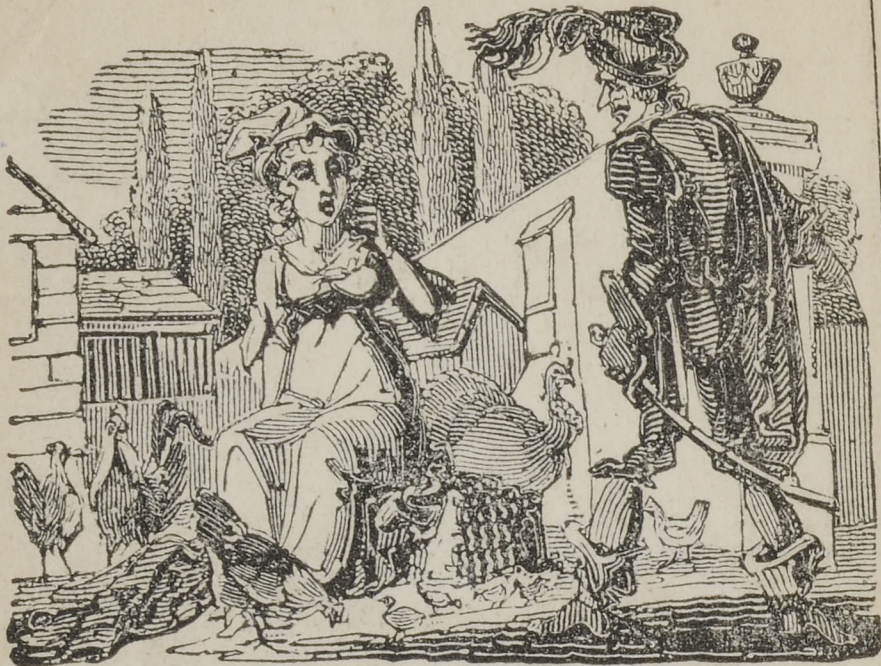


46.] Little White Mouse.



The good Boy.

This good little boy
Is reading his bible,
He knows very well
He ought not to be idle.

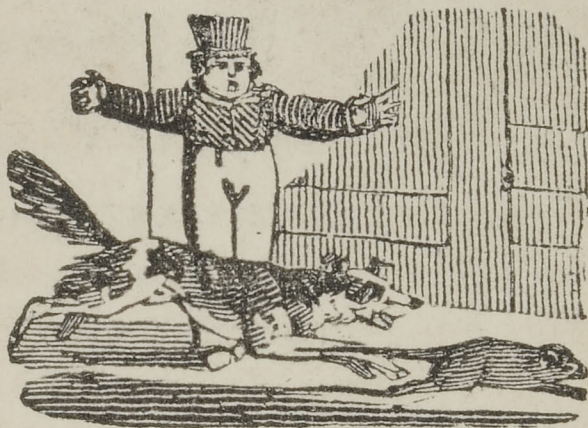


Thus careless of the splendour that awaited her, the keeper of the poultry sat on a stone in the middle of the yard when the king's son arrived: he was crooked, and marked with every kind of deformity. "If you persist in refusing me, I will order you to be put to death instantly." "I will never marry you; you are too ugly, and too wicked. I prefer poverty with my poultry to you."

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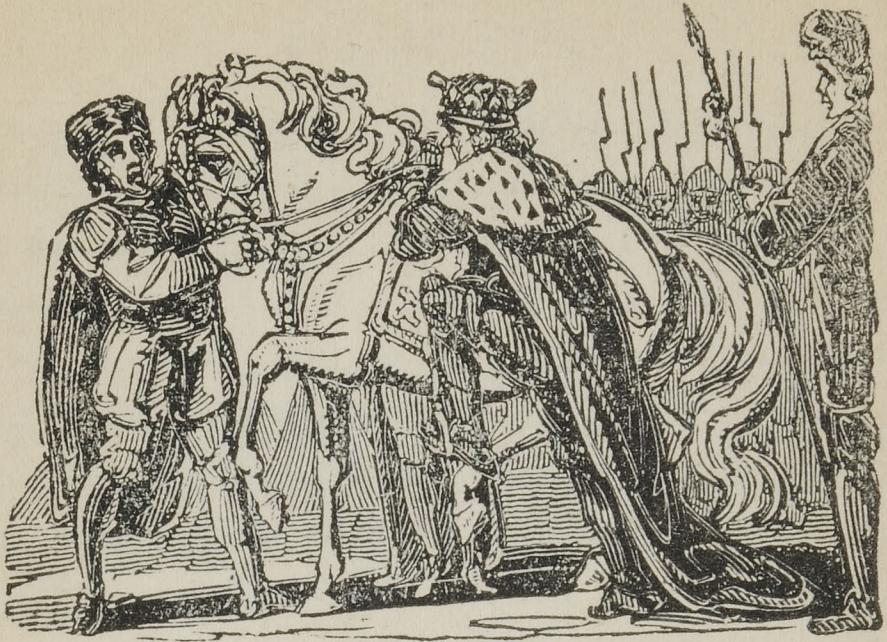
THE LITTLE
WHITE MOUSE.



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THE LITTLE WHITE MOUSE.

THE king and queen of the Land of Pleasure were so attached to each other that nothing was wanting to make them happy.

The king of the Land of Tears conceived a deadly hatred against the king of the Land of Pleasure.

This wicked wretch determined to spread his army through the territory of his happy neighbour, but his intention reached the king of the Land of Pleasure, he put every thing in the best state of defence, took a tender leave of the queen, and marched to meet the enemy

The queen gave way to sorrow, "Alas! if the king should fall in battle, I shall be left in the power of a cruel monster, and my child will be born a slave. The king wrote to her every day; one morning when she was watching for the messenger, she saw him coming at full speed, with fear pictured in his countenance. "O! madam, all is lost: the king is slain, the army defeated, and the ferocious conqueror almost at our gates."

The poor queen fell senseless: her attendants carried her to bed; and no scene could have been more affecting. The wicked king, at the head of his savage troops, entered the palace, where he found the queen overwhelmed with sorrow and despair. He seized her by the hair, and dragging her from the bed, he threw her across his shoulders, and carried her away without remorse. She besought him to have pity on her, but he said to her, "Weep on; your complaints are a diversion to me."

He carried her to his own capital; and

he took the most dreadful oaths that he would hang her ; but he was informed that the queen would soon become a mother.

When he knew this, a thought struck him, that if she should have a daughter, he would marry her to his son ; and, he sent for a fairy. When she arrived, he led her into a tower, in which the queen was confined. Nothing could



equal the unpleasantness of her apartment. The bed was an old mattress.

In this miserable condition the queen passed both day and night, weeping bitterly at her own situation, and for the death of her husband.

The fairy embraced the queen, and, whispered, "Take courage, madam, your misfortunes will soon be at an end: I hope to contribute to your happiness." The queen was a little consoled and entreated her to have pity on a poor unhappy princess.

The king growing impatient, "Come, come," said he, "let us not have so many compliments; I brought you here to inform me, whether the queen will have a daughter or a son?" "She will have a daughter," replied the fairy, "who will be the most beautiful princess that has ever been seen." "If she be not very beautiful and accomplished," said the king, "I will hang her mother with the child at her neck; and nothing shall prevent it." Having said this, he left the place with the fairy, the queen wept bitterly, thus lamenting her unhappy

fate. "Alas! what shall I do? If I have a beautiful little girl, he will give her to his reptile of a son; and if she is ugly, he will hang us both. Cannot I conceal it from him so that he can never see it."

The time approached when the little princess was to come into the world, and the distress of the queen augmented daily: the jailer gave her nothing but three boiled peas, and a small bit of black bread for her food during the day.

One evening, while she was employed in spinning, she saw entering, at a small hole, a pretty little mouse, as white as snow. "Ah, pretty creature, what do you come here to seek? I have but three peas to last me all day: begone, if you wish not to fast."—The little mouse ran about here and there, and skipped like a little monkey. The queen was so pleased with it, that she gave it the only pea that remained for her supper. "Here, poor little thing, eat this: I have got no more; but I give it thee willing-

ly." The instant she had done this there appeared upon the table two partridges and two pots of preserves. "Really, a good turn is never lost." She ate a little; but with fasting so long her appetite was almost gone. She threw sweetmeats to the mouse, who having nibbled them away, began to leap about with more glee than before.

The next morning the gaoler brought the queen three peas, which he had put as usual in a large dish, to mock her sufferings: the little white mouse came softly, and eat them all three, as well as the bread. When the queen wished to dine, she found nothing there, at which she was very angry with the mouse. "What a wicked little beast! if he continues thus, I shall die with hunger." As she was going to cover the plate she found it full of things good to eat: but while she was eating, a thought came into her head, that, in a few days, the king would perhaps kill her child, and she quitted the table to weep. "Ah!

is there no way of saving it?" At the time she pronounced these words, she perceived the mouse playing with some long straws: she took some of them, and began to work:" "If I have enough of straw I will make a basket to put my little daughter in, and I will give it out of the window to the first charitable person who will take care of it."

She began to work very diligently: she never wanted straw; for the mouse always brought some; and at meal-times, the queen always gave her the three peas, and found in exchange a number of dishes of delicate meats.

One day as the queen was looking out of the window, to see how she should let it down, she perceived an old woman leaning upon a stick, who spoke to her thus:—"I know your trouble, madam; and, if you wish it, I will serve you." Alas! my dear friend, you will much oblige me, if you will come every evening to receive my child, whom I will let down to you: you must feed and

nurse it ; and if ever I am rich, I will repay you well." "I wish for no pecuniary reward, but I am very nice in my eating, and wish for nothing so much as a fat mouse. If you find one in your prison, kill it and throw it me : your infant will be the better for it."

The queen began to weep without answering ; and the old woman, after having waited a little, asked her why she cried ? "It is, that there only comes into my chamber one little mouse, so engaging, that I cannot kill it." How ! do you like a rogue of a mouse, who eats every thing, better than your own child ? Very well, madam, you are not to be pitied : remain in the good company you have chosen ; I can have plenty of mice ; so I care but little about it ;" and scolding in this manner, she hobbled away.

Although the queen had a good repast, and the mouse played about as usual, she never raised her eyes from the ground, and tears ran down her cheeks.

On this same night the little princess

made her entrance into the world: her beauty surpassed all that the queen had ever beheld: instead of crying at her birth, as other children do, she smiled at her affectionate parent, and extended her little hands, as if she had already a good understanding. The queen caressed her fondly, "Alas! my dear child, if you fall into the hands of the wicked king, it will cost you your life." She shut it up in the basket, with a paper, on which was written,

O! you whose steps the favouring
powers direct

To these lone scenes, your generous aid
I claim;

My hapless child, in infant years, protect
From sorrow's grasp—and Juliet be her
name:

and having turned away for a moment, she looked again, and found the infant dressed in the finest clothes: she kissed it and shed a torrent of tears, not knowing how to part with her.

At this moment in came the little

mouse, and jumped into the basket. "Ah! little creature, how much it costs me to save your life! I shall perhaps lose my dear Juliet. Any other than me would have killed you, and given you to the dainty old woman; but I could not consent to it." "You will not repent it, madam, I am not unworthy of your friendship." The queen was thunderstruck when she heard the mouse speak; but her surprise augmented when she perceived its little visage change to that of a woman, and the paws become hands and feet. At length the queen, hardly daring to look up, discovered the figure to be the fairy that had visited her before, and who had promised to put an end to her misfortune and sufferings. "I wished to try the goodness of your heart," said the fairy: "I now know that you are worthy of my friendship. Fairies like me, who possess treasures and riches do not seek so much for the luxuries of life, as for friendship, and we seldom find it." "Is it possible,

great fairy, that you, who are so powerful and wealthy, find it such a great trouble to gain a friend?" "Yes, because persons seldom love us but for interest; but when you loved me as a mouse, and it seemed from a disinterested motive, I wished to put you to a still greater trial; I took the figure of an old woman; and it was me who spoke to you at the bottom of the tower: you have always answered my best expectation." At these words she embraced the queen; then she kissed the infant princess, and said, "My pretty little girl, you shall henceforward be your mother's consolation; you shall be richer than your father; you shall live for an hundred years without illness, wrinkles, or old age." The enraptured queen begged that the fairy would take Juliet away, and be careful of her; adding, "I give her to be your daughter."

The fairy thanked her; she put the little one in the basket, which she let down to the bottom of the tower, and

having again taken the form of a mouse, she descended by the cord ; but when she got down, she could not find the child any where ; and remounting in a great fright, " All is lost," cried she, my enemy Cancaline has carried away the princess.

When the jailer entered and perceived what had taken place, he went to inform the king, who came in a great passion to ask for the child ; but she told him that a fairy had carried it away by force. At this the king said, " I promised to hang thee, and I will keep my word." He then dragged her to a wood, and was going to hang the queen, when the fairy, having rendered herself invisible, pushed him down and carried away his intended victim to her palace. She was treated with every attention ; and if it had not been for the thoughts of her little daughter, she could have been happy.

Fifteen years passed away without any change. At this period there was

great talk that the son of the wicked monarch had fallen in love with the keeper of his poultry, and that she refused to accept him for her husband. This refusal surprised every one: the nuptial dresses were prepared, and the ceremony was expected soon to take place. The little white mouse determined to see this extraordinary damsel, and transported herself to the capital. She entered the poultry-yard, and found her dressed in a coarse woollen gown, with her feet bare, and a cap of goat skin on her head.

Careless of the splendour that awaited her, she sat on a stone when the king's son arrived: he was marked with every kind of deformity. "If you persist in refusing me, I will order you to be put to death." "I will never marry you; you are too ugly, and too wicked."

The little white mouse observed her with admiration. As soon as the prince retired, the fairy assumed the figure of an old shepherdess. "Good day, fair

damsel, the fowls do credit to your care of them." The young woman looked at her with a countenance full of sweetness: "They wish to persuade me to quit my employment for a crown which I do not want: pray, good mother, what is your advice?" "My child, a crown is a dazzling object; but you cannot imagine the trouble it is to those who wear it." But suppose I do know all this, still I would refuse to accept it, because I know not even the name of those who gave me birth." Tell me then who placed you here." "A fairy, named Cancaline, she almost killed me, without the least provocation. Tired of my sufferings, I ran away from her, and met the son of the wicked king, who asked if I would enter into his service: I consented, and was placed to take care of his poultry. Alas! he conceived a most violent love for me, and has so teased me that I have no comfort left."

The fairy suspected she had at last met with the princess Juliet, and she

asked her name. "I am called Juliet, but who gave me that name I never knew." The fairy threw herself on her neck exclaiming, "Juliet, I have known you long; I am delighted to find you so sensible and so lovely; take the clothes that are before you, and put them on."

The princess obeyed; "who do you suppose yourself to be, my dear child?" "Really, I could fancy myself to be the daughter of some great king." "Should you be glad of it?" "yes, certainly, for it would give me the power of assisting many that are in distress." "Be happy then, for you are born of royal parents: to-morrow you shall know more."

The fairy then returned to the queen. "I bring you, madam, the happiest tidings." "Alas! what tidings of joy can come to me, who have lost both my husband and my child?" "It is always right to hope; I have seen the princess your daughter, and she is more beautiful than the dawning day." She then related the whole of her discovery. "I

am determined," said the queen, "that she shall not marry the prince, pray go and bring her to me."

The son of the wicked king left Juliet in a great rage at her refusal, and went into the gardens to consider what he should do; here he cried so loud, that his father overheard him, and inquired the cause of his distress. "How can I be otherwise than afflicted, to be thus set at defiance by a keeper of poultry?" "What will not she love you? I am determined she shall be put to death." He then called his guards. "Go, and bring her here immediately."

They went and seized her, and shut her up in a tower. At this moment the fairy and the good queen arrived in a flying chariot; and on hearing the sad fate to which her daughter was just condemned, "Be of good comfort," said the fairy, you shall be made happy, and your enemies punished." The king retired to bed. The fairy then resumed the form of the little white mouse, and

bit his ear! at which, he turned the other side and she bit that also: he cried out for assistance, and when his attendants came, they found both his ears bleeding very much. While they were seeking the mouse, she was gone into the prince's room, to inflict vengeance upon him: she eat out one of his eyes, which left him in total darkness; for he was blind of the other before. He leaped out of bed, seized his sword, and ran to his father, who also had taken his sword, swearing that he would kill every one that came in his way till the mouse was found.

When he saw his son, he scolded him, and the prince, not knowing the voice, attacked him furiously; the king made a violent cut at him with his sword, and received a severe wound from his son at the same moment; so that they both fell to the ground bleeding profusely. All their subjects, who hated them mortally, now dreading them no longer, dragged them into the river.

Thus ended the days of the wicked king and his son. The good fairy, who had seen all that passed, went immediately to seek the queen, and they went together to the black tower, where the princess Juliet was confined. The fairy struck three times with a little ring on the great door, which opened instantly: they found the poor princess with scarcely spirits to speak a word. The queen ran to embrace her: "My dear child, I am thy mother, the queen of the Land of Pleasure," exclaimed she, and then gave her an account of her birth. When Juliet heard these happy tidings, she was nearly dying with joy: she threw herself at the feet of the queen, and wet her hands with tears that she shed upon them. She likewise caressed the good fairy, who had conferred so many obligations on them both. The fairy said to them, "Is it not time now to think of amusing ourselves; let us go to the hall of the castle, and harangue the people." They moved gracefully to every one

they met, whether rich or poor. When the great hall was full, the good fairy said to the subjects of the tyrant, that she would recommend them to choose for their sovereign the daughter of a neighbouring king, whom she then presented to them. "Under so amiable a queen," said she, "you cannot fail to live in a state of continual happiness and tranquillity." At these words the people cried out with one voice, "Yes! yes! we choose her for our queen, and we trust she will make us amends for the miseries we have so long endured."

46.] Little White Mouse.



Naughty Girl.

My sweet little girl should be cheerful and
mild,

And should not be fretful, and cry!

Oh, why is this passion? remember, my child,
God sees you, who lives in the sky.