



## BULSTROLL THE DWARF'S REVENGE.

A STORY FOR CHILDREN.

By CHARLES SMITH CHELTNAM.



IN a very far-off country, a very long time ago, there was a King who had an incomparably beautiful daughter, to whom his people, in token of their boundless admiration of her charms and of the sweetness of her character, gave the name of Starbright, which suited her so well that nobody ever spoke of her by any other. Naturally, many charming Princes aspired to wed her, but, though she was gracious to all of them, she preferred Prince Constant, and, her father having freely given his consent to their marriage, she and her affianced, accompanied by a numerous

and magnificent suite, took their way towards the church where their wedding was to be solemnized.

By that time several of the Princes whose suit had been unsuccessful had retired regretfully to their distant kingdoms, but one of them, a powerful Prince named Bulstroll, a frightful dwarf in form, with a big hunch on his back and a beard 7ft. long, who was a magician, and malignant beyond expression, stayed behind,

resolved to revenge himself for the slight put upon him.

To carry out this wicked purpose, just as the bridal procession reached the church door he changed himself into a whirlwind, and filled the air with blinding dust, from the midst of which he sprang upon Starbright and bore her away into the clouds, whence, after awhile, he descended to his palace underground, where he laid her upon a sofa and left her insensible.

When, on her recovering from her fainting fit and casting her eyes about her, the Princess was able to realize what had happened to her, she found herself in a splendidly-furnished room, forming one of a magnificent suite of apartments, as she discovered when she was able to rise and examine her surroundings.

Suddenly she became aware that, by some invisible means, a table had been spread with a profusion of gold and silver dishes containing food so appetizing in appearance that, in spite of her distress of mind, she could not refrain from tasting some of it. Having once tasted, she continued to eat until her hunger was thoroughly appeased; after which she laid down and tried to go to sleep. But it was in vain that she attempted to close her eyes, which continued to wander from the door of the room to the brilliant lights burning upon the table with its sparkling furniture.

Presently the door opened and four armed negroes entered, bearing, upon a gold and jewelled throne, the dwarf with the big hunch upon his back and streaming from his chin the beard that was 7ft. long.

Descending from his throne, Bulfstroll approached the sofa and attempted to kiss the Princess; but she repulsed him by the administration of so vigorous a box on the ear as made him stagger and see a thousand stars whirling about him, and, at the same time, hear the ringing of as many bells. He was unable to repress the utterance of a cry which made the palace tremble; but, as he wished the Princess not to see that he was angry with her, he turned to quit the room: in his hurry, however, his feet became entangled with his long, trailing beard, and, in trying to recover his balance, he dropped the little cap which he was carrying in his hand, and which possessed the virtue of rendering him invisible whenever he wanted to be unseen. The negroes hastened to his assistance and, having replaced him on his throne, hurriedly bore him away.

As soon as the Princess saw that she was alone she sprang from the sofa, locked the door, picked up the little cap and hurried to a mirror, to see whether it would fit her head. What was her astonishment at not seeing anything of herself in the glass! She snatched off the cap and looked again: then she discovered the secret of her invisibility and, replacing the marvellous cap on her head, walked about the room delightedly.

A short time afterwards the door was violently thrown open, and the dwarf, who had now flung his incommensurable beard over his shoulders, entered the room furiously. Seeing neither the Princess nor the lost cap, and comprehending that she had appropriated it, he set to work to search in every corner, tapping all the furniture, and even peering under the carpet.

While he was thus fruitlessly engaged the Princess, rendered invisible, quitted the

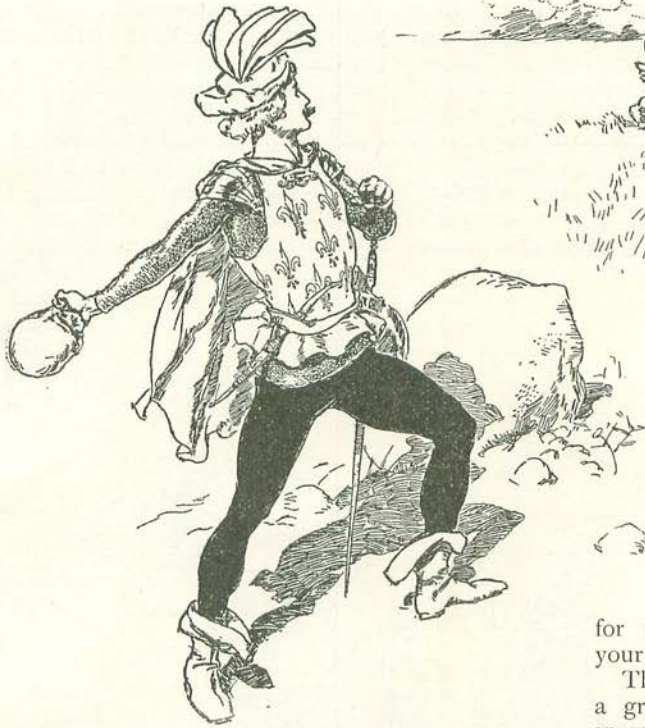
palace and fled into the garden, which was of vast extent and magnificence. There she lived in tranquillity, eating delicious fruits, drinking from a translucent spring, and enjoying the impotent fury of the dwarf in his unceasing search for her. Sometimes she even went so far as to pelt him with plum-stones, or to show herself to him for a moment by taking off her cap, and then, instantly replacing it on her head, disappearing with a shout of laughter at his rage.

One day, when she was amusing herself in this manner, the magic cap caught on the thorny branch of a gooseberry bush as she sped past it. In an instant the dwarf saw what had happened, seized her, and was in the act of recovering the cap, when the air of the garden was pierced by the warlike blast of a trumpet.

Uttering a thousand maledictions and trembling with anger, he breathed upon Starbright, to send her to sleep, and, drawing his double-edged sword, shot up into the clouds, so as to be able to pounce upon his challenger and slay him with a single stroke of the magic weapon.

Meanwhile, when the storm of wind and dust threw the wedding procession into confusion and dispersed the cavalcade, a great tumult arose among the Princes and their suites. The father of the vanished Princess and Prince Constant, her betrothed, searched for her everywhere, calling her by name, until, at length, the King, driven to despair by the non-success of their endeavours, issued a proclamation, promising that whoever found her and brought her safely back should become his son-in-law and the possessor of half of his kingdom. Without a moment's loss of time the suitors took to horse and galloped away in all directions in search of her.

During three days and nights Prince Constant rode without eating, drinking, or sleeping, until, on the evening of the third day, worn with fatigue, he reined in his horse in a meadow and dismounted with the intention of snatching a few moments' rest. But, as he did so, he heard plaintive cries, and perceived a poor little hare, on the back of which was an enormous owl, tearing it with its claws. The Prince instantly snatched up a large stone, as he thought, but which, in reality, was a skull, and threw it with such accuracy as to strike the owl dead. Delivered from its enemy, the hare ran to the Prince and caressed him for a moment, then skipped away. Whereupon the skull which the Prince had heedlessly flung at the owl thus addressed him:—



“HE THREW IT WITH SUCH ACCURACY AS TO STRIKE THE OWL DEAD.”

“I thank you, Prince Constant, for the great service you have done me. I belong to an unfortunate man who has deprived himself of existence, and, for this crime of suicide, has been condemned to roll in the dust until it was made the means of saving the life of one of God’s creatures. For seven hundred and seventy years I have lain miserably on the face of the earth without winning the least sign of compassion from any human being. You have released me from the penalty of my crime by using me to save the life of that poor hare. In gratitude for this service I will teach you how to call to you a marvellous horse which belonged to me in my lifetime, and which will render you a thousand services. When you want him you have but to go into the plain, without looking behind you, and call to him in these words :—

Wondrous steed with golden mane,  
Hie to me across the plain,  
Flying, like a wingéd bird,  
Through the air with steps unheard !

Now, please, finish your work of charity by burying me here, so that I may repose in peace ; then, go on your way in good hope

for the accomplishment of your enterprise.”

The Prince thereupon dug a grave at the foot of a spreading tree and piously, with prayers, buried the skull.

As he was casting the last clod of earth upon it he saw a tender blue flame ascend from the ground : it was the dead man’s soul, happy in its release from its long-endured penalty, speeding heavenward.

His humane labour finished, the Prince went out into the plain, taking care not to look behind him, and—to test the efficacy of the invocation taught him by the skull—cried :—

Wondrous steed with golden mane,  
Hie to me across the plain,  
Flying, like a wingéd bird,  
Through the air with steps unheard !

From the midst of lightnings, hissings, and the crash of thunder, there sped towards him a miracle in the form of a horse—light as the wind, with a dappled coat and golden mane, flames flashing from its eyes and nostrils, and clouds of vapour pouring from its mouth and ears ! It stopped before the Prince and addressed him in a human voice :—

“What are your commands, Prince Constant ?”

“I am unhappy,” answered the Prince ; “come to my assistance.” And he described the misfortune which had befallen him.

“Enter my left ear and pass out by the right,” said the magic horse.

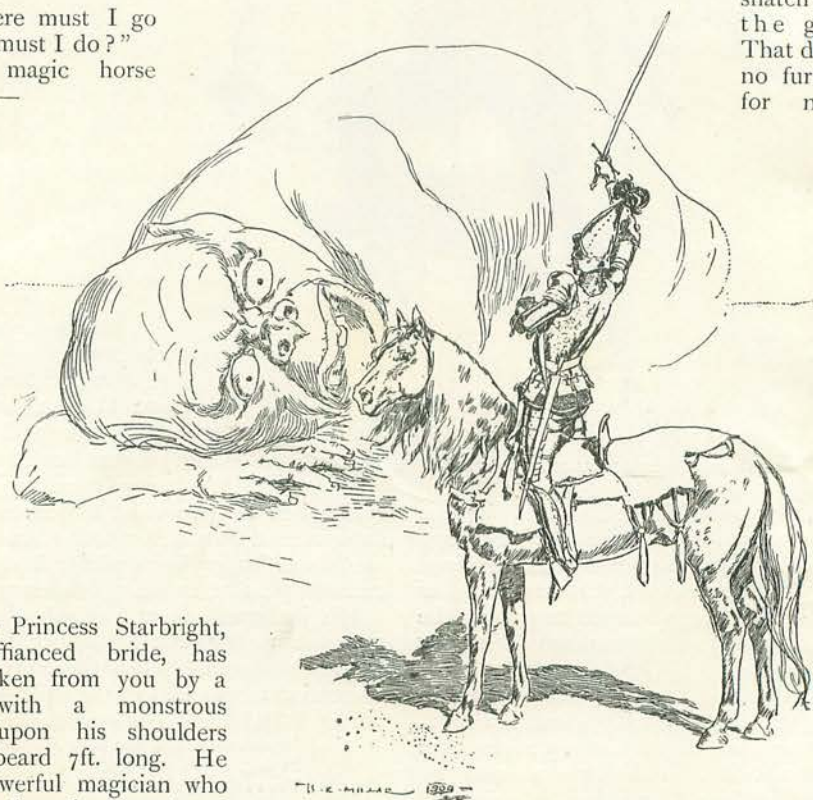
The Prince did as directed, and came out of the horse's right ear completely and magnificently armed : his breastplate was covered with ornaments wrought in gold and jewels, his casque was of glittering steel, and these, with his sword and mace, made of him a fully accoutred warrior. Moreover, he felt himself animated by superhuman strength and bravery. Stamping upon the ground, he found that it trembled under him, a sound as of thunder shook the air, and the leaves fell from the trees as in the passing of a storm. He then said to his steed :—

“Where must I go  
—what must I do?”

The magic horse  
replied :—

of a trembling mountain. Here the steed stopped and said :—

“The moving mountain which you see before you, Prince, is the head of the monster with the basilisk eyes ; so beware of meeting their glance, which is deadly, as all those whose bones you see lying about you have found. Fortunately, the heat of the noonday sun has sent the monster to sleep, with his keen-edged sword, which nothing can resist, resting beside him. Conceal yourself by bending down behind my neck until we are close upon the sword, then stoop and snatch it from the ground. That done, have no further fear, for not only



“HE SHOUTED SO LOUDLY AS TO WAKE THE MONSTER.”

“The Princess Starbright, your affianced bride, has been taken from you by a dwarf with a monstrous hunch upon his shoulders and a beard 7ft. long. He is a powerful magician who lives far from here, and you must conquer him ; but the only arm that can reach or wound him is the keen-edged sword possessed by his brother, the monster with the great head and basilisk eyes. It is with him that we must begin.”

Prince Constant sprang fearlessly upon the back of the dappled steed with the golden mane, which at once started on its wondrous course, leaping over mountains, bounding across rivers, piercing dark forests, without crushing a blade of grass or raising a particle of dust on the road. At length they came to a wide stretching plain, strewn everywhere with human bones, at the foot

will the monster be unable to do you any harm, but its life will be at your mercy.”

Noiselessly the horse approached the sleeping monster ; the Prince stooped and dexterously snatched up the sword, then rising in his saddle shouted so loudly as to wake the monster. Raising its head with a start, it infected the air with a long-drawn angry snort and turned its burning eyes upon the Prince ; but seeing the keen-edged sword in his hands, it restrained its rage and said :—

“Have you determined on giving up your life that you have come here?”

"Speak less haughtily," replied the Prince, "for you are in my power; your basilisk eyes have lost their force, and you are going to perish by this sword. But first, I want to know who you are."

"It is true that I am in your power, Prince, but be generous, for I am worthy of your pity. I am a knight of the race of giants, and, but for the malevolence of my brother, should now be happy. He is Bulfstroll, the dwarf with the great hunch upon his back and the beard 7ft. long. Jealous of the grace of my form, he seeks by all means to injure me. His strength, which is prodigious, he owes to his beard, and that can only be severed by the keen-edged sword which you hold in your hand. One day he came to me and said:—

"Dear brother, help me, I beg, to discover the keen-edged blade which was buried in the earth by a magician, one of our enemies, who, of all, is the only one who can destroy us both."

"Fool that I was, I trusted what he said, and with a spade made of a great oak tree dug into the mountain until I found the sword. Then a dispute arose between us as to which of us should have it. At last my brother said: 'Let us each put an ear to the ground, and let the sword be his who first hears the ringing of the nearest church bells.' I at once bent down to listen, and instantly my brother sprang upon me and, with one traitorous stroke of the sword, severed my head from my body, and left me unburied to become an enormous mountain covered with forests.

"As to my head—gifted with a vital force which nothing can overcome, it has ever since remained here to terrify to death all who have, before you, attempted to get possession of the keen-edged sword. Now, Prince, I beg of you to employ that magic weapon in cutting off my wicked brother's beard, which will at once destroy his malevolent power and avenge the terrible wrong he has inflicted upon me."

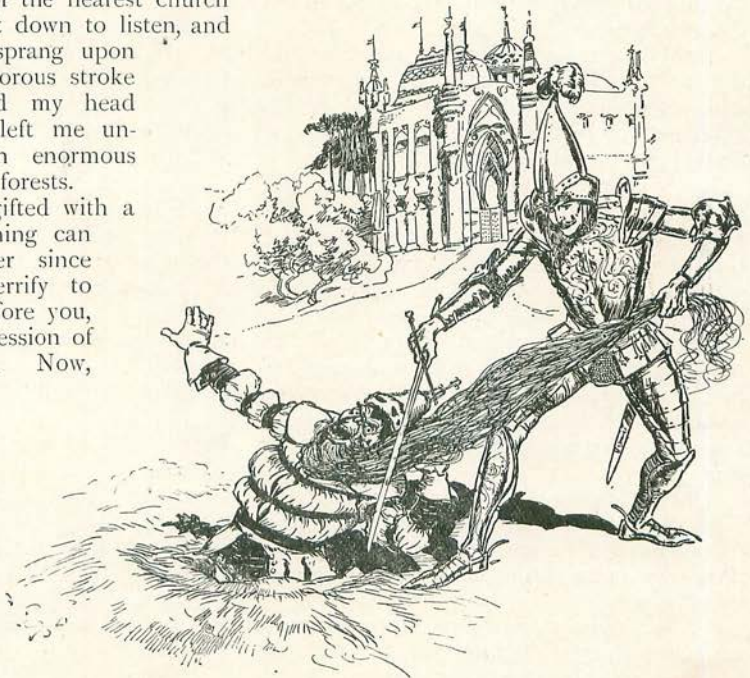
"Your desire shall speedily be accomplished, I promise you," replied the Prince.

Vol. xx.—60

Thereupon he commanded his dappled steed with the golden mane to bear him to Bulfstroll's palace. The words were scarcely spoken before they reached the garden-door, at the moment when the dwarf was pursuing the Princess Starbright. The sound of the warlike trumpet compelled him to desist; but, before quitting her, he took the precaution to replace the cap upon her head, so as to make her invisible.

The Prince was awaiting an answer to his challenge, when he heard a loud rumbling sound in the clouds above his head, caused by the dwarf, who, for the purpose of descending with crushing force upon his enemy, had risen to a great height above him. But he took his measures so carelessly that, on reaching the ground, he plunged into it up to his waist at the mercy of the Prince, who instantly seized hold of his beard and cut it off with the keen-edged sword.

After having tied the magician's severed beard to his casque and bound the helpless dwarf to the saddle behind him, he entered the palace, where the servants threw open all the doors the moment they saw that he was possessed of the beard which had so long held them in awe and bondage.



— THE PRINCE SEIZED HOLD OF HIS BEARD AND CUT IT OFF. —

The Prince immediately began to search for the captive Princess; but it was in vain that he examined every portion of the palace and gardens, the malicious dwarf refusing to give him any aid. At last, however, and when he had almost given himself up to despair, he had the good fortune to take hold of the magic cap, and then perceived his *fiancée* sleeping as the dwarf had left her. Being unable to awaken her, he put the magic cap in his pocket, and, taking her in his arms, mounted his dappled steed, and carried the dwarf to the head of his brother the monster, which, after uttering a roar of satisfaction, instantly swallowed him.

Having remounted his steed, Prince Constant presently arrived at a wide-spread plain, where his horse stopped and said:—

“Prince, we must here part company. You are not far from your journey’s end; your horse is near at hand awaiting you. Farewell! But before I leave you, enter my right ear and come forth by the left.”

The Prince did as he was directed, and found himself dressed in his wedding suit of clothes, as he had been when Princess Starbright was carried off by the dwarf. The dappled steed with the golden mane then disappeared from his sight, and, in answer to his call, his own horse galloped to him from the opposite side of the plain.

Night having come by that time, he laid the still sleeping Princess on the ground, and, after carefully covering her with his mantle to protect her against the cold, lay down himself and fell asleep.

By ill-chance, one of the unsuccessful suitors for the Princess’s hand passed that way, and, seeing Prince Constant sleeping, pierced him with his sword and rode away with the Princess to the palace of her father, to whom he said:—

“Here is your daughter, whom I claim as my wife, in accordance with your promise. She was carried off by a terrible sorcerer, against whom I had to contend during three days and three nights before I could conquer him.”

The restoration of his daughter filled the King with joy; but observing that all his caresses failed to awaken her, he inquired anxiously as to the meaning of her strange condition.

“I do not in the least know what it means,” answered the impostor. “You see her exactly in the same state as that in which I found her imprisoned in the sorcerer’s brazen castle.”

While this was passing in the King’s palace, Prince Constant, pierced by the sword of his treacherous rival, awoke with hardly sufficient strength left him to murmur:—

Wondrous steed with golden mane,  
Hie to me across the plain,  
Flying, like a wingéd bird,  
Through the air with steps unheard.

A moment later, and from the midst of a luminous cloud the magic steed returned to him.

Knowing what had happened to the Prince, the magic steed sought at a bound the Fountain of Life, whence it returned with three kinds of water—the water that revives, the water that cures, and the water that gives strength—with which, in turn, he sprinkled the Prince’s pale forehead. At the first sprinkling life returned to his already cold body and the blood re-coursed through his veins; at the second his wound was cured; and at the third all his lost strength came back to him. Then he opened his eyes and cried:—

“Oh, what a sound and refreshing sleep I have had!”

“The sleep you have enjoyed was the eternal sleep,” replied the dappled steed. “One of your rivals, finding you sleeping, murdered you, then carried the Princess Starbright to her father, representing himself to have been her preserver. But do not distress yourself, she is still sleeping, and you alone can dispel her sleep by touching her with the dwarf’s beard. Mount your horse and hasten on your way.”

In a swirl of light the magic steed once more disappeared. Prince Constant mounted his own horse and rode like the wind towards the home of his betrothed.

On nearing the capital he found it besieged by an army of enemies who had already captured part of the walls, and to whom the terrified inhabitants were on the point of appealing for mercy. Seeing this, he put on the invisible cap and, with the keen-edged sword, fell upon the besiegers with such irresistible energy that all who were not slain fled from the kingdom, only too glad to have escaped with their lives. This great feat achieved, he hastened—still remaining invisible—to the palace, where he heard the King expressing astonishment at the sudden and wholly unlooked-for flight of the enemy.

“Who can the valiant warrior be who has saved us?” asked the King, wonderingly.

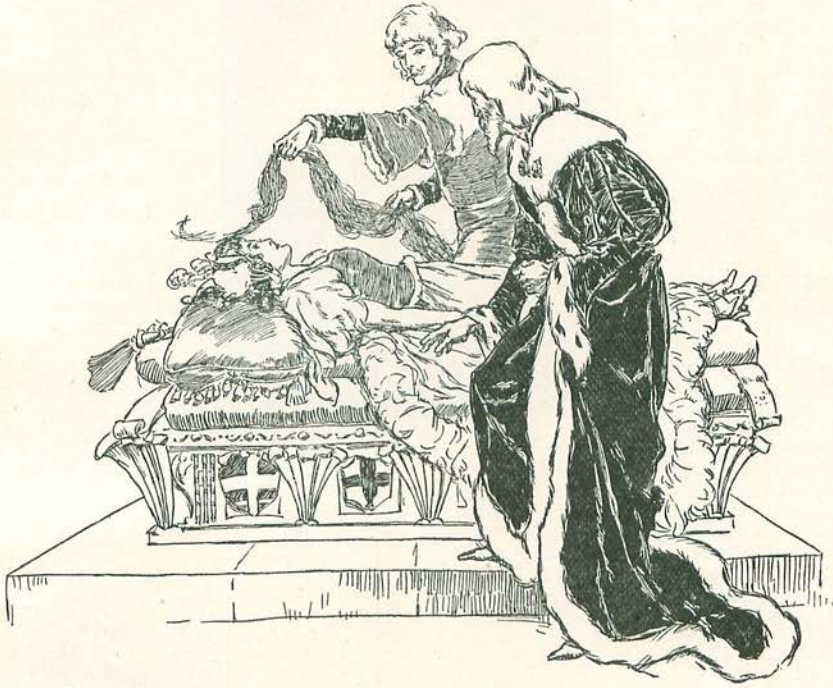
For a moment nobody answered. Then

Prince Constant took off the magic cap and, kneeling at the King's feet, said :—

“It is I, King and father, who have had the good fortune to overcome your enemies, and it is I who rescued the Princess, my betrothed, from the great peril she was in, and was bringing her back to your arms, when my

touched her forehead with the dwarf's beard, whereupon she instantly opened her eyes and smiled, as if awaking from a pleasant dream.

Transported with joy, the King overwhelmed her with caresses, and, that same evening, married her to Prince Constant,



— H. A. MILLER — 1900 —  
“PRINCE CONSTANT TOUCHED HER FOREHEAD WITH THE DWARF'S BEARD.”

rival here traitorously assassinated me while I was sleeping, and next, deceived you, by passing himself off as her preserver. Take me to her, and I will awaken her.”

On hearing these words the impostor fled as quickly as he could get away, while Prince Constant, hastening to the sleeping Princess,

himself leading her to the altar and making over to his son-in-law the promised half of his kingdom.

What can be said of the festivities which followed? Only that no eye ever saw, no ear ever heard tell of, greater magnificence than was displayed in their celebration.