

How Turlupin Won the Princess.

A STORY FOR CHILDREN. TRANSLATED FROM THE FRENCH OF JÉRÔME DOUCET.

BY G. H. WOODHOUSE.



AT the back of his garret Turlupin kept an old chest which he had never dared to open, although there was nothing alarming in its appearance. It was not of oak heavily banded with iron, nor was it of leather all studded with nails. It was simply a small box of common wood, painted dark green, with a bunch of flowers painted on the top of the lid. Still, Turlupin, so far, had been afraid to open it.

One morning—it was a Friday and the thirteenth of the month, but Turlupin was not superstitious—he climbed the stairs, determined at last to see what the wonderful box contained. When he first raised the lid he thought the chest was empty, and having got so used to the idea that it must contain something mysterious and wonderful he felt quite disappointed. At last, however, he espied something lying in a corner, and putting in his hand drew out a pair of gloves. He found they were white ones. At least they had been white once, but they were soiled with use and yellowed with age, and the dust which covered them had certainly not improved their appearance. Still, they had been white once, and therefore we will continue to flatter them by calling them a pair of “white gloves.”

Turlupin put them on, and as he did so they reminded him of a wedding, naturally his own. Having put them on he went downstairs in such a hurry that he forgot to close the lid of the box, and, putting on his best hat—he only had two, for he was very poor—he immediately started to find the fair unknown who, he was sure, was destined to become his wife.

He had not walked very far along the high road when he met an old woman riding to market on her donkey. On either side she carried a pannier of apples, which she hoped to be able to sell.

Turlupin stopped and raised his hat politely.

“Madam,” he said, with a low bow, “I have the honour to ask your daughter’s hand in marriage.”

The old dame laughed so heartily that you could have heard the apples rattling together.

“Of my daughter, you foolish fellow!” she cried. “My old donkey, perhaps! Why, you are not half rich enough for a daughter of mine, I can tell you.”

Turlupin answered, quietly: “You deserve that I should take you at your word,” and the donkey, with a loud “hee-haw,” seemed quite to agree with him.

Perhaps it did really understand him, for you must know that donkeys are not half so stupid as people pretend to believe; but whether it did or did not, it started off so suddenly that the old woman was taken by surprise and, losing her balance, was left sitting in the road with her apples rolling in all directions around her.

The good-natured Turlupin came to the rescue and lifted her to her feet, after which he picked up her apples and caught the donkey for her.

“Let this be a lesson to you,” he said, as he left her to continue on her way. “Choose an honest man for your daughter’s husband because he *is* honest, not because he *is* rich.”

Turlupin had walked about three leagues farther when he met an old man hobbling along with the aid of his stick.

“Good-day, friend,” he said.

“Good-day to you, stranger,” the old man replied.

“I have the honour to ask your daughter’s hand in marriage,” Turlupin continued.

“I am sorry. I am afraid you are a little late, for she has been married this last thirty years; and her daughter even is married too. Otherwise I should have been quite willing to accept you as a son-in-law; I like the look of you.”

Turlupin thanked him for his good opinion and went on his way once more.

The next person he met was also a man, and again he was unsuccessful, for although the man had seven children they were, unfortunately, all boys.

Decidedly, Turlupin was unlucky so far, and his ill-luck seemed likely to continue, for the next person he met informed him, when he had made the usual request, that she was an old maid who was very satisfied with her condition and had no desire to change it.

Turlupin was beginning to grow tired of



"HE MET AN OLD WOMAN RIDING TO MARKET."

his journey. He had been walking for nearly ten hours and he was both hungry and thirsty. The gloves, too, to which he was not used, caused him considerable inconvenience and made his hands feel hot and very uncomfortable.

He was in two minds whether to turn towards home or not when he came face to face with a great noble, dressed all in red, embroidered with gold.

Turlupin stopped him.

"My lord," he began, "I have the honour to propose for your daughter's hand."

For a moment the nobleman looked very much surprised, but at length he said:—

"My friend, I am glad to meet you—if you really want what you say. You do really wish to marry my daughter, the Princess Harpigelle? Very well, you shall do so, and what is more, do so as soon as you like. What is your name?"

"I am called Turlupin, my lord."

The King, for really it was he, immediately led Turlupin to the palace and sent for his daughter, the Princess Harpigelle.

"My daughter," he said, "my kingdom has at last produced a man who knows you so little or else is so brave that he asks for your

hand in marriage. Here he is. I offer him to you as a husband."

Harpigelle looked scornfully at Turlupin, albeit she felt rather uneasy at his calm and assured bearing. She was amused, however, and surprised at the white gloves he wore so proudly.

"Well! as you please," she said, carelessly; "but does he know the conditions?"

As Turlupin did not appear to understand the Princess continued: "You must bring me, within a year from to-day, the teeth of a nightingale, the feathers of a carp, and the scales of a lion," and, having spoken, Harpigelle, with a mocking curtsy, ran laughing from the room.

"You have heard her, my friend," said the King, sadly. "This is the thousandth time at least that I, her unhappy father, have heard her make the same demands from the suitors I have invited to the palace."

Turlupin, however, appeared in no way moved.

"Since she demands these things, sire," he said, "the only thing to do is to endeavour to find them with as little delay as possible. In a year from now, come what may, I will place in her own hand what she asks."

The monarch patted him on the back approvingly.

"That is capital," he said, "capital! Go then, Turlupin, and return quickly. I long for your success, for you are worthy to become my son-in-law."

Turlupin went first to the heart of a great forest. "It is there," he said to himself, "that I shall have the best chance of finding a nightingale which possesses the teeth I require, for nightingales love old trees and lonely places."

He chose an old oak, gnarled and mossy with age, and sat upon the soft grass at its foot, his back leaning against the trunk, and then he waited patiently.

The birds, frightened at first, hid themselves among the thickest foliage, but gradually, seeing that Turlupin was motionless, they began to move about above his head, emboldened and curious, and some of the less timid at last fluttered to the ground and moved about around him.

Turlupin had taken the precaution to bring some corn with him, and this he threw in handfuls towards the birds. Greedily they picked it and waited for more, but Turlupin did not gratify them at once. When evening came, however, he gave them another meal, and for several days continued to feed them regularly. The birds were now almost tame, and perched on his hands and feet and head, and would even let him handle them. In vain, however, he examined the nightingales. Not one of them could he find possessing any teeth.

His bag of corn rapidly grew empty, until at last it was quite exhausted. Then he began to dig with his knife, and found beetles and grubs among the moss and grass with which to feed his little friends. One day he uncovered a golden ring. Taking off a glove he put his finger through it, and, pulling with all his might, drew up a golden cage. Inside the cage a bird sat pining, with drooping wings.

Turlupin, always kind-hearted, opened the little door. The bird came quickly out and, fluttering its feathers and uttering little cries of gratitude and pleasure, was suddenly transformed into a most beautiful maiden, who addressed him thus:—

"Turlupin, I am the Queen of the Birds! Your kindness has won my people's hearts, and you have rescued me from the power of the Giant of the Forest, who had cast a spell over me. I know what you are seeking—what you so earnestly desire—and, at the needful hour, I will teach you how to procure it. In the meanwhile I give to your voice all the sweetness and the knowledge which my subjects themselves possess. The gift will enable you to give pleasure to yourself and to others. From this moment you are able to sing as sweetly as any nightingale."

With a noise like the soft rustling of feathers the fairy disappeared, and Turlupin was alone once more.

Turlupin thereupon set out for home and, when he reached it, he found to his surprise that he had been absent for half a year. He still, therefore, had six months before him in which to accomplish his two remaining tasks.

"Fish," he reflected, "are found in rivers, and it is at the water's edge, therefore, that I must seek the wonderful carp which Harpiggelle has ordered me to find."

He proceeded to establish himself upon a small island situated in the middle of the nearest large river and, full of confidence in the future, began his search.

Our hero had taken the precaution to bring with him a number of jars which contained every variety of the worms and grubs of which fish are so greedy that they swallow the hooks as well, and he also had paste, flies, and grasshoppers in order to be able to suit all possible tastes.

Turlupin at once began to feed the fish, and by throwing in the food less and less far each time was able to bring them so near the bank that he could see and distinguish them quite easily.

Alas! all the carp he saw were covered with scales instead of feathers. Their shining sides gleamed in the sun as they leapt from the water, and the wretched Turlupin saw his bait exhausted without setting eyes once on the strange fish he was so anxious to find.

In time all the bait was gone, and there was nothing more to give the shoals of greedy fishes which hungrily lined the shore in a compact, expectant mass.

One day, walking along the water's edge, he knocked his foot against a sharp stone, and, stooping to examine what had hurt him, saw that the stone was surrounded by a strongly knotted cord. This he picked up and pulled.

Presently a wicker trap appeared weighted



"A WICKER TRAP APPEARED, AND IN THE TRAP HE DISCOVERED A GORGEOUS FISH."

with a stone, and in the trap he discovered a gorgeous fish. Its scales were of all the colours of the rainbow, its fins were of strange and fantastic shapes, and its eyes gleamed with an expression altogether unlike anything Turlupin had ever seen before.

But the fish was already gasping, and so Turlupin, taking it from the trap in which it had been imprisoned, gently replaced it in the water.

The water sparkled and became luminous, and, to his boundless surprise, from the spot where he had replaced the fish Turlupin saw the figure of a beautiful maiden rising slowly out of the water. She was clad in a robe of glittering scales, and in her hand she bore a golden water-lily as a sceptre.

"Turlupin," she said, "my subjects love you for the kindness you have shown them, and you have rescued me from the spell

which the wicked Giant of the Water had thrown over me. I wish now to do you a service. I know what your wish is and what you seek. At the hour of your need you shall find that which the Princess Harpigelle has demanded of you. Remember this, you who have lived amongst my dumb subjects, that although speech is a precious gift, silence is at times more valuable."

As she spoke the last words she disappeared below the surface of the river.

Turlupin, well pleased with this adventure, returned home once more, and found that his absence had lasted three months. He still had three more in which to accomplish the third feat set him by the Princess Harpigelle.

"It is more than I shall need," he told himself confidently, and started, furnished with as much meat as he could carry, for the desert where lions abounded, and where he hoped to find the animal of which he was in search. He soon reached it, and made his way towards a small oasis, where he seated himself at the foot of a banana tree and calmly awaited the course of events. He hadn't to wait long, poor Turlupin!

A furious roaring shook the air and, pit-pat, pit-pat, an enormous lion came trotting

up. It must be confessed that Turlupin felt as though very cold water were trickling down his back, but he was a brave man and, better still, he had a mind free from reproach.

He took a large piece of raw meat and threw it to the great beast, which caught it in its huge jaws and then, without so much as a "Thank you," pit-patted away out of sight as quickly as it had approached.

Turlupin heaved a sigh of relief and felt distinctly happier. His content did not last long, however. A mournful cry was heard and a hyena crept stealthily near. The result, of course, was the same—the giving of another piece of meat, followed by another trotting off without a word of thanks.

Turlupin did not feel quite so easy in his

mind. The night seemed the longest he had ever known. No sooner did he begin to doze than a thousand strange voices of the night sounded all around him, rousing him effectually again and again.

At dawn he was approached successively by a jackal, a tiger, and a lioness, and he began to realize that his stock of meat would not last long among so many and such hungry guests, and he began to wonder how he could obtain a fresh supply and, above all, find shelter for himself from the voracious appetites of his new friends. He espied a palm tree a little distance away, and it seemed to offer him a refuge high enough to protect him from the attacks of the savage beasts with which the desert evidently swarmed.

He lost no time in climbing this tree, and from its top saw that he was surrounded by the desert which, on all sides, stretched as far as eye could reach. Not even a blade of grass broke the level monotony of the view. Only, on his left, he saw in the distance a large black hole, and at the same time heard the mournful roaring of a lion, which seemed to proceed from its mouth.

Turlupin climbed down the tree and went towards the hole, which he found had been covered over with branches and leaves and then with sand. This covering was all broken away, and at the bottom of the pit a huge lion was lying groaning, evidently in great pain.

Deceived by the apparently solid nature of the sand-strewn opening the animal had trodden upon the covering and fallen into

the pit and, having broken a paw in its fall, was unable to jump out of the trap. Turlupin, with nothing but his own white gloves to protect him from the lion's terrible claws, lay down and, leaning over the side of the hole, was able to reach the injured paw and examine it.

He bound it up as best he could, using a large handkerchief he was fortunate to have in his pocket, and then he gave the starving beast the remainder of his stock of meat. The poor lion greedily devoured it and, strengthened by its meal and thanks to Turlupin's skill in bandaging, managed to leap out of the trap and approach its deliverer.

Turlupin felt somewhat alarmed, but judge of his relief when the lion suddenly changed into a beautiful lady, who addressed him

thus:—

“Turlupin, I am the Fairy of the Sun. You have delivered me from the enchanter who held me prisoner, the Giant of the Desert. In return I wish to do something for you, for I know what your dearest wish is and what it is that you are in search of. You shall have it when you need it. You have lived amongst the inhabitants of the desert, and you will, I hope, remember that



“A STRANGER ENTERED THE LISTS MOUNTED UPON AN ASS.”

courage is man's greatest virtue.”

And saying this she vanished suddenly.

Turlupin had succeeded in accomplishing his tasks and triumphantly set out for the King's palace. It was night when he arrived, but he caught sight of the Princess Harpigelle, who, leaning from the window, was gazing at the stars,

Turlupin be-
thought him of
the Fairy of the
Birds and of her
gift, and began
to sing the ever-
beautiful song of
the nightingale.

Harpigelle
listened, enrapt-
ured. When the
song was over
she leaned out
and, addressing
the singer, who
was hidden in
the shadow of the
wall, cried, "Oh,
singer divine!
willingly would
I become your
bride!"

Turlupin, dis-
guising his voice,
replied, "But,
Princess, did you
not pledge your
word to Tur-
lupin?"

"Poor Tur-
lupin! he has
been gone a year,
and to-morrow is
the last day left
him in which to accomplish the task I set him.
It is impossible for him to return in time."

"If that is so, Princess, then give me your
hand."

Harpigelle did so, and, raising himself
upon a projecting stone, Turlupin carried it
to his lips and bit it until it bled.

With a cry of pain Harpigelle disappeared
from the window and Turlupin quickly hid
himself in the trees which surrounded that
part of the palace garden.

Next morning the heralds went through
the town proclaiming a tournament. The
Black Knight had bidden defiance to the
King and his barons, but such was his
reputation for prowess that none could be
found to accept the challenge.

At the hour appointed the King, the
Princess, and the whole population flocked
to the lists where the Black Knight awaited
his rival. It was the last day the challenge
would remain open, and if no champion
could be found the challenger would take
possession of the kingdom and deprive the
monarch of his throne.



"RAISING HIS FLAIL, HE BROKE HIS ADVERSARY'S LANCE
WITH A SINGLE BLOW."

There was a sudden commotion amongst
the crowd, and a stranger entered the lists
mounted upon an ass. Instead of a helmet
he wore a cotton night-cap pulled down over
his face, with two holes cut out of it to
enable him to see; instead of a lance he
carried a flail.

He approached the foot of the throne,
picked up the Black Knight's gauntlet and
put it upon his right hand; his left hand was
already covered with a white glove. The
Black Knight, scornful, flew upon him. The
new-comer, however, raising his flail, broke
his adversary's lance with a single blow.

The Black Knight, furious, threw himself

upon him, sword in hand. All present believed that all was over with the poor stranger; but he, brave and strong, used his flail shrewdly, and at last stretched his foe on the ground.

The crowd, delighted, roared with applause, and the victor, drawing off his gauntlet, laid it at Harpigelle's feet and knelt before her.

"Sir," she said, "you are a brave man, a perfect lion. I am ready to become your wife."

The unknown replied:—

"And Turlupin?"

But while the Princess was replying that it was hardly likely that the absent one had accomplished his tasks the conqueror had disappeared.

All day long no one could speak of anything but the encounter and the mysterious conqueror, until a magician, pointed cap on head, appeared in the market-place. All crowded round him and eagerly demanded a story.

Harpigelle, who was walking in that direction, attended by ladies of the Court, had also the curiosity to demand a story, but the magician remained obstinately silent in spite of her promises and threats. The Princess grew angry.

"Have you no voice, then?" she demanded. "One would think you were as dumb as a carp!"

Then the magician took a pen and wrote upon a piece of parchment:—

"Princess, you wish to know your fate. It is that you shall marry Turlupin."

"Turlupin?" she cried. "He is far away and not at all likely to be here. Besides, listen! even now it is striking twelve, and with the last stroke the year is up."

As the last stroke sounded the magician took off his cap and, bowing, said: "Your Highness, I am Turlupin!" He took her hand.

"Look," he said, "at this bite, still fresh. It was made by the tooth of the nightingale that sang last night beneath your window. See that gauntlet you carry at your girdle, that gauntlet of steel scales! They are the scales of the lion which only this morning fought to save your father's kingdom; while this quill pen with which I wrote your fate is the feather of the carp which refused to speak to you."

Harpigelle married Turlupin. Softened and tamed she became the best of wives, while Turlupin became a great and wise King. Turlupin, we must not forget to add, carefully replaced the old white gloves in the chest where he had found them, in the hope that perhaps they would lead another man to fortune and happiness, as they had led him. But he forgot to leave in the chest at the same time his courage, honesty, and simple good-nature, the qualities to which alone he owed his happiness and success, and without which no one can hope to be happy or successful.



"A MAGICIAN APPEARED IN THE MARKET-PLACE."