

STAR PEOPLE



By
Katharine Fay Dewey

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STAR PEOPLE AND THE JANE
ELLEN

STAR PEOPLE

BY

KATHARINE FAY DEWEY

WITH ILLUSTRATIONS BY
FRANCES B. COMSTOCK

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TO THREE LITTLE KATHARINES

*Oh, Katharines three,
Come sail with me
Where the ship of my Fancy flies!
We'll wander free
Over land and sea,
Then sail away to the skies.*

*If I were a star,
So far—so far—
From this Earth where the children dwell,
My twinkliest beam
For that ship should gleam;
And my truest secret I'd tell
To the eyes that look
Through fancy.—No book
Nor telescope serves so well.*

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STAR PEOPLE

I

THE PRINCESS AND THE OTHERS

So they came to the place where the Princess was. And when they looked down there were treetops—

But that is not a proper beginning when nobody knows who they were or anything about it.

There were four of them,—the Princess and three Others.

What the Princess's name was isn't to be told, and she was not a real princess. But that made no difference to the Others. She was the most wonderful person they knew, and everything a princess should be, and they loved her loyally.

The Others were called Prudence, Pat, and the Kitten; but the true name of each one of them was the true name of the Princess,—that isn't to be told and doesn't matter.

Prudence was the oldest, and very wise. (That was why she was Prudence, but more often the Princess said, "Miss Phyllis-y.") She had brown eyes, clear and steady, and short hair. There was a perky little lock on one side of the middle of her forehead that reminded the Princess of a question mark. She was small and looked years younger than she was, and that made her funny when she was so sagacious.

Pat was the tallest and the most impatient. (So they called her "Patience"—because she wasn't!—and shortened it to Pat.) She talked with her eyebrows; and sometimes they would fairly frighten you if you didn't know she couldn't do it! Her hair was braided and tied tight, but usually a good deal of it escaped and ruffled before it reached the braids. She was over nine and Miss Phyllisy was not far from twelve, and they considered the Kitten extremely young,—

which the Kitten didn't deny. She was young, and she had other kitten-tricks,—like coming and sitting on a person's knee without being invited when she wanted to, and other times being very independent and going her own ways; and she made soft little songs for herself,—that didn't begin or end any more than a real kitten's,—and purring sounds instead of talking when she was pleased. But she could talk faster than countless kittens when there was any occasion for it.

That is who they were. And any one can fancy how they were frisking about in the garden and out,—and the nearer it grew to bedtime, the farther they kept from the house; and how they trailed up the crooked path on the side of the hill,—the Kitten following along, making a song for herself,—and finally came to the farthest, high, wild lookout place, with a railing at the edge overlooking the dark treetops. And there they found the Princess watching pale little stars coming out in the light sky.

The Kitten didn't come close until she was ready, and then she immediately cuddled up, sleepy; but the Others went straight to the Princess. She put her arm around them and they leaned against her, but they didn't talk, they watched with her. And more stars came out where they looked steadily, and others came where they didn't look, more than they could count, all silent, to look back at them. And the Princess was smiling to herself.—

But that didn't suit Pat very long, it made her uneasy. First she puckered her eyebrows, but nobody saw her; then she sighed, but nobody noticed; then she spoke,—“What *are* you looking at?”

The Princess still looked, but she squeezed with her arm. “Some people I know. Friends of a friend of mine.”

Pat didn't understand, so she grew wary (that was one of her ways). She twitched her shoulder, but she wouldn't be the next to speak—unless it were too long!

“What people, Dearie?” asked Prudence, when they had waited a minute and the Princess didn't speak again.

“Most illustrious, highly exalted. A king and a queen, a royal dragon, and an indispensable little bear—wonderfolk,” ended the Princess, as if that explained it.

"You're looking at the stars," said Pat-who-would-n't-be-imposed-upon.

"Star People, Pat. Can you guess now?"

"I think I can, Dearie. But you tell," said Prudence.

The Princess took her arm away so she could point with it, and she put her head down beside a dreadfully scowling little girl's, so they could look along and off the end of the same finger. It pointed where five stars made a zigzag in the sky. She pointed to one after another.

THEY WATCHED WITH HER

"Look like a 'W,' don't they, Pat?—But there's another star—very pale—and another off here. Now, see—tipped up—so—Isn't that a pretty good chair? How would you like to sit there and overlook things?"

"Cassiopeia wouldn't let her," said Prudence. "That's Cassiopeia's Chair, Pat. She doesn't allow any one to sit in it."

"I don't want to." Pat spoke in a loud whisper.

"That is where you're mistaken, Miss Phyllisy," said the Princess. "She wouldn't mind a bit. But she is sitting there herself, this minute."

"Really, Princess? I didn't know that!"

"Did you ever see her out of it?" (Miss Phyllisy giggled.) "There is one of the stars on her most loftical head. Do you see it?"

"Who said it was that?" asked Pat. Her manner was a trifle threatening, but she was ready to be friends.

"Said what?"

"Cas—what you called it. Why did you call it that?"

"Cassiopeia's Chair? That is what it was named long and long ago."

"Long as Ancients?" (The Princess knew all about the Ancients,—several kinds of them. She knew everything.)

"Long as that," she answered. "They're the very ones who named the Star People for us, saw the figures in the stars, and gave them the names of their own gods and heroes, animals,—all sorts of queer things. Useful lives they led, those Star People, ever after."

“How were they useful?” asked Phyllisy.

“To the sailors, Beloveds, most of all, or any one who wants to find his way where there’s nothing on Earth to guide him. In the middle of the most vastest ocean or the most widest plain, all they have to do is to look up and see where the Star People are; then they’ll know where they are themselves, and where to go to be somewhere else. Of course the Star People can’t help any one who doesn’t know them,” she added.

“We don’t. We could be lost any time,” said Pat.

“You might have been once, but not after this. There’s a whole Royal Family right before your eyes now: Queen Cassiopeia on her throne and King Cepheus beside her and their pretty daughter, Andromeda.—That is one of Cepheus’ stars—and there’s another.” The Princess drew lines with her finger from the stars of the big “W” to the ones they wanted to find. And the Others picked them out, passing from star to star like crossing a brook, jumping from stone to stone. There were different colors, too, to help them. The Princess saw them plainly,—red stars and blue and yellow, and never before had the Others seen anything but all alike and plain shining. At first they believed it only because the Princess said so; then they began to see it themselves, but it was still too light to see very well. And they found a few stars of Andromeda.

“There is a beautiful young hero who belongs with them,” said the Princess. “He’s down below the treetops now; he will come up later. He is Perseus,—the Rescuer. He helped the Cassiopeia family out of terrible trouble when they were all Earth People.”

“Oh!” exclaimed Phyllisy. “Perseus-and-the-Gorgon?”

“No less. A friend of yours, Miss Phyllisy?”

Miss Phyllisy nodded, and Pat twisted her eyebrow.

“Well,—she’s eleven and nine months, and I’m only nine and seven months,” she said, just as if she were arguing something.

“I only happened to, Pat,” said Phyllisy.

“She’ll tell you some time; then you’ll know him too,” said the Princess. “I want to show you somebody splendid. Tip your heads up. Do you see four stars that make a long diamond,—three brighter and one not so bright at the point? That’s Draco’s head,—the great Dragon. See his spiky wings lifted. His tail comes down this way.

Look,—a curl,—so.” She swung her finger around. “Isn’t he fine? Keep your eye right on him and I’ll tell you who he is. He isn’t one of your common, everyday dragons you meet so often.—Is your eye on him, Pat?”

Pat tipped her head up, then she tipped it down and nodded. The Princess squeezed the young Other One, who was sleepy, in the hollow of her arm, and began in a story-telling voice: “There was once a young man named Jason, who had a great many adventures. One of them was when he set out to bring home the fleece of a ram. (A ram is a grown-up lamb, Kitten.” The Kitten made a funny little bleating noise, like a mother-cat; but she was only partly awake.) “And this was a golden fleece. And it hung on a tree all-by-alone, where any one might have stolen it,—ONLY, it was guarded by a great dragon that lay curly at the foot of the tree, and never closed his eyes, watching it. And that was the very identical Dragon you’re looking at this minute.”

“Tell us what happened then, Dearie,—when he didn’t close his eyes,” urged Phyllisy, after they had looked again at the Dragon.

“He *did*!” the Princess closed the words off—snap!—so they were tight shut,—and the Others giggled. “Jason gave him some magic drops that put him to sleep, and carried off the fleece.”

“What did they do to the Dragon when they found the fleece was gone?”

“I wasn’t exactly there, Phyllisy; but you may judge by this, they made him a Star Person to reward him because he was a good reliable dragon until he met a Bewitchment that he couldn’t help.—And he’s very happy there in the Sky, half surrounding the indispensable Little Bear who carries the Sailor’s Star on the tip of his tail. He’s still guarding something very precious, you see.”

“You haven’t told us about the indispensable little bear,” said Phyllisy.

“Tell about little bear,” the Kitten murmured.

“Tell us,” said Pat, coaxing the Princess’s hand up and down.

The Princess didn’t answer at once. She was looking up into the twinkly blue—very far away—as if she were forgetting the Others. At last she spoke: “Little Bear is a very special friend and friend’s friend. I’d rather tell you about him another time,—when he isn’t listening.”

“Can he hear?” Pat whispered it.

“Surely,—and carry messages.”

“Will he do it?”

“He did,—brought me one and took one.”

“Oh-h,—what did he say?”

The Princess laid her fingers on her lips.

“Is it secrets?” asked Phyllisy.

“Long secrets.” Her voice smiled in the dusk. “But I’ll tell you the Word of it,—‘Faithful.’”

The Sky was dark and deep and crowded with stars. They sat very still and mysterious while a wind came out of Beyond. They could hear it turning back the leaves in the treetops,—saying, “H—ss-sh—” as it passed through, and all the stars winked.—

“Wake up, Kitten!” said the Princess.

But she didn’t have to wake up entirely, for the Princess held her hand coming back, down the rocky steps and along the paths, and her feet walked themselves.

II

THE SAILOR'S STAR

Quite suddenly the Princess was there, at the head of the path where four steps came down the terrace,—all silken and wonderful and growing up into a rose at the top, that wasn't a rose but a hat!

The Others dropped everything and ran, and she waited until they got there and hung on her arms. And they walked around her to look at it in the back.

"What kind of a party was it?" asked Pat.

"They were married and lived happy ever after, and there were bridesmaids all in a row," said the Princess. "So there wasn't any more to *that*;—and if anybody wanted me to tell them about how the Pole Star happened, I should say this was the most suitable time."

"It is for us, very convenient," said Miss Phyllisy. "We'll come this minute."

They waited while the Princess gathered up her skirt where it trailed,—soft outside, but fluffy under,—and threw it over her arm, to start fair: One, two, three, and away!

The Kitten won, because she truly ran very fast and she looked straight ahead, but Pat wanted to see behind at the same time, to know if the others were gaining.

By the Shadow Pool, they two watched the Princess with Prudence beside her—very companionable—walking the last bit of it—across the little bridge below, then turning up the dark path on the edge of the ravine, with trees arching over from the hillside. Looking out the other way through a gap in the trees, they could see—like a picture in a frame—the steps coming down the terrace and the path curving

down by the petunias, all in the sun, then dropping away out of sight into the trees that it came out of to cross the bridge.

In here it was cool and deep shade, in tall woods on the steep hillsides that opened out like a “V.” There were rocks with maidenhair and moss in the banks behind; and in the point of the “V”—higher than any one could reach—a thin waterfall came over the edge of the rock, and fell a little way, and slid the rest into the still pool with goldfish in it, and others that were the same color as shadows in water and scarcely showed unless they darted across. The water went on over another edge that was made for it, and ran away at the bottom of the ravine,—hunting for the sea; but the fishes lived there for always. There were seats around the pool in convenient places where a tree or a rock made part of it and twisted wood the rest. But there was one broad seat with a high twisted back against the rocks behind, and a long flat rock before it for a footstool, that was stately for the Princess.

She pulled out long pins,—curious ones, carved at the top,—and the hat that wasn’t a rose, but grew up as if it were part of her, came off and left her altogether finished without it, with coils on top.

And because the Princess was willing, Miss Phyllisy put it on her own head. The Shadow Pool was a mirror, so she could see if it looked as if it were growing there, and Pat looked with her. But Pat looked also at the back of Miss Phyllisy’s head. “It ought to be more hair—done up,” she said. Phyllisy twisted her head to see in the pool, and she put up her hand and felt down her hair behind; it ended in a point in the middle of her neck,—the locks crossing in from the sides,—like a very small duck’s tail, about an inch. The Kitten slipped her finger under and turned up the lock, and it curved around the finger.

So Phyllisy took the hat off and they put it carefully where it wouldn’t fall, and “would be all right, Dearie,”—and they settled down in their most usual places: Phyllisy, where she could look into the pool from across and see the Princess upside down; Pat, in the narrow seat in the crotch between two trees,—but she would move to another pretty soon, because she always did,—and the Kitten, sitting on her foot in the seat next largest to the Princess’s.

“It is about the last, youngest Star Person of all; and how there came to be the Pole Star,” said the Princess.

“We’ve told the Kitten what she didn’t hear, all she could understand;—so you won’t have to plan about that,” said Prudence.

“I could understand before,” said the Kitten. “I heard, too,—myself.”

“Oh, Dearie,”—Prudence had “Dearies” to spare for others beside the Princess,—“you were asleep, and you couldn’t be expected to understand it all; you’re such a little girl—under seven.”

“I’m going to tell it most particularly to you, Kitten. Now, see if you don’t,” said the Princess.

She leaned a little forward on the stately seat, her elbow on her knee, and the silken folds fallen down on the broad stone. She looked for a long moment, her eyes shining straight out. And then she began:—

“Once upon a time, so long ago that nobody can remember when, a beautiful ship was sailing along under a spanking breeze with all sails set. The name of the ship was the Jane Ellen, and she was named for the Captain’s wife. At her prow was the figure of a mermaid, with long waving hair; and the head of the mermaid was like the head of the Captain’s wife. But that was when she was young. Now she sat at home and knit; but to the Captain she looked just like the lovely mermaid, and he kept the Jane Ellen spick and span from truck to keel,—the finest ship afloat, as she was the best of wives.”

(No one could tell stories as the Princess told them. The things she told she knew so well, it was as if she were seeing them, and words were waiting for her and came orderly, just as she needed them to make it plain.)

“Now, as the ship was sailing along on this fine starlight night, and everything favorable, the Captain in his cabin felt a great jolt, then a s-scrape, and the ship leaned away over, and everything that could slid down to one side. The next minute it tilted the other way, and most of them slid back again, and then the ship went on as before.

“The Captain jumped up and put his head out of the cabin window and looked fore and aft along the deck. He saw a man coming toward him, and called, very sharply, ‘Mr. Morganwg!’^[1]

1. He called it “Morgan-*ough*,” but he was particular about the spelling.

“It was the Mate of the Jane Ellen. He was young and big, and he had gray eyes and black hair and heavy black eyebrows that almost met over his eyes, and he could look very stern, but his eyes laughed; and he could sing, and if he had had time, he could have played on a harp, because he was a Welshman, and his name was Taffy. But he didn’t have time, because if you are mate of a ship like the Jane Ellen, you have a great deal to do, and have to be everywhere at once, to see that things are done as the Captain wants them.

“‘What was that?’ asked the Captain.

“‘We struck on Porpoise Rock, sir,’ said Taffy.

“‘Who’s steering?’

“‘Nelson.’

“‘Well?—he knew the rock was there, didn’t he? It’s marked on his chart plain enough. There’s no excuse, a bright starlight night like this.’

“‘Yes, he knew it,’ said the Mate, ‘but he says he didn’t make enough allowance for the stars moving. He says if there were *one* star, only, that he could depend on to be in the same place every night, it would be all right.’

“‘Well, there isn’t,’ said the Captain.

“‘I know it,’ answered the Mate. ‘But you know yourself, it’s confusing to steer by them.’ Taffy spoke quite respectfully, but he often made suggestions to the Captain when no one was listening, and the Captain loved him like his own son.”

“Do they move?” asked Pat.

“Yes,” said Phyllisy. “Don’t you know?—rise and set.”

Pat looked at the Princess to see if that was what she meant, and she nodded, and went on:—

“‘H’m!’ said the Captain. ‘You go and drop anchor right now. I won’t have any more paint scraped off from this ship. Then you come here and we’ll talk it over. Something’s got to be done.’

“‘Very well, sir,’ said Taffy, touching his cap. And a few minutes later a great quivering and trembling went through the ship as the anchor chains slid out; and then they lay quiet, rocking gently on the

waves, and everybody went to bed except the Lookout and the Captain and the Mate.

“No one knows just what was said in the Captain’s cabin, or whether he or Taffy made the suggestion, but this is what happened:

—

“The next morning, just before sunrise, the Mate stepped out of his cabin and walked for’ard. He leaned over the fo’c’s’le hatch, which stood open, and called, ‘Bos’n!’

“‘Ay, ay, sir,’ answered the Bos’n from below. The next minute he stood beside Taffy on the deck.

“‘Assemble ships!’ ordered the Mate.

“‘Ay, ay, sir,’ said the Bos’n again. He had a whistle hanging from a string around his neck that he used for a signal to the sailors, but he didn’t use that now. Instead he took from a pocket inside his shirt another whistle. It was no larger than the first, but when he put it to his lips and blew,—the sound was so high and clear it seemed as if it must go all around the world! And before very long,—just as if it had gone, and was broken up on the way, and was coming back in little pieces,—from every direction came a faint, thin little answering whistle.

“And then the Captain and the Mate and the second Mate and the four Quartermasters and the Bos’n and the sailors and the cook and the cabin boy—who were all on deck by this time—saw appearing, one by one, on the horizon, little specks, that as they came nearer, showed themselves to be ships of all descriptions,—schooners and brigs and barkentines and barks and frigates and luggers and full-rigged ships. And every time one of the little specks appeared the Lookout would call from the masthead, ‘Sail ho!’ and the Captain would say, ‘Where away?’ and the Lookout would answer, ‘Two points on the weather-bow,’ or wherever it happened to be.

“All the morning long, all these different kinds of ships tacked and jibed and went about and missed stays and luffed and beat to wind’ard, and in all these ways drew nearer and nearer, until, just as the Quartermaster made it seven bells, the last one of them hove to, and the Jane Ellen lay surrounded by fifty-two ships of every kind you ever saw,—but none so fine as she!

“Then from the peak of the Jane Ellen fluttered a string of little flags,—red and yellow and white and green,—and the little flags said to the captains of the other ships, ‘Will you please come aboard the Jane Ellen?’ Then from every ship a boat put out, and was rowed to the side of the Jane Ellen, where a rope-ladder was let down to the water’s edge. Her Captain stood on the deck by the rail, with the Mate standing by, and shook hands with every captain as he came over the side, and said, ‘I’m glad to see you, sir!’

“When they all had come aboard and were assembled on the hurricane deck the Captain made them a speech, while the Mate went and told the cook to ‘look alive with lunch, to have it ready when the “Old Man” gets through with the powwow!’

“This is the Captain’s speech: ‘I suppose you wonder why I called you together? Perhaps you noticed a big mar on the Jane Ellen’s bows, where the good new paint is scraped off?’ All the other captains nodded. ‘That happened last night,’ said our Captain. ‘We ran on Porpoise Rock; and my quartermaster, Nelson, said he ran a-foul of it because he didn’t make enough allowance for the stars moving. I’ve got as good quartermasters as any ship afloat, but I know—you all know—that kind of thing happens to all of us.’ The captains nodded again. ‘The trouble isn’t with the man at the wheel, it’s just here,’—and the Captain struck the palm of one hand with the forefinger of the other several times, and they all looked at it to see what it was,—‘He hasn’t the right kind of stars to steer by!’ The captains all looked up at the sky, and blinked, because it was just noon and the sun was very bright, and then looked at one another, and one of them said, ‘What kind of stars could we have? We’ve got all there are.’

““Oh, these *stars* are all right, but they move about so! Night after night they go ’round and around! A man is almost too old to take his trick at the wheel before he learns to make allowance for it. Now, we’ve been fair and honest, and we’ve steered by these stars—and sworn by them—as long as there have been ships and sailors, and the Star People ought to do something to help us out. So I propose to send some one to put it to them fairly, and see if they can’t keep one star always in the same place. Then we could start from that, and know where we were.’

“‘How are you going to get up there?’ asked the same captain who had spoken before.

“‘We’ll show you after lunch,’ said the Captain of the Jane Ellen. ‘That is, if you all agree?’

“The other captain asked, ‘Do you all agree?’ and they all nodded.

“Then the other captain said, ‘Three cheers for the Skipper!’ and fifty-*one* captains shouted, ‘Hurrah!’ three times. So that was settled, and they went down to the cabin for lunch.”

“What did they have?” asked the Kitten.

“Plum duff,—full of raisins,” said the Princess.

“Did they like it?” asked Pat.

“You’d have thought so if you’d seen them. Every one took a second helping until Taffy was almost discouraged. He was in a hurry to be through. But at last they were finished and back on the deck to hear what the Captain had to propose.

“‘Now,’ said the Captain, ‘we shall have to borrow your masts and some anchors.’ They nodded, and the Captain called; ‘Mr. Morganwg! You may set to work.’

“‘At once, sir,’ said Taffy, and called, ‘Bos’n!’

“‘Ay, ay, sir,’ said the Bos’n, running up.

“‘Call the men,’ ordered the Mate.

“The Bos’n blew his ordinary whistle, and at the same time the captains began to go over the side of the Jane Ellen to return to their own ships. They all looked very smiling and good-natured but one man,—the one who hadn’t cheered.

“When it came his turn to say good-by, he just humped up his shoulder and growled, and then he turned around and said, very loud, ‘The rest of you can do as you like, but I’m blowed if you take *my* mainmast for any such foolishness!’ Then he went down the side of the ship and was rowed away.

“The captains who heard him looked perfectly disgusted, and Taffy said to his captain, ‘Shall I attend to him, sir?’

“‘Yes!’ said the Captain, and they all nodded.

So, before they did anything else, Taffy and the Bos’n and his men went to the rude Skipper’s ship (it was a brigantine, the Wandering

Willie), and they set all the sails, and tied the ropes in hard knots instead of just belaying them, as every one knows is seamanlike. Then they weighed the anchor, and got off as quickly as they could,—and off went the Wandering Willie! And it had gone only a little way when the wind changed, and the Skipper shouted in the roughest voice, ‘Ease ’er off!’ And when the sailors tried, they couldn’t untie the knots, and the ship keeled over, farther and farther, until, all at once, she turned bottom up, and every one had to swim back to the other ships! The crew were glad of it, because they were better off; and the rude captain, who couldn’t swim very well, had to be thankful to be pulled aboard and allowed to ship before the mast on the Jane Ellen. And he learned in time to be a very good sailor.”

“That was just right for him,” said Pat.

“That’s what I think,” said the Princess. “But while all this was happening, the work was going on on all the ships. The first thing they did, they brought twenty-four large anchors, and anchored the Jane Ellen, twelve on a side and her own two at the bows, so she couldn’t even wobble. Then they drew up all the other ships in a long line, one after another, with a space between, and unstepped the mainmast of every ship. When every ship had her mainmast lying on the deck, beginning with the Jane Ellen, they spliced them all together, the top of one to the bottom of the next one. It took them all that afternoon and part of the next morning to do it.

“Meanwhile, other sailors had brought twenty mizzen-masts to the Jane Ellen, and, one after another, they were carried up her mizzen-mast and spliced to the top of the one below. When they were all in place some hoisting-tackle was made fast to the top, pulley-ropes were run through it and carried out over the other ships and fastened to the spliced mainmasts, about a third of their length away.

“By this time it was four bells in the afternoon, and everybody was pretty tired, so the Captain said they might rest for an hour, all except the cook, and he had to serve out grog. So all the seamen had their grog, and lay around on the deck and looked up at the tall mizzen-mast and the hoisting-tackle, and thought what a good captain they had, and that the Jane Ellen was the finest ship afloat.

“Six bells had hardly finished striking when the Mate jumped down from the rail where he had been sitting, and called, ‘Bos’n!’

“The Bos’n sprang up and said, ‘Ay, ay, sir!’

“‘Pipe the men aft,’ ordered the Mate.

“‘Ay, ay, sir,’ said the Bos’n again, and blew his whistle.

“The seamen all jumped up nimbly and came trooping aft to the foot of the mizzen-mast. There some of them brought a winch, and some more arranged the pulley-ropes and passed them around the winch, and carried them fore and aft, and arranged more tackle around the heel of the mainmast, and did a great many things to them that I don’t know anything about, but the Mate did, for he directed it all, without stopping even to think. And the Captain came and looked on, and he looked as proud as if he had done it himself!

“At last everything seemed to be done, and Taffy asked, ‘Are you all ready, Bos’n?’

“‘Just waiting for Tom Green to sing the chanty, sir,’ said he. And in a minute, Tom Green came.

“He wasn’t a very large sailor, but he had one blue and one brown eye, and red and blue anchors and ships and stars and a weeping-willow tattooed on his arms; and he wore his sleeves rolled up high to show them. And he stood up on a water cask in the stern, and the sailors all stood ready, in long lines, with the ropes in their hands.

“Then the Mate said, ‘Are you ready, Bos’n?’ and the Bos’n said, ‘Ay, ay, sir!’

“‘Then, hoist away!’ ordered the Mate.

“The Bos’n blew his whistle, and Tom Green began to sing the chanty, and this is how it began:—

(*Tom*) “We have left our happy home,
On the ocean for to roam.”

(*Sailors*) “Yeo, ho! Away we go!
Round the world and back again.—
Yeo—heave-*ho*!”

(*Tom*) “And our wives and sweethearts dear,
May not see for more’n a year.”

(*Sailors*) “Fair winds! White sails flowing free,
Blue water ’neath our keel,—
That’s the life for *me*!”

TOM GREEN'S
CHANTY

TOM.

We have left our hap-py home,
On the o-cean for to roam.

REFRAIN.

SAILORS.

Yeo-ho! A-way we go!
Round the world and back a-gain,
Yeo, heave ho!

TOM.

And our wives and sweet-hearts dear
May not see for more'n a year.

SAILORS.

Fair winds, white sails flow-ing free,
Blue wa-ter 'neath our keel,
That's the life for me!

The Princess laughed with her eyes at the Others, while she held the last long note until it seemed to die away in the woods, and they laughed back, but they didn't speak, and she went on, quite seriously:

—

“I give you only one verse of it, but there were ninety-three, and it told all about their life on the ocean wave and what they wanted to do, and Tom Green made most of it up as he went along,—so perhaps he worked as hard as any of them!

“Now, every time when they sung the refrain, the sailors all pulled together on the ropes, and little by little—inch by inch, almost—the great long mainmast rose in the air. And on all the other ships the sailors stood watching, because they had nothing else to do, and they all joined in the chanty, and the sound of it mounted up through the clouds. There never was a chanty like it since the world began!

“It had been bright, sunshiny weather when the work began, but all the afternoon the clouds had gathered until the sky was

completely overcast, like a solid roof of gray, and when the mast rose up, about one quarter of it pierced the clouds. At last it stood, straight and tall, the heel firmly fixed on the step above the deck of the Jane Ellen, and the top hidden from sight in the cloud roof, and a shout went up that must have reached the heavens! Then everybody drew a long breath, and went to rest, and waited for it to be quite dark.”

The Princess paused. “Perhaps you, yourselves, would like to stop and hear the rest another time?” she suggested. But they were sure they wouldn’t. So, after only a moment, while Pat changed to another place, she went on:—

“When it was time, and every one was on deck (the other captains had come aboard again), the Captain of the Jane Ellen looked up at the great tall mast, going up and up until it went out of sight in the clouds, and he said to the other captains, ‘Whom shall I send up to talk to the Star People?’ And the other captains said, very decidedly, ‘You’ll have to send an able seaman.’

“So the Bos’n picked out the very best able seaman there was, and he stepped out before the captains. He swayed his body when he walked, and hitched up his trousers, and he could dance a hornpipe better than any man aboard, and wrap his leg four times around a rope when he climbed. He was just the man to climb to the top of that great tall mast.

“The Captain looked at the Able Seaman, and said, ‘You go aloft there; and when you get to the top, you tell the Star People you want to talk to their captain. Do you understand?’

“The Able Seaman pulled his forelock and said, ‘Ay, ay, sir,’ and the Captain went on: ‘You tell him, we want *one star* that we can depend on, to steer by. We’ve steered by them ever since there were ships, and they move about all the time, and we can’t stand it any longer! We’ve done the fair thing by them, and now they can do the fair thing by us, or by Jiminy! we’ll throw the whole lot of ’em over, and they’ll be out of a job!—Do you understand?’

“The Able Seaman pulled his forelock and said, ‘Ay, ay, sir.’

“‘Then, up you go!’ and the Able Seaman turned away and came to the foot of the great tall mast.

“There were two ropes that ran from the top to the bottom. He wound his leg four times around one of them, and took hold of the other and began to climb. And everybody watched him go up and up, and grow smaller and smaller until he wasn’t nearly so large as a fly. And then he went clear out of sight in the clouds. And they couldn’t have seen him at all, any of the way, if they hadn’t thrown a strong light on him as he went up.

“Then—though there was nothing to see, and their necks ached—nobody could take his eyes from the spot where he disappeared. And before very long they saw a little speck, smaller than a fly, appear again and come down the great tall mast,—so tall it took thirty-eight minutes to come down from the place where it entered the cloud. The captains hardly could wait for him to get down.

“‘What did you find?’ asked the Captain.

“‘A lot of Star People—I dunno who they was,’ answered the Able Seaman.

“‘Well,—what did they say?’

“‘They wanted to know what that singin’ was, this afternoon.’

“‘But what did they say about the *star*?’

“‘I didn’t ask ’em.’

“‘Didn’t ask them!’

“‘No. I come back to ask what to say about the singin’. You didn’t tell me that.’

“‘*Thunder!*’ said the Captain. ‘Did you come clear down here to ask me that? You get back, as quick as ever you can, and tell them what I said. Of course you’re to answer a civil question!’

“‘Ay, ay, sir,’ said the Able Seaman without winking; and he climbed up the mast again. And all the captains watched him as before, only their necks ached a little harder.

EVERYBODY WATCHED HIM GO
UP AND UP

“He was gone a trifle longer, and then back he came. It only took thirty-six minutes this time, because he was more used to it (beside

the time it took to go up, of course, and the time he was above the clouds).

“‘Well?’ said the Captain.

“‘I tol’ ’em it was the chanty. And I asked to speak to the captain, an’ a big man said they hadn’t no captain,—they’re a Republic.’

“‘Then what?’ asked the Captain, as the Able Seaman paused.

“‘Then, I didn’t know who to ask for,—so I—’

“‘Thunder-*ation*!’ cried the Captain. ‘Did you come clear down here again, to ask me *that*? You go back—quick—and don’t you come down again till you finish your errand!’ And the Able Seaman said, ‘Ay, ay, sir,’—and all the other captains looked at each other and said, ‘*Thunderation*!’ or some other word that meant the same thing.

“Then the Able Seaman climbed up the mast again, and nearly all of them watched him. But some of the captains who had short necks couldn’t watch another minute, until one of them lay down on his back on the deck; then a good many of them did the same thing, and were more comfortable.

“And this time he was gone a long time—so long, the Captain was just going to send up the second-best able seaman to see what was the matter, when they saw him coming down. It took a little longer, because the leg of his trousers caught in the third twist of the rope, and he had to unwrap his leg and twist it around again. It took forty-one minutes this time, and it seemed *forever* to the captains! Three or four of them waited at the foot of the mast, and caught at him as he slid down.

“‘What did they say?’—‘Will they do it?’—they asked eagerly.

“The Able Seaman breathed hard. ‘You wait a minute—till I get—my breath.’

“They waited. Finally the Captain said: ‘Now?’ and the Able Seaman pulled his forelock and said: ‘I tol’ ’em, sir,—just as you said,—an’ they all talked an’ talked—’

“‘*Who* talked?’ asked the Captain.

“‘I dunno their names. I ain’t no navigator.—There was the big man, an’ a woman sittin’ in a chair, an’ another man, and a feller with a head in his hand—all snakes!—an’ a big dragon kep’ pokin’ his

blame head in all the time,—an' some more people; an' they all talked to onc't.'

"What did they say? Will they give us the star?"

"I can't make out,' said the Able Seaman. 'I guess they was willin', but they didn't seem to know what to do, and they was quarrelin' about who'd do it.'

"The Captain looked around. 'Mr. Morganwg!' he said. (The Mate was there almost before he spoke.) 'It's no use. You'll have to go.'

"Certainly, sir,' said Taffy, and his eyes shone when he said it, and he turned and walked to the foot of the mast.

"He weighed two hundred and eleven pounds, but he walked so lightly his feet seemed hardly to touch the deck; and when he sprang into the ropes and began to go up the mast, he made the Able Seaman look like an apprentice! And the captains all stood and watched him, and they were so pleased and so sure it would be all right, their necks almost forgot to ache."

"He wanted to go," said Phyllisy, when the Princess paused.

"He'd better have gone before, and saved all that time," observed Pat.

But the Princess said nothing for a moment. Then she went on with the story: "Up and up climbed Taffy, higher and higher, until it seemed to him a thick cloud came down and wrapped him about so he could see only a few feet ahead of him. But he knew it didn't come down at all. It was he who had climbed up into the clouds. So he kept steadily on, and very soon it began to grow thin; and as he came out of it he saw a sight that almost took his breath away, and made him lose his hold of the rope. But he wouldn't even look, but kept climbing on until he reached the top of the fifty-second mast, and with one leg wrapped easily around one rope, and his elbow resting on the gilt ball on the top of the mast, and his chin in his hand, he was as comfortable as a boy in an apple tree. Now he had time to look about him,—and he could take it, for the Star People were so busy talking among themselves they hadn't seen him come.

"Two persons seemed to be the centre of the group. One was a tall, splendid man with a sword on his belt and a shaggy lion's hide hanging carelessly over his arm. Set in his belt and on his head and

in the clasp around his knee were great blazing stars, and two dogs were at his heels.”

“Orion,” said Phyllisy, “I used to know him ages ago.”

The Princess nodded: “Yes. Taffy knew him at once.—The person to whom he was talking was a beautiful lady (not so very young), who sat in a massive, star-jeweled chair, and was alternately crying and scolding, while a man, evidently her husband, leaned over the chair and tried to quiet her. Near by stood a young man, looking very sulky; and from his hand swung a curious object. It was a woman’s head, with snakes instead of hair.”

“*Snakes?*” said Pat, her voice sliding up and down on it.

“*Snakes,*” said the Princess, firmly.

“For pitysakes!”

“They had once been quite stiff and wriggly snakes, and had stood up on end, each one of them, and squirmed, but now they were limp and raggy. And Taffy didn’t wonder when he saw how Perseus was absent-mindedly swinging it by one or another of the snakes, and letting it wind up and unwind again around his finger.

“Like Orion and his dogs, these people and others who crowded near were studded and decked with shining stars; and it was by their stars, that he knew so well, that Taffy recognized these Star People in their unaccustomed places.

“‘Yes, I *could!*’ the lady in the chair was saying. ‘And he isn’t the one to say, anyway!’

“‘What’s the matter?’ asked Taffy; and they all jumped, and then all began talking at once, so he couldn’t understand a word they said.

“‘Hus-sh!’ he said, holding up his hand. And they gradually stopped talking, all but Orion. (And Cassiopeia kept on saying things to her husband—but that didn’t count.)

“‘Who are you?’ asked Orion.

“‘I’m the Mate of the Jane Ellen,’ said Taffy. ‘And I want to know what’s the trouble. It doesn’t seem much to ask for—just one star.’

“‘No,’ answered Orion, ‘it doesn’t. And we’re all willing. But who is going to hold that star?—and how are we going to know it’s always in the same spot?’

“I should think you might agree about that easily enough,’ said Taffy.

“Well, we can’t,’ said Orion. ‘I can’t do it; I have other things to attend to.’

“And you won’t let any one else!’ broke in Cassiopeia. ‘You know how I just sit in my chair, and I’d love to hold it.’

“She can’t,’ said Orion. ‘Pretty thing for a woman to do!’

“I’m not a woman,’ observed Perseus.

“Don’t you say another word!’ said Cassiopeia. (‘And stop twirling that Gorgon!—You make me nervous.) You know perfectly well, you have to keep away the monster from my darling child.’

“Perseus said no more, but he looked sulkier than ever.

“No, he can’t,’ said Orion. ‘And beside that, you’re used to seeing us move about. Now if one of us gives up his own place, it will mix you all up.’

“That’s true,’ said Taffy. And just as he spoke, something rubbed against his hand,—something that sent a little prickly shock through him at first, and at the same time, the very softest thing he ever had felt or imagined.

“He looked down and saw a little bear—but such a little bear! His long fur was, in color, a beautiful blue-gray, and the tip of each hair seemed to have been dipped in moonlight or powdered with stardust, for it shone and glinted in the starlight as he moved; and his eyes twinkled like two little stars themselves; and curiously enough for a little bear, he had a great long tail. And unlike any of the Star People, he hadn’t a star on him anywhere.

“Hello, little one!’ said Taffy. ‘What are you doing here?’ And he bent down to stroke Little Bear. Little Bear leaned against his leg; and as his hand sank in the soft, soft fur, and again the electric tingles ran up his arm, it was as if they took the message to his brain: ‘Oh, dear Taffy, let *me* take care of the Sailor’s Star!’

“It came so clearly to him, Taffy spoke again: ‘Would you really like it?’—and the answer came, like a long, ‘Oh-h!’ of rapture.

“See here,’ said Taffy to the Star People. ‘Why don’t you let this little chap have it? That would settle it.’

“‘Little Bear?’ said everybody. Then everybody looked at everybody else, and said, ‘Why not?’—because they all loved Little Bear; and they were glad to find a way to settle the dispute and stop talking.

“Taffy told them what to do; and Cassiopeia was the first one to take a lovely star from the back of her dress, where it never had been seen by the sailors and wouldn’t be missed; and they all agreed that, if she couldn’t hold the Sailor’s Star herself, she should be the one to give it. And they fastened that star on the very tip of Little Bear’s tail. Then Orion and Perseus and the Big Dragon, who came and looked on, and the rest of them gave more stars to fasten on Little Bear, and he stood pressed against Taffy’s knee while they did it; and his fur sparkled and shone and his two bright eyes twinkled, bright as any of the stars, while little electric thrills of pleasure and gratitude ran to Taffy’s heart as his hand stroked the beautiful fur that was softer than anything in the whole World!

“‘There!’ said Orion, as he fastened the last star and pushed one of the dogs back with his foot, while Little Bear growled, a soft small growl. ‘He’s fine as a birthday cake! Now I want to know how you are going to be sure that star is always in the right place?’

“‘Easy enough!’ said Taffy. ‘You know where the North Pole is, don’t you?’

“OH, DEAR TAFFY, LET *ME* TAKE
CARE OF THE SAILOR’S STAR”

“‘Of course we do,’ said Orion, and the other Star People echoed: ‘Of course!’

“‘Then, all Little Bear has to do is to keep the star directly over that Pole. And he’ll do it,’ said Taffy, laying his hand on Little Bear’s head—and the message thrilled through it: ‘Oh, I will, dear Taffy! The Sailor’s Star shall never wander!’

“When the Mate stepped on to the deck of the Jane Ellen it was almost morning, and all the captains who weren’t asleep had such stiff necks they hardly could turn their heads to look at him. And when he touched his cap and said to the Captain of the Jane Ellen: ‘It’s all arranged, sir,’ they were so worn out they were glad to go back to their own ships and go to bed without asking a single

question. It wouldn't have been any use if they had, for the Captain took Taffy straight into his own cabin and shut the door; and that was the last any one saw of them that night.

"The next morning every one was as busy as a bee; and they worked so fast that before evening every mast had been put back, and the twenty-four anchors returned to their own ships, and they were all ready to sail.

"During the afternoon the clouds had broken up, and the sun went down in a clear sky. As darkness fell, the crew of each ship assembled on the deck, with every eye fixed on the Northern sky.

"Taffy stood beside the Captain of the Jane Ellen while the rose-red faded into yellow, and palest green, and violet, and a few large stars came out, one by one. Then,—faint at first, then, brighter and brighter,—the stars that told Taffy Little Bear was at his post! And a great shout went up from all the ships, that must have reached the sky! It seemed to Taffy that the stars glowed brighter, and he could almost feel the touch of soft fur, softer than anything in the world, and a little thrill went to his heart, that said: 'You see, Taffy dear, I'm here!'

"Then the fifty-two ships set sail in every direction, and the Jane Ellen was alone once more. And all night long, as she went on her way, whenever Taffy looked up at the Northern sky, the Sailor's Star hung over the Pole. But Little Bear swung slowly, slowly around it, watching, watching the ships that were sailing to all quarters of the world. And on every ship the sailors said:—

"God bless the Little Bear!"

As the Princess came to the end the children grew very still. When she had spoken the last word no one stirred for a moment. Then they all stirred at once. The Kitten slid off from her big chair and came straight across to sit on the Princess's silken knee, and the Others with her, to crowd as close as they could,—to talk about it and ask all the questions they had saved for the end, not to interrupt the story. And they had a great deal to say, and had saved a great many questions.

"You did understand, didn't you, Kitten?" said the Princess. "I knew you would."

The Kitten nodded, and wriggled on the Princess's knee. "Could you feel it prickle?" she asked.

"'Little thrills,' she means," Phyllisy suggested.

"Um-m," said the Kitten. "That night—you said he brought a message."

"But you were asleep," said the Princess.

"I heard. Would it hurt?"

"No, indeed! It was a little warm thrill that went to my heart."

"The same as Taffy," said Pat.

"Just the same," said the Princess.

Then Miss Phyllisy brought her the rosy hat, and she pinned it on; for there were long shadows across the sloping lawn and the petunia bed; only the high steps down the terrace were still in the sun.

III

THE COMET AND THE POLE STAR

“How did they fasten the stars on him?” asked the Kitten. She didn’t say who “he” was, but they knew, though it was quite another time.

“With a half-hitch and another half-hitch, then belay,” said the Princess, promptly. “Much better than sewing them, or pins. Don’t you think so?”

“Pins would stick him,” agreed the Kitten.

“Whereabouts did they fasten them?” asked Pat.

The Princess reached out her arm and picked a narrow pointed shell out from the hard sand. It lay broad and brown between them and the gray sea, worrying, whiteand-green at the other edge. Out over the sea whitish-gray fog was waiting all around in a circle. It went up and joined the gray sky over; and a salt smell blew out of it.

She began to draw in the sand with the pointed shell, and the Others watched it grow. She began at his head and worked back, quickly.

“Is it going to be Little Bear?” asked Pat.

“Yes,” said the Princess. “But I can’t make it really a likeness.”

“You could, Dearie, if you had a pencil and paper,” said Phyllisy. “Nobody could, in the sand with a shell.”

“It’s like him the way the map is America,” said Pat. “More—*much*.”

“Now make the stars,” said the Kitten, when she drew his last foot.

“No,” said the Princess. “You must do that.—Who’ll give a star to Little Bear?”

“What shall we give?” asked Pat. But the Kitten spied a clear, shiny pebble, and she didn’t need to be told; she pounced at it quickly, and purred when the Princess took it from her.

“And they fastened that star on the very tip of Little Bear’s tail,” quoted Phyllisy. “Now we must all give stars.”

So they scurried over the sand and brought suitable pebbles to the Princess,—and some of them were shells,—and she showed them where to place them, where he truly wore them; but they placed only the principal ones, because it was a sketch, not a likeness.

“But you don’t *see* even this—of a bear—in the sky?” said Pat, doubtfully. It wasn’t as easy for her to make believe as it was for Phyllisy. Phyllisy loved it. As for the Kitten, it was no trouble for her; real or make-believe, it was all alike.

“No, indeed,” said Phyllisy, explaining to Pat, and perfectly familiar with it. “Just the stars of him, and play the rest. When it’s night, we’ll look, and see if we can find them ourselves.”

“You can’t when it’s cloudy,” said Pat. “And it’s cloudy to-night—will be.”

“And the Star People will have a holiday,” said the Princess.

“Will they?” asked the Others, though she had just said it.

“Sure as sure. When it’s a cloudy night and the sailors couldn’t see them wherever they were, they may go where they like.”

“They might go where they like in the daytime,” said the Kitten.

“So they might. But you have to sleep some time, Kit. And if you have to stay up all night to be looked at, you’d better take a long nap in the daytime. So, when it begins to be light, the Star People just quietly fade away in their places, then when night comes they wake up, fresh as daisies.”

“Suppose some time they would go off, and it was a clear night—and they moved around?” said Pat.

“I couldn’t imagine anything so dreadful,—nor the Star People, either! Don’t you fancy, because they haven’t any captain, that they have nothing to obey.”

“What?”

“They have *Law*!—and that’s something every one of them obeys without a single word, or ever stopping to argue. When anything is

the Rule of the Sky, that ends it.—Unless you're a comet."

"Oh, comets!" exclaimed Phyllisy. "What do they do?"

"What don't they do?" corrected the Princess. "They're silly. Just a head, with the wildest, fuzziliest hair,"—she drew on the sand as she talked,—"*that never saw* a hairbrush—and tails!—switching and flying and spreading over everything and curling around!—and, as if one such tail weren't bad enough, some of them must have two!"

The Princess stopped drawing, because the sand was filled up with comets, as far as she could reach. "That one is like the Kitten," said Pat. "Yours would be, if it weren't braided," the Kitten answered.

"Only in looks, I'm sure," said the Princess, politely. "The Star People try to be charitable, and when they hear of some fresh bad thing one of those flyaways has done, they say: 'He doesn't know enough to be good;' and they don't talk about it any more. But when any really horrid mischief is done, it's always when a comet or two has been around."

"What did one do?—some mischief," Pat suggested.

"I should think you'd all rather hear about somebody good," said the Princess. But the Others giggled—and wouldn't.

"Make some more Star People while you consider, Dearie," urged Phyllisy.

So the Princess moved along the sand (and they were glad it was a good, gray day, not glaring), and she drew more, the same way as Little Bear. They didn't try to be likenesses, but you would know whom they were meant for,—Cassiopeia and the Dragon and Orion and more,—and the Others put in the stars. It used a great many pebbles and shells, though they put in only the principal ones. But they ought to be pretty ones, so they went a good way off to find them.

DRACO

"This is the way Draco looked, guarding the Golden Fleece, except his expression. He had to look fierce then, but he always had a sweet nature.—You'll observe that he has no teeth. He did have, but Jason took them. He threw the magic drops straight into Draco's jaws when they were gaping open to swallow him, and the

Dragon went so immediately to sleep that he hadn't even time to close his mouth. Then Jason took, not only the fleece, but his teeth; because he always liked to have a few dragon's teeth in his pocket. He had used them before, for a Bewitchment, and he never knew when he might need them.—Very few people know about this, but it's just as true as the part they do know." The Princess spoke severely, but the Others giggled.

They thought Draco ought to have stars on his tail, but she said his wings folded back over most of it when they weren't set up. Hercules gave him the small star on his nose, because he had a great many, and Draco needed that one to make him symmetrical.

When they came back from farther off, they couldn't guess what the long wavy line was meant for, that she was drawing beyond Orion—in deep loops down and back.

"This is the Starland River," she explained. "The Ancients called it the Eridanus. That was the name of one of their own Earth rivers. Once Phaeton tried to drive the chariot of the Sun,—the Sun God was his father,—but he didn't know how, and horses, chariot, and all plunged into the river, and he was drowned for his folly, but the chariot and horses came out shining again the next morning at sunrise. And Phaeton's three sisters stood on the bank of the river and mourned and mourned for him, and wouldn't go away. So Jupiter kindly changed them into poplar trees;—and right here—and here—and here"—she showed the places and the Others laid especial shells—"are the stars that mark the tall poplars on the bank. At least, that's what I think. You may choose others if you like, but they are certainly there."

The Princess surprisingly sprang up, and the pointed shell flew out of her hand, over the hard sand, and beyond the worrying green-white edge, into the gray sea.

"What did you do that for?" Pat remonstrated.

"Because-that-was-a-sign-that-it-wouldn't-be-lucky-to-have-any-more-drawing-on-the-sand-because-that-was-Enough," said the Princess.

"Will you tell it now?" asked the Kitten.

And she would; but back under the cliff, where there were rocks—smooth and hollowed by the ocean, long ago, and another one for a back,—and where those crazy comets on the sand wouldn't be looking at them.

“You hardly would believe how happy the care of the Sailor's Star made Little Bear,” said the Princess, when they were all comfortable,—“proud of his responsibility, and most grateful to the Star People.”

“Because they gave him stars?” asked the Kitten.

“Yes, and allowed him to have that responsible thing to do when he wanted it so much; and it made them happy to see his pleasure, and to feel that they all had a share in it—because he was their own dear Little Bear. Now, at the time this story happened, everything had been comfortable and pleasant for a long time. Little Bear hadn't had his star so long he had forgotten the time before he had it; but he had grown used to having it on the end of his tail, and could keep it over the Pole without giving his mind to it. And nobody had seen a comet for ever so long, so they weren't thinking about them.

“But, very early one morning, any one of the Star People who had been awake to look, might have seen, peeping up over the rim of the Sky, a small, vagabond head. He shook his fuzzy hair out of his eyes and came up a little farther, switching his long tail that had a wicked crook at the end of it, as he danced up and down like an elf! A more rascally Comet you wouldn't care to see!”

The Others wriggled with appreciation, but they didn't speak, to interrupt.

“The Star People were in their first sleep, and not dreaming of any harm; and what a chance for the worst, small comet in the Sky!

“What should he do? Hammer a dent in Cepheus' crown? Tie a knot in the Dragon's tail? He darted here and there,—rapid, uncertain little darts; nothing seemed quite worth while when he had such an opportunity.

“Cassiopeia stirred slightly in her chair, and the wicked imp dropped where he was, and wound himself all up, like a porcupine, holding himself together by the crook in his tail. You never would have guessed that he could tuck all his wild hair and streaming tail

into a little round bunch, as quick as a flash! But she didn't wake up, so he let himself go, and his hair and tail sprang out like a jack-in-the-box; and now he danced harder than ever, for rage!

"How he did hate Cassiopeia! He remembered how she had boxed his ears when he had come that way before, and he would rather do something to plague her than anything else. He looked about him, and saw Little Bear, fast asleep—never dreaming of any harm,—and he stopped short in his dance. He knew, now, what he could do; but, wicked little Comet as he was, he was almost frightened. This was much worse than anything any of them ever had done. But how it would plague Cassiopeia!—and set the whole sky by the ears. He puckered up his face and stuck out his tongue at her."

"And she couldn't see him," Pat murmured.

"Then there was a whizz,—a switch of a long tail with a crook in the end of it,—a zigzag streak of light across the morning sky—and the Comet was gone!

"And the Star People were all sound asleep, and never dreamed he had been there.

A MORE RASCALLY COMET YOU
WOULDN'T CARE TO SEE

"Oh, dear! It seemed almost a pity Little Bear had to wake up at all, with such trouble waiting for him. But the time had to come, and he stirred a little and opened one eye, and shut it again and rolled on to his side. There he lay for a minute; then he gave a soft sneeze that waked him up altogether. So he opened his eyes, that twinkled like stars, and looked about him. Every one else was still sleeping, and that seemed like wasting time, because it was a cloudy night, which meant a holiday. So Little Bear stood up and shook himself, and sparks seemed to fly from his fur, and then—his heart gave a great jump, and almost stopped beating!—The Sailor's Star was gone!

"It was such a blow he could hardly see, and he sat down, quite dazed.

"In a few minutes Cassiopeia opened her eyes. Now, Little Bear felt as if he couldn't stand it to have any one know what had happened to him. But the minute he saw Cassiopeia was awake, though it was the

last thing he meant to do, and before he knew what he was about, he had run to her and put his head in her lap; and she knew in a second something was wrong.

“‘Why, Little Bear, what is it?’ she began to say—then she saw—and such an outcry! Everybody awoke, and the next minute, everybody was searching in every possible and impossible place;—all but Little Bear. He was too miserable to do anything but sit still, and wish the clouds would rise up and cover him all over.”

“‘Poor little soul!’ said Phyllisy, and the Others crooned in sympathy, the Princess with them. Then she went on:—

“‘It’s no use. It isn’t here,’ said Cepheus, who had been down on his hands and knees, looking, just as hard as if he hadn’t been a king. (He tucked his sceptre under his arm while he was looking, except when he poked with it in a corner.) As he spoke, he stood up and straightened out the ‘crick’ in his back, and the others took it for a signal to stop the search.

“‘Cassiopeia had stopped some time before, without any signal, and sat in her chair, with Little Bear leaning against her knee again.

“‘No, I didn’t think it was any use,’ she said, significantly. ‘That star didn’t go without hands,—or *claws!*’—and she looked straight at Draco, who stood every night before Little Bear, to guard him, looking very terrible, though he hadn’t a tooth in his head. But no one would know that unless he spoke, and he had been hunting for the star as hard as any of them.

“‘Doeth thhe mean *me?*’ he asked, in surprise. (He lisped a little, on account of having no teeth.) Then, indignantly: ‘I thould think you’d be athamed!—I believe you took it back yourthelf!—Indian-giver!’

“‘Cassiopeia’s hand flew to the back of her dress where the star had been, and she began hotly: ‘The idea—’

“‘There, there,’ said Cepheus, soothingly, while Little Bear stirred uneasily, ‘don’t quarrel! It’s bad enough without that.’

“‘Maybe he didn’t take it *himself,*’ said Cassiopeia. ‘But it’s a very poor watch he kept. And this isn’t the first time something has been lost while he was asleep!’

“‘Shame on you!’ cried Cepheus. (And it was mean in her to call up the time when he lost the Golden Fleece.)

“Don’t mind her,’ said Perseus to Draco. ‘She doesn’t mean anything.’

“I don’t think Cathiopeia liketh me very well,’ said Draco, almost crying. ‘I can’t thtay awake all day. I alwayth did need a great deal of thleep.’

“Well, let’s not talk about it any more,’ said Cassiopeia, impatiently. ‘We’d better be doing something! It’s a good thing it’s so cloudy. I’ll tell you what you do,’ she went on, turning to Cepheus. ‘You go straight to Boreas, and tell him he mustn’t blow away one scrap of cloud until we find that star.’ Boreas had a great conch shell, like a trumpet, and when he shouted his orders through it, the clouds flew before the sound—just as he told them to go.”

“The North Wind,” said Pat. “I’ve heard about him. He lived in a cave.”

The Princess nodded. “I don’t think it looks very well for me to be running errands,’ said Cepheus.

“Looks or no looks, you go along,’ said Cassiopeia. ‘I’m going on one myself.’

“When Orion waked up that night he was pleased to see the clouds, because there was something he wanted to do. Every one knows he was a famous hunter; and there was no animal so fierce or so wild that he could not face it and conquer it. But that was not what he prided himself upon. What he liked to do, more than anything, and what he thought was his special talent, was gardening!

“He had his garden on the Milky Way, where he was forever planting things, and digging them up again to look at the roots, and transplanting them to see if they wouldn’t do better somewhere else, and pruning them and training them and spraying them; and the only rest and chance to grow those poor things had was when there was a long spell of clear weather, and Orion had to leave them alone! And with all his care, there wasn’t a place on the whole Milky Way that had so many bare spots in it as Orion’s garden!”

“Like mine,” observed Pat.

“Now, he had some young meteors just coming up; so, as soon as he was awake, he called his two dogs and set out for his garden. He was down on his knees examining the young plants, when the dogs

began to bark. He looked up, and he was astonished to see Cassiopeia hurrying toward him.

“‘I knew where I should find you!’ she called, breathing hard. (She wasn’t exactly thin.)

“‘What over the Sun brings you here?’ exclaimed Orion.

“‘Somebody’s stolen the Pole Star!’

“‘No!’ cried he.

“‘Yes, they have. While we were asleep. It was there, all right, when Little Bear went to sleep, and when he waked up, it was gone.’

“Orion scowled fearfully. ‘There’s just one Star Person who would do such a thing—’ he began.

Cassiopeia interrupted him:—

“‘Now that’s all nonsense! Just because you hate the Scorpion, is no sign he would steal. You’d better come along with me, and we’ll have a meeting to see what to do.’

“As Cassiopeia and Orion were coming back together, they met Cepheus, returning from his errand.

“‘Did you see Boreas?’ called she.

“‘Yes,’ answered Cepheus, pushing up his crown. (It didn’t fit very well, and was always slipping down.) ‘He says he’ll do the best he can; but he can’t promise more than two days.’

“‘Oh, we’ll find it before then,’ said Orion, confidently.

“But before the two days were gone he began to feel very differently, and so did every one else. They talked and they talked, and suggested and consulted, and hunted, and went back and hunted again and again in all the places they had searched before; and every one almost began to look suspiciously at every one else.

“And it would have made any one’s heart ache, to see Little Bear. No one blamed him, but he couldn’t help feeling that it was his fault, and he *wanted* his dear Star, too. So he mourned and drooped, and all the sparkle went off from his beautiful soft fur, and out of his bright eyes; and when Perseus offered to let him take the Gorgon’s head to play with, he didn’t even care for that.

“Cassiopeia took him up into her chair beside her, and sang little songs to him. The one about the fishes, that he always liked.”

“What song?” asked the Kitten, quickly.

ORION

“Orion was a mighty hunter,” she explained. “This is the way he would attack a lion or any wild creature, without the slightest fear. But he died at last from the bite of a scorpion. The Scorpion is in the sky too, spread out very glittering—a lobster-kind of a thing—but never at the same time as Orion, because that wouldn’t be good manners. So, sometimes we see Orion marching across, with his two dogs, Sirius and Procyon; then we see the Scorpion, but never the two together.”

And she couldn’t draw the dogs near him, where they belonged, because the Kitten had stepped there; they had to move along to a place where the sand was smooth.

“This,” answered the Princess:—

There are just as good fish in the sea—the sea
As ever came out (they say);
But the finest fish that ever were there
Have come to the Sky to stay.

These fishes lived in a pool—a pool,
Where coral and seaweed grow.
The great waves dash on the reef without,
But here they ripple and flow.

You’d think ’twas a place where a fish—a fish
Would willingly live and die;
But these two fishes were not content—
They wanted to go to the Sky!

The Fisherman, up above—above,
Espied the fish from afar;
He spun a line from a moonbeam fine,
And baited it with a star.

Now, these silly fish didn’t try—didn’t try

To make the best of their home;
They fumed and they splashed and they lashed their tails,
Till the water was covered with foam.

And the Fisherman, watching above—above,
And *wanting* to pull them in,
Could only wait till the fish were too tired
To move a tail, or a fin.

Then, twice, on the face of the placid pool,
He dropped the star from on high;
And, one by one, drew the Fishes up,
To shine each night in the Sky!

And the moral's plain, of this tale (your tail,
If you are a bear, or a fish),
Don't fume and splash and disturb your pool,—
And you'll probably get your wish!

“Little Bear liked to hear it, but Cassiopeia could see that it wasn't really any comfort to him, and she was at her wit's end to know what to do.”

“They ought to have thought it was a Comet,” said Pat.

“It was stupid in them, but they never once thought of them,” said the Princess.

“Don't you know, it is like that sometimes,” said Phyllisy, “the most probable thing you forget all about.”

“That was the way with them,” agreed the Princess. “They thought of everything else, and the two days were almost gone when Boreas sent word that he couldn't possibly wait any longer; but he wouldn't blow the clouds clear off—only break them up, and send them flying about; so perhaps it wouldn't be noticed that the Star was gone.

“‘That won't do at all,’ said Orion. ‘We can't take chances like that. But what can we do?’

“‘The next best thing,’ said Cassiopeia. ‘We must get another star as near like it as we can find.’

“‘I have one the same color; but it's not the right size,’ said Cepheus.

“‘Let me have it,’ said Cassiopeia. ‘I'll try to match it.’

“She took it from him; and the Star People came, one by one, and turned their backs to her, and she held up the star that was the right color by those that were the right size and in a place where they

wouldn't be missed; and you never would believe how many sizes and colors there were! It was enough to drive one crazy, and she was ready to give up in despair. At last she went back to one she had rejected before, on the back of Perseus' elbow.

"It isn't right,' she said, 'but it's the best there is.'

"Oh, that's not so bad,' said Orion. 'A man on horseback wouldn't notice the difference!'

"That's a very poor joke!' snapped Cassiopeia—her nerves were quite frazzled. 'Come, Little Bear!'

"And Little Bear came to her, and they fastened the false star on his tail; and he let them do it, quite quietly, though he felt as if his heart would break—and so ashamed! It was almost worse than no star at all, and seemed like trying to cheat the sailors who trusted him.

"All that night and the next and still another night, Boreas blew and shouted through his trumpet, and the clouds swept back and forth, whirling and tumbling, while Little Bear stood at his post, wheeling slowly around the false star, with his head drooped low and the silver glint all gone from his soft fur, and his heart almost breaking, whenever, through the rifts of the racing clouds, he saw the ships flying before the gale—sailing to all quarters of the world.

"And the other Star People were almost as unhappy as he was, because they loved him, and because such a dreadful thing had happened, and somebody must have been so very wicked. By the time the third night was gone they felt that it couldn't possibly go on that way any longer; and every one went to sleep, perfectly worn out with trying to think what they could do, and how they could comfort Little Bear, if nothing else could be done.

"Orion was just in his first sound sleep, when a big, jolly voice called: 'Are you all asleep there? Wake up, Orion!'

"Orion turned around, and there was Old Sol himself, fairly beaming with happiness and good humor, and—what do you think?—in his hand he held up the lost Pole Star!

"Wh-why, where did you find it?' gasped Orion.

"Oh, this fellow had it tucked into the crook in his tail. I caught him, going by, and shook him up, and out it fell. So I brought it to you.'

“Then Orion saw that Sol held in his other hand the most disreputable little Comet that ever was seen! His hair and tail—what was left of them—were hanging in shreds. He had struggled to escape, and Sol had held him. Now, scarcely enough of him was left to be worth holding—just a rag! and his head seemed positively shriveled up.

“‘For the love o’ the Law!’ exclaimed Orion, ‘what’s that? A Comet! And we never once thought of it. Give me that star.’ He fairly snatched it from Sol’s hand, and started, as fast as he could run, North, waking every one as he ran, calling: ‘We’ve found the Pole Star!’

“The Comet seemed to think this was a good chance to escape, and wriggled cautiously between Old Sol’s fingers. ‘Oh, no!’ said Sol. ‘You’ll stay with me, where you won’t do any more mischief.’ And he put him in his pocket, and followed Orion, as fast as he could, to the North.

“And when he came in sight, Little Bear was just awake, with everybody crowding around him, and talking to him so fast he couldn’t understand what it was all about. But when he saw his own Star once more—then he knew! And Old Sol laughed to see Little Bear (who had been so patient and uncomplaining when he was most unhappy) give his tail such a switch and jerk that it sent the false star flying off—nobody knew where, nor cared! They kept right on talking—all at once, and nobody listening to anybody else—and saying how stupid it was in them not to have thought of the Comet.”

(“And it was,” said Pat, under her breath; but Phyllisy shook her head at her—not to interrupt.)

“Cassiopeia cried, a very little, while they fastened the Sailor’s Star once more on Little Bear’s tail; and the good old Dragon said, anxiously: ‘Be thure you fathen it *thtrong*!’

“And Little Bear quivered and trembled with delight, his eyes sparkling, even in the sunshine; and then—everybody began to be so sleepy they couldn’t hold their eyes open. So they all hurried back to their places and faded away again; while old Sol, with the Comet in his pocket out of harm’s way, glowed brighter and brighter with pleasure.

“But when night fell, calm and cloudless, who was so proud as Little Bear? His eyes twinkled brighter than any stars, and his soft fur glittered and shone, and he held up his head bravely as he swung around the Pole Star—watching the ships; while the sailors on the ships said: ‘How bright all the stars are to-night! The rains have cleared the air.’

“The next cloudy night, Little Bear sat beside Cassiopeia, in her great jeweled chair, and she sang songs to him once more—about the Fishes, and the other songs he liked. Best of all, the one she couldn’t sing to him when he was so unhappy, about his very own Sailor’s Star:—

“Oh, how do the ships go sailing
Over the starlit sea?
 They’re sailing East,
 And they’re sailing West,
 And they’re sailing South,—
But they love the best,
Where the North Star shines unfailing.

“Oh, how do the ships go sailing
Over the angry sea?
 The winds blow high,
 And the clouds sweep low,
 And the ship flies fast!—
But the sailors know
Their Star still shines unfailing.

“And still the ships go sailing
Forever, over the sea;
 For the winds will drive
 The clouds away,
 And the stars shine forth,
And the sailors say,
Their Star for aye’s unfailing!”

““The Sta-a-ar’s unfailing,”” sang the Kitten, after her. And they two sang the last few lines again, together.

“Oh!” exclaimed Miss Phyllisy.

“What is it?” asked Pat.

“Orion’s leg is gone; I’ve been expecting it. A wave just went over.”

And another wave followed close, and shoved it back still higher, before it had time to run away out.

“He doesn’t mind,” said the Kitten.

“Not a bit,” said the Princess. “It wasn’t even a likeness. And where are the Comets?”

There wasn’t a sign of one left. And that was a sign that every one else had better be starting!

ORION’S DOGS AND LITTLE BEAR

The name of the big dog was Sirius, and the little one was Procyon. And Orion himself hadn’t so splendid a star as Sirius wore in his collar. Procyon’s wasn’t quite so fine, because he was smaller.

“And they’ve just been over here to see Little Bear, and they’re hurrying to catch up with Orion and be in their own places,” said Phyllisy.

IV

OLD SOL'S MENAGERIE

Because she had said she would, and they had come expressly when the tide was out, the Princess didn't wait to be asked; she only looked to see what kind of an Ocean it was, while the others hunted for a pointed shell like the one she used before—and it was a cool blue one, with little waves running on it and cloud shadows moving across.

Then she took the shell that Miss Phyllisy brought, with the Others following; and perhaps it was the very one that flew out of her hand! Anyway, it was exactly like it; it could have been brought back by the sea, and that was a sign that it was lucky to draw more Star People on the sand.

They chose a place to begin, and the Princess drew a circle around her, as large as she could reach from the middle; and it was surprisingly round—when it wasn't mechanical. Then she came to the line of it and reached over and drew another, larger, circle just so far outside; then she made marks—little neat ones—on the edge, to have it even, and drew lines across to divide it into spaces; and there would be twelve. And the Princess was inside, drawing, and the Others were outside, watching to see what it was going to be—like a Bewitchment, with nobody speaking. For each time Pat started to say: "Whatever is it?" Prudence said: "Don't speak!" and she stopped. But the Kitten lay on the sand, propped on her elbows, watching and making a song for herself, inside, until the Princess was ready to talk.

As she drew the last line across, that made twelve spaces, she began, sing-song: "Walk right up, ladies and gentlemen! The greatest show in Skyland is now ready to begin. Unrivalled aggregation of animals and galaxy of talented artists. Old Sol's Menagerie, in Sky-Language called the Zodiac. Something between a zoölogical garden

and a circus, and better than both put together—” She stopped and laughed, teasing with her eyes.

“What does it mean?” asked Pat.

“I’m going to show you. These are twelve great cages that make a splendid ring all around the Sky—Houses, the Star People call them. They think it sounds better; but they aren’t in the least like either cages or houses; they’re more like a *place*; and it isn’t a flat circle like this. It’s that way in Starland. You can’t really describe it, because it’s so different; but we can draw it this way, and call it what we like.” The Princess stooped down and began to draw: “In this first cage, Sol keeps the Ram that had the Golden Fleece, that they took away from him, to take such care of! And now that he’s a Star-Ram, he has it back and takes care of it himself.”

“So Draco needn’t watch it any more,” observed Phyllisy.

“The Ram likes it much better this way,” said the Princess. “And here is his name, like a doorplate on his house.” She made a funny little mark in the corner of the space. “Wherever you see that mark, Beloveds, it’s the Sign of the Ram; and it looks like his curving horns. Next door is a great white Bull. One time he was grazing in a meadow where some children were playing. He was very gentle, and let them wind garlands of flowers around his horns. At last, one of them climbed on his back, and away he went with her and swam over the sea. Did you ever see such remarkable, lofty horns?” All the time she was drawing.—“Here’s the sign of his House, and here go his stars.” The Others had stars collected, and when they had finished the Bull, she went on: “In this House are the Gemini Brothers, twin boys who do boxing and wrestling, and ground-and-lofty tumbling. Wonderful singers they are, too, Castor and Pollux, and especial friends of all sailors. They were great sailors themselves, and once drove all the wicked pirates out of the Ægean Sea.”

“The Star ones?” asked Pat.

“No; the real ones. We want two beautiful pebbles for the stars that they wear in their helmets. And up here”—the Princess whirled across—“in this last House that brings it around the circle are two more twins—the Fishes that Cassiopeia sang about to Little Bear. They can have only small stars, because they were discontented.”

When they were done the Princess turned back to the place where she left off.

“In this cage at the North is a Crab; and in the cage exactly opposite is a Goat, but not a common goat. He is a Sea-Goat—like this, with a kind of fish tail.” She left the Crab, and drew the Goat to show. “These two were once impertinent to Old Sol; and now he has them in his Menagerie; and I’m glad of it! Aren’t you, Kitten?”

“What did they do?” asked Phyllisy.

“It’s poetry,” said the Princess. She stopped drawing and clasped her hands around her knees, sitting in the middle of the Zodiac to say the poetry; and the Others sitting outside to listen.

A kindly gentleman was Mr. Sol.
He sallied forth one day, to take a stroll,
Saying: “This morning I will make my goal,
The South Pole.”

With smiles for all he met, and greetings gay,
He southward bent his steps,—nor would delay
Because he saw, directly in his way,
A Billy-Goat stood at bay!

“Yez can’t go anny farther!” cried the Goat.
“The language on that sign I’d have yez note:
‘The passage South is closed.’ Kape on yer coat!
That’s the *Law*! Ye’d orter know’t!”

His language rude could only cause surprise,
And Sol advanced. Oh, who’d believe his eyes!
With lowered head Bill rushes—and Sol lies,
Knocked flat!—sprawly-wise!

Old Sol arose and said: “I’d have you learn”
(So grieved his rage had scarce begun to burn)
“There’s still a Pole to visit; and I’ll turn
To the North! Your Pole I spurn!”

But as he walked and thought upon his wrong,
His rage waxed hotter, his resolve more strong.
“The next who thwarts me won’t be happy long!
Just let him try!—I think he’ll change his song!”

So striding northward, with his face ablaze,
He overtook a Crab, who’d paused to gaze
Where stood the Pole. His courteous amaze
Sol’s wrath allays.

Now, even as the Goat was set to guard
The Southern Pole, and visitors retard,
The task of Mr. Crab was just as hard:
The North he barred.

But what's the use of knock-down argument,
When courtesy will answer your intent?
If with a little tact 'tis wisely blent.
Why break a will, that may as well be *bent*?

"Shall we not walk together, sir?" he said.
Sol—still determined, though his rage was fled—
Agreed, if to the Pole his friend's path led.
Waving his claw, the Crab said: "Straight ahead!"

"SHALL WE NOT WALK
TOGETHER, SIR?"

But wily Mr. Crab did not confess
(And Sol was far too much engrossed to guess,
So pleasant and straightforward his address),
He *backward walked*,—like all crabs—none the less!

They strolled together down the road awhile
With jest and chat, that might the way beguile;
Then bade adieu. And then Sol saw the wile
That turned him from his purpose with a smile!

He had not noticed that they backward walked,
Because the Crab so pleasantly had talked.—
Thus, twice in his ambition was he balked:
The Goat had felled him—and the Crab had mocked!

Since then, he's fixed a limit for his stroll;
He never tries to go around the Pole.
Deceit and rudeness worry Mr. Sol
Past his control!

"That is the poetry," said the Princess, "and *this* is very truly true:
Old Sol makes a visit and spends a little while every year in each of
the Houses of the Zodiac. But when he comes to the farthest North—
which is the Crab—in the Summer, he turns back and goes South
until he comes to the Goat's House, which is the farthest South, in
the Winter; then he turns and comes back, and so forever and
always."

"Won't they let him go?" asked the Kitten.

“He doesn’t give them a chance to prevent. Now he knows it’s a Rule of the Sky he obeys it even before he comes to the place they say he mustn’t pass.”

“But they might have told him politely,” said Phyllisy. “It means something behind, doesn’t it, Dearie?—just plainly true without anything around it?”

The Princess laughed suddenly, because Miss Phyllisy was so earnest and so funny; but she nodded, “Yes.”

“And the ‘House’ just means that part of the sky where they are?”

The Princess nodded again.

“And Old Sol has put a Bewitchment around it so they can’t get out—instead of bars,” Phyllisy added, going back of her own accord to the make-believe, because she preferred it. And that was one of the ways she was wise. What was plainly true could very well wait until she was older and had more time to think about it.

“Here, in Mr. Crab’s House, Sol keeps a beehive.” The Princess went back to her drawing where she had left off the Crab to draw the Goat; and the Others found very tiny yellow shells that looked like them, for the bees.

“Now, here is a Lion who doesn’t have to be any lion in particular because he’s so splendid just being himself. He’s like ‘Terrible as an army with banners,’ not because he’s terrible, but he’s like a heraldry lion. Right next him is Mlle. Virgo, very ladylike and not a bit afraid.”

“What is she for?” asked Pat, while the Princess was drawing her.

“She does ‘poses plastiques’—which means that she looks perfectly lovely being all kinds of statuary on top of a pedestal, and when she doesn’t do that she does remarkable juggling with a pair of great scales that are carefully kept in the cage next hers, so they shan’t get out of order.”

“Could they weigh anything?” asked the Kitten.

“Yes, indeed! The Star People may go in and be weighed on them, if Mlle. Virgo goes with them. But the Scorpion really does the weighing—puts on the weights for her—because she’s so ladylike. He lives next door, on the other side, and he’s very handy with his claws.”

“The Orion one?” asked Pat.

“The Orion one,” said the Princess, beginning in the middle to draw him. “Somebody will have to find a splendiferous red something for the star he wears above his fiery heart.” She drew down his body into his curled-up tail; then she put on his lobster claws.

“And this gentleman is Mr. Sagittarius, with a head and body like a man joined to the body of a horse; and he is a better shot with a bow and arrow than a Red Indian. Then, there’s the Goat—we’ve done, and the Fishes—we’ve done. And there’s just one more House I haven’t told you about. An old man lives in it. He’s like Orion in one thing, he’s very fond of gardening. But he hasn’t any garden, only a watering-pot. And that’s the part of him we’ll draw, because that’s where he wears his stars.”

“You’re making two spouts,” said the Kitten.

“Because it has. If you want to *garden*, and have no garden but a watering-pot, you can’t have too many spouts. The Ancients said the two streams that flowed from it watered all the gardens of the world.”

“It must have felt funny to be an Ancient,” said Pat.

“Why?” asked Phyllisy.

“With those queer ideas in them,” said Pat.

The Princess looked around the Zodiac ring, to see what was left out; and it was all done but signs in the Fishes, and three more she had not put in when she made them. She put them in now, in the corners of the Houses. So it was finished; and it had taken a good while—drawing and talking and starring them all; but, because she wasn’t tired, they moved along a little farther and began afresh.

It was a tremendous man, with lumpy arms and legs; and that was Hercules, the strongest person in the Sky.

“I’ve heard about him,” said Pat. “He killed lions, and strangled some snakes when he was just a little baby in his cradle—immense ones; he must have been always strong.”

“I suppose he inherited it,” said the Kitten—very grown-up.

“Just hear the child!” said Miss Phyllisy. “What does that mean, Kit?”

“I know,” the Kitten insisted. “He *could* do it.”

"Course he could!" said the Princess; "and because of *that*. He came of a very fine family—none better. He was a God of the Greeks."

"A *God*!" exclaimed Pat. "Do *you—mean—to say—that Hercules* was a *God*?"

"I do," said the Princess; and, "One of those Ancients, you know, Pat," explained Phyllisy. But Pat paid no attention.

"Well! For pitiesakes! *Hercules—a God!*" she said once more.

And that was all; and nobody will ever know why it surprised her so.

"That's what he was," said the Princess, drawing away, very industrious,—*"a demi, to begin with, and they made him a whole one. He was highly cultivated and accomplished, besides being so strong. But he had a great deal of trouble, and had to work very hard; and altogether it quite broke him down. It made him always on the lookout for unfortunate signs. Now that he's a Star Person, he isn't particularly intellectual, but he is perfectly amiable; and that is a great deal to be thankful for, when you consider how strong he is."* And by that time he was ready for his stars.

Miss Phyllisy suddenly thought of something.

"Oh, Dearie!" she exclaimed. "There's somebody you never drew."

"Who is that, Miss Phyllisy?"

"The Big Bear. You never talk about him."

The Princess made little marks in the sand, all in a row, that didn't mean anything. When she spoke it was in a slow, thinking-it-out way: "There is something curious about that Bear, that makes him *not* do the things the other Star People do; and this is it:"—she spoke very impressively,—*"The Great Bear doesn't know whether he's a bear or a dipper!"*

"Oh-h!" cried the Others.

"What *do* you mean?" asked Phyllisy.

CASSIOPEIA

"Of course it isn't a *likeness*," said the Princess, putting a quirl on her crown, "but you can tell something

by it. And do you think Cassiopeia looks like the kind of person who would boast of her own beauty?"

The Others looked at her critically. —"She looks to me more domestic," said Phyllisy. "Did she?"

"Some old mythologies *say* she did, but it was truly Andromeda's beauty she was so proud of. The trouble was, Cassiopeia wasn't satisfied with knowing in her own heart that her child was the loveliest thing the sun shone on; she talked about it. And at last it came to the Sea Nymphs' ears. They heard in all the waves—like coming out of a shell—'Andromeda is fairer than the Sea Nymphs: Cassiopeia says so,'—and off they went to their father, crying: 'Vengeance, Father Neptune, upon the impious Cassiopeia!' That was the way they talked, only a great deal more of it. And rather than hear them whining and teasing he consented to punish Cassiopeia. She and Cepheus were obliged to chain Andromeda to a rock on the seacoast to be devoured by a horrible sea monster; and that would have been the end of her and her beauty if Perseus hadn't come to the rescue."

Then they stopped talking about that, because it was time to put on Cassiopeia's stars.

"He's confused," said the Princess. "You see, before he was a Star Person he was a performing bear, and in one of his tricks—the best one—he stood on his head so much it affected his brain. Now he is a Star Person, and he's quite harmless, but he thinks perhaps he's a Dipper. And, of course, when he thinks that he can't go about or talk; and there's nothing for him to dip, so he doesn't lead a very amusing life."

"Wouldn't the Star People let him go with them?" asked the Kitten.

“Certainly they would—be glad to. But he doesn’t want to. And they let him have his way. They call him ‘Major’; and that pleases him when he thinks he’s a bear, and when they see he has a ‘dipper-fit’ they don’t talk to him at all, because he doesn’t like it.”

“I should think they’d be glad,” said Pat. “What could they talk about?”

“Nothing intelligent,” agreed the Princess, “so they let him alone, to be happy in his own way.”

“Is Little Bear his child?” asked the Kitten.

“No, Kitten. They aren’t related; they only both happen to be bears and neighbors. Major never goes away from his place—almost never,” she corrected herself. Then she stopped, and began again, talking to herself. “There was once—such a time as they had—” She shook her head, but she didn’t say any more.

“Aren’t you going to tell it?” asked Pat.

“Bimeby,” said the Princess, suddenly energetic. “I’m going to draw him now.

“Now, my Hearties! How’s that for a bear? and just crying for stars. Look alive! and see what you’ll see when he has them on.”

They placed his pebbles, and seven were especially large, and all the time Pat kept saying: “I don’t see anything. What is it?”—and all the Princess would say was, “Look at him hard,—his stars,—never mind his legs.” And then Phyllisy saw something that made her laugh. “Oh, Dearie! Is that what made you think of it?—The Dipper—what he thinks?”

“S-sh,” said the Princess.

“What are you laughing at? Tell me now,” said Pat.

“Don’t you see, Pat?” explained Phyllisy. “It’s the old Dipper we always knew—part of it is. I never thought of it’s being the same.”

“Two names for it?” asked Pat, looking at the Princess.

She nodded. “I know another one.”

“Aren’t you going to tell it?”

“Bimeby,” she said again, just as she had said it before.

And that was drawing enough, and no time for a story, but much better for a scamper on the beach, along the edge of the waves that

had stopped going out and were running all the time nearer.

V

MAJOR

Exactly far enough to be convenient to sit down for a while was the old great Wreck that had been there for years and years and years.

So there was only a part of it left, pushed deep in the sand, and sand inside, because the sea had eaten away the rest. And it was pale and gray-bleached where it stood up toward the sky, but underneath dark and sodden, with long seaweed weeping off into the water—back and forth—back and forth—forever.

Going up by the rocks on the other side, some strong timbers laid over made a bridge across into the broken place where her ribs showed. There were pale waves churning, flat, in and out among the rocks and below the bridge when they crossed over and came out on the old gray deck with the old black capstan standing in the middle of it; and everywhere around there was water. The Ocean was much larger from here than it was when they were walking on the sand; so large that any ship in the whole wide world *might* have come sailing across it—and a fair wind blowing. The Princess looked for several minutes, to see if there was coming the finest ship afloat. And there was not; but she hadn't expected it, because she knew it was not there.

"Now is it a suitable time to tell it?" asked Pat.

And the Princess thought it was, while they rested, sitting on the tilting deck, with the sea running in and out in the dark hollow place under it.

"You know how you feel about something that is *always there*," she began; "a tree on the lawn, or a church steeple, or something you take for granted and expect to see when you look for it. You don't

look the first thing in the morning to see if it has gone away in the night.

“That was the way with Major. The Star People were so used to seeing him in his place that they thought very little about him.

“It was rather cloudy one morning when it was time to fade away, and it promised to be more cloudy by night. The Star People had plans for what they wanted to do; and they waked up, quite full of their own affairs. So, though each one of them in Major’s neighborhood had a feeling that something was strange and lacking, they didn’t think enough about it to realize what it was. And it wasn’t until Cepheus said suddenly: ‘Why, where’s Major?’ that they saw that he was gone, and that was what they missed.

“‘Now, what do you thuppoth pothethed him?’ said Draco.

“‘I’ve no idea,’ said Cassiopeia. ‘But we must find him and bring him back. We can’t let the silly old thing go wandering about, nobody knows where. Perseus!’ she called. ‘You and Andromeda come and help.’

“They were so interested in some scheme of their own they weren’t noticing what was going on. But as soon as they did, they were just as much concerned as anybody, ‘Major gone!’ they said. ‘Why, where can he be?’

“‘I thee him!’ called Draco, excitedly. He had flown up to look about. Now he dropped again. ‘He’th almotht to Orion’t’h garden, and going Thouth ath fatht ath ever he can!’

“‘Run, Perseus. You’re young,’ said Cassiopeia; and off he started, with Andromeda after him. She and Perseus very easily ran faster than the other Star People who followed: Cepheus and Cassiopeia, with Draco, half flopping his wings and half running on his short crooked legs, like a dachshund’s, and after them Hercules and Little Bear. Hercules picked him up and put him on his shoulder, and came after the others—all racing down toward the Southern Sky, to find Major and bring him back home.

“Cassiopeia was not much of a runner; but Hercules came up and put his hand under one arm, and Cepheus put his under the other, to help her along, so they made pretty good speed; though, of course, not so good as Perseus and Andromeda. So they weren’t surprised, when they finally came in sight of Major, to see that the young people

had caught up with him, and they and Orion were going along by his side.

“For Major wasn’t noticing them, nor stopping to listen to their talk. He kept straight on, lifting his great paws high and throwing them out as he trotted—not as a bear usually runs, and not getting along so very fast, either.

“When he was actually in sight Cassiopeia declared she couldn’t go another step without resting. So she sat down; and Perseus, who saw them, came racing back with Andromeda after him, of course.

“‘Guess what he thinks!’ he called, when he came within hearing distance. ‘He thinks he’s a wagon!’ cried Andromeda, in the same breath.

“‘A *wagon!*’ said everybody.

“‘Yes, he does,’ said Andromeda. ‘Orion ran out after him when he went by the garden, and Major made him look out for the wheels. He thinks his legs are wheels, and he will run over any one who’s in the way.’

“‘Did you ever hear more?’ said Cepheus. ‘I’d like to know how such an idea came into his addled old head.’

“‘I’d just like to know how to put it *out!*’ said Cassiopeia.

“‘How’ll you stop him, if you don’t?’ asked Hercules. ‘He’ll keep on forever—now he’s started.’ And that was perfectly reasonable, certainly, and quite observant for a person who didn’t pretend to be bright.

“‘I can thtop him,’ said Draco.

“‘How?’ asked Perseus.

“‘You wait and thee. We’ll catch up with him thoon. He doethn’t go very fatht.’”

The Princess stopped, and looked off, over the sea. Then she looked back at the Others, all waiting for her to go on.

“It’s terribly exciting, Dearie,” said Phyllisy.

“Then what happened?” asked the Kitten.

“By this time Cassiopeia was ready to go on, and they started once more. They could see that Orion still talked and argued as he kept on by Major’s side, with the two dogs running about them both; but

Major never once glanced at him or his dogs, and kept up his curious gait.

“And—do you believe?—now that they knew what his idea was, his legs did seem to make a circular motion; and they couldn’t help thinking that he did look a little like a great clumsy wagon; but they wouldn’t, one of them, have owned it to the others!

“Now what do you think of that?” asked Orion, stopping to let them come up with him. ‘He’s started, and he may go forever!’

“That’s what *I* say,’ observed Hercules.

“Draco says he can stop him,’ said Andromeda.

“Oh, can he?’ said Orion. ‘All right. Go ahead. It’s more than I can do.’

“I’m *pretty thure* I can,’ said Draco, as he flopped along—and they stood aside to let him pass, he took so much room; ‘but you’ll have to thtand by what I thay. It’ll take diplomathy.’

“Then they all followed after to see what his diplomacy was, and how he would use it. And when he came up with Major he didn’t stop; he didn’t even seem to notice him, but kept flopping along until all but three coils of his tail had passed him. Then he stopped abruptly, as if he were very much surprised. ‘Why, I thought you were a wagon,’ he said. ‘But where are your hortheth?’

“Major held one foot suspended in the air for a moment, and they thought he might stop. But it was only an instant; then he went on.

“Draco raised his voice higher: ‘Don’t you know, you thilly, a wagon can’t go without thomething to draw it?’

“Then how did he get here?’ asked Perseus.

“S-s-sh!’ said every one.

“Now he’th thpoiled everything!’ complained Draco. And he flopped right down in the road—but Major kept straight on.

“No, he hasn’t,’ said Andromeda, encouragingly. ‘Don’t you mind. That was fine! I know how to manage.’ Then she ran on until she was a little ahead of Major. And she looked at him, very hard, and stooped down and looked at his legs. Then she called back, over his head:—

“It’s running downhill; but it will stop now. It’s beginning to go up.’

“WHY, I THOUGHT YOU WERE A
WAGON,” HE SAID, “BUT WHERE
ARE YOUR HORTHETH?”

“Sure enough, it did begin to curve up just there; and Major lifted one foot—and put it down, heavily; then he swung the other around wildly—and they all crowded near, and said: ‘There! It’s stopping. It can’t run up-hill.’ And the next minute Major sat down with a hard *thump*, not very far from the edge of the Zodiac. And if you don’t believe he was a tired old Bear, you try it yourself!”

The Others giggled; but they believed it without interrupting. And the Princess went on: “When I told you about the old man in the Zodiac, I didn’t tell you this: besides his watering-pot, he has a great reputation for giving wise advice. So when the Star People are in any difficulty they go and consult Aquarius. Or they would go; but when he once begins to talk he goes on *forever*; and they are so tired with it, and it is so impossible to stop him without being rude, that they are rather more likely to say to some one else, ‘Why don’t you go and ask Aquarius?’ than they are to go themselves.

“When Major sat down *hard*, he was not far from Aquarius’ House, and the old man came to its limit to see what was going on, but the Star People pretended they didn’t see him, because they didn’t want him to begin talking.

“Cassiopeia was the person who discovered that they were out of one trouble only to be in another. They had stepped aside a little, to be out of Major’s hearing, and everybody—except Cassiopeia—was saying how good it was he had stopped. Draco just observed complacently, for the third time: ‘I don’t know how I happened to think of it. It theemed to *come* to me,’ when Cassiopeia’s voice broke in on them, very cold and depressing: ‘It’s a pity it came so soon. Why didn’t you turn him around first?’

“‘Turn him around?’ said Cepheus. ‘What for?’

“‘What is the first Rule of the Sky?’ asked Cassiopeia, and they all recited in unison:—

“‘A Place for Everything; and Everything in its Place.’

“‘Yes,’ said Cassiopeia. ‘There *he* is,’ and she pointed to Major, just *sitting* exactly as he dropped, ‘and *there’s* his place!’ and she waved her arm toward the North. ‘How are you going to get him there?’

“Then they were in a pickle! Major had always liked Andromeda, and she tried to coax him. But he wouldn’t pay the slightest attention when she talked.”

“He thinks he’s a Wagon, just the same, if he has stopped,” said Phyllisy.

“Of course,” said the Princess. “So it was no use to talk to him. Then they tried to push him and pull him around; but he shook them off, and even growled as no one had heard him growl before. Besides that, he was naturally an extremely large bear, and being a Dipper, with nothing to dip, and doing absolutely nothing else, had made him grow fat. Even if he had allowed them, they could hardly have moved him all that way. And certainly not without Hercules’ help. All this time he had stood aside, saying nothing, though they hadn’t noticed it, they were so busy with Major himself. At last Orion almost suggested setting his dogs on him. But they all said: ‘The idea! Poor, dear, old Major!’ and he said quickly, of course he didn’t mean it. He only said they *could*. Nobody answered him; nobody spoke at all for as much as a minute.

“Then Cassiopeia sniffed. Then she looked very hard at Hercules, and remarked: ‘If I could do anything I wouldn’t wait to be asked.’

“‘Who could?’ asked Perseus.

“‘I don’t say *any one* could,’ said Cassiopeia. ‘But if I were so strong that my hands just—er—*swung*, and I saw that poor old lamb, far from his home, and with not sense enough to go to it, I’d do the best I could to take him there!’

“‘There aren’t stars enough in the Sky to make me touch him!’ said Hercules. ‘And it isn’t carryin’ him I mind. Bless you, I could pick him up like a baby. He doesn’t weigh so much.’

“‘Then why don’t you do it?’ asked Cepheus.

“‘Tisn’t lucky,’ said Hercules. ‘He isn’t willing; and he’s an Innocent. No good ever comes of crossing an idjit. I wouldn’t lay so much as a finger on that loony bear—unless he was willing—for all you could offer! No, sir-ee!’

“Then they were just about ready to give up, or take anything that offered, so they weren’t very reluctant to see old Aquarius, who had been beckoning to them and waving his watering-pot for some time, and evidently had something to say. They drew near, where he could

talk to them, though they groaned when they did it, for they knew he would bore them almost to death.

“I have been strangely unable to gain your notice, although I have made considerable effort to that end,” he began, in his prosy way. ‘I have waved my hand—thus’ (he showed them how he had beckoned), ‘and my watering-pot—thus’ (and he showed them how he had waved the watering-pot, and hadn’t spilled a drop of water, although it had two spouts), ‘but in spite of my endeavors, I have been unable to attract your notice.’ (They looked at each other, and sighed.) ‘I have been thus persistent,’ he went on, ‘for *your* good; not for my own pleasure—although conversation with congenial persons is always most agreeable to me—’

“Me, too,” said Draco. ‘I jutht love to talk to my friendth.’

“Er—exactly,” said Aquarius. ‘But it was not merely to converse—agreeable as it may be to us all—*all*,’ he repeated, waving his watering-pot benevolently. (And they looked at each other again; and some of them changed their weight over onto the other foot.) ‘No, I had a purpose in calling you hither. I rarely act without a purpose—’

“What was it?” asked Perseus.

“I was about to mention it!”—looking at Perseus reprovingly. ‘You seemed in some perplexity concerning the removal of that misguided Bear to his proper place. I gather that he considers himself—and wishes to be considered—a Wagon! A most surprising hallucination. It might be interesting to consider how it could have arisen?’ He looked at them, in turn, to see if they were inclined to consider it, but they were not, and stood perfectly still, without any expression in their faces, until Hercules said: ‘You were going to tell us something.’

“Yes. I remember to have heard something that applies exactly to such a case. I am sure it will be a helpful suggestion.’

“Every one looked hopeful and interested, but Aquarius stopped short. They waited. Then, ‘I seem to have forgotten it for the moment. But never mind—it will come—it will come—’

“Oh, what’s the use waiting?” muttered Orion.

“It will come,” went on Aquarius, cheerfully. ‘It is something about wagons—and stars—I am sure it is just what is needed. Ah! I have it now: “Hitch your wagon to a star!”—The very thing! I knew it would come,’ and he went right on talking; but the Star People were not

listening. If that was the best he could do in the way of advice, they were completely discouraged.

“I never heard such rubbish in my life!” said Cassiopeia, under her breath. ‘Nor I,’ said Orion. ‘I know pretty much all there is to know about stars—and how could you hitch a wagon to one? And if you did, what then?’ They all thought that was the very silliest advice that ever was given; and there was old Aquarius talking and talking—and they didn’t know how they were to escape from him, when some one said:—

“Look at Major!”

“They all looked—even Aquarius stopped with his mouth open—and, what do you think? With all their trying they couldn’t move that foolish old Bear one inch. But now, when they were worried to death, and trying to think what to do next, and were leaving him alone—

“All at once he turned his great head and seemed to see for the first time where he was. Then he stood up; and they held their breath to see what he would do. He stood for a moment, swaying his huge body back and forth; then he swung around until his nose pointed to the North, and started off at an even trot, never looking to the right nor to the left, just like an ordinary bear, and not in the least like a wagon or a dipper! And he didn’t stop until he reached his very own place in the Sky. The Star People followed him all the way on tiptoe, not daring to speak for fear he would change his mind again before he reached home. But I shouldn’t wonder if old Aquarius went right on talking, though there was not a soul left to hear him; for no one thought to say ‘Good-by.’

“That was a long time ago, and Major still thinks he’s a Dipper; but he knows it’s no use to be a Wagon without horses. So he stays in his place, and the Star People feel pretty comfortable about him. But”—the Princess dropped her voice, and glanced up at the sky—“just suppose he ever finds out about Automobiles!”

“O-o-o-oh!” said the Others, politely horrified.

Then: “He won’t,” said Pat. “And I know what the other name for it is, besides Dipper and Great Bear. You needn’t tell.”

“I know, too,” said Phyllisy.

“I’d like to tell somebody,” said the Princess. “Come close, Kitten, and let me whisper it.”

So the Kitten came close, and she and the Princess found her ear—warm and rosy under a great deal of troublesome hair—and the Princess whispered in it until the Kitten laughed. “Now we all know, don’t we?” said the Princess. And they all nodded.

The waves were running away from them, up the beach, a long way beyond the point of the ship where the bowsprit used to be.

The Kitten knelt down and looked through a chink in the deck, at the water under it. She curved her hands each side of her eyes to shut off the sunlight so she could see more plainly, and to keep her hair from falling into them. “O-oh! it’s pretty closer,” she said.

“Let me see,” said Pat. The Kitten let her have the place, and she saw for herself. She was satisfied in a minute; then she settled back on her heels. “It’ll come just so close; then it’ll go back—and not any more. What makes it do that?” she said.

“The tide,” said Miss Phyllisy.

“I know that,” said Pat. “What *makes* it?”

“It’s on account of Lady Moon going by,” said the Princess.

“That would be a different kind of Star Person. Isn’t she?” said Phyllisy.

“Pretty different, and especially nice. This is the story of her: She is Mother Earth’s dear daughter. Long ago her mother held her close in her arms; then Lady Moon was called away to live in Starland, and had to leave her mother’s side. Her dim gray robes never could be seen in that distant sky, so she carries a glowing lantern hung on her arm; and when the slide is open and Mother Earth sees its light, she knows where her child is wandering among the stars. Then her heart longs for her, and she reaches out toward her, trying always to come a little nearer. If you listen, you’ll hear the sea sobbing, to think how far away she has gone.” The Princess stopped talking, and tipped her head, listening. They listened with her, to the waves running into the old ship—and they truly seemed to grow sadder and sadder; not unhappy-sad, but romantic.

“That is beautiful, Dearie,” said Phyllisy. “It’s parable, isn’t it?”

“This is truly true,” answered the Princess. “Wherever the moon is, there every bit of the Earth feels it, and is drawn out toward it.”

“Hard rocks and all?” asked Pat, as if she never would believe it.

“Rocks and mountains and all,” said the Princess. “But they are so stiff they don’t give very much. But the sea yields easily, and the water heaps up toward the moon, and pulls away from the shore behind it; then when the moon passes on, it flattens out again. If we were down on the sand before every bit of the hard is covered up, I could draw something to show it plainer, in about two seconds, on the way back. But there’s no time to waste.”

So, without wasting any time, they left the old Wreck deep in the sand and water, with the waves running in from the Ocean and hurrying by it—on to the land. And when they found a hard place, the Princess drew the large round Earth with the sea humping up on the side of it toward the small round moon. And she drew several moons on several sides, to show how the hump would follow, and make the tide; but it was all one moon—only gone along a little farther. And she said it was truly the Earth that whirled in the middle, not the moon going around; but they weren’t to bother about that—and they didn’t.

VI

THE BEE BABY

“The pleasure of your company to drink tea with the Princess,” it said. And the Others left all their occupations and came at once.

She was expecting them, with the little tea-table set out and ready; but they might wash their hands in the Princess’s own bath-room, and have verbenä water out of a tall bottle on them, if they liked; and they did—a great deal.

ANDROMEDA

“Poor Andromeda!” said the Princess. “She must have wished she had been born with piggy eyes and a turned-up nose when she found what came of her beauty. Here she is: chained to the rock, waiting for the sea monster to come and devour her, but still lovely.”

“She isn’t chained *now*?” said Pat.
“In the sky?”

“Dear me, no! Never, since Perseus happened along with Medusa’s head in his wallet, and turned the sea monster into a rock. But this is the way they stand to be looked at,—a tableau, with Perseus coming to the rescue, and Cassiopeia looking on, thinking what a lucky escape they had, and that her child is truly much lovelier than any Nymph whatever. But she isn’t talking about it any

more.”

“Perhaps she would have thought so, just the same, if Andromeda had looked piggy,” observed Phyllisy.

“Very true, Madam Owl,” agreed the Princess. “But whether or no, she certainly has four undeniably beautiful stars to wear—if anybody will find them for her.”

The “tea” was in a high, cool, clinking pitcher of strange colored glass that let the light shine through, and it was golden and yet pinky, and tasted of fruits, but no kind any one could say. But they could have it in a teacup if they would rather. (The teapot was there too, by courtesy, to look on.) The Princess sat beside the table to pour it, with wide lace hanging over her arms, and coming out from under, but not catching when she handled the fragile cups, because she knew how—very deftly.

Pat chose a yellow cup, with butterflies and tiny roses, and Miss Phyllisy took one, white and very thin, with a dragon coiled around it and a red curly handle; but the Kitten had hers in a tall glass like the pitcher, and so did the Princess. And there were delicious little cakes, the kind the Princess had, and never any one else. It was most refreshing and restful to hot little girls out of a garden.

At last they said, “No, thank you, *really*,” when she asked if they would have another cup, because the cups were so small. Then the Princess went over to a comfortable chair near the long window, and watched the Others wandering about the room. Outside it would still be hot in the garden; but in the Princess’s own room it was cool and shaded, with interesting things to see, that they loved because they had seen them before.

“Suppose there were an Indian Squaw (*and there was*),” said the Princess, “and she was weaving a beautiful basket.”

“Is it that basket?” asked Pat.

“That very identical basket you’re going to hand me.”

So Pat brought it to the Princess, and Phyllisy and the Kitten came too. “And suppose, when she came near the top, she wove in this row of brown points like the teeth of a saw”—their heads were close

together, following the Princess's finger with their eyes. "Wouldn't any one know that she meant them for mountains?"

"Did she?" asked Phyllisy.

"She did," said the Princess.

"Oh-h," said the Others.

"Or," said the Princess, "suppose there were an Ancient Egyptian—the Ancientest kind—who lived on the edge of a flat desert; and could never—alive or dead—go to a mountain without crossing miles of blazing sand. If he happened, at the same time, to be a King (*and he did*), with thousands of slaves to work for him, he might set them to work to build him a mountain. And what shape would it be when it was done?"

"What?" asked the Kitten.

"I know what I think," said Phyllisy, "maybe."

"Say it, Miss Phyllisy. I think so, too."

"A pyramid?"

"Would it?" asked Pat.

"*What* shape would it?" repeated the Kitten.

The Princess didn't answer directly. "Let's just once more suppose. Suppose there were a little girl, who wanted to draw the picture of a mountain. (*And I saw the picture.*)"—"M-m-mm" purred the Kitten. —"Her pencil went up one side—so," the Princess slanted up with her finger, and the Kitten did the same with hers, "and down the other,"—their fingers slid down again—"like a letter 'A,' very much spread out and without any cross-piece. Now: could there well be three kinds of people more different than an Indian Squaw, an Ancient Egyptian, and a Kitten—I mean a little girl? And yet they agree precisely about how a mountain ought to look. Doesn't it seem as if they must be right?"

The Others thought it did—looking at the Pyramid picture over the glass cabinet. Then the Princess leaned forward, with the lace all falling away, and her voice grew more impressive:—

"There is Some One else who thinks just as they do; and she doesn't stop with thinking, she takes the best of care that there shall be one perfect example of a truly symmetrical mountain."

“Oh-h,” said Phyllisy. “Was that what it was all for? I thought it was just conversation.”

“Not at all,” said the Princess. “It was designed to lead you gradually up to that especial mountain.”

“Are you going to tell us?” asked Pat.

“If you don’t think it will tire you.” She said it very politely, like a question. And they all shook their heads—one great, vigorous shake. So the Princess began to tell it:—

“Sometimes, on her voyages, the Jane Ellen passes near a coast where there is a long line of white surf edging the blue water; then just as long a line of white sand; and back of both, the level forest extending back to the line of the coast mountains. And back of this coast range—so far away that it looks as if it were painted flat on the pale blue sky, with paint only a shade darker—rises the great triangle that, Taffy says, is the most satisfactory mountain in the world.

“And that is Xyntli’s mountain.”

“Did Taffy see it?” asked Pat.

“He did,” said the Princess, “from the sea. He sometimes thought he would like to go inland and see what it was like, near at hand. But the Jane Ellen never stopped there—there was nothing to stop for—and he never went. And that’s all he and the Jane Ellen had to do with it.

“If he had left the ship and gone ashore to climb to the top of the range of hills, he would have seen that they sloped down again; and far away, over miles of green, rolling country, the great cone of the mountain lifts its bare slope out of the forest. And on the southern side, almost at the top, his sailor eyes might have made out the hole (with the peak of the mountain, like a pointed hood, behind it) that leads down into the depths where Xyntli sleeps—long naps that keep her young and beautiful in spite of her age.

“No one can tell how beautiful she is, because she wraps herself in a veil when she looks out; but her splendid, fiery-gold hair streams out of it, and floats and sparkles in the wind when she stands on tiptoe inside, to look out and see that the mountain is just as she wants it to be,—an even slope from top to bottom; clean rocks, with no creeping green things and trees littering up its sides.

“It must be trying to her (and she is a nervous person, too) to lie down to peaceful slumber for a hundred years or more, leaving her mountain the pink of perfection; and to wake and look out—only to see that the waters that run down its sides have collected into streams, and dug irregular channels for themselves (like scratches on the mahogany table!), and to listen and hear the winds whispering in the leaves of the forest:—

Creeping, creeping,
Forward stealing—
Up the mountain
Follow, follow;
Tiny rootlets,
Thrusting, feeling
Every crevice
 (S-s-ssh!),
Silence keeping—
In the hollow
Of her mountain
 Xyntli’s sleeping!

Silence keeping—
Soft gray mosses
Cover rocks,
And, onward creeping,
Claim the mountain!
 Forward leaping,
Winged seeds!
You’ll soon be peeping
O’er the rim,
Where, in the hollow
Of the mountain,
 Xyntli’s sleeping.

—and then to see that the forest actually is marching up the sides of her own fortress! Wouldn’t that be discouraging?

“But Xyntli is not discouraged. Not she! She calls up her fiery snakes from below, and sends them crawling down the sides of the mountain, while she stands on the top, waving her wonderful smoky veil, and urging them on.

“Down they glide,—filling up the channels the streams have dug, hissing with hatred as they swallow the streams themselves, and devouring the advancing forest.

“At last the mountain stands once more, smooth and polished—the green army driven back to the valley.

“Then Xyntli is satisfied, and cuddles down in her hollow for another nap.

“It was during one of these naps—after it had lasted a very long time—that the Bee Baby was born.

“Year after year, the forest had marched steadily on; so the people who lived in the valley seldom thought how the snakes had come down and driven it back in the old days. The very old people occasionally shook their heads, and said: ‘When Xyntli awakens she will have her own.’ But the young people didn’t listen, and followed the forest, building their curious houses fairly upon the slope of the mountain.

“They were very strange houses indeed—a good deal like willow bird-cages. In a snowstorm they would have been about as useful for a house as a mosquito net for an overcoat. But there came never a snowstorm; and the house where the Bee Baby lived was built of slender branches of trees, set in the ground, side by side, and interwoven with palm-fibre—the light glimmered through it in little flecks. The roof went up to a point in the middle and sloped four ways. That was woven even closer, of the palm leaves, so the rain couldn’t come through. The house had only one room, and nearly the whole of one side was the doorway—with the roof extended over it a little way, like an awning. There was no floor but the earth, and no door. So, when the Bee Baby woke in the morning, all he had to do was to rub his big brown eyes with his little brown fists, and trot through the open doorway, to be in the warm sunshine, where there wasn’t a fence nor a bar between him and the whole enchanting world.

“There was no one to watch him very closely, either, because he had no mother. He did have a father; but he spent a great deal of his time driving a pair of drowsy oxen in a cart with two solid, wooden wheels. Such a queer cart!

“Of course his father knew that one of the brown babies that played and tumbled about in the village of bird-cage huts was his. But when babies wear only their own shining skins to cover them, it isn’t easy for a father who spends most of his time driving an ox-cart to pick out his particular baby.”

“Not any clothes—didn’t they wear?” asked Pat.

“Most of the little children didn’t. A few of them—who were very fashionable—wore one garment. It was a straight piece of cloth that covered their plump little bodies in front; the ends were gathered up in the back, and tied in a bow between the shoulders. It looked very stylish—but the Bee Baby was more comfortable. Stand up a minute, Kitten, and I’ll show you how it was.”

So the Kitten came and stood before her, and she showed them how the fashionable little children dressed, using a piece of Chinese embroidery for the straight piece of cloth. Then they settled down once more to listen.

“If an owl had looked through a chink in the wall, very early one morning, he might have seen the Bee Baby’s family—his aunts and his grandmother and four or five brown babies and children—all asleep on flat straw mats on the ground. But nobody but an owl could have counted exactly how many there were, it was still so dark.

“Then the first sunbeam slipped in at a chink, and put its finger on one of the poles in the side of the hut. It felt its way slowly down, until it touched a small, dark heap at the foot of it.

“And that was the Bee Baby.

“He sat up on his mat and looked around him at the other heaps.

“Not one of them stirred; and that was pretty stupid.

“Then he saw something interesting; his own little foot with the sunbeam resting on it, as he sat with his toes pointing straight up at the roof. He looked at it for a moment, and frowned as if he were anxious. Then he leaned forward and felt of it.

“It was a perfectly good foot; and feet are made to be walked on; and it is much more amusing to be walking than sitting on a mat in a dusky hut like a bird-cage. That, probably, is the idea that came into the Bee Baby’s head when he found his foot was so satisfactory; and a big dimple came in his cheek, but he didn’t make any noise.

“To get up, he rolled over on to his face and planted his feet firmly, only when they were quite solid, lifting his hands from the ground. And there he was, all dressed and ready to go out. He trotted over to the doorway and stopped a minute, looking out.

“The hut stood on the edge of a grove of tall cocoanut trees. There were bananas growing among them; and vines with gorgeous orange and red flowers creeping everywhere. Black and spotted pigs ran

grunting through the vines and about the huts of the little village; it all looked clean and fresh in the early sunlight. The Bee Baby's was the last hut of the village, at the edge of the grove, that stretched on beyond it, up the slope of Xyntli's mountain.

"When one is not much over two years old, one can't think of everything, and the Bee Baby didn't notice that which the older people had been watching for a month—Xyntli was awake!

"After a sleep of two hundred years—and more—one night she had stirred and turned herself, shaking her mountain and the village on its slope. The next morning a thin, gray streamer floated from the top of the cone; and the old people said: 'Xyntli's veil! Oh, when she sees —' And they shook their heads.

"Since that day the veil had floated, sometimes like a broad banner, then again Xyntli drew it in until it was gathered down inside. But yet, she had not looked out and seen how the forests and streams were defacing her mountain.

"And the Bee Baby didn't look up at the great blue triangle. The kitchen was at the right of the house; and he had a feeling that said: 'Breakfast.' So those good little feet carried him over to the big stone where the women ground corn to make the flat cakes that he liked to nibble with his brand-new teeth. The stone oven where they were baked was there too; and the Bee Baby found some cakes lying on the grinding-stone. He had to stand on his tiptoes and feel over the stone, to find them; but he knew where to feel, and where to find a banana, too. So why should he wake the cook?

"With the flat cakes in one hand and the bitten banana in the other, he set out, following the level sunbeams into the green grove. He knew just where he wanted to go, and trotted straight on until he came to an old tree.

"If it had been a *tree* that he was looking for, it wasn't much to see. It hadn't a green leaf on it, and only a few scraggly branches. But he was not a bird, nor a squirrel; he was a Bee Baby. And considered as a beehive, it left nothing to wish for. There was the fine hollow trunk to store the honey; and a round knot-hole near the ground, for the bees to pass in and out, all day long, in sunshiny weather. And that funny brown baby never seemed tired of watching them—hurrying off, and coming back dusty with pollen, and with masses of it in the

pockets on their legs, or laden with clear, sweet honey. Sometimes a bee lit on his finger. Then the wise baby sat quite still, and never brushed it off; so he didn't find out that it carried a needle in its tail—as sharp as its temper. (But he was careless about letting the dimple come in his cheek. It's a wonder the bees didn't fly in, it was so deep and red and sweet.)

“When the baby came to the tree this morning, even he could see that something was different. The bees were not going about the business of the day—gathering honey—in their usual orderly fashion. No, indeed! They were running in and out of the knot-hole, helter-skelter; and such a humming as there was inside the tree!

“He came close to the trunk to listen, and a gray cockatoo sat on a tree near by and watched. And it's a pity there was no one else to see what a quaint little figure he was, with one arm clasping the tree-trunk, as far as it would go, with a cake still grasped in his chubby hand, and his ear pressed against the rough bark—listening—listening—

“‘Buzz-z-z-z,’ hummed the bees; and the baby listened, with lips apart,—serious and wondering.

“Then that soulless cockatoo ‘squawked’ as if it were the funniest thing in the world, and swung herself, head down, around the branch where she had been sitting; and then worked her way into the next tree, clutching the vines with beak or claw, squawking all the way. She had neither manners nor dignity; and she was a grandmother, too.

“Her noise startled the Bee Baby so he toppled over; but he didn't mind, and sat where he fell, to finish his cake and to watch.

“The buzzing in the hive was louder now, and there were very few bees outside. Then—all at once—they began to come out in numbers, and flew wildly about before they collected on a low branch near by. You can't imagine how many there were—all in a dark cluster clinging to the vine. The baby never had seen anything like it, and his eyes were round with amazement. He got up from the hummock, to see more plainly.

“Perhaps because he disturbed them, as he came near, the whole mass rose together in the air, and flew up a natural path through the forest. And straight after them went the Baby!

“But it was not a fair race; for they had wings to fly, and several thousand eyes apiece to see where they were going; and he had only his two small feet to carry him, and his one pair of eyes to watch the bees. So he couldn’t look where his feet were going; and the next thing that happened—he tripped and fell on his nose.

“It didn’t hurt him, and he picked himself up; but the bees were gone, and he could only follow on in the direction they had flown.

“He was such a baby, it isn’t likely he even remembered what he was looking for; but there were other things to see beside bees; and a green forest, with birds and monkeys and all kinds of little living creatures in it, is a fine place to be in.

“So he strayed on, amusing himself in his baby way, until he had gone really a considerable distance from the village, and was on a ridge of high land that ran up the mountain.

“Suddenly, something was the matter with the ground, and try as he would, he couldn’t stand up on it—it was swaying—and the forest was full of strange noises; and a black cloud covered the sun so that it grew dark all in a moment. The great trees groaned and waved their branches, as if they too were trying to balance themselves on the rocking Earth. Those that were young and supple held their own; but a few that were old and dry fell crashing, and carried others down in their fall.

“But though the trees cried and shrieked in their distress and amazement,—and the monkeys and birds too,—the Bee Baby never made a sound. He lay pressed close against the ground in the awful darkness; as chickens cower when the mother hen sees the hawk’s shadow, and sounds her warning to them.

“He was like a little frightened animal, too, when the rocking stopped, and the forest gradually grew quiet around him; and he crept along the ground, through the green tangle, to where a tree had fallen against a cleft in the rocky ledge, carrying a mass of vines down with it, and making a sort of den or shelter.

“The brown baby crawled into the farthest corner, and huddled down close under the rock, to wait helplessly for whatever was to come.”

The Princess paused. “Poor little soul!” said Phyllisy. “Please go on, Dearie.” And after a moment, she began to speak again:—

“Of course you know—though the Bee Baby didn’t—what was making all this disturbance; and if he hadn’t left home so early that morning, before his people were awake, they wouldn’t have forgotten all about him. But when they were awake, they found enough to think of in watching Xyntli.

“There stood the giant cone of the mountain, with the thin gray streak of her veil floating from the top.

“It looked very peaceful.

“Suddenly—without further warning—Xyntli stood, straight and tall, in the top of the mountain, borne up on the servant-winds that live with her inside!

“Her veil wrapped her from head to foot, and its loose folds were blown upward by the breath of the winds. Her hair streamed through its topmost folds like gleaming flames; and the blue flashes that shot forth from the veil might have been the anger that flared in her blue eyes when she saw the outside of her mountain!

“Now, for the snakes!

“She gave a strange, wailing cry—like the wind, or flames rushing up the black throat of the chimney—and down in the depths of the mountain her fiery serpents came writhing out of their caverns, obedient to her call. The blue cone and the whole countryside shuddered with their motion; and as their hot breath scorched the inside of the mountain, thick black smoke arose like thunderclouds, and blotted out the sun. Then the heads of the fiery monsters peered over the rim at the mountain’s top, and they came crawling, gliding down its sides.

“And the very fiercest, hungriest of them all was rushing straight to the village of bird-cage huts, nestling in the hollow upon the slope of the mountain!

“It was a splendid sight—the mighty cone, purple in the midday darkness, with the green forest at its base, and the serpents, like rivers of fire, pouring down its sides. Smoke and flame rose, streaming upward, where they passed.

“And in the midst of the murky clouds, on the mountain-top, stood Xyntli, beautiful exceedingly, in her iridescent, gray veil, with her glittering, red-gold hair. Swaying lightly on the shoulders of her servant-winds, waving her arms and crying, she urged on her fiery

snakes, that were to restore her kingdom to her as she would have it—clean, smooth, unbroken;—the pattern of a perfect mountain!

“But the people in the village saw the terror, not the beauty; and they thought only of their flight from it.

“They huddled the babies and the old people who couldn’t walk and their few poor possessions onto the ox-carts. Some of them tried to drive the spotted pigs before them; and any one who has tried to drive *one* pig (a plain one at that) can imagine how much confusion it made when there were dozens and dozens. And it’s not to be wondered at, that the aunts and the grandmother didn’t count correctly. So they didn’t miss the Bee Baby until they were far away; and the body of Xyntli’s hideous snake lay stretched across the blackened hollow where the little huts had stood in the green grove.

THEY THOUGHT ONLY OF THEIR FLIGHT

“There is a curious thing about a snake. It has a habit of slipping out of its skin, and squirming away, leaving the old one behind, looking quite like itself.

“Xyntli’s snakes were unusual in many ways; but in this they certainly did something very like the rest of their tribe. When they had gone down the mountains and filled up the hollows with their bodies, their fiery hearts seemed to die out of them where they lay. One might think they were asleep, or dead; but I believe it was only their cast-off skins they left behind, while the real snakes stole back into the mountain, to be ready when Xyntli wanted them again.”

“I believe it, too; that’s what they did,” said Pat.

“If they didn’t, they wouldn’t be there always, when she called,” agreed Phyllisy.

“It seems so to me,” said the Princess. Then she took up the story again: “At last Xyntli stopped her wild motion and looked down on her mountain.

“The snakes had done their work well this time. There were no hollows left, and no green thing but one slender spur of forest, like a finger pointing up the slope, and that was hardly worth noticing.

“The smoke was thin now, and blue. Xyntli stood, swaying softly on the mountain-top. Then she sank slowly, drawing her veil after her. Now she was nearly gone; now, only a gleam of her red hair flickered against the sky; now—she was quite gone—

“When—suddenly she shot up, straight, towering above the cone, and flung a long fold of her veil wide over the land; and from it fell a shower of fine powder, soft as snow, that filled all the cracks and crevices and covered the horrid bodies of the snakes, and choked every green thing left in its track.

“Then—as suddenly—Xyntli vanished! and in her hollow mountain, slept once more.”

The Princess’s voice died away in a hush that lasted a long moment, as if some one really were sleeping.

Then Pat drew a deep breath: “Well! I should say! For pitiesakes! I hope she’s done mischief enough for once!”

“She didn’t mean it for mischief. She had to make the mountain clean, didn’t she, Dearie? She couldn’t help it if they were in the way,” said Miss Phyllisy, with the wise little mind the Princess loved in her, clear and fair and earnest.

“But she wouldn’t be sorry,” Pat insisted.

“No; she went straight off to sleep,” Phyllisy admitted. “And that poor little baby!—We’re ready to go on, Dearie, whenever you’re rested.”

And after a few minutes the Princess was ready also.

“There isn’t much that goes on on Mother Earth that the Star People don’t know about,” she began, whisking them away to Starland without any warning. “On clear nights, when they are standing still to be looked at, they watch—and watch. And Old Sol keeps watch by day. So there is not much that escapes them: certainly not Xyntli and her naps, and particularly her wakings!

“She was a tantalizing person in this way: though they might look at her naps—that were nothing to see but a place!—as much and as long as they liked, no sooner was she fairly awake than the clouds would gather thick, and the Star People had to seize every chance to look through chinks. Any one who had a good sight had to tell it over to the others, again and again. But they did have glimpses, and Sol

too; and after it was all over they could see what had been done. So they had a pretty clear idea of her and her actions.”

Pat nodded her head, as if she had, too; but she didn’t speak.

“When Xyntli vanished in her mountain the sky was full of heavy clouds; so when night came the Star People stationed themselves wherever there seemed the chance for a tiny gap, through which they might look.

“Now, Old Sol dearly loved the Bee Baby; and he had told the Zodiac People all about the quaint little child who was so happy by himself, in the sunshine, watching the bees. So the Star People understood just what Andromeda meant when she exclaimed, from her chink in the cloud:—

“‘The Bee Baby is left all alone by himself in that strip of forest on the ridge!’

“‘Are you thure? I didn’t thee him,’ said Draco, at another chink.

“‘You’re always imagining things,’ said Orion.

“‘I didn’t imagine this,’ insisted Andromeda. ‘The light from Lady Moon’s lantern shone through for a moment, and I saw him plainly—standing in front of a dark hole in the rock. Then he ran back, as if he were frightened.’

“‘Well, I’d like to know what his people are made of!’ said Cassiopeia. ‘They don’t deserve to have a child, if they can’t take better care of him than that!’

“‘Maybe they aren’t so bad,’ said Hercules. ‘I don’t believe Xyntli asked ’em which way they’d rather be chased out. When they saw those snakes coming they hadn’t any time to go back for stray babies! I don’t mind snakes, myself, big or little, but I want ’em cold! They are, too—mostly.’

“‘Too what?’ asked Perseus.

“‘Cold,’ answered Hercules; ‘toads, too.’

“‘I thought you said you’d rather have them cold?’

“‘I would. And they are—mostly.’

“‘Then why did you say they were *too* cold?’

“‘I didn’t. I want ’em that way. And they are, too.’

“‘But you’—

“‘There’s a conundrum about that,’ interrupted Orion. (He couldn’t stand it, to have them go on arguing.) ‘I’ve forgotten what it is; but the answer is: Because a hot snake is better than a cold hop.’

“‘Why! that isn’t it—at *all!*’ said Andromeda.

“‘I should think you were all cold snakes and toads yourselves!’ broke in Cassiopeia, indignantly. ‘Arguing like that, with that poor child all alone in the middle of desolation! What do you propose to do about it?’

“‘There isn’t anything we can do,’ said Cepheus. ‘It isn’t our place.’

“‘Xyntli is the one who ought to do something. She made all the trouble,’ said Andromeda.

“‘Don’t you be so silly,’ said Cassiopeia. ‘This is a serious matter.’

“‘I shouldn’t like her to bring up *my* child,’ said Draco. ‘The ’th too exthitable.’

“‘We can decide about yours when you have one!’ said Cassiopeia. ‘Now, who is going after that baby? Because I think they’d better be starting.’

“‘What over the sun are you talking about?’ asked Orion. ‘Going where?’

“‘We are going to adopt that Bee Baby. If some one doesn’t start at once, I shall go myself!’

“‘*Adopt the Bee Baby!*’ cried every one in chorus. They were too much astounded to say anything original; they could only repeat her words—though they knew it was rude.

“‘That was what I said,’ said Cassiopeia.

“‘But you can’t,’ said Orion. ‘No one ever thought of doing such a thing. It isn’t the Rule of the Sky.’

“‘Do you know any Rule that *says* we can’t?’ asked Cassiopeia.

“‘No,’ answered Orion; and that disposed of him.

“‘How could you take care of him?’ asked Perseus. ‘He’d keep getting lost; and he mightn’t like it.’

“‘It’s a pity if I can’t take care of one small child, and make him happy!’ said Cassiopeia. ‘I’ll learn.’

“‘Wouldn’t he just love to watch Sol’s bees!’ said Andromeda. ‘It would be a good thing to have some one to watch them; there’s

always such a fuss when they swarm.'

"Yeth, indeed!' said Draco. 'Don't you remember latht time?—when they got away when no one wath notithing, and every one thought they were a comet?'

"Yes,' said Cassiopeia. 'It might have made a great deal of trouble. I think we really need him. I'm going now. Is any one coming with me?'

"No!" exclaimed Cepheus. 'I forbid it! I am your husband, Cassiopeia; and I will be obeyed!'

"Every one looked at him—startled to hear him speak like that. He stood holding up his sceptre in a magnificent attitude, and looked absolutely majestic. Cassiopeia was too much astonished to speak for a moment, but Andromeda slipped her fingers into his and laid her cheek against his shoulder; and when he bent his head to listen to her pretty coaxing in his ear, his crown tilted a trifle, and he looked like his usual, cloudy-night self. So no one was surprised to hear him say:—

"Yes, I suppose so. But your mother needn't go.'

"I'll go,' said some one who hadn't spoken before.

"It was Lady Moon."

("Oh-h," said the Others, softly, and very glad; and the Princess smiled back at them.)

"The moment she spoke, the Star People felt every perplexity smoothed away, and it all became simple and plain. There wasn't the slightest reason in the Heavens, why they should not take that lonely little baby for their own, to care for and to love.

"The clouds in piled-up masses lay low on Xyntli's mountain; and it was an easy matter for the Star People to follow Lady Moon down from level to level. When they reached the limit of the cloud-stairway, they could see once more; how right it was that they should wait—their blazing glory hidden—while Lady Moon, her lantern darkened, should slip unseen down the bare shoulder of the mountain, to the strip of forest, left like a dark finger pointing up the slope.

"Ah, but think of a helpless, frightened little child—only two years and a scrap over—alone in a dark cave in that awful desolation!

“How must he have felt—that little Bee Baby—when, suddenly, a soft light shone into the cave, and he looked into the face of the loveliest of ladies, who was holding her lantern so that it disclosed to her—huddled into the farthest corner of the cave—a small brown heap. Only the eyes, like a little frightened animal’s, looking out of it, showed that it was alive.

“And the baby?

HIS WONDERING EYES LOOKED
FROM LADY MOON’S SHOULDER

“When he looked into that pitying face, and saw the tender arms held out to him, his own went out in answer; and then he was held close—nestled like a young bird or a tired baby—as he was—in the shelter of that loving breast.

“Then, what baby king had ever such a royal progress as that brown little child?

“His wondering eyes looked from Lady Moon’s shoulder, as she carried him up the stately stairway of mass upon mass of cloud, whose lowest step was the mighty mountain, and whose highest led to the measureless Heavens! And grouped along its heights were the radiant Star People, whose splendors might have frightened him if their faces had not been so kind with loving welcome. All those of whom we have talked, and many more, assembled to welcome one little helpless child.

“It was worth it, to see his eyes shine and the happy dimple come in his cheek. He clasped one arm, tight, around Lady Moon’s neck, and stretched out the other to these new friends, without a trace of fear. Why should he be afraid? Hadn’t he loved the shining sun, and all beautiful things, his whole two years of life?

“So he listened to the song Lady Moon sang low to him; and as they passed along, the Star People caught the refrain, and took it up:

—

“The sorrow is over;
Thy Star life’s begun.
Hear the golden bees humming
For joy at thy coming,
Oh, little Bee Baby,

Dear child of the Sun!

“Listen!” said the Princess.

There was a sound, very small and clear and silvery:—One—two—three—four—and *One more!*

And that was a Bewitchment! Everybody must vanish at once!

VII

LADY MOON'S LANTERN

On the terrace there was a Pergola—that was two rows of white columns with criss-cross bars overhead and vines growing over it. There were built-in seats between the columns, but there were always chairs besides.

There was no one in it. Down below, in the garden, there were Shapes flitting about in the dusk. They came up out of it, to the Pergola, all together; and they were the Princess and the Others.

A large spider was spinning down, with a clear yellow sky behind it, at the far end of the Pergola. They were obliged to watch it. It dropped and sprung, elastic, on the end of its thread—then dropped—and sprung; and then it clawed up again, working its legs. They could see them distinctly against the sky, though it was quite a distance away. Out at their end, the sky was cool, with a white moon in it; so there were two kinds of shadows: large, blurred ones from the last daylight; and in them, moon-shadows of the vines on the long white seats and on the floor and down one side of the Princess's dress—sitting in a chair. The moon-shadows were very faint, but they were a clear pattern, and the daylight shadows had no edges; soon there would be only moon. It was very interesting.

And the slide of Lady Moon's lantern was about three quarters open.

"Wasn't it lovely she took him?" said Phyllisy. "I'd rather she than anybody else."

"But it stopped short," said Pat.

"That was a proper end of a story, with everybody happy," said the Princess. "You wouldn't want any more than that, would you?"

“The people weren’t, with the houses and everything spoiled.”

“But they built new ones, very quickly. It doesn’t take long to build a house like a bird-cage. They drove the loaded ox-carts only a little way down the slope of the mountain; and before you could think, there was a new village just like the old, and everything was just as it was before. The brown babies and the spotted pigs ran and tumbled about, and the women went right on grinding corn to make more and more flat cakes; but they didn’t do much housework or sewing, and everybody slept a good deal in the midday heat; then when the cool evening came they gathered together to visit comfortably, while the children played about in the moonlight.”

“Like us?” asked the Kitten.

“Like us,” said the Princess. “Only you aren’t playing about; you are listening to more story.”

“Oh, is it more?” asked Pat.

“A tiny bit,” said the Princess. And the Others wriggled down into their places to listen quite differently from the way they listened when it was conversation. She began to speak in a still voice:—

“So it was one night when the full, round moon shone, silver-bright above the treetops. One of the women sat a little apart, and watched it soaring among the stars. And as she looked, it seemed to her it was not quite round; a tiny slice was gone from one edge.

“‘See the moon!’ she called to the others, pointing upward.

“They gathered near; and as they watched it, the dark shadow crept forward, across the face of the moon.

“‘What is it?’ asked the children.

“‘I know not,’ said the old grandmother. ‘It comes so at times; but never have I seen it like this. Before, it has covered the whole moon, or gone over one edge—like a great shadow. But this is round, like a dark ball, and small. See, the moon shows around it.’

“It was as she said: a thin thread of light, like a silver ring, almost surrounded the dark something that came between their eyes and the moon.

“‘It is just like the Bee Baby!’ said one of the children. ‘Don’t you remember how round his little head was?’

“‘I wonder what became of him,’ said another.

“Perhaps he’s there—in the sky,’ said a third.

“But the grandmother said: ‘You are foolish children. He is dead. Xyntli’s snakes could tell—’

“Wise children know when to stop arguing with older people about things that only children understand. So they said no more to the grandmother, but drew away, and talked and whispered to each other—while the small round shadow passed on, across the bright lantern of the moon, and left it clear once more.”

THE SMALL ROUND SHADOW
PASSED ON ACROSS THE BRIGHT
LANTERN OF THE MOON

“But it was truly the Bee Baby,” said Pat. “And now they could know what became of him.”

“What did he do to the moon?” asked the Kitten, because she didn’t exactly understand.

“What do you think about this?” asked the Princess. “If a little child—so tall”—she showed, with her hand—“follows a beautiful lady with a lantern hung on her arm, don’t you think, once in a great while, his round little head *might* come in the way, and interfere with its light?”

“It did. That was it,” said the Kitten comfortably.

Then, with Lady Moon throwing leaf patterns and white light down upon them, and the whole world very still, the Princess told them a song:—

“Who loves to follow wherever you roam,
Lady Moon?”

“Bee Baby.”

“Is he happy in Starland?—so far from his home?”

“He may be.

“Over Milky-Way meadows
Fly the bees, living gold;
There he strays, blessed Lamb,
Safe, with love for his fold.”

“Who comes to nestle so close in your arm,
Lady Moon?”

“Bee Baby.”

“Is he falling asleep, to a Starland lullaby’s charm?”
“Hush—he may be!”

VIII

ANDROMEDA'S BIRTHDAY

"Nine more days,
And then comes a birthday,"

the Kitten sang, over and over, making different tunes each time. She sang it softly, to herself, but it was loud enough to be heard.

"Dear-my-soul!" said the Princess. "Whatever will happen when you're a seven-year-longlegs, 'stead of six? Skeeters, you know."

The Kitten stopped singing and rubbed her leg where there were lumpy spots above her socks.

"She'll have stockings when they get too long," said Pat.

"And the next thing we know, she'll begin to be a Cat! Why don't you have birthdays like the Star People's?"

"What kind?" asked the Kitten.

"Steady and reliable," said the Princess. "Everybody is exactly the right age to begin, and then they never grow any older."

"But they are different ages," Pat objected.

"The right age for *them*," the Princess explained. "Haven't you noticed that they were?"

The Others thought about it for a minute, and decided that they couldn't very well be different.

"But if they are always going along the same, perhaps they wouldn't notice their birthdays," said Phyllisy.

"Indeed, they would," said the Princess, earnestly. "They're particularly good about remembering dates and anniversaries and times of the year. And they'd never think of letting a birthday go by without noticing it."

“Would they have a party?” asked the Kitten.

“They do usually. Do you think it would help you along a little through one of those nine days, to hear about one of them?”

And the Kitten seemed to think it would.

“Whose birthday is it going to be?” asked Pat.

“Andromeda’s, the same year that the Sailor’s Star was stolen; and Orion gave the party. You remember the young meteors that he had planted were just coming up in his garden when Cassiopeia came to tell him what a misfortune had happened? All those same young plants had kept on growing and growing, unusually well, and Orion was as proud of them as a comet with two tails. They promised to be ripe just in time for Andromeda’s birthday, and he said he would like to give the party.”

“To eat them?” asked Pat.

“Never!” said the Princess. “I thought you knew about meteors: when they are exactly ripe you give them a bit of a pinch. Pop! goes a beautiful starlet with a trail of gold-dust behind it.”

“Fireworks,” said the Kitten.

“That’s the way a balsam seed pops,” said Phyllisy.

“Yes, it reminds me of it,” agreed the Princess. “When they are ripe one has to be very careful not to hit them, or they go off too soon. Orion wouldn’t even pick off a leaf or pull up a weed, he was being so careful to save every one for the birthday celebration; and how he did have to watch the dogs, to keep them out!

“The night before, it was partly cloudy, and Orion almost drove Cassiopeia wild, dodging about behind the drifting clouds, making his last arrangements. Little Bear, too. It seemed as if he were possessed, he who was always so quiet and steady—‘The best Little Bear that ever happened!’ Andromeda used to say, when she gave him a bear-hug, and then rubbed his soft fur the wrong way, from his tail clear down his nose, to feel the tingles and see the sparks fly. But no sooner had they begun to talk about her birthday than he began to be excited; and this last night it seemed as if he could not keep still. Whenever a cloud lay so that he could, he would go clear to the edge of it to watch Orion. Once, Cassiopeia could scarcely believe her eyes: there was Orion, talking to Lady Moon behind the clouds; then she saw Little Bear crowding in between them, looking up at them

eagerly. Orion was too much engrossed to notice him, but Cassiopeia called at the top of her voice (and it was a very high top), ‘Come here *this minute*, Little Bear! I should think you were crazy!’

“He heard her, and came prancing back, zigzag, as fast as he could dodge from cloud to cloud. When he was back in his place, barely in the nick of time, his eyes almost twinkled out of his head, and his fur shone so that Cassiopeia could hardly see his stars. She couldn’t help laughing, though she was annoyed. It was bad enough for Orion to dodge around like that; but his legs were so long he could get back to his place always before the clouds floated off.

“The next night no one could have asked for better star-weather, just plain clouds, not a jumpy kind to keep them wondering every half-hour what it was going to do.

“A little before midnight the Star People began to come to the party. Orion was the first to arrive, then Hercules and Draco.”

“Not Little Bear?” asked the Kitten.

“He was there without arriving—Andromeda and Cepheus and Cassiopeia and Perseus and Little Bear. Very soon there was such a noise and chattering down the Sky that one might have thought a whole flock of magpies was coming: but Orion and Draco and Cassiopeia knew better, and magpies don’t squeal and giggle quite like that.

“‘Jutht hear thothe Pleiadeth girlth,’ said Draco. ‘I don’t thee how any one can be tho thilly.’

“‘That’s because you never were a girl,’ said Cepheus. At that, Andromeda began to giggle too; and the more she tried to stop, the harder she giggled.

“‘Now, what’th the matter with *her*?’ asked Draco.

“And then Andromeda squealed, and laughed so she choked, and Perseus had to thump her on the back, while she gasped: ‘To think of Draco’s being a g-gu-girl!—*Oh!*’

“‘She’s one, all right,’ remarked Orion, ‘and here are the others.’

“Maybe they were silly, but the seven Misses Pleiades certainly were pretty to look at as they came in sight. Their gowns were of thin golden gauze, with a multitude of tiny stars woven into the underdress; their interlacing beams made a pattern, like gold

embroidery, and they shimmered faintly through the mist-like tissue that veiled them.

“They wore no other stars but one above the forehead. The stars of six of the sisters were very brilliant, but the seventh was puzzling. When one gave a quick glance and looked away one could see the star quite plainly; but when one looked directly at her it was gone! It was like the place where a star had been. This sister’s name was Merope, and her eyes were so sweet and gentle that the people who loved her never missed the star from her soft brown hair.

“The tallest of the sisters, whose name was Maia, came ahead (as much as any one could be ahead where they all walked in a bunch!), and she called to Orion: ‘Oh, weren’t you mean! Why didn’t you wait for us?’

“‘Didn’t you hear us calling you?’ cried Taygeta.

“‘We thought we’d be late,’ said Electra (no one thought of waiting for an answer), ‘Taygeta kept us waiting so.’

“‘I never!’ said Taygeta. ‘It was Alcyone!’ Then they all looked at each other and giggled again, and Andromeda giggled with them, where she and Merope stood with their arms around each other’s waists. It was a giggling match, and Cepheus and Cassiopeia and Orion and Hercules and Perseus and Draco and Castor and Pollux—”

“The Zodiacs?” asked Phyllisy.

“Yes, the Gemini Brothers.”

“Did Sol let them?” asked Pat.

“Of course, for a party. They came just after the Pleiades girls. They all looked at the gigglers, and they smiled because they were young and pretty, and *they* seemed to know what they were laughing at, but the others couldn’t guess what it was, to save them!”

“Weren’t they silly?” said Pat. “But we do it, too.”

“And quite big girls—much bigger than we,” added Phyllisy.

“Even worse, Miss Phyllisy. I’ve noticed it,” said the Princess.

“Finally Cepheus said: ‘You might as well go home, Orion. These girls don’t want a party to-night.’

“‘Oh, yes, we do!’ they cried. ‘Only Taygeta—’ Then they were off again.

“‘Come, come!’ said Cassiopeia. ‘Just pretend you have a little sense!’

“‘Draco has!’ cried Andromeda. ‘*He* never was a girl!’

“Then everybody laughed together—Draco, and all; and when they were quieted down they were ready to begin the party.

“Andromeda and Perseus took Little Bear and went off a little way, while Orion placed the other Star People in two lines that led up to Cassiopeia’s Chair. She and Cepheus stood at the head of the lines, on either side of the chair. And then they began to sing Andromeda’s Birthday Song:—

“The stars sang together at the little maiden’s birth;
They watched her through the years
Of gladness and of tears;
And they said: ‘She’ll come to dwell with us when she shall leave the Earth.

“‘She shall bring an earthly blessing in which we have no part;
We can only shine by night,
When the sun has sunk from sight;
She shall bring the sunshine with her—though it’s hidden in her heart!’

“A thousand, thousand greetings to the maiden, ever young!
As the years the birthdays bring,
The stars together sing
The praise of maid the sweetest whose praise was ever sung!

“As the Star People sang, Perseus led Andromeda slowly up to them. Little Bear walked ahead; and he was so proud and, at the same time, so excited, that he hardly knew whether he wanted to walk in a very dignified way, or to prance and dance. The consequence was, he did both. Every few steps, he made a funny little skip; then he was so embarrassed to think he had done it that he’d rub his paw over his nose, and almost tip over, because he was walking along all the time.

“How they did laugh at him! all but Andromeda; she looked very serious and grave, because it was a Ceremony. As she walked, with her hand in Perseus’, between her friends to the chair where her father and mother stood waiting for her, she was so sweet and modest and stately—like a little queen—that no one who saw her could have helped loving her.

“There was no doubt how Cepheus and Cassiopeia felt about it, when she stopped before them, and Perseus and Little Bear stepped

back; then she clasped her hands and recited, in her clear, fresh voice, her little verse:—

“With heartfelt joy and thankfulness,
I come to you, that you may bless
Your happy child to-day.
You, whom I owe all reverence
And love and prompt obedience,
Accept them now, I pray!

“A father-and-mother kiss on one’s birthday isn’t the gayest part of it, but we know it’s the best—don’t we, Kitten?—and Andromeda is the only Star Person who can have it. That is one reason why they love to keep her birthday; it can be so complete.

“Cassiopeia and Cepheus placed Andromeda in the great chair, and the Star People came, one by one, and knelt and kissed her hand, then fastened a star-daisy in her hair—they kissed her pretty pink cheek too, when they had done it; but that was just love and extra, not part of the ceremony; so they made her a beautiful crown, and she looked more like a queen than ever.

“When this was over she stepped down from the chair and took Perseus’ hand, and, with Little Bear ahead once more, they went down the Sky. Orion followed with Maia; then Castor and Taygeta, and Pollux and Alcyone. Hercules took Merope, because she was so gentle and never laughed at him. That left three of the Pleiades girls,—Electra, Celeno, and Sterope,—but Draco said: ‘That’th all right. I gueth I can walk with three girlth. I’m long enough!’ How they squealed and giggled! But that was the way they arranged it; and Cepheus and Cassiopeia came at the end of the procession.”

“Where was it going?” asked Pat.

“First, they were going all around the Zodiac to carry greetings to the people who were shut up. They always did it on birthdays, and they liked that part, but it took a good while, and this time Orion was impatient to have it over. He wanted to have them come to his especial share of the party.

“And at last they came in sight of his garden; and Little Bear skipped the funniest prance yet, when he saw what was waiting for them. This was what Orion was talking about the night before, to Lady Moon.” The Princess stopped just long enough to let the Others wonder what it could be.—

“A moonbow,” began the Princess, and the Others said, “Oh-h!”

“A moonbow,” she repeated, “isn’t so gayly colored as a rainbow, but it is shinier, and the most delightful thing you can imagine, to sit on, to see a meteor party. And kind Lady Moon stood with her lantern behind the edge of a cloud, so that the light shouldn’t interfere with the meteors, and held the bow steady, exactly in the best place.

“Cassiopeia declared she never could walk up; but she did—to the top, and sat down, with Little Bear cuddled up by her side with his toes straight out in front of him, between her and Andromeda. The others settled themselves on either side—all except Hercules and Draco. Draco would have taken too much room; and Hercules said:—

“‘I guess I’ll stay here. If that cloud should happen to flop around, that thing would go out like winkin’. I’ve seen ’em do it.’

“The Pleiades girls shrieked, and pretended they were coming down; and Draco said: ‘Never mind. I’ll catth you if it melth.’

“‘You sit still,’ said Orion. ‘That moonbow is there to stay. Lady Moon and I know about that.’ But they never meant to get down; they only liked to make a fuss.—What is it, Kitten?” The Princess could tell, by the way she wriggled, when she wanted to know something.

She held her foot tight and rocked on her tucked-under leg when she asked it: “Was the Bee Baby too young to invite?”

“He would have been rather young for a party; but that wasn’t the reason he didn’t come. This birthday was before there was any Bee Baby. Little Bear was the only child they had.”

“All right,” said the Kitten. “Then what did they do?”

“At last, when they were all settled on the moonbow, Orion went into his garden. He stooped over one of the bushes, very carefully, lest he should rub against some of the others, and gave just the right kind of a pinch,—then, ‘Ah-h,’ said the Star People, as a lovely meteor flew up—up, over their heads, leaving a little trail of gold-dust behind it.

“That was the beginning; and Orion had good reason to be proud of his garden, for each meteor seemed lovelier than the last. They couldn’t decide whether the blue ones were prettier than the red or

the green; or those that flew in straight lines than those that flew in spirals, they were all so beautiful.

“So it went on with hardly a mishap. Almost every meteor was just ripe, and Orion joggled only two so that they went off too soon; and he had come to the last two bushes. They stood side by side and were the finest in the garden; that was why he had saved them for the last.

“‘What are those dogs after?’ asked Cepheus. Orion had left them with Sagittarius, in the Zodiac, for fear of accidents.

“‘Where?’ called Orion, who couldn’t see from the garden, so well as they from the moonbow.

“‘There they come,’ said Cassiopeia, and they all craned their necks to see.

“‘Yap! yap!’ cried the dogs, and on they came; and just ahead of them—barely out of reach—was—? A comet, of course! What else could it be? It was only a scrap of a comet, with a stub of a tail, and how it was scrabbling along!

“It was heading straight by, when it saw Orion standing by his meteor bushes; and what did that bad, mischievous little comet do, but turn square off, with a flirt of his saucy tail under the dogs’ noses, and make directly for the two bushes! Straight after it came the dogs—and three Orions couldn’t have stopped them, they hated a comet so—and rip—smash! they ran right through the bushes, and thirty meteors at once flew up in one splendid blaze!

“Orion’s first thought was that it was a misfortune, and spoiled the end of his party. But Cassiopeia said, as soon as she could get her breath: ‘I think that was perfectly splendid! And you never would have had the heart to send them all off at once, like that!’

“‘Yes, indeed!’ said every one else; and Orion thought so, too.”

“I’d rather,” said Pat. “Wouldn’t you?”

“Much rather,” agreed the Princess. “Who would choose deliberately to have a party fizzle out, when it might go in

THREE ORIONS COULDN’T HAVE
STOPPED THEM

a blaze of glory? It was time to go home, anyway; so they climbed down from the moonbow.

“Oh, hasn’t this been the loveliest party we ever had?’ said Andromeda.

“Yes, it has,’ said Merope. ‘And I know who has enjoyed it more than anybody.’

“Who?’

“Little Bear.’

“Andromeda turned and dropped on her knees beside him to give him a hug, and his eyes twinkled like stars.

“Bless his little heart!’ said Cassiopeia. ‘I wish we could keep his birthday, but nobody knows when it is.’

“But we love him just the same!’ said Andromeda, rubbing his fur the wrong way and ending with a little shake of his nose—and the sparks flew as if he were a garden of meteors himself. And that was really the end of the party.”

The Kitten had something in her mind to do at once when she was perfectly sure the party was over. For that very minute when the Princess came to the end and Pat and Miss Phyllisy began to talk about it, she slipped her foot out from under her to have it ready to walk on. And the next minute, when Phyllisy looked around to see why the child wasn’t talking too, when it was rather especially her story, she was already starting away—and she didn’t care to tell what for.

Because they wondered, and they knew she wouldn’t mind—it was only that she didn’t like to explain—they followed after. When she was clear away, the Kitten began to run, so when they came to the place in the garden where the balsams grew all in a row, she was there and had found a ripe one.

There were very few flowers left, and a great many seedpods, and when they pinched them at the tip—or only barely touched them—they popped delightfully, but there didn’t any star shoot out.

But they pretended there did; and—as Miss Phyllisy remarked—you couldn’t see actual fireworks if you set them off with the sun shining like that.

IX

A SURPRISE PARTY

It seemed to the Others that the Princess was a *long* time coming. And once they had been afraid they wouldn't be ready in time. But they were—too soon, and it was the watching that made it seem so long. They *flew* when they saw her, and hurried her along.

"It's something to surprise you," said Miss Phyllisy.

"We did it all this morning," added Pat.

"Thought of it and gathered them and everything," chattered the Kitten, walking on all sides of them.

"Don't you tell," warned Pat's eyebrows.

"You couldn't guess, could you?" asked the Kitten.

"Now stop; from here," said Phyllisy, "shut your eyes and we'll lead you so you won't see too soon."

So the Princess shut her eyes, and Pat and Phyllisy led her and the Kitten went ahead over the lawn until they said, "Now, open!"

Directly before them was the great wicker chair from the piazza, sitting under a tree. But nobody would have known it was that chair at all—so trimmed and flowery.

There were pink and purple and white ones from the garden, and tall plumes of small feathery ones, that were wild ones, nodding on the back, and all lovely.

"Do you notice what they are?" asked Phyllisy. "We wouldn't have any other kind."

"Do you know why we had that kind?" asked Pat.

"They're *stars*!" cried the Kitten.

“Because you said ‘asters’ meant stars,” said Phyllisy.

“And it’s Cassiopeia’s!—For you!” they all finished. “Do you like it?”

And the Princess reached around and gathered them all into one four-sided hug, because how she loved it she couldn’t otherwise tell. And Cassiopeia’s never had a quarter so many stars. “We didn’t leave one in the garden,—large enough to pick,” said Pat.

“That’s where you’re going to sit to tell the story,” said the Kitten.

“And when you’re ready, we’ll lead you up to it, and make ‘salaams,’” said Miss Phyllisy.

When she had admired more particularly the way they had done it, she was ready, and they went off to the next tree to come back properly, Pat and Miss Phyllisy leading the Princess, and the Kitten holding up her gown behind.

Then the Princess turned around and stood in front of the chair, and the Others stood facing her in a row.

“Salaam alekûm,” said the Princess, bowing very low and saluting with her down-dropped hand from her feet, to her heart, to her forehead, in two scallops.

“Aleûm essalaam,” replied the Others, saluting the same to her.

And to the Princess and Miss Phyllisy and the Kitten it was a kind of game they played, but it was not play at all to Pat. Even the little children said, “My compliments to you,” like that, where she came from.

“This story begins with Perseus and Andromeda sitting in a favorite place of theirs, where three tall poplars grow on the bank of the Starland River,” the Princess announced when she had taken her seat.

“The three sisters that were changed into them?” asked Phyllisy.

The Princess nodded. “Must have been.”

“Is it a real river?” asked Pat. “Like any river?”

“Like all the most beautiful rivers in the world in one, only changed into star-meanings—fireflies winking among the reeds, and fairy trees along the banks, with strange glowing fruit and blossoms

on their shadowy branches. The poplars carry theirs proudly on their tops, like a crown.”

“It’s something Beyond, isn’t it, Dearie?—to understand just what it’s like,” suggested Phyllisy, “you have to know it inside, and stop.”

“That’s the only way,” said the Princess. “It’s gone in the telling—like fairy gold when you touch it. But the river was there in Starland, and there were Perseus and Andromeda having a cosy talk.

“‘What do you suppose ails Little Bear, to make him act so?’ said she.

“‘How does he act?’ asked Perseus.

“‘I don’t see how you could have helped noticing him. It’s ever since my birthday. He hops when he walks, and looks so important; and lately he has taken to going off by himself—nobody knows where. I believe he’s planning something.’

“‘Let’s watch him, and find out what it is.’

“‘Yes. That’s what I spoke about it for. But we mustn’t let him guess we are watching. It would spoil his fun.’

“‘Of course not,’ said Perseus.

“A few nights later, Perseus beckoned mysteriously to Andromeda. She was listening to old Aquarius. She often went to visit him, and it pleased him even more than it bored her, so she liked to do it.

“But when she saw Perseus, she made her escape as quickly as she could, and came to him.

“‘What is it?’ she whispered.

“‘Little Bear has just gone again. I saw him coming toward Orion’s garden. Orion was there, and Little Bear pretended he was going by—not anywhere in particular. Then Orion came out of the garden and went toward Sagittarius’ House, and Little Bear turned in, quick as a wink, and went through and on—down the Milky Way.’

“‘Come, quick!’ said Andromeda. ‘Are you sure you know which way he went?’

“‘Yes. We’ll find him easily enough.’

“Orion had come back to his garden, but they were in such haste they didn’t even see that he was there. He watched them whisk

through, and as they were going out at the farther side, he called to them: 'Did you come to see me?'

"No,' answered Perseus. 'What makes you think we did?'

"Because you are in my garden.'

"We aren't now,' said Andromeda over her shoulder—pushing Perseus ahead of her. 'You don't mind, do you?'

"No. Only you might say good-evening.'

"We do,' she called. 'But we can't stop now.'

"So she and Perseus ran on, and before long they caught sight of Little Bear. They crept cautiously nearer, where they could watch him unseen. He was hunting for something.

"What do you suppose it is?' whispered Andromeda.

"I can't make out—wait—there! What's that he's found?'

"It's a meteor bush,' said she.

"Little Bear stopped by the bush—looked at it—looked around him; then he trotted on—hunting for something.

"They watched him find another bush—and another; and each time look back and forth. It was very mysterious.

LITTLE BEAR STOPPED BY THE BUSH

"He is fixing the places in his mind, so that he can come back to them again!' exclaimed Andromeda.

"That's it,' agreed Perseus. 'I wonder what for.'

"We'll find out.—Be careful! He's coming home.'

"They kept close until Little Bear had trotted by them and was out of sight. Then they went themselves to examine the bushes. But that didn't help them to understand. They were the ordinary kind of wild meteors that never grow very large; and they were still quite green.

"So they gave up puzzling about it, and went back to be civil to Orion. But when he wanted to know why they were in such a hurry, they were so mysterious he thought they had a secret; and he never guessed that the secret was Little Bear's, and one reason why they wouldn't tell was because they didn't know it themselves!

“They began to think they never were going to know, for Little Bear didn’t go off again and gave them no chance to find out.”

“I thought I knew, once,” said Miss Phyllisy. “But I don’t know so well now. Can you guess, Pat?”

Pat shook her head. “No. But she’ll tell us.” And the Princess went on to tell them, in her own way:—

“Cepheus awoke one night, the first of the Star People. As he turned his head quickly, something bobbed against his forehead; and he could see—out of the tail of his eye—something dangling that moved when he did. He took off his crown and looked at it. There was a rather wilted green meteor tucked into it. He knew he didn’t put it there himself, but he didn’t take it out, and while he was thinking about it, Draco woke.

“He gave his wings a flap to see that the joints worked right, and something fell out of the fold of one of them. What should it be but a little green meteor with a very short stem!

“‘That’th funny,’ he said. Then he stuck it on one of the sharp prongs of his wing, and came over to Cepheus.

“‘Thee what I’ve got,’ he said.

“‘So have I,’ said Cepheus. ‘Where did they come from?’

“‘Maybe it’th a joke. Do you thuppoth any one elth hath them?—I’m going to look.’

“‘Cathiopeia hath!’ he called, in a whisper. ‘Right on the arm of her chair bethide her.’

“Cepheus was perfectly willing to have some one else do the running about; so he waited, and in a few minutes Draco came back to him.

“‘Every thingle perthon around here hath one,’ he said. ‘Herculeth’ ith thtuck into the crook of hith thumb where he’th holding hith club; and Perth euth’ hath two thnakes twithted around it on hith Gorgon’th head.’

“But the time was gone by to discuss it quietly, for Cassiopeia was awake. By chance, her meteor was the first thing her eye rested upon.

“‘What is that?’ she said to herself, and picked it up. ‘I’d like to know where that came from. *See here!*’ she called to Cepheus, and her voice began to sound excited. ‘Look at that!’

“He came toward her, and Draco followed him. ‘What is it?’ he asked, pretending not to know.”

“To be funny?” asked Pat.

“Yes. Cepheus was a bit of a wag in his way. ‘Can’t you see?’ Cassiopeia asked impatiently. ‘A little wilted green meteor!’

“‘What of it? It won’t hurt you.’

“‘Of course it won’t! But how did it come here?’

“‘You must have put it there yourself, to decorate.’

“‘Now you know better. Wouldn’t I know it if—Why! *You’ve got one yourself!*’ she almost shrieked.

“‘Have I?’ asked Cepheus, innocently.

“‘There—in your crown!’ and she pointed to it. And Draco could not keep still another second.

“‘We’ve all got them!’ he cried. Then Cassiopeia knew they had been pretending—to make sport of her; and that was the time everybody else had to wake up!”

“It was Little Bear put them,” said the Kitten.

“That was the very person. And Andromeda guessed it at once. But even she couldn’t guess *why*. So she chose to wait a little before she spoke. Perseus must have forgotten, or it took him longer to wake up; but suddenly it occurred to him too. Andromeda pulled his elbow just as the word was at his lips. ‘Don’t say anything,’ she whispered. ‘Look at Little Bear!’

“Perseus looked; and it was hard not to laugh. Little Bear did laugh—in his own way. He twinkled! He was close by Cassiopeia’s chair, and fairly bursting with importance and excitement, but he was so little they quite overlooked him.

“Cassiopeia went straight on talking.

“‘I want to understand it,’ she said. ‘It seems as if it must mean something, and I can’t see one bit of sense in it,—just little green meteors that won’t go off. What are they for?’

“‘Little Bear knows,’ said Andromeda, quickly. She was afraid his feelings would be hurt to hear his meteors spoken of disrespectfully.

“‘Little Bear!’ cried Cassiopeia; and the Star People fell back in a circle and left him in the centre, the twinkles running over his fur as

he laughed inside and shook with excitement.

“‘Little Bear,’ said Cassiopeia, ‘did you do it?’

“‘Little Bear’s eyes danced with delight; then he buried his nose in Cassiopeia’s dress.

“‘Of course he did,’ said Perseus. ‘We saw him hunting for them.’

“‘But what is it *for*?’ she insisted.

“‘I know—I know!’ cried Draco. ‘Don’t you know what night thith ith? It’t the night Little Bear got hith Thtar!’

“‘And he means it instead of a birthday!’ cried Cassiopeia. ‘Don’t you remember? We said we’d keep it if we knew when it was.’

“Andromeda was on her knees beside Little Bear, her arms around him, when Orion and the Pleiades girls arrived—each with a little green meteor—to know what it meant. Then how they did chatter!—a regular Star People’s chorus.

“‘Now, wasn’t that the cleverest Little Bear you ever heard of?’ said Maia. ‘Just think of his picking them all with his little nose, for us.’

“‘And tucking them in where we’d be sure to find them,’ said Alcyone.

“‘I wish I’d seen him traveling back and forth while we were asleep,’ said Orion. ‘How many times do you suppose he went through my garden?’

“‘If we knew how many he brought at onthe, we could tell,’ said Draco. ‘Jutht count how many there are of uth.’

“It seemed as if they never would make an end of petting Little Bear and praising his cleverness, and wondering what he thought they could do with those silly, useless little meteors; but they were careful not to let him hear them say they were of no use. But when they had said it all again and again, Merope thought it was time to do something better.

“‘What shall we do for the party?’ she asked.

“They were troubled then; they would have liked to do something very particular, and it was hard to think of anything without taking time to plan. Cassiopeia advised them to put it off, but—to their astonishment—Hercules objected. He wouldn’t listen to any such word.

“‘We aren’t going to do anything of the kind,’ he said. ‘After that Little Bear has worked like that, and given something to every one of us, he’s going to have his party the same night, and not be kept waiting.’

“‘Very well,’ said Orion. ‘You plan it.’

“‘I will. Maybe it won’t be much; but it’ll be *now*.’

“‘It’s a surprise party, to have you plan it,’ suggested Andromeda. ‘And they’re always fun.’

“‘What shall we do?’ asked Electra.

“‘We’ll go to the Ship,’ announced Hercules, ‘and Little Bear shall be Captain. I guess we can have a pretty good party, if we haven’t been thinking about it.’

“The Star-Ship was across the river; and Hercules often went there, because it reminded him of a voyage he had taken before he was a Star Person, but they seldom went there together. So, only to go was a frolic.”

“Did they go in a procession?” asked the Kitten.

“Yes, just as they did on birthdays, and explained to the Zodiac People how they were celebrating because Little Bear had his Star. He marched at the head, and you can fancy whether he felt proud. They pretended they were a party of adventurers setting out on a cruise, and they took Castor and Pollux along with them.

“They crossed the river by the tall poplar trees and came to the splendid Ship. The stern went up high in a beautiful quirl, and the figure on the prow was the head of a woman.”

“That’s like the Jane Ellen,” said Phyllisy.

“Yes, but the ships were very different. This was the good ship Argo: Captain Little Bear. And they made a wonderful voyage, because they were all good sailors on the Sea of Make-Believe. There were storms and pirates; and they stopped at a cannibal island, off the coast of Borneo, rescued a captive damsel, who was just about to be eaten, and restored her to her parents in Scotland in three shakes of Little Bear’s tail. There never was a captain like him, nor such a happy Little Bear. And when they were tired of thrilling adventures, the Pleiades girls danced, and Castor and Pollux sang songs for them—while the Ship took care of herself.

“On shipboard, when the sea is smooth is a proper time to spin yarns; so, at the end of one of the dances, Maia said: ‘Now somebody must tell a story.’

“‘Hercules,’ said Andromeda. ‘This is his party.’

“‘His surprise party,’ corrected Orion. And they never were more surprised than to hear him say:—

“‘I will. What about?’

“‘Bears,’ said Andromeda. ‘Because it’s for Little Bear.’

“‘All right,’ agreed Hercules. ‘I’d just as soon have it that as anything.’

“They settled themselves around him to hear the story. ‘Now go on—about the bears,’ said Andromeda, giving Little Bear a squeeze.

“‘Before there were any Star People in the Sky, it was full of bears,’ began Hercules.

“‘Little Bears?’ asked Orion.

“‘No. Great, big, horrible bears.’

“‘Ath big ath Major?’ asked Draco.

“‘Bigger—twice over; and bad. They’d go roarin’ and fightin’ around, and they’d eat up a girl—like Taygeta, here—as quick as they’d look at her; but there weren’t any girls here to eat.’

“‘Were they polar bears?’ asked Perseus.

“‘No. They were—were—*China* bears. The worst kind there is. There weren’t any girls then, nor any Star People. There were just bears, and not so many stars as there are now. There were just exactly one thousand; but there were meteors—and the bears liked ’em better than anything.’ (Little Bear gave a shiver of joy, and Hercules went on.) ‘The meteors were big, too, bigger than any you ever saw. When they were ripe, they were bigger than a bear’s head; but sometimes they wouldn’t go off—and that’s what made the bears do what they did.’

“‘What did they do?’ asked Perseus.

“‘That’s what I’m telling you,’ said Hercules.

“‘S—sh!’ said Cassiopeia. ‘Don’t interrupt. *When* didn’t they go off?’

“For the biggest bear’s party. There was going to be a party, and the bears all came; and not one of them would go off.’

“The bearth?’ asked Draco.

“S—sh!’ said Cassiopeia. ‘The meteors, of course.’

“It thounded ath if he meant the bearth,’ explained Draco; but Hercules went on, undisturbed. It was remarkable how he could talk, now he was started. He looked right at Little Bear while he told his story, and Little Bear looked back at him in perfect delight.

“There wouldn’t one of ’em go off,’ he repeated, ‘and that made the great big horrible bears madder than hornets—and they went tearin’ around, and they would have smashed all the meteors and eaten each other up; but there was one bear that was a funny fellow, and he used to make ’em laugh. And they liked that sometimes, when they were tired of fightin’.

“So this bear said to the others: “I’ve thought of something. Let’s have some fun. I know what to do with these meteors.”

“What?’ asked Perseus.

“S—sh!’ said Cassiopeia; and ‘You wait,’ said Hercules.

“So the other bears said: “All right. You tell us what it is.” And the funny bear told ’em what to do, and they all went to work, and they gnawed out the inside of the meteors. And they were bigger than the bears’ heads—so their heads went inside; and they gnawed ’em out until there wasn’t anything left but the thin shell; and they gnawed holes through that in places, besides—just the way the funny bear told ’em to. And it was a cloudy night, and those bears all worked like sixty, and before morning they had just a thousand meteors all gnawed out.

“The next night began by being cloudy too; but about two hours after dark, it all cleared off. The clouds rolled up from one side, all together, like a curtain in front of a tableau. And the first man that looked up at the sky fell right down in a fit, so everybody around had to attend to him. But when he began to come out of it, the rest of them looked up—just to see what the weather was; and every one of ’em yelled right out!’

“Hercules stopped and looked around at his audience. They were listening so breathlessly they couldn’t even ask questions, and he

must have been proud of his success. He paused to enjoy it, until Cassiopeia said, 'Oh, go on!'

"What do you suppose made 'em?' he asked, looking at Little Bear, —'made 'em yell, I mean. In that sky, there ought to have been just one thousand stars, spread around equally; instead of that, there were one thousand *Chinamen's heads*, grinnin' at 'em, over each other's shoulders, all on one half of the sky.' ('Oh!' gasped the Star People.) 'Those horrible bears had popped one star inside of each of those gnawed-out meteors, and arranged 'em like that.'"

("Like the heads on the Chinese plates," whispered Phyllisy, and the Princess twinkled at her with her eyes.)

"Made jack-o' lanterns of them,' said Cepheus.

"Yes,' said Hercules. 'One thousand jack-o'lanterns, because that funny bear said it would be a joke.'

"I should think it was,' said Orion.

"Well, it *wasn't*,' said Hercules. 'At least, it was the poorest joke those bears ever tried. It did for them! Of course, people couldn't stand such goings on with the stars. So they said: "Those bears have got to be cleared out; and we'll have some Star People to take care of our sky." So they picked out some people they knew were good at huntin' wild animals and weren't afraid; and Orion and Perseus and I —and some more of us—came first; and we just cleared out those horrible bears that weren't fit to be here, and made this the right kind of a Starland for us all to live in.'

"Did you drive them, every one, out?' asked Alcyone.

"Yes,' said Hercules. 'At least—almost; but there was just one little bit of a bear that didn't seem at all like the others,'—Little Bear wriggled with delight—'and Orion said to me, "I guess we'll keep this little chap. He seems a pretty good kind of a bear." And I said, "All right. We'll try him; but if he goes to cuttin' up—out he'll go, after the others!'"

"But he didn't!' said Andromeda, squeezing him, 'and we couldn't live without him! Is one single bit of that story true?'

"There's Little Bear, to prove it,' said Orion. And it was not fair to ask; for it was an absorbing story while it lasted, and that's more than can be said for a great many stories," finished the Princess.

“Not yours, Dearie,” said Miss Phyllisy. “Yours are always as good as that—and better.”

“They interrupt just like us, don’t they?” asked Pat.

“Just as we’re interrupting now,” said Phyllisy. “What came next, Dearie?”

She was looking off, over their heads, at the sky beyond the treetops; she looked back quickly, smiling at the Others. “Next, Miss Phyllisy? Not very much. When the laughter and talk about the story had died away, every one sat quiet, a little tired and ready to be serious—and they fell to talking about the Ship.

“Isn’t she beautiful?” said Celeno. ‘Wouldn’t you love to see her sailing?’

“We shall, some time,’ said Orion.

“Do you really believe it?’ asked Maia.

“Surely,’ said Castor. ‘She’s lighter now than she used to be.’

“A good deal,’ agreed Hercules. ‘I measure every once in a while, and she keeps going up—every year a little.’

“Sing the song about it, Castor,’ said Andromeda. But he didn’t, because Draco exclaimed suddenly: ‘It’s going to clear!’

“They had forgotten all about the weather!

“Goodness!’ cried Cassiopeia. ‘I do believe it is! And we’ve all that way to go! Come this second, or we’ll be caught in it!’

“And, just as we’re going to scurry in before that big black cloud catches us, those careless Star People had to scamper, laughing all the way, back to their places, to be there before the clouds drifted away. They were lucky that it cleared so late. All they lost of the party was Castor’s song about the ship. And they knew it as well as he did.”

“But we don’t know it,” said Phyllisy.

Pat twisted her eyebrow and glanced up for an instant. “If we go now, we can’t scurry. It won’t come soon enough. You can tell it.”

The Kitten looked up, too, weatherwise. Then she folded her hands very comfortably in her lap. “It truly won’t,” she said. And the Princess believed her, and leaned back once more in the flowery chair.

“I’d like to sing it to you,” she said, “because it’s such a pretty song, and it explains what they meant by the Ship’s growing lighter.”

The wind of the shower stirred the plumes of asters behind the Princess’s head while she sang; but even when the song was ended they weren’t obliged to scurry. So they waited a little longer for an excuse to scamper, because they wanted to.

THE SONG OF THE SHIP

“I’ll build you a palace of gold, my dear,
With diamond knobs for its doors;
 With banqueting-halls,
 And rooms to give balls,
And thistle-down rugs on the floors.
And other splendors untold, my dear,
Shall be yours. When I once begin
To build the palace, it won’t take long.”

“Oh, when?”

“When my ship comes in.”

“Would you ride in an ivory chariot, my dear,
With steeds that are swift as the wind?
 Six zebras shall stand
 To wait your command;
Then, away!—and leave dullness behind!
Their harness of silk all a-tinkle with bells
Of crystal, makes musical din.
They shall surely be yours, if you’ll say but the word.”

“But *when*?”

“When my ship comes in.”

There’s a Ship that is freighted with heart’s desires;
Fast moored ’midst the stars she must lie,
 Till the last, least weight
 Of greed or of hate
Shall out of her cargo fly.
When the wish of each heart is gentle and kind,
With no taint of a selfish sin,
Then—light as a dream—the buoyant Ship,
The Ship from the Stars shall come in!

X

TRAVELERS' TALES

There came a frost one night, and it was most exciting in the morning to see the bewitchments everywhere. Sometimes it was whole trees and rows of trees solid gold, and sometimes it was only one tiny branch blazing red by itself out of plain green. It was joyful surprises every minute to walk in it. They filled their hands with leaves, more than they could hold, gathered one by one—and each the most beautiful they had found. The Others gave them to the Princess until her hands were brimming; then they filled their own, but they were still for her.

Before they could believe it, they came to the hill that was the round top of the world. It was covered with short grass, very slippery to climb but worth while, for from it they could see World-without-end, and Ocean. There were mountains, far away, on three sides, and on the fourth—also far away—was the Ocean, set up on edge. The sharp top line of it came opposite, but everything was below them, with long slopes going wide, and they were up in the middle, directly under the deep blue sky. And they could see frost-bewitchments over all the land.

On the face of the very blue sea were tiny white flecks that were ships. They looked as if they were climbing up, or slipping down, on account of the sea being set up on edge.

“Suppose this,” said Miss Phyllisy to Pat and the Kitten (the Princess was looking off, thinking: “What if the finest ship afloat were coming?” and the Others wouldn’t disturb her). “Suppose this: Wouldn’t it be funny if a ship went straight up; and it climbed up until it came to the edge, and then kept going straight on ahead—off into the air?”

“But it couldn’t,” said Pat. “It has to stick right on; and then it keeps rounding over until it is curling under. It *does, truly*,” she insisted, though they didn’t contradict her, “because I’ve done it—when I came; and it goes right along and nobody would know, but still it is curling under; and you would think it was going straight ahead, because—I ought to know, because I’ve been clear under, halfway around; and it’s night there now. Now that is really true. *Honestly!*”

“That is the way it is, honestly,” said the Princess, for she had heard all they said. “You can’t get off. Straight ahead you go and seem to go and keep going; and back you come to the place you started from—if you go long enough, because you’re tied down to it. But it’s a beautiful old Earth to travel on, isn’t it?—and Starland to see besides.”

“Orion could sail straight off in a Star-Ship,” said the Kitten.

“Of course the Star People could go anywhere,” agreed Phyllisy. “How far could they go, truly straight ahead, Dearie?”

“To the other end of Nowhere, and be no nearer the end—I should say. But they don’t go, because their Law says they are to stay in their own Starland.”

“Then they’ll be there at night,” said the Kitten.

“Where would they go?” asked Pat.

“To other Starlands,” said the Princess. And that was a surprising answer, because not one of them supposed there could be any others. “The Star People say there are,” the Princess assured them, “and I should think they ought to know.”

“But how would they know, if they never go to them?” Miss Phyllisy objected.

“Partly by seeing. For instance, there are the Far-Away Isles—two little filmy streaks of light away down in the Southern sky, that look like scraps of the Milky Way. The Star People often talk about them; and from time to time some bit of news comes trickling in about outside places, nobody knows how—vague rumors. It made a story one time, news coming that way,” she ended, looking very attentively at a leaf in her hand, and turning it over to examine the back, as if she didn’t know what was expected of her!

But the Others were immediately disposing of their leaves where they would be safe under stones, hopping and chirping like birds in a bush, to settle themselves on the smooth ledges of rock that came through the hill where it was thin on top, and were toasty warm from the sun. And the Princess watched them, smiling to herself, but not saying a word until everybody was comfortable.

“As I told you,” she began, “there are often bits of news floating about in Starland—a sort of impression of something, very vague, that comes—nobody knows how,—comets, possibly. And nobody would depend on what they said.”

The Others were very sure *they* wouldn’t.

“Neither would I,” said the Princess. “And perhaps that isn’t the way it comes. But it comes some way. Sometimes vaguer and other times more distinct. This time, all at once, there sprang up a real, definite rumor: They were to have a visitor!

“Orion was the person who first spoke of it to the Pleiades girls. They were dancing a pretty, twisty dance when he came strolling along and called to them:—

“‘Are you practicing to be ready for company?’

“They didn’t catch what he said, and Taygeta would have stopped, but Maia wouldn’t let them. So Orion waited and watched while they untangled and finished in a straight line; and he might have gone far to see anything so pretty as they were, in their gauzy gowns all aglimmer with tiny stars.

“‘Now you may talk, if you like,’ said Maia. ‘Alcyone often makes a mistake in that, so I wanted to go straight through it.’

“‘What dance was that?’ asked Orion.

“‘That’s one of the “Sailor’s Knots,”’ said Taygeta. ‘There’s such a lot of them!’

“‘Yes,’ said Alcyone, ‘and they are a good deal alike and entirely different. Any one might be mixed. You have to tie them up, first, and then untangle them.’

“‘She can do it perfectly well when she wants to,’ said Maia. ‘All our family know about ocean things; but any one can make her giggle and be silly.’

“‘What was it you said as you came?’ asked Merope, quickly. She had tact about changing the subject.

“‘I don’t remember. Nothing much,’ said Orion.

“‘Yes, it was,’ said Taygeta. ‘Something about company.’

“‘Oh, yes. Haven’t you heard?’

“‘Heard what?’

“‘Tell us—quick!’ They all spoke together; and they should have known better than to let Orion see how eager they were. It gave him a chance to tease.

“‘Why—some one. Oh, I’m sure you must have heard. You don’t want me to tell it all over again?’

“‘Yes, we do—’

“‘No, we haven’t—’

“‘Now, don’t be so mean—’

“‘Don’t ask him,’ said Maia. ‘He’s dying to tell.’

“Then they said not another word, but stood in a lovely row, locking arms and balancing on their toes, and looked at him; and Orion looked back at them. Then he pushed his lion’s skin up over his shoulder and spoke to his dogs:—

“‘Come, Sirius! We’d better go and get ready before the Stranger comes,’ and he turned to go. But there were seven girls to stop him, and they were around him in a second.

“‘No, you shall not—’

“‘Now, Orion—’

“‘Oh, *please*—’

“‘What is it?’ they asked; and he *was* dying to tell!

“‘I can’t tell you so very much,’ he said. ‘But they say we are to have a visitor from the Far-Away Isles.’

“‘Who says so?’

“‘Who is coming?’

“‘When will he be here?’

“‘What is he coming for?’ They were like seven interrogation points!

“‘I don’t know,’ said Orion. ‘I don’t remember who told me—and I’m not quite sure what. Everybody but you seems to know about it.’

“‘Did you ever know any one so tiresome?’ asked Maia. And six Pleiades girls said they never had, and ‘We’ll have to ask some one else.’

“So, off they went to try to find out what was going to happen; and how anybody knew about it.

“It was a curious thing, but by the time they had talked with the other Star People, they were in the same state as Orion and all the others. No one could tell quite where he had heard it, and no one knew exactly what he had heard; but every one had a perfectly clear impression that a visitor was coming from the Far-Away Isles.

“When they tried to talk a little more definitely about him, they did not altogether agree. Still, there was a strong idea that he was young and splendid and handsome, of course; some one very distinguished in his own country.”

“A prince, for instance?” asked Phyllisy.

“More than likely.—

“What do you suppose he is coming for?’ asked Maia.

“‘Perhapth, becauth he’th going to all the Thtar-Countrieth,’ said Draco. ‘He couldn’t do that unleth he came here.’

“‘That’s so,’ said Hercules. ‘We’re one of ’em.’

“‘You’re mistaken,’ said Cepheus. ‘He’s heard about the prettiest seven sisters in Starland, and he wants to take his choice of them back with him. You’ll have to polish up your stars, girls, and dance your best for him.’ (That was his idea of a joke!)

“‘Indeed we *won’t*!’ said Electra, with her nose very high. ‘We care nothing about him.’

“‘No,’ said Alcyone. ‘We won’t do one thing!’

“‘Now, don’t you put nonsense into their heads,’ said Cassiopeia to Cepheus. ‘He’s just coming to be friendly, and because he can; and I think it’s lovely. We are going to do everything possible to give him a fine welcome; and the girls will look just as pretty as they can, to be a credit to us all.’

“‘I wish Merope’s star were brighter,’ said Celeno. ‘Do you think there is anything we could do about it?’

“There was one thing they could do: they could talk! And they began that very minute. It seems hardly possible that people could talk so much about so little! No one had thought before that Merope was not quite as she should be. If her star was faint and vanished when one looked hard at it, that was the way of Merope’s star, and that was all there was about it.

“But now, with the thought of stranger eyes, they began to feel that perhaps it was extraordinary that she should be different from her sisters. And the more they thought and talked about it, the more important it seemed to be.

“Every one had some suggestion to make, except poor Merope herself; she never had given it a thought, and now she declared she didn’t care.

“‘But *we* care,’ said Maia. ‘It isn’t creditable to our family. What will the Stranger think, to see you different from us?’

“So they talked—and talked—”

“Why didn’t they give her a star?—like Little Bear?” asked the Kitten.

“They would have given it, gladly, but Merope wouldn’t take it; and, what is more, none of them had a star of the right kind to give.”

“They’re terribly particular about them, aren’t they?” said Phyllisy.

“They have to be,” answered the Princess. “But not in the way they were now. Those foolish people went on talking, and fixed their eyes and their thoughts on the star until they quite lost their senses, and it seemed the most calamitous thing that could happen—that the splendid Stranger should come from the Far-Away Isles and see Merope with the puzzling star above her forehead.

“One night, at this time, Perseus came along by the river, and there he found Merope sitting alone. She was thinking so deeply she didn’t see him until he was close beside her.

HE FOUND MEROPE SITTING ALONE

“‘Where are the rest of you?’ he asked.

“‘Dancing somewhere; I don’t know where. I came here to think.’

“That sounded pretty sad to Perseus, and he tried to say something to cheer her.

“‘I wouldn’t worry about that star. You look all right.’

“‘I wouldn’t mind for myself,’ said Merope; ‘but I’m not going to disgrace my family.’

“It was not long after this that the six Pleiades began to say: ‘Where is Merope?’ and then the other Star People said: ‘Where can Merope be?’—until the whole Sky seemed one great Question; and the nearest it came to an answer was that Perseus had seen her sitting on the bank of the river, quite downcast, but plainly resolved to do something.

“Cassiopeia was so worried, she lost her temper.

“‘I hope you girls are satisfied *now*’ she said. ‘Persecuting that poor child!—and all for vanity. If anything has happened to her, I don’t know how you’ll forgive yourselves!’

“‘You were in it, too,’ observed Perseus; and she was.

“‘I know it,’ she said, after a pause. ‘That’s how I know how they ought to feel.’

“‘I don’t see how anything *could* have happened to her.’ said Orion.

“‘Then where is she?’ asked Perseus. And that was what no one of them could answer; and Starland wasn’t a happy place.”

“They could think she’d run away,” suggested the Kitten.

“Or drowned in the river,” said Miss Phyllisy in a tragic voice.

“They couldn’t bear to think it was anything serious; but it was a mystery where she could be. They wandered from place to place, asking one another what it could mean. And everywhere they ran across Little Bear, roaming uneasy and disconsolate: even old Major was restless.

“‘You don’t suppose the Stranger came and carried her off to the Far-Away Isles, do you?’ asked Andromeda.

“‘No, I do not,’ said Orion, very positively.

“‘She wouldn’t have gone! She wouldn’t have left us,’ Taygeta declared.

“‘Suppose he *took* her?’ insisted Andromeda.

“‘*Nonsense!*’ said Cassiopeia.

“But when the night was gone without any sign of her, and a cloudless night followed and there were only six girls in the group where there should have been seven, what could they think? What could keep one of the Star People from her place, unless something really had happened to her? And when they had borne her absence for two cloudless nights, their hearts had grown heavier and heavier, and they had almost given up any hope of seeing their dear Merope again.”

“And they couldn’t hunt for her when it was clear,” said Phyllisy.

“No. They could only stand still and brood over it for two endless nights.

“The third night came, cloudless still. The daylight grew dim until it was nearly gone, and one after another, each star glimmered in its place. When——

“Who was it?—coming—far down the Sky?

“The Star People neither spoke nor stirred while Merope came swiftly and slipped into her place just as the last gleam of daylight faded away. And if that didn’t show how faithful and obedient they were, what could?”

“They had to keep all their questions in them,” said Pat.

“Yes, for a while. But about midnight thick clouds spread across the sky; and then Merope might have answered twenty questions at once, if she had had so many mouths.

“‘Where have you been?’ and ‘Why did you go?’

“‘Has anything hurt you?’

“‘Didn’t you know we would worry?’ That was Cassiopeia.

“‘If you’ll listen, I’ll tell you all about it,’ said Merope. ‘But you all talk at once.’

“‘We won’t,’ said Cassiopeia. ‘Be quiet, everybody! Tell us this minute. Who took you?’

“‘Nobody. I went myself.’

“‘That’s not the way to begin,’ said Orion. ‘Where did you go?’

“‘I went where the stars are made.’

“‘What did you do such a thing as that for?’

“Merope’s arm was around Little Bear, as he sat close beside her, and she drooped her head until her chin touched his sharp little ear and bent it over.

“‘I wanted a new star,’ she said very softly. ‘Wait—I’ll tell you all about it. I thought you were ashamed of me, and I didn’t want to disgrace you; and I thought and thought until I made up my mind to go where they were made, and get a new one.’

“‘But how could you be gone from your place?’ asked Maia. ‘Don’t you know it’s been clear weather?’

“‘Yes,’ said Merope. ‘But I knew my star was so dull it wasn’t likely I’d be missed. I’m not very important.’

“‘Yes, you *are*—just as important as any of us,’ said Taygeta.

“‘And we’ve been almost crazy, missing you,’ said Cassiopeia. ‘Even Major had the fidgets. I think our feelings ought to be considered.’

“‘I know it. I’m sorry now. I didn’t think of that.’

“‘But tell us what you did,’ said Orion. It seemed almost impossible to keep them to the subject.

“‘I will. You know the place—off that way,’ and she pointed over the river. ‘I knew all I had to do was to keep going straight on until I came there. So I slipped off quietly, when you were all busy.’

“‘If I’d seen you start, you wouldn’t have gone,—unless I went too,’ said Hercules. ‘It wasn’t safe—a girl all alone.’

“‘But what happened? Did anything frighten you?’

“‘No. Only the dark, and cold.’

“‘*Dark!* Was it really *dark*, Merope?’

“‘Well—I never heard anything like *that!*’ said Cassiopeia.

(“The reason they were so astonished is because it never is dark in Starland. There is always the starlight.” The Princess answered the question the Others didn’t ask, except by looks. “Oh—h!” they murmured.)

“‘Yes, it was,’ said Merope, ‘part of the time. Not at first. After I crossed the river I went straight on for a good while; it was about like this,’ she waved her hand. ‘It was all right until it was dark—’ Then she stopped talking just at the most interesting place.

“‘Oh, go *on*, Merope!’ said Alcyone. ‘Where was it dark?’

“I don’t believe I can explain it. It came all at once—everywhere—as if I had walked off the edge—into the sea; only there wasn’t any sea. There wasn’t anything!’

“There was *you*, wasn’t there?’ asked Perseus.

“Yes. But I knew there wouldn’t be, long.’

“I wish you would explain things as you go along,’ said Cassiopeia.

“I’ll try,’ said Merope. ‘But it’s very perplexing. It was perfectly dark; you never saw any dark like it—’

“You can’t *see* dark, ever,’ said Orion. ‘That’s what it is.’

“That’s what I meant. You couldn’t see it; even my own little stars were out’ (she glanced at her dress), ‘and it was cold—*deathly*! and not a sound—and I didn’t know which way anything was. I was just colder and colder, and still—and I knew, somehow, I was going out.’

“Out where?’ asked Hercules.

“Nowhere,’ said Merope. ‘Like a candle.’

“Goodness! Weren’t you frightened?’ asked Andromeda.

“Yes. And I tried to think what to do, but I couldn’t. I kept growing colder and stiller—I couldn’t move. Then I thought about all of you, and there came a little warmth inside, and I knew the cold couldn’t reach me.’

“Because love was stronger than cold or dark?’ suggested Andromeda.

“Yes; that was it. Nothing could put it out.’

“Then how did you find your way out?’ asked Cepheus, after a minute.

“That was easy. When I thought of you and home, something pulled me; so I knew which way you were.’

“Then you came back,’ said Taygeta.

“No, I didn’t. I couldn’t come without the star. And I thought if I kept going in the direction I started, I’d come to the right place. So I kept on, the way I didn’t want to go.’

“Now, I call that downright clever!’ said Draco. ‘It thowth what it ith to uthe your reathon.’

“Merope always was the brightest one of our family, really,’ said Maia. ‘What did you do then?’

“Kept on. And after I came out of the dark I was not very far from the new stars.’

“Oh, tell us about them!’ said Cassiopeia. ‘How are they made? Tell us every single thing!’

“I can’t,’ said Merope. ‘I’m not good at understanding such things. There were a great many—all colors. I think they are made of something very light—and spread out—it was like fog, in places; then, in other places, it was whirling—I don’t know what makes it begin to whirl: then it seemed to thicken up, when it whirled—’

“How, thicken up?’ asked Orion.

“I can’t explain; but the star-fog collected and drew together into a ball, and that was the star. There were all sizes and kinds. Sometimes there was one in the centre and more little stars whirling around in rings outside it. And trails of fog—I never could describe it. You would have to see for yourself. And they sang. Oh, it was beautiful!’ Then she stopped again, to recall it; and that was trying to the others, because she certainly did not make things very clear to them.

“Now, Merope,’ said Cassiopeia, ‘you give your mind to it, and describe things a little better. I wish I’d gone myself. I could tell what I’d seen and heard. What was the singing like?’

“It wasn’t like anything,’ said Merope. ‘That’s why I can’t tell you. It was quite, quite beautiful. Every star—when it whirled—seemed to have its own song—’

“Like tops?’ asked Perseus.

“Perhaps, a little—’ said Merope, doubtfully; ‘and all the songs made one; and—I don’t know what it said, but I think—’ then she hesitated.

“Go on!’ said Maia.

“I think it said, they were glad they were alive.’

“Of course,’ said Cassiopeia. ‘Then what?’

“Then it was time for me to come home.’

“Didn’t you dread coming through the dark place again?’ asked Electra.

“Yes. But I knew I could get through. And it wasn’t so hard as going; all I had to do was to come the way I wanted to. So I just came.’

“‘But, Merope,’ said Andromeda, ‘where is your new star?’

“Then every one of the Star People looked at Merope, and saw—what not one of them had noticed before, they were so glad to have her back—her own, strange, vanishing star still glinted above her forehead.

“‘Couldn’t you find the right kind?’ asked Taygeta.

“‘Weren’t you allowed to have it?’ asked Orion.

“‘Did you lothe it, coming back?’ asked Draco.

“‘Answer, Merope!’ said Cassiopeia.

“Merope looked confused, and she bent over Little Bear once more (he was a very convenient Little Bear), but she had to speak.

“‘There were plenty of stars,’ she said slowly, ‘and I might have taken one, but when I saw them—all so splendid—they didn’t seem like me; and then I thought you all loved me, and I knew you didn’t care really, for the star; and I liked my own best. So—I just came home.’

“‘We’re glad, Merope,’ said Andromeda. ‘We love you best like this.’

“And every one of the Star People felt the same.”

“We do too, Dearie,” said Phyllisy. “That was the best ending.”

Pat and the Kitten wriggled and nodded, and the Princess smiled at them, but she held up her finger for them to wait for the very end.

“Then it was Merope’s turn to ask a question. But it didn’t occur to her until a little later.

“The sisters were dancing—the very prettiest and most twirly of the ‘Sailor’s Knots’—and Merope was the centre of the twist, when she stopped short and asked:—

THE SISTERS WERE DANCING—
THE VERY PRETTIEST AND MOST
TWIRLY OF THE “SAILOR’S
KNOTS”

“‘When will the Stranger be here?’

“The Star People looked at each other in complete astonishment. They had forgotten all about him.

“‘He isn’t coming,’ said Orion, after a pause.

“‘How do you know he isn’t?’ asked Hercules.

“‘The same way we knew he *was*,’ answered Orion.

“‘I’d jutht like to know who thtarted that thtory,’ said Draco. ‘I believe it wath a comet!’

“‘So do I,’ said Cassiopeia.”

“Truly was it?” asked the Kitten.

“What do you think?” asked the Princess.

Then all the questions they had kept inside of them began to come out, and they lasted down the hill—very jerky, on account of having to run or slip—and most of the long way back. But there was time beside to gather more leaves to take the place of those they had forgotten and left safe under small stones on the hill-top!

There were thousands and thousands of them fallen, too beautiful to pass over, so it was just as well.

XI

TORQUILLON'S LAIR

Precisely when the clock had struck three there came three raps on the door. (There had been shuffling, whispering noises, and a squeak like a mouse before, very small, but different from the sound of the rain against the windows.)

“Come in!” said the Princess; and there entered the very ones she expected to see, because it was an appointment.

The first thing, she wanted to ask them if they didn't think it would be comforting to have a fire in the fireplace, to look at.

The Others instantly thought it would. Miss Phyllisy shivered her shoulders when she thought it, and the Kitten shivered hers when she saw Miss Phyllisy. But Pat did not shiver, because none of them was truly chilly, only it was such a disconsolate day, with cold gray coming in at the windows and the corners dark, and large doleful brown leaves hanging sodden from a branch and beating back and forth in the rain.

The Princess was sure they would feel that way about the fire, and she thought they wouldn't mind the trouble of starting it themselves, it was so jolly to see the first blaze. And they didn't mind in the least; they loved it.

It was laid ready—large logs and small pieces to kindle it, but they were very busy for several minutes, changing the small pieces as Miss Phyllisy wanted them, because she had a talent for fires.

When it was arranged to suit her, the Kitten struck the match and lighted the paper—and they all stood quite still while a flame stole around, weaving in and out, and the blackened paper drew up where it passed. A round puffing smoke rose above and sharp red tongues

flipped out at the top—a fine crackle began to sound—then came a broad roar. The next minute flames were wrapping around the great logs, the whole length of them, and blazing up the chimney, and the room to the farthest corner and across the ceiling was full of moving firelight, with little fires winking from everything shiny in it—even the raindrops chasing down the panes. It was surprising, the change it made. Now, the miserable day outside only made them more cosy and contented, here by Miss Phyllisy's beautiful fire, where their Princess sat ready to tell them a most especial story that she would love to have them hear. But, as Prudence said, it wouldn't be wise to begin while the fire needed attention, and there was no hurry. So they watched the first blaze pass off; then the logs settled and fell apart, and they poked them and put on one more, and Pat set the fender in place.

The new log sputtered a minute before the blaze began to eat it. They watched a few minutes longer, to be sure it was all right; and it was. The Princess said she never had seen a more satisfactory fire,—and likely to last.

So Pat and the Kitten curled up in the pillows on the broad couch in the corner near the fireplace, and Phyllisy sat on a stool at the end of the hearth, where she could reach the poker without interrupting, if it should be necessary. The Princess was in her large chair, drawn up a little way off. The rings on her clasped hands glittered, and there was a big rosette on the toe of her slipper, pointed out toward the glow. The firelight shone in her eyes and they looked very joyful, and her lips were smiling before she began to speak.

"The Jane Ellen," said the Princess softly, making the name long, as if she liked to say it, and the Others wriggled as if they liked to hear,—“the Jane Ellen was a very busy ship, and made important journeys, carrying splendid cargoes from port to port; but she sailed so fast when she was going straight on that the Captain always had time to stop on the way to attend to any little thing that needed it, or to be obliging and kind—like the time when they arranged about the Sailor's Star.

“Now if you had sailed on the Jane Ellen on one of the most interesting cruises she ever made, you would have come to a place where a long point of land ran out for miles into the sea. The point ended in a great rock that looked like the head and shoulders of a

lion, coming out of the forest that covered the hills back of him, and roaring because he couldn't get across to the point of a very large island that lay in the sea opposite. There was another great rock that made the point of the island (as if they were two gate posts), and this rock was the head of a man, frowning and dark; and one would hardly know which he was angriest with; the Lion, or any one who tried to pass through the gateway.

"Besides the large island, there were a great many smaller ones—like a flock of ducks—and between them the water was shallow. So ships that wanted to pass that way had either to go through the dark Gateway, between the Roaring Lion and the Frowning Man, or else turn away to the south and sail miles and miles out of their course, around that whole flock of islands. And a great many ships did want to go that way; for it led to a land where the pearls were as large as gooseberries and all lovely tropical things grew because they couldn't help it.

"It isn't pleasant to have even a rock man look as if he would like to bite off one's bowsprit, or crowd one over into the jaws of a roaring lion; but they were only rocks with a good passage between, and no captain who was in the least bit of a hurry would have hesitated one minute, or even thought of sailing around those hundreds of islands on their account. But every captain who sailed the sea knew that, once inside that Gateway, he would come into the haunt of Torquillon, the Waterspout. And that was reason enough for any ship to go miles the other way."

(Torquillon was a stranger to the Others, but they nodded as if they thought it was an excellent reason. The story was beginning in a way that made them very quiet, not wanting to interrupt.)

"Now when the Jane Ellen passed that way, if the Captain were not on deck and the Mate was commanding the ship, he liked to sail close to the Gateway instead of taking the shortest way to go around the islands, because he was not so old as the Captain, and he never had had so much as a glimpse of Torquillon.

"This time that I've begun to tell you about, the Captain was taking a nap, and Taffy had things his own way as they came into that part of the ocean.

"How's the wind, Quartermaster?' he said to the man at the wheel.

“‘Sou’west-by-south, sir,’ answered the Quartermaster.

“Taffy looked up at the sails and the clouds and out over the sea—as if he were making up his mind, instead of knowing all the time what he meant to do! Then he said to the Quartermaster:—

“‘Keep her as she is until we reach this point,’ and he made a little mark on the chart, right near the large island; ‘then we’ll make a long run to the south.’

“‘Ay, ay, sir,’ said the Quartermaster. But when the Mate turned away to walk for’ard, he drew up one side of his face so it was all bias, and winked at the Bos’n!

“Taffy went into his own cabin, and came out again with a long spy-glass in his hand. He walked to the foot of the foremast-shrouds and rested the spy-glass in the ratlines to steady it, and looked toward the place where the Gateway led into Torquillon’s Lair.

“And the Jane Ellen was sailing so fast that he hadn’t been looking long before he saw a little gray hump on the edge of the water, that he knew was the large island. Then he put down the glass and waited a little while. The next time he looked, both the island and the mainland showed plainly, with a little, little gap between.

“But he never could spend much time doing what he liked without being interrupted, so very soon he put down the glass and went below to see why Tom Green hadn’t polished the binnacle.

“While he was gone the Jane Ellen kept sailing on; and by the time he came back the Gateway showed even without the glass. And when Taffy had the glass steady once more and looked through it, he saw a dark speck on the water, outside the Lion’s head. He looked for a moment, then he called, ‘Bos’n!’

“‘Ay, ay, sir,’ said the Bos’n, coming up. Taffy handed him the glass.

“‘See what you make of that?’

“The Bos’n took the glass and looked carefully. Then he rubbed the small end with a loose fold of his shirt, and looked again.

“‘It looks to me like a brig, sir. She’s hove-to; and she’s lost some of her riggin’,’ he said.

“Taffy took the glass, and while he was looking, who should come along but the Captain! He had just stepped out of his cabin, and was

surprised to see the island so near.

“Why are we here, Mr. Morganwg?’ he asked. ‘Aren’t we out of our course?’

“We are, sir, a little,’ said Taffy. ‘But that’s because the wind is sou’west-by-south. I thought we’d make better time this way.’

“And go by that Gateway, too,’ said the Captain; and he looked at the Bos’n and laughed. The Bos’n laughed too, so Taffy felt a wee bit foolish, and he thought he’d rather talk about something else. So he said, ‘There’s a ship lying over there, in distress.’

“Let me see,’ said the Captain, taking the glass. ‘Sure enough! We must go and see what is the matter.’”

“Everybody knew he wanted to go, didn’t they?” said Pat.

“Everybody,” said the Princess. “But they were all eager, now, to go to the rescue.

“So the Jane Ellen sailed on fast, and drew nearer and nearer to the brig; and when they were near enough to see, she was a sight!

“Some of her rigging was gone, and halyards and bowlines and braces and all kinds of ropes and sails were trailing in the water; and a flag of distress flip-flip-flipping in the breeze over it all.

“It was the Reindeer brig, and her captain was a friend of the captain of the Jane Ellen. So when they were hove-to, beside the Reindeer, the Captain—with the Mate standing by—was very glad to welcome his friend on board.

“Now, tell us all about what has happened to the Reindeer,’ he said.

“The captain of the brig was a short man with bright black eyes, and he *hated* to wait for anything. When he wanted a thing, he wanted it that very minute; and when he sent a man on an errand he often went after him before he had time to come back, because it seemed so long to him. His name was Gryller, but Skipper seemed to suit him exactly, so he was very seldom called Captain Gryller.

“When he came aboard the Jane Ellen, he could hardly wait for the proper greetings to be over before he began to tell his story. He spoke very fast; the words pattered, clean, and there sounded a great many *rr*’s in them.

“‘It’s that Waterspout!’ he said. ‘He’s played the mischief with my rigging!’

“‘What? Torquillon?’ asked the Captain.

“‘Certainly. Did you ever hear of any other waterspout hereabouts? I didn’t. He took my main-to’gal’n’mast at the first whack!’

“‘But where was he?’ asked the Captain.

“‘Chasing *me*!’ said the Skipper, indignantly.

“‘Out here?’ asked the Captain, perfectly surprised. And he looked at the Lion and the Man, to see if Torquillon were peeping out.

“‘No!’ exclaimed the Skipper, loudly. ‘Inside.’

“‘*Inside!*’ said the Captain, even louder. ‘What were you doing there?’

“‘Going through, of course!’ shouted the Skipper. ‘Do you suppose I was trying to anchorr?’ and he almost danced on the deck, he was so impatient.

“The Captain looked at him. Then he said in his ordinary voice:—

“‘We’re neither of us deaf, and there isn’t a gale of wind; and will you please begin at the beginning, and tell me what you did do?’

“‘That’s just what I was trying to do; but you interrupted.’

“‘Because you began in the middle.’

“‘How could any one begin in the middle? The place where you begin is the beginning!’

“‘Well, what made you go through there, anyway?’ asked the Captain. (He wasn’t quite sure whether the beginning was the middle or the end or the other end, he felt so tangled up.)

“‘I didn’t go through,’ insisted the Skipper. ‘Didn’t I just tell you?’

“‘Then, will you tell me what you did do?’

“‘I starrrted to go.’

“‘Why?’

“‘Why does a hen run across the road?’ asked the Skipper.

“‘To get to the other side,’ answered the Captain; and, ‘Because she can’t go ’round it,’ said Taffy.

“‘Which is it?’ asked the Captain.

“Both,’ said the Skipper. ‘I wanted to get to the other side, and I didn’t want to go around all those islands. It’s ridiculous, with that good passage through, to go miles out of the way because of that Waterspout—and I hadn’t the time to spend.’

“I don’t see that you’ve saved very much,’ said the Captain.

“I should have—if I’d gone through. It’s all very well for you; but every ship is not as fast as the Jane Ellen. Anyway, I made up my mind to try, and I got halfway through before that fellow caught me. But then he did smash me up like kingdom-come! and I had to box-haul her, and come back.’

“What do you want to do now?’ asked the Captain.

“I hoped a ship would come along and let me have some extra spars to make the Reindeer ship-shape; and then—I’ve got a Plan;’ and he stopped, and looked very mysterious and important.

“Are you going in again?’ asked Taffy, hoping he would say Yes—and he did.

“Yes, I am. And you’re going too.’

“I don’t know whether I am, or not,’ said the Captain. ‘What for?’

“I want to bottle up that Waterspout, and clear that passage so ships can go through there safely.’

“You don’t want to do much!’ said the Captain. ‘Have you thought how you could do it?’

“Yes, I know all about it. It’s no use to run him down; for he just spills and comes up again; and you can’t tie him up. But I noticed, about halfway through the passage there is a little island. It’s hardly large enough to call an island—just a flat-topped rock, not much above the water. In that rock there is a deep hollow. Now, I think we might lead Torquillon such a chase that he would trip over the island and spill into the hole. Then we could cover him over, quick, with a big tarpaulin, and afterward roof him in solid, so he never could get out. Don’t you think that would be worth spending a little time to do?’

“Yes,’ said the Captain. ‘If we could do it.’

“We can’t, of course, if we don’t try!’ said the Skipper. ‘Will you do it?’

“‘One thing at a time,’ said the Captain in that sensible way that is so annoying when one has an idea. ‘We’ll rig the Reindeer first—and consider about it.’

“And that was all he would say, though it seemed as if the Skipper couldn’t stand it, not to have it settled that very minute. But the Captain lent him some extra spars and his ship’s carpenter and some men, and they set to work; and before they knew it, almost, the Reindeer was ship-shape again, and looked as good as new.

“Except the Jane Ellen—that was a full-rigged ship anyway—there wasn’t a prettier little brig on the high seas. Captain Gryller had had her painted brown, dappled with lighter spots on her sides and two large light spots on her stern, because he meant to call her the Reindeer. And he didn’t care whether that was like a reindeer or a moose or a stag or a wapiti, or none of them; he liked it that way.

“While they were working, the Captain considered. And the more he considered, the more he didn’t know whether it would be one bit of use; but the less he wanted to go sailing away around all those islands without trying to bottle up that waterspout and clear the passage for all the ships that should come after.

“And Taffy never considered a minute. He didn’t know, and he didn’t much care, whether they could bottle up anything, or not; he thought only, some way or other, he *must* go in at that Gateway between the Lion and the Man, and see what was inside. So when the Captain called him into his cabin to consult with him, I think you can guess what kind of advice Taffy gave.”

(The children looked as if they could very easily. They would have given the same themselves.)

“When the Skipper came aboard for his answer, he found there was no persuasion needed; but they could begin at once to lay their plans very carefully for what they should do when they were once inside. The Skipper drew a chart, the way he remembered it, and they laid their course, just how they would sail, and settled everything so that there could be no mistake.

“At last the Captain said: ‘There! I think that’s all. And we can make a start the first thing in the morning.’

“‘*To-morrow morning!*’ shouted the Skipper. ‘Shiver my timbers! Do you think we can wait forever?’

“‘Nobody wants to wait so long as that,’ said the Captain. ‘But it’s too late to go in to-day. You don’t want to be caught in there in the dark.’

“‘Who’s going to be caught?’ asked the Skipper. ‘I’m not. And we’re going in *to-day!*’

“‘We’re going in *to-morrow,*’ said the Captain, just as firmly. The Skipper turned huffy.

“‘I’d like to know who’s planning this,’ he said.

“‘You are,’ said the Captain. ‘And I don’t think it’s much of a plan— whoever made it! And if you’re so set, we’ll go now,—the time may be as good as the plan,—but it’s too late!’

“‘It’s nearly the longest days in the year,’ said the Skipper. As if that wouldn’t have made it all the easier to wait for morning!”

“Then it was a wrong argument,” remarked Phyllisy.

“Yes; but he didn’t think long enough to see it.

“So, because he was so impatient, just after three bells of the second watch of the afternoon had struck, the Jane Ellen and the Reindeer weighed their anchors and made sail, and advanced side by side, like two white swans, to the Gateway that led into Torquillon’s Lair.

“There were always clouds hanging over it; and they lowered dark over the Frowning Man, so he scowled harder than ever as they passed out of the sunshine that made their sails shine white as snowdrifts, into the shadow of the cloud that suddenly turned them gray.

“But they sailed boldly by, close under his nose; and Taffy looked curiously, to see what sort of place they had come into.

“It was a fine open stretch of sea. The mainland curved back from the point into a great bay, so large that the point at the farther side of it was only a distant gray streak. The flock of islands lay at the right, and separated it from the wide ocean. High mountains rose up on the mainland, and the islands, too, were like mountaintops; but graceful palm trees and bananas and other lovely green things grew among the craggy rocks.

“Now, as they passed into the shadow of the great dark cloud and sailed under the nose of the Rock Man, a little wind, that lived in a

cave on the large island, cried:—

“Whooooooo-uuuuuu-eeeEEE—!’ and struck, first the Jane Ellen, then the Reindeer, on the starboard bow, so that they heeled over to port; but they went steadily on.

“Then another little wind, that lived in a rocky gorge on the point of land back of the roaring Lion, began to whisper:—

“Wh-h-i-i-is-sssss-sh-sSH—!’ and blew the Reindeer and the Jane Ellen along from over the stern. The sails shivered and the sailors swung the yards; then the sails filled and the ships went right on.

“Another wind lived in a beautiful valley, where a waterfall came tumbling down, like a white ribbon, over the edge of the cliff, and while the first two winds were still whispering and crying, this wind woke up and shouted:

“Whoooooooooooo-eeeeeee-ooooop!’ and came tearing over the green water, splashing it up in white foam under his feet as he ran to meet the Jane Ellen and the Reindeer, that were swinging on, down the wide channel.

“Then, wakened by the whispering and shouting and crying, other little winds came racing out of their crannies on the islands and in the mountains, and all scurried after the Reindeer and the Jane Ellen, until they couldn’t tell, to save them, which was the lee and which the weather shore! And these winds were little, only compared with the great winds that travel over the whole Earth. They were large enough for this land-locked sea; and the Jane Ellen and the Reindeer found them all they cared to meet. But the two ships were sailed so well they rode weatherly under storm-sails; and by continually trimming sails and bracing yards and luffing and doing numberless other things that sailors know all about—and you and I don’t understand a bit of—they kept on their course down the channel, looking on every side for Torquillon, the selfish Waterspout who claimed it for his own, and wouldn’t let any one pass through. As if there weren’t room for him and them too!

“They had not gone far before the whistling of the winds, like barking watch-dogs, roused Torquillon; and he raised his head to see who was coming into his waters.

“The Captain was sailing the Jane Ellen himself, so Taffy was free to watch; and far ahead, just under a black cloud that hung very low,

he saw the dark water rise in a mound.

“That was only for a moment, and it dropped back again. But the winds had seen their Master; and—as if he had called them to him—they rushed from all sides, whistling and crying and whooping, and left the Jane Ellen and the Reindeer with sails drooping in the sudden calm, while they circled to the spot where Torquillon’s head had pushed above the water.

“And as they reached him he rose with one powerful leap from the waves, and caught the dark sagging cloud, pulling it down behind his head, swinging and twisting as the winds flung themselves upon him, and filled the cloud that floated like a banner and served for a sail. And then he caught sight of the two ships, and the chase began!

“Down the channel he came flying; and the Reindeer and the Jane Ellen waited, side by side, their sails hanging idly in the dead calm, and the sailors all standing by the braces to be ready when the winds struck them. And now Taffy had his wish; for no one ever had a better chance to see a monstrous Waterspout.

“As he whirled and twisted, his long trailing robes wound close about his feet, then curved out again, smooth and black in the water, like the curves of a lily-petal. They looked quite black to Taffy; but as the light struck through the edges and thin folds, he saw that they were green—like the green water under him. And following after, leaping, snarling, jumping at the edges of his robes, the white foaming waves joined in the chase, and came rushing, whirling down on the two motionless ships.

““Wh-iiii-sss-shoooouuuuuu-eeeeEEE—!” shrieked the winds, and the next instant Torquillon would have had them—but just in time the sails filled; and off flew the Jane Ellen to the right, and off darted the Reindeer to the left, and left him hanging in the wind, because he

DOWN THE CHANNEL HE CAME
FLYING

couldn’t chase both at once, and didn’t know which to follow first.

“But it didn’t take him long to decide. He had seen the Reindeer before; and it made him very angry to see that she had come back as good as new. He swung his black banner high over his head, so that it

caught the wind from the large island, and tore after the white spots on the stern of the brown Reindeer, that showed plainly although it was beginning to be dusk.

“The Captain had said it was too late to go in that night; and here was their work just begun, and very little more daylight to do it in, but he didn’t say, ‘I told you so,’ even to Taffy; but did his best to carry out the plan.

“When Torquillon was almost within reach of the Reindeer, he glanced aside and saw the Jane Ellen slipping along down the channel, and seeming about to escape him altogether. With a howl of rage he turned and flew after her instead. Then the Reindeer had her chance, and she turned down the channel as if she were going to escape. So, crossing and turning, the two ships dodged under the nose of that angry Waterspout, who was in such a rage it was very easy to bewilder him.

“And always they drew him nearer and nearer to the flat little island with the hollowed rock where they planned to seal him up forever, when he should have tripped into it.

“The winds shrieked and screamed from all sides, and the clouds pressed down, thick and black. But just before they reached the island, the sunset light broke through a narrow rift in the clouds, and shone through the gap between the Lion and the Rock Man; and all the foaming crests of the waves and the edges of Torquillon’s robes turned to fiery gold; and down his dark sides and in the black curves about his feet were blood-red streaks; and the great sable banner over his head burst into crimson flame!

“Then the Jane Ellen passed the island, and Torquillon tore after in his crimson fury, never heeding where he went—and the rock directly in his path. The Reindeer scudded after, the sailors on both ships standing by to lower the boats, with the wide tarpaulin ready to cover him over. And the Skipper fairly danced up and down on the deck in his excitement and delight to think how near they were to success. And Torquillon was almost on the rock!—when up went his feet, and on went the flaming scarlet sail—with the purple hollow on the side away from the sun—and carried him clean over, without even touching it; though the waves that followed crashed and boiled to the very top, and covered the rock from sight!

“Then the clouds closed in—black and heavy—and night had come almost in a minute. And there were the Jane Ellen and the Reindeer in the middle of an inland sea, without a star to guide them, the winds raging and shrieking about, and a furious Waterspout at their heels!”

The Princess stopped—as if that could possibly be the end of it!

“Oh, Dearie! You can’t have the heart to leave them like that,” Phyllisy remonstrated. “We’re so excited.”

“I’m pretty excited myself, Miss Phyllisy,” said the Princess. “I’d like to rest a few minutes. What should you say to a few chocolates? You might look at the box, at least, if you don’t care to eat them. It’s a very pretty one.”

“Where is it?” asked Pat.

When she brought it to the Princess, they all crowded around her chair and admired the outside of the box. Then she lifted the cover slowly, to show the chocolates packed in rows of different shapes with crimped paper, and little tongs to pick up the kind they wanted. And the Princess let them go down to the under layers to see if they were different.

Still, they were very anxious to go on and find out what happened; and when the Princess had rested and Phyllisy had attended to the fire—it would have needed it soon any way—they went back to their old places and the Princess began again.

“You know how Old Sol stays a little while every year in each of the Houses of the Zodiac?”

“It happened, when he glanced through the long slit in the clouds at Torquillon and the two ships, that he was making his visit to the Gemini Brothers; and that was very fortunate, because it gave him an idea.

“It was only a glimpse he had of that chase, but it was enough to show him that it was going to be hard times for the Jane Ellen and the Reindeer unless something were done for them before it was too late. And Castor and Pollux were right at hand and able to do it, so it was the most natural thing that he should send them.”

“And they’re specially for sailors—friends,” remarked Pat.

“Specially; Sol knew it. ‘Now’s your chance,’ he said, ‘you ground-and-lofty tumblers. Tumble right down, or that wicked Torquillon will have the Jane Ellen and the Reindeer made into kindling wood—if they don’t run ashore first, in the dark.’

“The darkness came so suddenly on the ships when the clouds closed down in the West, that it was bewildering. And they were so surprised and disappointed that Torquillon had not fallen into the trap they had laid for him that they hardly knew what to do.

“Fortunately, the same darkness that confused them confused him, too; but it was not long before the chase began again. Now the ships had no thought of anything but of how they should escape: and whether it was better to go back or forward they didn’t know. The darkness grew blacker and blacker, and they flew wildly back and forth—until they had no idea where they were, nor where the entrance lay, and could only guess where Torquillon was by the shrieking of the wild winds.

“Once he passed so close to the Reindeer that he nipped off her flying-jib-boom. But the flying jib was not set, of course, in that weather, so it didn’t much matter; and he carried a trysail on the Jane Ellen out of the gaskets with a crack like a cannon. Still they were managing to escape him, when, as the ships happened to be close together, and Torquillon was raging down the channel some distance away, trying to find them in the darkness, Taffy heard a sound—different from the screeching of the winds in the rigging—and it seemed to come from the foremast of the Jane Ellen.

“As he listened to the sound, like music, he looked up at the place from whence it came, and above the ends of the topsail yards were two glowing flames of pure white fire that threw a faint light on the deck, and the music grew clearer to his ears.

“And in a moment, all the men on both ships were looking and listening. But some could hear only the wind in the rigging and see two little lights hovering about the mast. Some could see and hear a little more; and Taffy,—because he was a Welshman and had a young heart,—more plainly than all, saw, standing lightly on the yards, high, high in the air, the twin brothers, Castor and Pollux! Young and strong, and with star-tipped spears in their hands and helmets on

their heads with the white, flaming star streaming from the top like a plume.

“The Captain, who had a young heart, heard the music of their singing, though he couldn’t tell the words, but he looked at Taffy—and his eyes were shining, so the Captain knew he understood, and that the beautiful Star People wanted to save them, and that Taffy was the one

STANDING LIGHTLY ON THE
YARDS, HIGH, HIGH IN THE AIR,
THE TWIN BROTHERS CASTOR
AND POLLUX

to help them do it. So he said softly, ‘Mr. Morganwg, you may take command.’

“Taffy only nodded, he was watching and listening so intently. And the Shining Brothers were singing:—

“Follow through the darkness
Where the Lion roars,
Where the Rock Man, scowling,
Marks Torquillon’s shores;

“Through the Gateway flying,
From his fury free,—
Follow, Taffy, follow
To the open sea!

“They pointed their star-tipped spears and Taffy gave his orders: and fast and faster sped the Jane Ellen through the black waters, the Reindeer following, led by the gleaming flames on her topsail yards—though the Skipper couldn’t hear a sound of the music nor see anything more than the little lights, because he wasn’t a Welshman, and if he had a young heart, he was too impatient to listen to what it said.

“Torquillon, too, saw the little flames of fire, and saw how fast they flew, and he knew the ships were escaping. And with the winds howling and shrieking (they were hoarse by this time, you may believe, for they had had no rest for two hours), and the waves snapping at his heels, he came tearing once more up the channel—after the Jane Ellen and the Reindeer, that were flying for their lives!

“And when they reached the Gateway and slipped by the roaring Lion’s jaws, Torquillon was so close he couldn’t stop himself, and dashed his whole height against the towering rock!

“It was like the crash of a hundred great breakers at once on a rocky beach; and he slipped and splashed down the streaming rock, into the sea at the foot of it, while the Jane Ellen and the Reindeer passed safely out, to the singing of the Star Brothers:—

“Follow, follow safely,
To the open sea!

“Then the two flames were gone from the topsail yards, and the ships dropped anchor to wait for morning.

“But don’t you think the Star People were interested when Castor and Pollux came back to their House in the Zodiac?

“They were all waiting for them, and they listened, quiet as mice, while Pollux told them (with Castor correcting him when he didn’t tell it straight) how they had saved the ships and escaped from Torquillon; and what a smash and tumble he had had at the end.

“‘And that’s the end of *him*,’ said Cassiopeia.

“‘Bless you, no, it isn’t!’ said Castor. ‘He doesn’t mind a spill like that. Of course it shakes him up, but he’ll come up like a jack-in-the-box.’

“‘Uglier than ever,’ remarked Orion.

“‘Then he ought to be ashamed of himself,’ said Cassiopeia.

“‘I don’t thuppoth he had any bringing up,’ said Draco. ‘He doethn’t theem to have any mannerth.’

“‘Not a manner,’ said Pollux. ‘And he’s too old to learn.’

“‘But he can’t be allowed to be rude and selfish where polite ships want to sail,’ said Castor. ‘Taffy will wait, and we are going back to-morrow night to teach him that.’

“‘How?’ asked Perseus.

“‘We want to talk with you about that,’ answered Castor.

“So they talked and they talked, and I’m not going to tell you what they said; but this is what happened after they had finished talking.

“Orion went striding away on his long legs, with his sword jingling at his side and the two dogs capering before him, until he said, ‘Come to heel, Sirius! Heel, Procyon!’ So they came to heel and the three walked fast along the Milky Way, through the star daisies, and at last they came to the edge of a great dark hole. It might have been a small lake, but there was no water in it, or, if there was, it was so deep down that it could not be seen. It seemed bottomless. No star-flowers grew around the bleak margin; and you wouldn’t wonder if you had been with Orion and felt the cold that came from the black emptiness which he looked into.

“He didn’t spend any time looking, but he knelt by the edge, with Sirius and Procyon watching every motion from either side, where they stood almost tumbling in. And they saw that Orion held in his hand two small, curious-shaped flasks. He took from his pocket a ball of moonbeam cord, and made a slip-noose in the end of it and put it around the neck of one of the flasks. Then he lowered it into the depths beneath him, and he and the dogs watched it go down—down—until it was swallowed up in the dark: but still he lowered the fine shining cord that was like a thin shaft of light. After a time he began to draw it up again. And when he had the flask in his hand, it was full of liquid, clear as crystal.

“He put in the stopper—quick—and lowered the other. When that was filled he wound up the cord, and he and the dogs came striding and capering back to the Gemini’s House. They were looking for him, and Orion handed them the flasks.”

“They couldn’t go themselves unless Sol told them, could they?” asked Pat.

“Of course not, the Zodiac People,” said Phyllisy. “I’m perfectly wild to know what’s in those flasks, but I don’t want you to tell, Dearie.”

“She will,” said Pat.

“Of course, at the right time. Please go on, Dearie.”

Then the Princess went on:—

“Very early the next morning Captain Gryller came aboard the Jane Ellen; and you never would have guessed, to see him, that it was his plan that had been such a failure, and that they had come so near losing the ships and their own lives because he had insisted on going

in so late. When he stepped on deck he looked about him, and was surprised to see that they were not making ready to sail.

“‘I’ve just come to say good-by,’ he said to the Captain. ‘We had a narrow escape last night, didn’t we?’

“‘Yes, we did,’ said the Captain.

“‘Well—we’ll have to go around the islands after all. I’ve wasted too much time already, and I must be off.’

“‘Not yet,’ said the Captain. ‘We’ve only half done our work—not even that—and I’m not going to leave until that channel is clear.’

“‘But what’s the use?’ said the Skipper. ‘We’ll just risk our ships for nothing. You saw how we failed last night!’

“‘That’s because we didn’t do it right,’ said the Captain. ‘Who helped us last night?’

“‘The Star People.’

“‘Exactly. And they’ll help us again. And the Jane Ellen is going to stay here to do it!’

“‘Then the Reindeer will stay, too,’ said the Skipper.

“That day the sailors and every one had a good rest, for it was very hot and the fight with Torquillon had been hard work, and they wanted to be fresh to begin again. So all they did was to make the Jane Ellen and the Reindeer ship-shape, and wait for night and the Star Twins.

“When twilight came, the captain of the Reindeer saw the little flag fluttering from the peak of the Jane Ellen that said it was time to sail; and the two ships moved forward side by side, like soft gray birds in the gathering darkness.

“When they reached the Lion and passed into the shadow of the clouds that hung low and black over Torquillon’s Lair, it looked as if they were about to enter an enormous cavern, and night fell all at once, but not quite dark. For far as eye could see, the water was covered with a pale greenish glow—like phantom light. The crests of the little waves crinkled and crisped up in faint flames, and the smoke of the Sea-fire rose where the forefoot of the ship cut through the black water and turned it back in ripples and streams of light.

“All sailors know the phosphorescence, and Taffy had seen it often, but never so much nor so beautiful. And over this lake of pale,

floating light the two ships sailed side by side, and the Mate of the Jane Ellen was in command.

“As they passed fairly between the Lion and the Frowning Man, the Wind from the Lion’s side cried: ‘Mmmmmmm-whooooo-uuuuu-eeeeEEE—!’ and rushed out upon them. Then all the other winds awoke and soon were screaming about them; and with their voices Taffy heard the sound of music—and there on the topsail yard, poised light as two dragonflies, stood the lovely Star Brothers with the streaming white flame-feathers in their helmets.

“They pointed straight ahead with their star-tipped spears and sang their brave song:—

“Onward, and onward, fly fast o’er the foaming wave,
Onward, still onward, with never a fear;
Meet the foe boldly, heed not though the wild winds rave;
Over the Sea-fire points on the bright spear.

“Onward, still onward! Torquillon in all his might
Whirling comes, swirling, hot rage in his heart!
Vainly they fight, who ’gainst Right and the Stars fight,—
Cold shall he be ere his rage will depart.

“Onward, then, onward—press forward to meet him;
Torquillon comes raging!—and coldly we’ll greet him!

“The straining ropes of the rigging hummed and sang with them as if the ships were mighty harps; and they held their way steadily down the channel in spite of the frantic winds, to meet Torquillon; and what they were to do with him, they hadn’t an idea, but they were sure Castor and Pollux would show them when the time came.

“That was a tremendous spill Torquillon had, just as he thought he had the two ships that had defied him, where he could crush them the next minute. So he was furiously angry when he gathered himself together at the foot of the rock; but at least he had taught them he was not to be trifled with! He took himself off, far down the channel; and there he sulked and made himself perfectly miserable because he couldn’t decide whether he would rather have the ships come back, so that he could crush them, or have them so frightened they never would try it again, nor let any one else.

“He had fallen into a sulky sleep when the watching winds cried, ‘WhiiiiisssssshhhhhhoouuuueeeEEE—!’ and he wakened and raised his head as the winds from beyond him rushed by to meet the two ships.

“He gave a scream of mingled rage and joy that called the winds to him, and, springing up, caught the floating banner that hung, always ready, over his head, and came whirling down the channel, black and furious and terrible to see! And the two ships came on steadily, never swerving.

“The Sea-fire ran up and down, in and out of the folds of his trailing robes in streaks of pale light, and curled on the edges of the waves that foamed about his feet. So they came nearer and nearer—

and then they were so close he towered above them, higher than the tops of the masts—and the next instant it would have been too late—when Castor darted like a dragonfly to the fore-royal yard of the Reindeer, and pointed to the left with his spear, and at the same moment Pollux mounted to the fore-royal yard of the Jane Ellen, and pointed to the right with his spear, and the two ships turned to the right and the left, and Torquillon went straight on to pass between them before he could stop or turn himself.

“And as they swept by, the Twins raised their arms; and each held in his hand a curious-shaped flask, filled with a liquid, clear as crystal.

“They flung it out, over Torquillon! and as it came from the mouth of the flask, it spread and pushed and billowed, on and on, pulsing and crowding in clouds of vapor; and the air grew cold—cold—so chill it seemed no living thing could stand against it.

“The winds cried: ‘Ughhhhhooooouuuuughhhhhh-h—’ and fled back to their caves. But they carried some of the cold with them, and the monkeys and cockatoos shivered and sneezed in the trees as the frost-needles pricked them. And some of them had bad colds the next morning.

“And as the ships swept by, almost within reach, and the vapor poured over him, Torquillon shrieked with rage and loosed his hands from his banner, to catch them. It floated off; and Taffy, looking back from the Jane Ellen, and every one on the two ships saw their enemy stand, his hands still lifted above his head, and the drapery of his robes hanging stiff about him—shining and glittering in the calm moonlight like diamonds and emeralds and sapphires—no longer a terrible Waterspout, but a glorious Iceberg, frozen to his hot, angry heart!

“And all the air was full of finest diamond frost-needles—drifting—floating—slowly settling about him and over the two ships—until every spar and rope was coated with hoar-frost, and the sails and decks shone like silver; but the Star Twins were gone.

“Then all the clouds drifted away, and the dark blue sky of the tropic night arched over Torquillon’s Lair, with the throbbing stars looking down; and the most beautiful thing they saw was that

wonderful Iceberg—all his rage gone—calm and shining in the tranquil sea.”

The Princess’s voice ceased. There was no sound, only a long-drawn breath through the room, as if great music had just come softly to a close.

She began again in a different voice—talking: “But the Captain knew it never would do to leave him there; for he would melt in the hot sun and be as bad as ever; though he was frozen harder than any ice he ever had seen. So they didn’t wait even for morning, but fastened ropes around him and set off to tow him North. They didn’t mind if it took a month—it was such a good thing to do. They carried him far up toward the North Pole, and left him frozen fast in the ice. And he will never get away!

“Now ships pass freely through the wide channel that was Torquillon’s Lair; and since he has gone the clouds have left too, and the Rock Man has forgotten to frown, and if the Lion roars, it is a roar of welcome. The little winds caper and frisk around the ships until the channel seems the pleasantest spot in the ocean, and they are sorry to leave it.”

The Kitten had her foot already off the edge of the couch, but she stopped, because the Princess leaned forward, with her finger up, to say one more word, and mischief began to dance in her eyes. “And,”—said the Princess, “if any one asks Taffy if he ever saw a Waterspout, his eyes shine and his white teeth, and he says, ‘*Sure!*’”

Then she opened her arms and the Kitten ran into them.

“I’ll ask him,” she said. “Will he tell me? Will he come soon?” She asked it so quickly, it was all one question, and her arm around the Princess’s neck pulled her head forward where the glow from the burned-down fire was on her face. It grew suddenly like a rose.

“I shouldn’t be one bit surprised if he did,” she answered.

“But, Dearie-*Dearest*,” said Phyllisy, perched on the arm of the chair and playing with the Princess’s fingers, “I wish you’d just explain this: You said it was so long ago—Taffy and all—nobody can remember when. I thought it was—not exactly ‘Ancient,’ you know, but ‘Once upon a time’?”

“That is perfectly true,” said the Princess, soberly. “But you know —”

“Yes?” prompted Miss Phyllisy.

“You know, Taffy had a young heart? It seems to me, he must have been always.”

That kept everybody silent for a moment, thinking about it. Then Pat’s voice came from among the pillows in the dusky corner of the couch: “Well—I hope to goodness he’ll like us!”

“I don’t see how he could help it,” said the Princess.

EPILOGUE

*Come back, Little Katharines, still for a time to our glamour-world,
Ere our ship's prow touches the daylight shore,
And her sails are furled.*

*The sun has gone on his way o'er the mountain's rim;
The mighty Earth-shadow creeps slowly up from the East,
And the heavens grow dim.*

*See, in the soft gloaming the stars steal forth into sight,
Till over the dun Earth-plain broods the deep blue vault
Of the jeweled night.*

*They are there, dear hearts; each one of our Star Folk blest
Faithful and motionless stands, borne on by the firmament's
Ceaseless roll to the West.*

*They listen, they wait, expectant. For what? In the vast,
Deep hush of the night their heart-beats throb in the stars.
At last,—*

*In the Northern heavens a gleam of wavering light
Floats upward—dies. Then again—pulsing up, ever stronger,
More bright.*

*With the first, faint gleam, a shadow of sound—a sigh
As a breath over harp-strings—sets trembling the stars
As it passes through Earth and Sky.*

*(Too fine for our bodily ears, little sisters, but clear
To the blessed to whom all beauty is one. Only look;
You shall hear!)*

*Fuller toned now, and deeper, as broadening pennons of light
Uprush from below the horizon; the heavens are alive—
Filled with splendor the night!*

*What do the Star People see that is hid from our eyes,
Where the ramparts of hills rise black in the North
'Gainst the flame of the skies?*

*Ranks beyond ranks of radiant Spirits! They stand
In dazzling circles;—a golden censer swinging
From each one's hand.*

*From the Shining Ones' censers, soft swinging, there float and ascend
Streams of pure radiance; and one with their rhythm, the deep
Swelling harmonies blend.*

*Like music heard faintly in dreams—first afar—it draws near,
Till the triumphant chant sweeps into the Star People's hearts;
Then, joyous and clear:—
“The Heavens declare the glory—” There follows a gush,
A bursting in spray of the sound, as it pours like a wave
In its o’erwhelming rush!
The splendor ineffable blinds them; their hearts fill with awe
And reverence—they know not for what; all the Power that they know
Is their Law.
Yet Law is obedient to this Nameless One,
Whose glory all Creation sings; and shall be
While the Ages run!
“Might, Power, Dominion—” Still the censers swing;
The Heavens declare, in light upsurging still,
The glory of the King.*

*May not the Star Folk, little sisters mine,
Faint shadows though they be—and still obedient
To Law divine—
Declare His glory, Whom they may not know;
And in the Northern Lights His worship see,
As we below?*

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TRANSCRIBER'S NOTES

1. P. [230](#), added EPILOGUE heading.
2. Silently corrected typographical errors and variations in spelling.
3. Retained anachronistic, non-standard, and uncertain spellings as printed.

*** END OF THE PROJECT GUTENBERG EBOOK STAR PEOPLE

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