

THE ANT MOUNTAIN

A STORY FOR CHILDREN FROM THE GERMANS

There was once a most beautiful maiden named Victoria. Her hair was of a golden hue, her eyes were blue as the heavens, her cheeks like milk, her lips red as cherries, and her slight, graceful form was supple as a reed. All mankind rejoiced when they beheld the beautiful maiden, but not so much on account of her surpassing loveliness as because of her great industry, and her exceeding skill in weaving and in all kinds of embroidery.

All her linen, her dresses, and even her Sunday stockings she had embroidered with flowers. Her little hands could not rest for a single moment; she worked while walking in the fields and meadows, as well as in the house. All the young men were in love with the beautiful Victoria. She, however, paid no heed to them; she did not wish to hear of love or marriage; she had no time for that, she said, she must look after her mother.

But the hour at length arrived when her mother fell ill, and all Victoria's love was unable to chain her to the earth. The beautiful maiden had to close the beloved eyes, and was left alone in the little house now so desolate. For the first time in her life, Victoria's little hands lay idle in her lap. How could she work? She had no longer anyone to work for. One day, shortly after her sad loss she was sitting on the doorstep looking sorrowfully into the distance, when her attention was attracted by something long and black that moved rapidly over the ground towards her. She looked with curiosity at the moving mass, and saw it was an end less procession of ants. From whence they came she could not discover, the wandering host stretched so far. At a short distance from the cottage they halted, and formed an immense circle round about the astonished maiden. Several of them, apparently the leaders of the host, then stepped forward, and said:

"We know you well, Victoria, and have often marvelled at your industry, which closely resembles our own, a thing we very rarely find among mortals.

"We know also that you are alone in the world, and therefore beg you to come with us and be our queen. We will build you a palace that shall be larger and more beautiful than any house you have ever seen, only first you must promise to remain with us all your life long, and never again return to dwell among men."

"I will willingly remain with you," replied Victoria: "I have nothing to keep me here except my mother's grave; that I must visit from time to time to plant it with fresh flowers."

"You shall certainly visit your mother's grave, but you must speak to no one on your way, otherwise you will be untrue to us, and our vengeance will be terrible."

So Victoria went away with the ants. They journeyed on for a long time, until at length they reached a place where it seemed suitable to build her a palace. Then she saw how much less skillful she was than the ants. She could never have erected such a building in so short a time. There were galleries one above the other, leading to the spacious rooms, and over higher and higher; at the summit of the building were the rooms for the larvae, which had to be carried out into the sunshine, and brought in again swiftly should raindrops threaten. The bed chambers were adorned in the most costly manner with the leaves of flowers, which were nailed to the walls with the needle-like leaves of the fir tree; and Victoria learned to spin cobwebs; these formed the carpets and the coverings for the beds.

But though all the rooms in the palace were beautiful, their beauty was as nothing when compared with the apartment destined for Victoria. Many passages led thither, thus in a few seconds she could receive news from every part of her kingdom, and these passages the industrious little ants daily strewn with the leaves of the crimson poppy to form a rich carpet for the feet of their beloved queen. The doors were rose leaves fastened together by a silken thread, so that they might open and shut without noise. The floor of Victoria's chamber was covered with a soft, thick carpet of forget-me-nots, into which her rosy feet sank, for she did not need shoes here: they would have spoiled the beautiful carpet. The walls were covered with ornations, honey-suckle, and forget-me-nots, cleverly woven together; these flowers the ants also constantly renewed, and their freshness and sweet perfume were almost overpowering. The curtains were of the leaves of lilies, spread out like a pavilion; the couch which the diligence of the little ants had stored up in many weeks' work was composed entirely of the dust of flowers, and over it was spread a coverlet of Victoria's spinning. When she lay there wrapped in slumber she was so beautiful that the stars would have fallen from Heaven could they have seen her. But the ants had placed her chamber in the centre of the palace, and guarded their beloved queen most closely and jealously. There was not one of them would have ventured to look on her while asleep.

In the ants' little kingdom every thing was most perfectly arranged. Each ant strove to do more work than the others, and to be the one who should best please the industrious queen. Her orders were carried out with the rapidity of lightning, for she never required too much at a time or ordered impossible things, while her commands were issued in such soft, tones that they sounded more like suggestions or kindly advice, and one sunny glance from her bright eyes was deemed by all a more than sufficient reward for any amount of toil.

The ants often said they had the sunshine continually in their house, and exulted much in their good fortune. To show their gratitude to Victoria they built her a platform, where she could enjoy the fresh air and sunshine should her room feel too small and close. From thence she could see the height of the palace, which already resembled a mighty mountain.

bleeding heart whilst they were piti- lessly stung to death by the others. The next morning she was up before any of the ants, and astonished them by building up one of the galleries alone. That she had at the same time looked out into the forest, and also listened a little, she did not even know herself. She had scarcely returned to her chamber, when some ants came running in in great consternation: "The wicked man of yester day is here again, and is riding round our mountain!"

"Leave him alone!" said Victoria, the queen, quite calmly. But the heart of Victoria the gentle maiden beat so loudly she was obliged to draw a deep breath.

After this a noticeable unrest took possession of her; she wandered about much more than formerly, complained that the larvae were too little on the sun, and carried them out herself, but only to bring them in again just as quickly; moreover, she often contradicted herself when giving her orders. The ants could not tell what had happened to her, and ex- erted themselves doubly to make everything good and beautiful; they also surprised her with a new and magnificent curtain, but she scarcely looked at it, and quite forgot to praise.

The tramp of horses feet could be heard daily round the mountain, but for many days Victoria did not show herself.

She was now seized with a longing for the society of mankind such as she had never before experienced. She thought of her village, her little home, her mother, and her mother's grave that she had never visited.

A few days later she told her sub- jects that she intended visiting her mother's grave, whereupon the ants, terrified, asked if she were no longer happy with them that she remembered her home. "Oh, no," said Victoria, "I shall only be away for a few hours. I will be with you again before nightfall." She forbade any of them to accom- pany her, but a few ants followed her at a distance without her noticing them. Arrived at the village, she found every place so altered that she knew that she must have been away a long time. She began to reckon how long it would have taken the ants to build the great mountain in which she dwelt, and she told herself that it must have taken years. Her mother's grave was no longer to be found, it was so overgrown with grass, and Victoria wandered about the church- yard weeping bitterly because this also had grown strange to her. Victoria sought for the grave she could not find. Then close beside her sounded the voice of the king's son. She wished to flee. But he held her fast, and told her of his great love in such soft and tender words, that with bent head, she stood still and listened. It was so sweet to hear once more his voice speaking of love and friendship. It was only when dark- ness had quite fallen that she remem- bered she was a queen forgetting her duty and not a forsaken orphan, and that the ants had forbidden her to hold any communication with mortals. Swiftly she fled from the king's son. But he followed her until they came quite close to the ant mountain, when begged and implored him to leave her. This he at length consented to do, but not until she had promised to return the following evening.

She crept in softly and groped her way carefully along the narrow pas- sages, but often paused and looked round anxiously, for she seemed to hear strange sounds, as of a swift tripping and whispering all around her. It was, however, only the an- xious beating of her own heart; for as soon as she stood still all was quiet. At length she reached her chamber and sank exhausted on the couch; but no sleep visited her eyes. She felt she had broken her promise, and how could she be any longer respected since her word was not sacred? She tossed restlessly to and fro. Her pride revolted against secrecy; still she hesitated to reveal her adventure of yesterday, for she knew the ants, their fierce hatred, and their pitiless punishments. Oftentimes she raised herself on her elbow, and always she seemed to hear the swift tripping of many thousand feet; it was as if the whole mountain were alive.

As soon as she felt the approach of morning, she raised the flower curtain to hasten out into the open air. But how astonished was she when she found the opening completely blocked up with the needle pointed leaves of the fir tree. She sought a second, a third, and so on all the openings; but in vain, all were alike entirely filled up. Then she began to call aloud, and, behold! immediately, through many thousand invisible openings, the ants came in in crowds.

"What is to go out into the open air," she said, sternly. "No, no," replied the ants, "we cannot let you go out, else we should lose you."

"Do you then no longer obey me?" she asked. "Oh, yes, in all things except this one. You may tread us under your feet as punishment; we are ready and willing to die for the welfare of the community. The honor of our be- loved queen must be preserved at all cost."

Victoria bent her head, and tears streamed from her eyes. She im- plored the ants to give her her liberty;

the stern little creatures silently, and with one accord, departed, and she was left alone in the sweetest chamber. Oh, how poor Victoria wept and lamented, and tore her beautiful hair; then she began with her delicate fingers to tear her way out, but, alas! all that she tore away was as swiftly rebuilt, and, at length she threw herself on the ground baffled and exhausted. The ants then re- turned, bringing her the sweetest flowers, nectar, and dewdrops to quench her thirst, but of her com- plaints they took no notice. Fearing that her lamentations might be heard by the king's son, the ants built the palace ever higher and higher, until at length it became a mountain that covered far above all the mountains around, and it received the name of the Ant Mountain, which name it still retains.

The king's son has long since ceased to wander round the mountain, but the unfortunate maiden has never ceased to weep, and when the stillness of night reigns over the forest, the sound of Victoria's weeping may be heard to this day.

Card of Thanks.

The Sisters of St. Joseph in charge of the House of Providence desire to express their sentiments of gratitude and obligation to all who concurred to make their recent picnic a success. Special thanks are due to the ladies, by their untiring efforts procured refreshments, and the gentlemen, for their unforgotten ardor so ably worked up the amusements.

Appended are the receipts from the different parishes:

Table with 2 columns: Name and Amount. Includes Our Lady of Lourdes, St. Basil's, St. Helen's, St. Joseph's, St. Mary's, St. Michael's, St. Patrick's, St. Paul's, St. Peter's, Admission and other sources, Total, Expenses, and Net.

SLEEPLESSNESS is due to nervous excite- ment. The delicately constituted, the financier, the business man, and those whose occupation necessitates great mental strain or worry, all suffer less or more from it. Sleep is the great restorer of a worn-out brain, and to get sleep cleanse the stomach from all im- purities with a few doses of Farnell's Vegetable Pills, gelatine coated, containing no mercury, and are guaranteed to give satisfaction or the money will be refunded.

Do not look forward to what may happen to-morrow; the same Ever- lasting Father who cares for you to- day will care for you to-morrow and every day. Either He will shield you from suffering or He will give you an unflinching strength to bear it.—St. Francis de Sales.

A Mean Statement.—She: "How do you think I will look when I am really old?" He: "Much the same as you do now." At first she was pleased; then she got mad, and finally she didn't know exactly how to feel about it.

Try It.—It would be a gross injustice to condemn the standard healing agent—Dr. THOMAS' ELECTRIC OIL, with the ordinary unguents, lotions and salves. They are oftentimes inflammatory and astringent. The Oil is on the contrary eminently cooling and soothing when applied externally to relieve pain, and powerfully remedial when swallowed.

Sunlight Soap advertisement featuring an illustration of a woman and text describing its benefits for use in all her palace laundries.

Books for Wrappers. For sale by the publishers, 12 West Beaver Street, Toronto. A useful paper-bound book will be sent to you for the price of the wrappers.

That Stout German. In the City of Brussels a great deal of very pretty lace is exposed for sale. Englishwomen admire this lace and buy it. If they go straight from Belgium to England they can take it home without having to pay any duty; but if they pass through France they have to pay on all their new Brussels lace at the French Custom House.

They groaned over their misfortune. The first time the train stopped the villain uttered their comment, still grinning. They glared at him, but he still grinned. They took re- fuge in silence; he began to speak.

They set to work to decorate their bonnets with the lace. They mingled white and black, fobu and doune, in the most skilful manner, and though the bonnets looked somewhat over-done, yet they carried the lace, and it was probable that the male eyes of the Custom House officials would not notice anything abnormal.

LOOK OUT FOR THEM. Through pedlars and other itinerant dealers, Canada is being flooded with cheap "gold-filled" watches. You will be wise, therefore, to purchase such goods from some reliable watchmaker in your own vicinity.

At length it was necessary to make for England, and to pass through that dreadful France with its protective duties. They realized their position; how about the lace.

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