

turned out to a big festival, or to see a grand procession, and were waiting for the show to begin. King Oberon, the Fairy monarch, and Queen Mab, his wife, who governed Dreamland in her own right, still delayed, and there was much anxiety, because the festival could not go on without their presence, and the Fairies and their brethren were afraid that, unless their Majesties arrived soon, the Spirits of Darkness would get possession of the hill and break up the Fairies' festival.

By and by, after they had waited a long time, and were getting very uneasy, the heavy stroke of a bell could be heard ringing wonderfully loud through the air. It was impossible to tell where the sound came from, for there were no bells for miles and miles from the hill, and yet it sounded as if an immense bell was struck close by. Hugh knew it must be the first stroke of midnight. At its sound, the Fairies, and Piskies, and all the rest, ran in a great fright for shelter into the holes, and behind the rocks. At that moment a great black cloud dropped over the sky like a thick curtain, and the big round moon, and the twinkling stars, and the white fleecy clouds, were all shut out of sight together. The great fael-fire leaped all the brighter, and made the top of the hill, and the old ruined castle, and the big rock behind which Hugh was hiding, as red as the fire itself; but all around the darkness closed in like a great black wall. The air was full of strange sounds, moanings, and wailings, and pitiful shrieks. Hugh was terribly frightened. He clutched the charm around his neck, and would have cried out, but that he was afraid something terrible would happen if he made a noise.

The bell struck a second time. The great flames leaped higher, and lit up the old castle with a very bright light, and out of the arched doorway came a procession of Druids, in long white robes, with garlands of oak-leaves around their heads, and their white beards reaching to their waists. They carried little branches of the sacred mistletoe in their hands, and they passed around the fire several times, singing a low and sad hymn. When the third stroke of the bell sounded, they disappeared in the darkness, and from the other side came up a crowd of savage-looking people, with a few skins wrapped around them, and the naked parts of their bodies stained blue. They passed silently through the fire, driving their oxen and horses before them through the flames, as the people used to do in that country, many ages ago, to preserve them from the evil spirits. At each stroke of the bell different figures came out from the old castle, and went around or through the fire before disappearing in the darkness. At last the eleventh blow was struck, and then was the most fearful time of all. The fire died down and burned ghastly blue. The air was full of shrieks and cries, and from out the thick darkness the terrible Black Huntsman and his demon hounds rushed furiously in and galloped around the fire, lightning flashing from their eyes.

The twelfth stroke sounded. In an instant all was changed. The terrible noises ceased, the mount became still, the black cloud vanished, and the moon and stars shone brightly out. The Black Huntsman and his demon dogs flew down the hill at a tremendous pace. The Fairies, and Piskies, and Goblins and Brownies all came out of their hiding-places and shouted for joy, for riding down the path of a moonbeam, in a fairy chariot drawn by milk-white moths, came King Oberon and Queen Mab, to preside over the fairy festival. The fael-fire was out by this time, and the strong Brownies gathered up the embers and threw them over the hill. Then they made brooms of the heath, and swept the ashes away, so that Queen Mab and the ladies of her train should not soil their white slippers. The Jack-a-Lanterns put out their lights, for now the moon was shining as bright as day, and they went dancing around as masters of the ceremonies, preparing everything for the grand ball.

At last all was ready, King Oberon and Queen Mab led off the dance, and all the other Fairies and Piskies danced in a circle around them, to the music of five hundred grasshoppers, specially engaged for the occasion. Whilst the dance was going on the Brownies were getting the tables ready for the banquet, and the Goblins

and Hobgoblins were cooking the supper. As soon as it was prepared, a Jack-a-Lantern announced the fact, and all the gay party sat down around the mushroom tables, and commenced eating and drinking from the daintiest little dishes and cups that ever were seen. Little Hugh was so interested and delighted at what was going on that he forgot to keep himself hid, and he was seen by the King, who sent a Pisky to find out who the daring intruder was. Now the Pisky that was sent on this errand was the same one who had guided Hugh into the bramble-pit, and he at once told King Oberon the story, who laughed so heartily that the little tears stood in his eyes. The king told Hugh to come forward, which he did, stepping very carefully for fear he should tread on some of the little folks. Queen Mab, taking a golden goblet from the table, filled it with fairy wine and handed it to Hugh, telling him to drink it. He obeyed, and such delicious drink he had never tasted in his life. It seemed to go all through his body, making him feel quite happy. King Oberon filled another goblet, and asked Hugh if he would drink with him. Hugh, who thought he could never have enough of such delicious drink, took the goblet in his hand, and said, "I will, your Majesty."

HE HAD SPOKEN!

In an instant he staggered back as if some one had struck him in the face, and then all was darkness. Mocking laughter rang in his ears as he became insensible and sank to the earth, still grasping the golden goblet.

When the sun rose in the morning, Hugh's grandmother rose too, and called Hugh to get up. He did not answer, and on looking into his bed she found he was not there. "What has taken little Sleepy-head out of bed so early this morning, I wonder," said she. "I generally have to call him half a dozen times before he will get up, and now he is up before me!"

She went to the door to see what sort of weather it was, and there was Hugh fast asleep on the step! She awoke him, when he stared around in great surprise, and asked where the Fairies had gone. His grandmother laughed at him when he told all the story of his night's adventures, and told him he had been dreaming, and had walked in his sleep. At this Hugh was indignant, saying he knew it was all true, and to prove it he still had the gold goblet that King Oberon had handed him. He held it out for his grandmother to see,—when, after all, it was only a golden-cup flower, filled with dew!

Now, what do you think,—did little Hugh dream his wonderful adventures or not?

FACTS IN NATURAL HISTORY

MOLES—To the eye of the naturalist who instinctively identifies himself with the nature of the animal he is observing, size is only of relative importance; and in point of fact, a battle between two moles is as tremendous as one between two lions, if not more so, because the mole is more courageous than the lion, and, relatively speaking, is far more powerful and armed with weapons more destructive.

Magnify the mole to the size of the lion, and you will have a beast more terrible than the world has yet seen. Though nearly blind, and therefore incapable of following prey by sight, it would be active beyond conception, springing this way and that way as it goes along, so as to cover a large amount of space, leaping with lightning quickness upon any animal which it met, rending it to pieces in a moment, thrusting its blood-thirsty snout into the body of its victim, eating the still warm and bleeding flesh, and instantly searching for fresh prey.

Such a creature would, with the least hesitation, devour a serpent twenty feet in length, and so terrible would be its voracity that it would eat twenty or thirty of such snakes in the course of a day. With one grasp of its teeth and one stroke of its claws it could tear an ox asunder; and if it should happen to enter a fold of sheep or an enclosure of cattle, it would kill them all for the mere lust of slaughter. Let, then, two such animals meet in combat, and how terrific would be the battle. Fear is a feeling of which the mole seems to be unconscious; and when fighting with one of his own

species, he gives his whole energies to the destruction of his opponent, without seeming to heed the injuries which are inflicted upon himself.

SCORPIONS.—The Rev. J. G. Wood in a recently published work entitled "Homes without Hounds," attests, on the authority of Captain Pasley, R. N., the often debated statement of the scorpion destroying itself when surrounded by a circle of fire. "The fiery circle," he says, "was about fifteen inches in diameter, and composed of smouldering ashes. In every instance the scorpion ran about for some minutes trying to escape, and then deliberately bent its tail over its back, inserted the point of its sting between two of the segments of the body, and speedily died. This experiment was repeated seven or eight times, and always with the same results, so that a further repetition would have been a useless cruelty. The heat given out by the ashes was very trifling, and not equal to that which is caused by the noontide sun, a temperature which the scorpion certainly does not like, but which it can endure without suffering much inconvenience. Generally the scorpion was dead in a few minutes after the wound was inflicted."

ANTS.—What story of enchantment, of sylphide, giant, or gnome, equals in strangeness and picturesque quality the story of the ants? Romance presents no incidents half so wondrous as the facts observed by M. Huber and others. The strength of the giants is puny compared with that of the Saüba ant, which builds domes two feet in height and forty feet in diameter, and makes passages from his dwelling-place seventy yards long. What is the vitality of the stoutest paladin compared with that of the Driver ant, whose head has given signs of life thirty-six hours after being cut from its body, which lived for more than forty-eight hours, and what mystery can be more bewildering than the fact that this very ant dies in less than two minutes when exposed to the direct action of the sun's rays?

BATTLES OF THE SWORDFISH AND THE WHALE.—Among the extraordinary spectacles sometimes witnessed by those who "go down to the sea in ships," none are more impressive than a combat for a supremacy between the monsters of the deep. The battles of the swordfish and the whale are described as Homeric in grandeur. The swordfish go in shoals like whales, and the attacks are often regular sea-fights. When the two troops meet, as soon as the swordfish have betrayed their presence by a few bounds in the air, the whales draw together and close up their ranks. The swordfish always endeavours to take the whale in flank, either because its cruel instinct has revealed to it the defect in the cuirass—for their exists near the brachial fins of the whale a spot where wounds are mortal—or because the flank presents a wider surface to its blows. The swordfish recoils to secure a greater impetus. If the movement escape the keen eye of its adversary, the whale is lost, receives the blow of the enemy, and dies almost instantly. But if the whale perceives the swordfish at the instant of the rush, by a spontaneous bound it springs clear of the water its entire length, and falls on its flank with a crash that resounds many leagues, and whitens the sea with boils of foam. The gigantic animal has only its tail for defense; it tries to strike its enemy, and smite him with a single blow. But if the active swordfish avoid the fatal tail, the battle becomes more terrible. The aggressor springs from the water in his turn, falls upon the whale, and attempts, not to pierce, but to saw with the teeth that garnish its weapon. The sea is stained with blood; the fury of the whale is boundless. The swordfish harasses him, strikes on every side, kills him, and flies to other victories. Often the swordfish has not time to avoid the fall of the whale, and contents itself with presenting its sharp saw to the flank of the gigantic animal which is about to crush it; it dies then like Maccabæus, smothered beneath the weight of the elephant of the ocean. Finally, the whale gives a few last bounds into the air, dragging its assassin in its flight, and perishes as it kills the monster of which it was the victim.

WAR.—"What are you thinking of, my man?" said Lord Hill, as he approached a soldier who was leaning in a gloomy mood upon his firelock, while around him lay mangled thousands of French and English—it was a few hours after the battle of Salamanca had been won by the English. The soldier started, and, after saluting his general, answered, "I was thinking, my lord, how many widows and orphans I have this day made for one shilling." He had fired 600 rounds of ball that day.