

THE WHITE GIANT.

One afternoon, about a hundred years ago, a boy was sitting in his grandmother's kitchen, apparently doing nothing in particular, but really holding a very remarkable conversation with—whom do you think? A white giant!

Now on the face of it nothing would seem more unlikely than that a giant should be found in a plain little Scotch kitchen no more than eight feet high from the bare floor to the unpainted rafters; all the more so when a horse-shoe hung by the chimney-side, and the old lady's Bible, with her silver bowed spectacles on the top of it, lay on the shelf. Nevertheless, there were the only two eyes in all Scotland that were able to find him out. Indeed I must tell you that the giant in his proper state was quite invisible; but when he did appear in plain view it was in the shape of a very old man with long white hair and beard which seemed to encircle him like a garment, unless, indeed, they flowed down and mingled with his garment; and all—hair, beard, and robe—were whiter than snow. Therefore he is called the white giant. And this is the way in which he made himself known to the boy. Sitting by the fire, James had noticed that the lid of the teakettle was in a singular state of agitation. It would rise and fall, and flutter up and down in a very excited manner; and, coming as he did of a race that had believed for centuries in witches and goblins, and many supernatural creatures, the boy naturally began to suspect that some imprisoned force or other was beneath it, struggling to get free. "Who are you?" said he, very quietly, "and what do you want, that you are so restless and excited?" "Space, freedom, and something to do!" cried the captive giant from within. "Softly! you have not told me yet who you are," said James. "Never was a race that wanted more done for it. But what can you do?" "Try me and see. No one can do more. I will carry your ships, draw your carriages, and lift all your weights. I will plough your fields, sow the grain, and reap and thresh the harvests. I will hew away mountains and build roads. I will turn all the wheels in all your factories. I will weave your clothes and print your books, and carry them to the ends of the earth. In short, I will do anything that strength can do, and you shall be the brain that directs. I shall be the faithful servant to fulfil all your commands." "There's a singular treasure-trove to be found in an old copper teakettle?" cried James, rubbing his eyes to be sure he was not dreaming. "Only shows the use of having your eyes open," replied his stranger companion. "I am one of the forces that were created to work for you; but you have a fancy for drudgery, it seems, and prefer to dig and weave for yourselves." "Indeed we prefer no such thing," said James, laughing. "We are told that it is one of our great vices to require other people to work for us while we sit idle." "That is very true when it is your brethren that you are enslaving," replied the giant; "But you have not found one half of the servants that were ordained to work for you since the foundation of the world, or else you would not be delving in the ditches and drudging with your hands, instead of letting your brains grow that you may direct us."

What do you mean by letting little children toil in your miserable factories, and become dwarfed in body and soul, when here am I, and a hundred other giants like myself, any one of whom could do the work of ten thousand of those

babies, and never feel it—and you give us no work?"

"You are a kind-hearted old genii, I am sure said the boy; "and, if I live, my work shall be to introduce you to the acquaintance of men. But tell me something of your history. Where have you been all these years, that no one has found you out?"

"Where I am now and in similar places, though not always so tightly pressed. And indeed I have been idle, though my appetite for work has never half been supplied. I am one of the elder children of the flood, and began my work in the world before your race appeared upon it. Before the rain began her ministry, I arose from my hidden retreats in the earth, and watered the earliest of gardens. Ever since then I have been carrying on a great system of irrigation; rising from the ocean into the sky, sailing in great fleets laden with treasure toward the mountain-sides where my bounties have been bestowed; sinking them in a slightly altered form, into the earth and visiting the roots of all the trees with supplies of food—creeping up through all their veins and into their broad green leaves, whence I escape into the air again. You see I have had something to do. But all this quiet work is only half enough for me. Work is my nature, so do not be afraid of overtaking me. I cannot have too much."

"Indeed you are a grand fellow, and I am proud of your acquaintance," cried James.

"Now I seem to remember having seen you in April days, or sometimes in August or September, floating in the sky, but I never thought to become so much better acquainted with you in my grandmother's kitchen."

"James! James! what are you doing?" cried the old lady, from her straight-backed chair. "Here ye've done naething all the day but tilt the cover of the tea kettle, like a lazy lout that ye be. Gae to your tasks noo, like a mon, and be of some use to the world."

"Ah grandam," said James "I have been doing a thousand day's work sitting here by the ingleside."

"Dinna be fooling, bairn! Dinna be fooling, ye idle dreamer! Wark and ye'll thrive; be lazy and ye'll come to naught."

Nevertheless James' dreams came to more use than many another man's work, because he had the faculty of thinking to a purpose; and in the many talks he held with the friendly old giant, he learned one after another the secrets of his power. When lessons were over, the giant told wonderful secrets of his power, and perhaps I can repeat one of them in a few words:

"In old times, there was a long-continued contest between the land and the sea. At first the sea had been the monarch and ruled over the whole surface of the globe. At length the land appeared, claiming a large part of his domain, and this enraged the sea, who beat wrathfully with whole armies of billows upon her shore, and threatened to conquer back all that he had lost."

Presently came the children of the land; first the little grasses, that, tenderly embracing their mother, protected her from being quite carried away by the rude invading sea; and at length the taller trees, the great pines and oaks, that added greatly to her beauty and glory. Then a new thought occurred to the land, and she sent these, her greater children to subdue the sea on his own domains. They rode triumphantly over the billows, and, aided by the friendly winds, plied diligently from place to place, increasing everywhere the

wealth and glory of her mother. But the sea arose in his wrath, and often engulfed these faithful children of the land, or broke their bones, and cast them up upon her lap in bitter scorn and defiance. Then the land resolved to take a more exquisite revenge than ever before. And she called forth a mighty spirit from the bosom of the sea himself—a weird, white gigantic genii who had been the oldest child of the flood. She gave him an armor of iron scales which the sea could not break, and upon him she laid her spells, and he went obediently to and fro at her bidding. Thus the land was at last triumphant, as organized brain always will be over brute natural force; and the children of men passed over land and sea safely toward their goal of perfect knowledge. But part of that is prophecy," said the white giant, when he had finished the story.

"It shall be a fact before many years," said James, "and you, my good giant, are the genii who shall finish the tale."

Soon swift cars were running to and fro the whole length of the kingdom propelled by the giant's arms; soon, too, the tasks of the little children at the factories were done by the same old worker, who could drive a million spindles at a stroke quite as easily as a child could move one, and if the children were still employed, it was only to keep the giant supplied with work enough, which indeed was no easy task. His good nature was equal to all the tasks which could be imposed upon him. If you have ever seen his white beard rising above the chimney of some factory on a winter morning, or puffing out of the escape valve of some little tug, you may almost have mistaken him, in the wavy, graceful lines of white drapery, for a sunny cloud, which, indeed, would not be the greatest of mistakes. Before long the great ocean going ships had the giant established in their holds, and their ponderous wheels moved by his iron hands, so that, independently of wind or tide, they could hold their course night and day, and like swiftly moving shuttles weave the continents together with bands of neighborly good-will.

Now children, having finished my story, I shall leave you to guess the real name of "White Giant."

THE emigrants from Liverpool in 1875, were 85,908 less in number than the year before.

THE only throne known to have been vacated in 1875, was that of the young Emperor of China, T'oung-Chi.

MR. EDWARD JENKINS, author of Ginx's Baby, has resigned his post as Emigration Agent.

THE question of disestablishment is not to be raised this year in a direct form before the British Parliament.

GREAT success is attending the German excavations at Olympia. Many of the statues adorning the eastern part of the roof and minutely described by Pausanias, are being exhumed.

A SOCIETY in the United States called the "Order of American Union," has for its object the disfranchisement of Roman Catholics throughout the country, and their exclusion from office. Its password is said to be "Gladstone."

THE famous manuscript of the Old Testament of Rabbi Aaron Ben Asher, which Maimonides took as his model, has happily been discovered in a cave, under a Synagogue in Aleppo. Dr. Ginsburg is going at once to study and examine it, and the learned world will soon have the opportunity of knowing all about this wonderful codex so highly praised.