

Resolved, on the moment, to spare him no smiles,
And immediately put into practice his wiles.

He spoke of his treasure as something quite poor,
Bewailed that his chances seemed fewer and fewer,
Spoke of having prolonged the few years of his life

(Forgetting to mention his poor sickly wife),
And strove with his might to make such an impression
As would tend to procure him an unsurpassed blessing.

The stranger, whose name I have heard say was Bacchus,
The god of the wine-cup, whose worship does crack us,

And rack us,
And whack us,
And into the poorhouse does oftentimes pack us,
Perceiving the drift of the crafty old fellow,
Again introducing the smile known as mellow,
Determined instanter,
Without further banter,
To let Midas have on the highway a canter
With Fortune, bedecked as the fairest enchanter.

So the long and the short is,
And funny the sort is,
He Midas presented,
Leaving him quite demented,
With power to turn every object to gold,
And make pretty new things out of ugly and old.
"When the morrow does break,
As soon as you wake,"
Said the stranger, "yourself you may straightway betake

To transmuting whatever it pleases your mind
From material base to gold double-refined."

Of course, all night long King Midas lay wishing
That morning would come, or the night-god go fishing,
And never an eye thought of closing a minute,
So impatient he was to find out what was in it.

The moment the sun peeped above the horizon,
He touched every object he could set his eyes on,
And shouted with joy to see the mutations
His magic touch caused 'mongst his old jugs and basins,

His socks, pants, and braces,
His boots and bootlaces,
His shirt and the brass collar-button he wore,
The old faded cap,
Ne'er before worth a rap,
His vest with frayed edges and dressing-gown poor,
His tooth-brush, his hair-brush, his o'd broken comb,

And e'en the wee insects that made it a home,
His penknife (a good one made by Joseph Rodger—

A monstrous extravagance for the old codger),
The cracked old delf basin and jug without handle

(For so up to then lived the greedy old vandal),
The soap he had bought at four bars for a quarter
(Dingman's Electric), and e'en the soft water,
All turned to the brightest and shiniest gold
'Neath the touch of his fingers skinny and old.

He laughed and he cried,
As the treasure he eyed;
He danced,
And he pranced,
As on each thing he chanced;

Gave a yell;
Rang the bell,
Started downstairs pell-mell;
Tripped in his haste and half-way down fell;
Rushed into the kitchen,
His fingers all itchin'
To do some plate-making upon a grand scale;
Kissed the red-headed cook,
Disregarding her look,
And left her a statue, turned yellow from pale.

The pots and the pans,
The kettles and cans,
Plates, knives, cups and saucers, the teapot and tray,

Salt-cellar and pepper-tin,
E'en the old rolling-pin,
Everything there, in fact,
Whether 'twas whole or cracked,
Turned yellow and bright from dingy and gray.

Then out to the garden, to make some gold roses
(He never once thought of what use a nose is),
He went, and from one end down unto the other
Proceeded the life out of each rose to smother.
And all the sweet flowers that grew in the garden
Beneath his sad touch directly did harden,
Till not one as flower was worth a "brass far-
din'."

And before he got through his matutinal labors,
'Tis said by his friends and relations and neighbors

That never a thing that he could get hold of,
But the grasping old rascal instanter made gold of.

But by this time the king began somewhat to tire,
And to think that he might creature comforts require;

So into the breakfast-room made he his way
(Not forgetting to make even this journey pay
By touching some few things that in his first flight

Had seemed 'neath his notice or escaped his sight),

And sat down to breakfast off coffee, eggs, toast,
And a small bit of beef off yesterday's roast.

Now, Midas' family, know you, was small,
One dear little princess, Maria, was all
That had ever addressed rich old Midas as "pa,"
Or had ever called Midas' missus "dear ma."
A dear little thing was Maria, be sure,
Sweet, kindly, religious, and good to the poor.
Just the kind of dear maiden that takes to a coffin,
Too young for a husband—we've all seen it often.
And now, with a towel tied under her chin,
She had just begun breakfast as Midas came in.
With a gladness unwonted, "Good m'orning," he said;
She nodded, her mouth being then full of bread.

Rich Midas sat down with a sigh of content
That gave all his happiness full and free vent,
And poured out in his saucer (note that, if you please)

A good dram of Mocha, to sip at his ease;
Then, reaching an egg, was astounded to see—
What to cause of hen's cackling ne'er happened before—

The shell turned to gold, and, in spite of his glee,
The king wished the egg had been laid with a door.

But useless the tale—beef, toast, coffee, all,
As soon as he touched them were turned into gold,
Changing his gladness to wormwood and gall;
For really, by this time his stomach was cold.

Dear little Maria, her milk and her bread
By this time had finished, and, turning her head,
Beheld her dear pa *in extremis* with hunger,
And, impulsive as many a one who is younger,
Tried to feed him a spoonful of her sweetened pap;
But it dropped like gold hailstones in Midas' lap.

"Oh, pa!" "Dear Maria!" "Pa, what is the matter?"
"Tis nothing, my dear; pray do not so chatter."
"But pa, can't you eat? Are you sick? Take a pill."

"My child, your poor pa must, I fear, make his will."

Now, here was a pickle, I'm sure you'll concede,
And a riddle for Midas not easy to read.

Gold was his plate, his victuals gold,
And gold was all around him;
But nought was there but brought despair;
Its richness did confound him.

Not e'en the driest crust of bread,
Or poorest of potatoes
Could this poor king to stomach bring,
To ward the stroke that fate owes.

No cooling draught, no posset warm,
His throat again might pleasure;
For gold, bright gold, his life he'd sold.
Oh, dread curse-laden treasure!!

In his despair,
Up from his chair,
He rose with a most frantic air;
Plucked from his head some pounds of hair;
Then stooped and kissed his daughter fair,

When—fearful though the tale to tell—
The kiss rang out like any bell.
For at his touch the awful spell
Upon his dear Maria fell,
And, hardening every fair, soft feature,
A statue stood the darling creature.

At this aghast King Midas stood,
While cold did run his very blood.
No words can tell the anguish felt
At this hard blow fate to him dealt.
His darling child, his pride and heiress,
No more might know his love and caress;
No more could brighter make his day,
Or charm him with her pretty way.
His brother's son would get his riches—
A snub-nosed lad, now in knee-breeches.
No more might he look forward now
To leave his crown to that fair brow.
No more might hope grandson to teach
The prize of fortune how to reach.
No more, no more, Maria know.
Faded all dreams as fades the snow.

He raised his eye, and, in the door,
He saw, as he had seen before,
The stranger stand. He bowed his head.
"Well, Midas," now the stranger said,
"How dost thou now? Art satisfied?
In aught has been thy wish denied?"
Midas could only bow his head
To all the stranger mocking said.

But let's leave the sadness
For something of gladness.
King Midas got over his miserly madness
By taking a swim, at the stranger's suggestion,
Not stopping to wonder, to think, or to question.
Plump into the river
He went, with a shiver,
And rose to the surface almost out of wind;
But feeling a lightness,
A sort of soul-brightness,
That told him his devil had been left behind.
And taking a bucket, as he had been told,
He filled it with water, and turned back from gold
Everything that at daybreak he had so despised,
In the garb nature for it had kindly devised.

The roses again were natural roses;
The other gold blossoms again became posies;
The cook and her tools, from castor to kettle,
Were changed back to their honester, dingier metal.

And dear little Maria, soon as he came nigh her,
He drenched, and proceeded with kisses to dry her.

And she, coming to,
Asked him what he would do,
And proved she was mortal again thro' and thro'
By raising a very decided boo-hoo,
Because he had spoiled her red ribbons and blue.

This proved a good lesson,
Indeed, quite a blessing,
And left on the king's mind a lasting impression.
So eschew-
ing the screw,
To all whom he knew,
It had once been his pleasure in bargains to do,
He returned cent. per cent.;
Cut down tenants' rent,
Became quite respected wherever he went.
Came to church every Sunday,
And heard, every Monday,
Maria her Sunday-school lesson say o'er.
Built two or three schools,
An asylum for fools,
And never on any pretence again swore.
And so when he died
The people all cried,
And forth to the funeral such numbers did ride,
His ghost must have swelled with a post-mortem pride,
Would require a path to the next world quite wide.

EDISON'S LATEST.—Edison is now on a plan to grease the sides of ships so that they will slip through the water more readily. He says the friction of salt water and its constituents are much more than is generally believed, and if he can only do what he is trying to do the *Campania* can make the voyage between New York and Liverpool in four days.