

Fay-Folk.

Some nights I try to keep awake
To see how fairies really look.
(You have to watch so sharp and
still,
So says my mamma's Fairy book.)

I squint my eyes a tiny space
And then I see them—one by
one—

Come trooping in from Fairyland
With funny little hop and run.

They nod and whisper to them-
selves—

Then scamper off across the floor
As if they'd never, never seen
A little boy like me before!

Yet if you ask me how they look—
Somehow I cannot seem to tell;
For pretty soon they've slipped
away—

And then I hear the breakfast
bell.

—Laura Simmons, in 'Lippincott's.'

The Little Tin Soldier.

Once upon a time there were twenty-five tin soldiers, who were all brothers, for they had been made out of the same old tin spoon. They shouldered arms and looked straight before them, and wore a splendid uniform, red and blue. The first words they ever heard were 'Tin soldiers!' uttered by a little boy, who clapped his hands with delight when the lid of the box in which they lay was taken off. They were given him for a birthday present. The soldiers were all alike, excepting one, who had only one leg; he had been left to the last, and then there was not enough of the melted tin to finish him, so they made him to stand firmly on one leg.

The table on which the tin soldiers stood was covered with other playthings, including a pretty little paper castle. Through the small windows the rooms could be seen. In front of the castle a number of little trees surrounded a piece of looking-glass, which was intended to represent a lake. Swans, made of wax, swam on the lake, and were reflected in it. All this was very pretty, but the prettiest of all was a tiny little lady, who stood at the open door of the castle; she, also, was made of paper,

and she wore a dress of clear muslin, with a narrow blue ribbon over her shoulders just like a scarf. In front of this was fixed a glittering tinsel rose, as large as her face. The little lady was a dancer, and she stretched out both her arms, and raised one of her legs so high that the tin soldier could not see it at all, and he thought that she, like himself, had only one leg.

'That is the wife for me,' he thought; 'but she is too grand, and lives in a castle, while I have only a box to live in, twenty-five of us altogether, that is no place for her. Still, I must try and make her acquaintance.' Then he laid himself at full length on the table behind a snuff-box, so that he could peep at the little delicate lady, who continued to stand on one leg without losing her balance.

When evening came, the other tin soldiers were all placed in the box, and the people of the house went to bed. Then the playthings began to have their own games together, to pay visits, to have sham fights, and to give balls. The tin soldiers rattled in their box; they wanted to get out and join the amusements, but they could not open the lid. The nut-crackers played at leap-frog, and the pencil jumped about the table. There was such a noise that the canary woke up and began to talk, and in poetry too. Only the tin soldier and the dancer remained in their places. She stood on tiptoe, with her arms stretched out, as firmly

as he did on his one leg. He never took his eyes from her for a moment. The clock struck twelve and, with a bounce, up sprang the lid of the snuff-box; but, instead of snuff, there jumped up a little black goblin, for the snuff-box was a toy puzzle.

'Little tin soldier,' said the goblin, 'don't wish for what does not belong to you.'

But the tin soldier pretended not to hear.

'Very well; wait till to-morrow,' said the goblin.

When the children came in next morning, they placed the tin soldier in the window. Now, whether it was the goblin who did it, or the draught, is not known, but the window flew open, and out fell the tin soldier into the street beneath. It was a terrible fall; for he came head downwards, his helmet and his bayonet stuck in between the flagstones, and his one leg up in the air. The servant-maid and the little boy went downstairs to look for him; but he was nowhere to be seen, although once they nearly trod upon him. If he had called out, 'Here I am,' it would have been all right; but he was too proud to cry out for help while he wore a uniform.

Presently it began to rain, and the drops fell faster and faster, till there was a heavy shower. When it was over, two boys happened to pass by, and one of them said, 'Why, here is a tin soldier. He ought to have a boat to sail in.'

(To be continued.)

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