

The Inglenook.

The Pieced Baby.

BY ABBIE FARWELL BROWN.

Once upon a time there was a girl named Rosie who wanted a little sister. She wanted a little sister so much that one day she cried from morning until night about it, and she would have cried all night too, I suppose. But in the midst of her crying, at about midnight, she heard a little laugh, and when she opened her eyes to see what had laughed, there in the moonlight at the foot of her bed stood a beautiful Fairy.

"Why Rosie! What are you crying about?" said the Fairy.

"O, I do so want a little sister!" sobbed Rosie.

"Well, why don't you go about to get one?" asked the Fairy.

"I don't know how," said Rosie, blinking the tears in wonder. "Where can I find one, dear Fairy?"

"You can't find a whole baby," said the Fairy, "but you must gather her in little pieces. Then perhaps my fairies will put her together for you, like a patchwork quilt."

"I never heard of such a thing!" exclaimed Rosie, indignantly. "I don't want a pieced little sister, I want a nice whole one."

"O, very well," returned the Fairy Queen carelessly, "but I'll tell you a secret. They are all pieced that way, though nobody knows it. The seams never show, we take such fine, fine stitches. But the pieces must be carefully chosen. Haven't you noticed how some babies have a nose which doesn't belong with the chin, or unmatched eyes, or ears which are not a truly pair? You must do better than that, Rosie."

"O, can I really do it?" cried Rosie, sitting up in bed eagerly. "When?"

"Begin now," said the Fairy. "I suppose you would like to have the little sister as soon as possible?"

"I would like her tomorrow!" cried Rosie, jumping out of bed. "But how shall I begin? Will you not help me?"

"I cannot help you to collect the pieces," answered the Fairy, "but I will give you a hint. You might begin with a face for your little sister; and why not go to the clock for that?" So saying, the Fairy suddenly disappeared.

"Go to the clock!" Rosie gasped; "how very strange!" Then she looked up at the tall old clock that faced her bed, and in the moonlight the face seemed to be smiling at her. "It's a queer face for a baby sister to have," thought Rosie, "but the Fairy ought to know. I will begin as she told me." So she peeled the pillow-case from her pillow to make a good big bag for the pieces which she was to collect. Then she went up to the clock and said, politely—for he was an old friend of hers—"Please, Clock, I want your face to begin a baby sister." Then she took off the face and put it in the bottom of the pillow-case bag.

"Now, what must my little sister have next?" wondered Rosie. "Eyes, of course! But where shall I find eyes?" Just then her own eyes happened to notice the pin-cushion on the bureau. "To be sure; needles have eyes. I will borrow two for my sister." And into the bundle went two needles. But Rosie was careful that they should be just alike, as the Fairy had warned.

"Now I want a nose," thought Rosie. "What has a nose? O—a kettle." And very quietly, so as not to awaken anyone in the house, she ran down into the kitchen, took the nose from the teakettle and put that in the bag.

"A mouth, I must have a mouth next. O, yes, a bottle has a mouth," said Rosie. She found one in the pantry, and its round mouth went into the bundle with the eyes and nose. But there must be a tongue to go in the mouth. Rosie thought and thought; but at last she remembered that there was a tongue in her shoe, and that was added to the collection.

"What about a head?" She needs that for her face, her eyes and nose and mouth; I forgot her head!" cried Rosie. "Let me think. Why, yes, a head of lettuce, that is what I want." And because it was summer, warm and pleasant out of doors, Rosie skipped right out in her nightie and bare feet. The vegetable garden was behind the house, and there Rosie picked out a round head of lettuce, which she added to her funny bundle.

The garden made her think of something else. The baby must have ears, and where should one look for ears if not in the corn-field? So away she tripped to the corn-field, where for weeks she had been watching the ears of corn grow plumper every day. Here she carefully selected two plump, pretty ears, just alike.

"And now the little sister is ready and trimmed as far as her neck," thought Rosie. "And for a neck, I know where I can find that. Mamma's white vase on the parlor mantel has a beautiful neck." So back to the house went Rosie, and soon into the bundle with the other things went the white vase.

"Now, let me see: baby must have a body. What is there that has a body? The body of a—the body of a—what have I heard? The body of a wagon; yes, that is it! But I can't collect one of papa's big wagons. A little one will be nicer for a baby. I will take the body of my little express wagon," and Rosie pattered away to the nursery, where the little red cart, without its wheels, went into the fast growing bundle.

Next Rosie took the arms of a sofa, two legs of a chair, and two feet of a table. Then she went back to her own little room. "You poor old Clock," she said to her now faceless friend, "I must rob you again. Please, I want your two hands for my little sister." And the Clock had to give her his hands, whether he could spare them or not. Then Rosie remembered that the baby must have nails on her hands and feet. So she tiptoed very softly into mamma's room and got twenty nails from the little carpenter's chest which mamma kept in her closet.

Just at that moment, in at the window on a ray of moonlight came walking the Fairy Queen herself. She smiled at Rosie and nodded when she saw the big bundle.

"Good!" she said. "You have done well. I hope that you haven't forgotten anything, for that would be awkward." Rosie shook her head positively. "Very well," went on the Fairy, "now empty out your bundle upon the floor at the foot of the bed, put the pillowcase on the pillow and go

to sleep. As soon as your eyes are closed tight I will see what my fairies can do with the pieces you have collected. But mind, you must not peep."

"No, I promise not to peep," said Rosie, and obediently she went to bed, closed her eyes tight, and before she knew it she was sound asleep.

Rosie slept and slept and slept, later than usual. And it was not until the old clock called out, "One, two, three, four, five, six, seven, eight!" that she opened her eyes with a pop and stared at him hard. How could a clock speak without a face? But there the old fellow stood, smiling at her just as usual, with his hands pointing up and down quite correctly.

Just then there was a knock on the door, and papa came into the room. "Wake up, my little Rose," he said, "and see what I have to show you here! Something came in the night, something new and nice that you have wanted for a long time."

"O papa!" gasped Rosie, "what is it? Not a—not a little sister?"

Papa looked surprised. "Why, how did you guess, Rosie?" he asked. "That is just what it is." And he beckoned to Eliza, Rosie's own old nurse, who came into the room with a tiny bundle in her arms. And there, wrapped in soft flannel, was the pinkiest, prettiest, cunningest little baby that you ever saw.

"O papa!" cried Rosie, clapping her hands, "it wasn't a dream after all. I did collect the pieces. O, I am so glad!"

Papa looked puzzled, but Rosie had no time now to explain about the Fairy Queen. She was too busy examining the little pink bundle to see if it was all there as she had planned. Yes, there were the eyes and ears, the little hands and nails, all quite evenly matched. This was no crooked, carelessly patched baby, this little sister of Rosie's. The fairies had smoothed out all the pieces and made them beautiful, and as the Queen had promised, there was not one seam to show how it had been done. O how proud Rosie was of the dear little nose and the pink mouth! Suddenly her face clouded. The baby had opened its pink mouth wide to let out a babyish howl, and Rosie saw a dreadful sight. There was not a single tooth there!

"O, O!" cried Rosie, "I forgot her teeth. And there was my comb lying on the bureau so conveniently all the time. O, how careless I was! Poor little sister!" and she burst out crying.

Nurse and papa assured Rosie that it was quite fashionable for a baby to be toothless at first, that the little sister's teeth would come soon enough. But Rosie could not believe it. She felt sure that she had spoiled the baby, who would never be quite finished like other children. It was only when, some months later, papa and nurse turned out to be right, and Rosie felt the little hard teeth pushing through the baby's gums, that she became quite happy and relieved.

"I think that this was the fairy's doings, too!" said Rosie. And, indeed, that did not seem more wonderful than the fact which Rosie could never explain—that no one had missed the nose of the teakettle, nor the neck of mamma's white vase, nor any of the other things which Rosie had collected to piece the baby. For, like the clock's hands and face, they were all in place as usual the very next morning after that exciting night. But, of course, it is useless trying to explain anything when one has to do with fairies, is it not so?—Congregationalist.