

white, nodding heads, and promise them that they should have their frocks again in the morning. And the violets went to sleep, comforted and forgiven.

But when morning, and the brownies hurried off in the early dawn to fairyland, some terrible news awaited them. You know the violets' purple frocks had been put in the queen's wardrobe. Well, the court tailor had found them there, and, thinking that they were some wonderful new fairy stuff, he had carefully picked them to pieces, and made a lovely robe for his royal mistress. And she was so pleased with it that she had sent out invitations at once for a grand dinner-party, and all the household was busy preparing for it.

Now was not that a terrible thing to happen? You may imagine what a state of consternation the brownies were in.

They tried to get audience of the queen, but she was interviewing the court cook, and could not see them for ever such a time. And when at last they were admitted to her presence they could hardly tell their tale, she looked so radiant and beautiful in her purple gown.

However, they told her the story, and she seemed very sad and disappointed.

"My poor gown!" she said, pitifully. "And I have told all my friends about it! Still, if the violets are very unhappy—" She paused and looked thoughtfully at the elves. "Could you not get them some others?" she asked.

They shook their heads. "We can't make them," they said. "Only the angels can do that."

The queen looked very thoughtful and uncertain what to do. Then suddenly she cried, "Take me to the violets themselves. I am sure they will give me the gowns."

So the brownies took her, themselves drawing her wee golden coach, far away from fairyland, down to the green lane where the violets waited under the hedge. And when she saw them she sprang out of the coach and exclaimed in wonder:

"Was *that* their punishment?" she cried. "That, to become more beautiful than their fellows! Why, look at them!"

And the brownies looked and saw what she had said was true. The violets in their sweet white gowns were fair with a new humility, and drooped their tender heads like children who had sinned and been forgiven.

"We see," said the brownies, softly. "You shall have their gowns."

And the violets, peeping up, and seeing the queen in her wonderful purple, bowed their heads and whispered, "You shall have our gowns."

"Hush!" whispered the queen to the brownies. "Do not tell them how beautiful they are." And then turning to the violets, she said—"Children, answer me, which shall it be? Will you have back your purple, or will you always wear you white, in memory of your fault and its forgiveness?"

And the violets whispered, "We will always wear our white," and bowed their heads even lower than before.

"It is well," said the queen, softly, "for out of your own fall have you lifted your own purity."