

# YOUNG FOLKS.

## THE DWARFS OF MOUNT KEDRIC.

BY PAYNE.

In the little village of Lorch the peasant people loved to show to travelers visiting their town the picturesque ruins of a stately old castle standing on the summit of the hill, and to tell the wonderful history of the renowned Count Gilgen, who in early years made his home here. The Count was a stern, severe man, hated by many and loved by none. His harsh, cruel ways were a constant source of terror to his servants and other members of his household. The only person who ever received a kind word from him or could cause a smile to appear on the gloomy face of this strange man was his only child Gerlinda. Count Gilgen loved her with the greatest devotion, and for her he coveted riches and fame.

But in spite of all his efforts to gain wealth, the Count became poorer and poorer. One by one his possessions vanished, until only the old castle remained. He even robbed the poor peasant people of their hard earnings and deprived them of their fields crops in order that he might have an abundance for his daughter. But his treasures disappeared almost before he had gained them. At last, in despair, he determined to consult an old witch, who lived in a dark cave in a mountain, and who declared that if he would throw his daughter's jewels into a cauldron of boiling water that the air would be filled with gold, and should have all that he desired. But when, one cold, stormy night, Count Gilgen sought the dreary cave and threw the jewels into a black kettle hanging over a blazing wood fire, no gold was to be seen, but only dense, black smoke filled the place. The Count was very angry, and would have struck the witch but she cried, in her shrill, piercing voice: "It is not my fault; the dwarfs are to blame for this. They are the ones who steal your wealth. Your daughter invites them into your house and feeds them from your table. Drive them away and you shall again be rich."

A few days after this, a furious storm raged in the land; the rain fell in torrents, and the winds whistled angrily around the castle walls. The beautiful Gerlinda sat at her window, and as she saw the flowers and trees bend under the force of the storm, she felt grateful for her safe shelter, and pitied any unfortunate traveler who might be abroad in such weather. Suddenly her quick eye detected one of her little friends, a mountain dwarf, trying in vain to seek protection under some overhanging plants. Umirful of the wind and rain, Gerlinda threw open the window, and leaning far out, cried: "How do you happen to be so far away from home in such a storm? Come in here where it is warm and pleasant, and remain till the rain ceases."

The ugly, wrinkled face of the little man grew bright with smiles. He climbed up the vines, and on to the window sill. "You are very kind, little friend," he said; "I feared I should perish in the storm. Can you give me wine and food that I may recover my strength?" "Certainly," replied Gerlinda; "I shall get them at once for you." But a rough hand seized the little girl, and the Count, pale with anger, cried: "How dare you bring this rascal into my house? It is he who has made me poor."

The dwarf looked up in astonishment and said, "If I had such a beautiful daughter as yours I should consider myself the richest man in the land." But the Count, still very angry, answered: "My daughter helps to make me poor; and you, scoundrel that you are, rob me of my wealth."

He struck with his sword at the dwarf, but the little man disappeared; and, although the Count and his servants searched eagerly for him, no trace of him could be found. Gerlinda was much grieved that her guest should receive such treatment, and wished to join in the search, but feared the displeasure of her father.

The next morning when the storm had passed away, and the sun shone bright and clear, the Count mounted his horse and, calling his dogs, started away to the chase. He was still displeased with his daughter, and at parting had said no kind word. Often during the day he thought of her, and regretted his harshness to his beautiful child. When he returned in the evening he was met at the gate by one of the servants, who was weeping and seemed in great distress. He said that early in the morning Gerlinda had gone into the valley to gather flowers and had not returned; and, although they had searched diligently, she was not to be found.

The Count was almost beside himself with grief, and ran hither and thither, calling for his daughter. He commanded his men to ride over hill and dale, and not to return till they had found Gerlinda. He himself rode wildly over the country, asking every one he met, "Has Gerlinda passed by here?"

A shepherd lad said he had seen a beautiful maiden with long, golden hair and bright, blue eyes, riding on a white horse led by three dwarfs wearing long red cloaks. But he had seen them only for a moment, and could not tell where they had gone. The Count then went to the old witch on the mountain, saying, "You surely know where my daughter is, and must tell me where to find her."

The old witch crooned some magic songs over the fire, and then said: "Your daughter is in Mount Kedric." Now the Count raged more furiously than before, and he knew he was in the power of the dwarfs; for the Kedric Mountain was as smooth as glass and as hard as flint. No human foot had ever been able to mount its steep, slippery slope. Turning to the witch, the Count cried: "If you do not tell me how to ascend this mountain, I shall cut you in pieces with my sword."

"It is a very easy matter to ascend Mount Kedric," said the witch. "My band of sprites shall go with you, and with their fiery feet shall burn a path."

The Count went at once to the mountain, and there on the top stood many little dwarfs who laughed scornfully, and cried: "In vain have we sought aid from you, and now you shall receive nothing from us."

"I shall have my daughter," said the Count, "and when I reach the top of the mountain, you shall know the power of my sword."

The dwarfs laughed, and made no reply. The witch's sprites then began to make the path for the Count. But he had gone only a few steps when the whole mountain began to smoke and burn with such a heat that he

had to flee for his life; and all the time he could hear the mocking laughter of the dwarfs. Then Gerlinda's voice sounded sweet and clear: "Father, go to the hermit in the forest; he will help you."

The Count followed this advice, and when he had told his trouble the hermit said: "The dwarfs are very kind and good, but they are angry with you for defrauding the people, and denying shelter to the needy. For this reason they have taken your daughter and will restore her only on condition that you promise hereafter to deal justly with everyone, and devote your time to doing good rather than getting wealth."

The Count hesitated; for he loved riches, and wished greatly to punish the dwarfs for carrying off his daughter. But his love for Gerlinda conquered, and he gave the required promise. "Go then," said the hermit, "to Mount Kedric, and you will have no trouble in finding your daughter."

Joyfully Count Gilgen went his way, and was surprised to see a flowery, shady path winding round the mountain. Following this, he soon reached the top, where he was received with cries of welcome by Gerlinda and the dwarfs.

After being loaded with rich gifts, the Count and his daughter returned to their home. Count Gilgen was never unfaithful to his promise; and the formerly stern and forbidding man became a friend and confidant of the people; and was loved by all. This is the story the peasants tell of the Castle Von Lorch.

### Precept and Example.

"I am very sorry my little daughter has told a falsehood! It is wicked, and I must punish her; now, Elsie, you must sit on this hassock in the corner," and Mrs. Jenness administered a couple of smart slaps on her little six-years' old girl, and set her down with emphasis on a seat with her face to the wall.

"I do hate to hear Elsie so untruthful; it worries me to death. I cannot think where she acquired the habit," said her mother as she seated herself in a rocker and resumed her sewing. Mrs. Jenness was one of my old-time friends, and I had accepted her invitation to spend my vacation in her pleasant home. Little Elsie was a bright, active child, but not trustworthy; one never knew how to accept her statements. Two brothers older than herself were sturdy, honest boys, and you could believe them when they told a story, but the little girl was just the reverse.

"I don't know what I shall ever do with that child," she said sorrowfully. Just then a ring at the door bell announced a visitor. Mrs. Jenness met the lady with a gush of welcome. She made a lengthy call, and when she rose to take leave, her husband urged her to tarry longer, and to come again very soon. As the door closed after her, little Elsie turned her head.

"Mamma, what did you ask Mrs. Vernon to stay for? You always say she is the most disagreeable woman you know."

"One has to treat callers with politeness, my little girl! I do not like Mrs. Vernon, but she persists in calling on me, and she is a member of our church; so I have to be polite. Oh dear! there come Mrs. Grey and her young ones; I do hope she is not going to afflict me with a day's visitation."

I had rather have the old scatch around." But she met her with great cordiality, urged her to lay off her wraps and kissed the children, with every appearance of welcome.

"Mr. Grey has gone for the whole day, so I thought I should never have a better time to accept your invitation to come with the children and spend the day; I did not know that you had company, however! Oh, how do you like my new hat? Do not you think it pretty? My husband thinks it too gay."

"Not a bit! It is just a love of a bonnet; and the little girls have some pretty new caps. I did think of getting one for Elsie."

"I thought you hated white caps, for Elsie," you said the other day and bought me a hat," said the little girl in the corner.

"Hush, Elsie; if you can be good you may run and play with your little visitors. Now remember what I told you."

Elsie got up slowly and went on the porch. Soon after, I followed her to escape the clatter of Mrs. Grey's small talk. The little girl stood in the corner with her finger in her mouth; she looked sulky and cross.

"Elsie, dear, don't you want to play with the little girls?" I said as I took her little dimpled hand and smoothed her curly head.

"No, I don't like them; they are naughty and break my dollies, and mamma don't like Mrs. Grey; but she pretends she does when she is here. Mrs. Grey thinks she is mamma's best friend, you see."

"But, Elsie, your mother has to treat her company politely, you know."

"I should think folks could be polite enough without making believe they love you, when they don't. It looks just as bad as lying to them, and mamma punishes me for lying, you know," said the child.

I stayed three weeks with Mrs. Jenness, and hardly a day passed that I did not witness some lack of sincerity in her intercourse with her neighbors. For example: A lady sent her child to borrow a cupful of raisins; Mrs. Jenness said she was sorry, but she was all out.

"Mamma," said Elsie, "what did you tell her so for? You have almost a whole box. I saw them yesterday."

"Hush up, Elsie! Little girls should not talk so much," she replied.

Almost daily I saw something in the practice that was in exact contradiction of the precepts that were given. Children do a great amount of thinking, and they notice everything that passes around them in daily life; and a mother may preach truth and sincerity to her children, but if she does not illustrate her precepts by her example, they will not have much influence in forming a truthful character in the impressible minds of children. A little precept to a great amount of example is the surest way to form the character of a child, and I ceased to wonder that Mrs. Jenness' little girl was not truthful.

### Couldn't Find One.

London Fun: A gentleman in search of a man to do some work met on his way a highly respectable lady, not so young as she once was, and asked her, "Can you tell me where I can find a man?" "No, I can not," she replied, smiling; "for I have been looking these twenty years for one myself."

The Czar, affected with the prevailing land hunger, has acquired Worms' island in the Baltic for 1,000,000.

### France in Africa.

The scramble for territory in Eastern Africa between England and Germany, which has been going on more or less earnestly for the last four or five years, has had the effect of directing public attention to that part of the Dark Continent to such an extent that colonial operations elsewhere have generally passed unnoticed. Meanwhile France, who chose for her field of operation western Africa, has not been idle; but without any blare of trumpets has quietly gone on extending her influence until now she spreads her protecting wing over an extent of territory which any of the nations might envy. Five years ago her only notable possession, north of the Gulf of Guinea, was the colony of Senegal. That colony, in area, is now only an insignificant part of her dominions, for the policy inaugurated by Gen. Faidherbe in Senegambia has advanced France's boundaries to the Niger, has overthrown the large empire of Samory on the south and added it to the French possessions, and finally through the remarkable journey of Capt. Binger from the upper Niger to the Ivory Coast, it has extended the French influence to the Gulf of Guinea. This explorer made treaties with the rulers of the large native kingdoms of Tiede, King and Bondouker, and with the chiefs of smaller states on the way to the sea by which they accepted French protectorates. The possessions which France now claims extend unbrokenly from the Senegal River to the Ivory Coast on the Gulf of Guinea including a vast area lying behind the British territories of Gambia and Sierra Leone, and the republic of Liberia. France's little steamers on the Niger in their second journey to Timbuctoo, have made treaties of protection with several of the shore tribes. The territories that France has acquired within four years, not without several hard campaigns in the countries east and south of Senegal, extend north and south about 900 miles. No wonder that with such success the French are dreaming of a vast empire in west Africa which shall extend across the Sahara, and form an unbroken line of French interests and stations from Algeria to the Gulf of Guirae. Great opportunities for trade have been opened by these acquisitions, and French colonial energy has been rewarded with a rich share of the most tempting plums that have fallen to European nations in the African scramble.

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Even the sluggish Turk is beginning to be affected by the general stir that is just now taking place among the nations of Europe. Report says: "The Turkish Government has sent a new note to the British Government, demanding that it fix a date upon which Egypt will be evacuated by the British troops, without the right of again occupying that country."

However, Lord Salisbury may frame his reply, the purport of that answer will doubtless be, "When British interests in Egypt, and especially in the Suez Canal, are safe—not till then."

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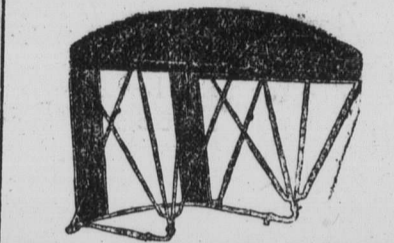
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