



### The King of the Birds.

A long time ago the birds decided that they must have a king, and they agreed to choose one from among themselves. In order to carry out their plan, they all met one fine May morning on the banks of a beautiful lake. There were all kinds of birds, and among them one very small one, who as yet had no name.

It was decided that he should be king who would fly the highest, and thereupon a green frog, who sat in the bushes, began to croak "Halt, halt," because he thought there would be many tears shed. But the crow cried, "Back, croaker. Everything must be quiet."

It was next decided that the trial should be made at once, as it was such a fine morning. At a given signal all the birds mounted in the air, but the smaller ones soon fell back and alighted on the ground again. The large birds kept it up longer, but none of them like the eagle, who soared so high that he almost touched the sun.

When he alighted all the birds cried, "You must be our king. Nobody has flown higher than you."

"Except me," cried the little bird without a name, who had hidden himself among the feathers on the eagle's back. "When the eagle was at his greatest height, I flew still higher. I am king! I am king!"

"You our king," said the other birds in a rage, and they would not accept him. They then made the conclusion that he should be king who should fall deepest into the earth.

The duck went boldest to work, for she jumped into a ditch, but she sprained her foot and waddled away to the nearest pond, crying, "Bad work, bad work."

But the little bird without a name found a mouse hole and crept in, calling out, in a piping voice, "I am king! I am king!"

"You our king?" cried the other birds, fiercely. Then they resolved to keep the stranger in the hole and starve him to death.

The owl was set to keep guard during the night, but by and bye he too began to feel tired, and thought that one eye would do to watch the evil thing, while he slept with the other. Soon the little bird peeped out, and finding after awhile that the sentry had forgotten and closed both eyes, he was able to escape.

From this time the owl dares not show himself by day, but flies only by night, and hunts the poor mice, because a mouse-hole brought him to disgrace.

The little bird, too, was afraid to venture among the others, so he concealed himself in the hedges, and when he thought himself quite safe, he called out, "I am king! I am king!"

Therefore, the other birds called him "Hedge king" in scorn, and that means the wren.

### Faithful Friends.

It was a clear frosty winter's night; the moon was shining brightly on the snow-clad world, turning all the dowdy flakes into sparkling gems like diamonds, and lighting up the frost-flowers hanging on each leafless tree.

The blinds of the nursery windows in No. 6 Newell's Terrace had not yet been pulled down, and the moonbeams flooded the whole room. They fell first on a child's empty rocking-chair beside the open door, and then glanced across to the fireplace opposite, where a few lingering coals still burnt upon the hearth, till they finally settled on a group of toys lying in careless profusion before the fire. They were costly toys, a magnificent wax doll, with blue eyes and flaxen hair; a horse, a box of tin soldiers and a miniature-baby's cradle. There was hardly a sound to be heard in the room, only the ticking of the nursery clock and an occasional falling cinder, disturbed the solemn stillness of that midnight hour.

Now, you must know that with the exception of one after twelve o'clock, all toys are subject to a certain spell which prevents their revealing to any one their thoughts,

feelings, hopes or ambitions. But during that one hour they are free to do or say what they please. As a rule, they get into lots of mischief, as the lost thimbles, tangled cotton, etc. (the work of nobody), can always be traced to these busy little people.

Suddenly the great town bell rang out the hour of midnight, and immediately signs of life appeared in the deserted nursery. The wax doll yawned a very dainty little yawn, and started to rub her pretty blue eyes, as she sat up on the side of the cradle; the tin soldiers shouldered their muskets and marched around the room, and the horse, for lack of something better to do, started to eat the hearth rug. Not finding it very digestible, he neighed most piteously, and soon all the toys were gathered round to see what was the matter. Everyone said it served him right. Finally, the wax doll, who rejoiced in the name of Belinda, imperiously ordered the captain of the soldiers to put some more coals on the fire, for, said she: "There has not been a decent blaze here all day, and I'm sure I'm getting rheumatism."

Belinda was an aristocratic young lady, her mistress' favorite and a somewhat saucy damsel. The captain, therefore, had too much sense to refuse the lady's request; besides, he also was feeling chilly, and physical discomfort does not engender peace of mind.

"Oh, dear," sighed the rocking horse; "I wonder how our little mistress is this evening. I, for one, shall be glad to see her around again."

Belinda shook her head so hard that her curls nearly fell off. "I'm afraid," she said, and there was a sad little break in her voice. "I'm afraid we shall never see her again. This afternoon Nurse came into the room crying. She picked me up and put me in the cradle, and I'm sure I heard her say Miss Daisy would never need me any more."

"Don't cry," said the captain; "perhaps she does not know anything about it, or you may have been dreaming."

He did not think so himself, but he wanted to cheer them all up, which showed what a brave little soldier he was.

"She never even said good-bye to us," sobbed Belinda.

"We'll just stay here till she comes back," said the rocking horse, "and she will find us each in our proper place, just where she put us many days ago."

The moon looked down upon the faithful little group of humble friends, and smiled sadly, for she had peeped into another room that night. What she saw told its own tale. A snow-white cot, a little head ever tossing to and fro on the pillow, two blue eyes, bright and glowing with fever and tiny hands that wandered restlessly over the counterpane.

There had come a change, those little feet, whose patter had often brought sweet comfort to many an aching heart, had ceased their childish journey, the stray sunbeam from another world had wandered back again, for a pair of golden wings fluttered over the little bed, and on those golden wings a little soul was borne to heaven.

## PERSONAL.

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