

"Tatters and Tosh": a Children's Story

(By Annie Margaret Pike)

CHAPTER V

Bears on Board Ship.

On the afternoon of the same day, the second day of his cold, Tosh told Tatters about a game he played on board the ship that brought him to Canada.

And this is what he told him. "There was a boy named Tom, and he was bigger than Bruce but not as big as Malcolm, and he asked me if I would play at being a bear, and I said I would, and we played in the music room.

"There was a seat all around the wall, and it had a curtain hanging from it almost to the floor, and a lady was playing the piano, and we crept in at a place where nobody was sitting and we did not growl, because Tom said the ladies might be frightened if we did.

"We pretended it was Winter for a while and that we were asleep, because Tom said some bears sleep all Winter curled up in their dens. Then we got tired of that and Tom said we'd pretend it was Spring, so we could wake up and creep along to the other end of the room so as to get out beyond where we could see the fat lady's feet.

"I was in front of Tom and that's how it was that I found it. Of course if he had been the bear in front he would have found it. It looked as if it was made of little silver chains joined together.

"We took it to my Mother, who was standing near the door. I think she had come to look for me. She said we must take it to the purser, so she went with us and he took care of it, and he wrote something on a paper and pinned the paper up on a board at the head of the stairs, and next day a young lady came up to me when I was playing on the deck. She said was I the boy who found the purse, and I said 'Yes', and she said:—

"I'm so glad it's found, and thank you so much, and here is a shilling for you to do what you like with."

"That's what she said, and I asked my Mother if I might give half the money to Tom and she said I might.

"So Tom and I went around to that little shop that the barber man kept on the other side of the deck, and we both bought chocolate and peanuts.

"Tom and his little sisters ate what he bought, and I and Jennie and Malcolm and Bruce ate all I bought because when I offered some to Mother, she said:—

"Thank you very much, Tosh, but Father and I are afraid of getting a toothache if we eat any," and Father said that was so, and that even so much as one toothache divided between two people was nastier to have than no toothache at all; so he agreed with Mother that they would choose a no-toothache to share between them, and we children could do as we liked with the nuts and chocolates. I don't think I understood what he meant, but we ate the things, and Jennie got a toothache, and we saw an iceberg the same day."

CHAPTER VI

Bobo the Giant of Grouse Mountain.

The cold was so much better next day that although Tosh had to stay in bed, he said he felt as strong as a giant, and that was why he told Tatters a story about a giant.

Said he:—"Bobo is such a big giant, Tatters, that he can step across the First Narrows when he wants to.

"He has a long beard, very white and very long, and when it gets in his way he divides it into two parts and ties it in a bow at the back of his neck. He wears a cloak and it is white too.

"When he walks down this Avenue he touches the houses on both sides. His hat is floppetty and his front hair hangs over his eyes, like yours does over your eyes, Tatters.

"I told you he was a big giant. Well, what do you think he had to do when he wanted to go to bed at night? He had to go half the way down the mountain and curl himself around it, and if he had been a yard longer his toes would have touched the top of his head.

"He didn't like the noise the Stanley Park crows keep on making wherever they go, so he invited them all to a tea-party at his house and told them to learn to be quiet, but when they got home they forgot every word he said and made sa much noise as before.

"When he heard them at it again, he went and filled his pockets with rowan berries, tons and tons of red rowan berries. A small giant couldn't have done it, but Bobo was an awfully big giant so of course he had big pockets.

"He sent an invitation to the crows and asked them to meet him at the back of Bowen Island to have a feast, and he said if he couldn't stay all the time himself, he'd leave them all the berries anyway.

"Well they came, and there were so many berries that it took them three whole days to eat them up and when they weren't looking Bobo slipped away back to his mountain and curled himself around it and went fast asleep and slept until the crows came back and woke him up with their noise once more.

"He got so tired of them at last that he went away to a country near the North Pole where there are no crows; but when he got there his white hair and his white cloak were so like the snow that the polar bears couldn't see the difference and kept knocking up against his toes by accident and getting awful surprises. His shoes were white too of course.

"So when they had done that a lot of times, they got cross about it and began to bite him. So he thought the North Pole country wasn't really half so nice as he thought it was at first; and he came back to Grouse Mountain again, and he stuffed moss into his ears when the noise of the crows was too tiresome.

"He had to mend the holes in his shoes and he got old flour sacks to do it with and plaster of paris like what Father put into the hole in the kitchen wall; and that's the end of the story about Bobo the Giant of Grouse Mountain."

Tatters was fast asleep by this time, so Tosh did not tell him any more stories until the afternoon.

CHAPTER VII

The Fireweed Fairies.

Tosh had heard the story of the Fireweed Fairies so often that he was able to repeat it almost word for word to Tatters.

"Once upon a time the fairies heard a terrible noise. They had all been asleep and it woke them up, and soon they smelled smoke. Their home was in a forest near a lake, so they flew to the lake, and their friends the water-beetles carried them away from the bank and out into the deep water, and there they stayed for a very long time. It seemed like years to the fairies, but really it was only half a day.

"At last the terrible noise grew less and less, and the flashing flames grew smaller and smaller, and the smoke stopped making their eyes smart; and then the patient water beetles swam nearer the shore, and set the fairies on