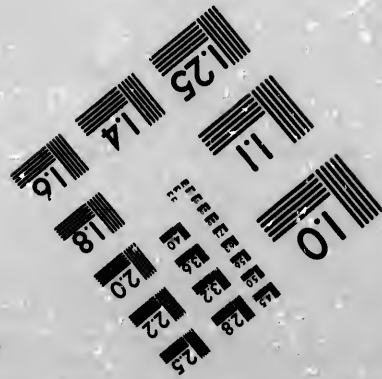
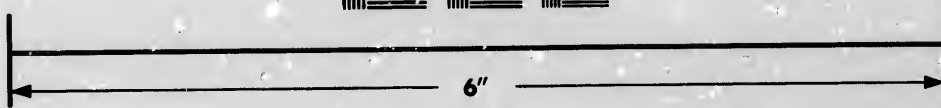
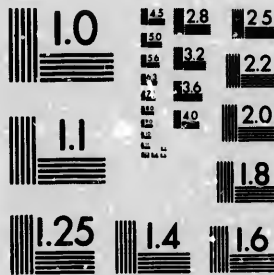


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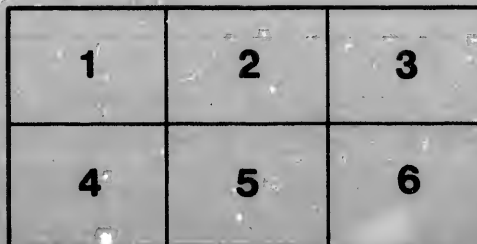
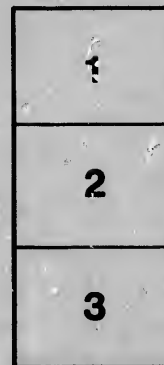
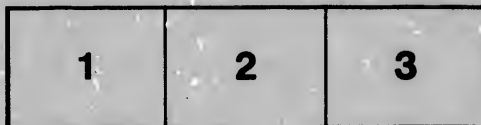
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GOOD MOTHER CARA

AND

HER GLASS SLIPPERS.

A CHRISTMAS FAIRY TALE.

1881.

4677

GOOD MOTHER CARA
AND HER GLASS SLIPPERS.

T WAS Christmas eve, and young Rosa May
Rejoiced that to-morrow was Christmas day:
For Uncle John, she was sure, would send
Some charming gift to his little friend;
And good Aunt Mary, she could not doubt,
Would certainly find her wishes out;
And dear Grandma, who was ever kind,
It need not be feared would lag behind;
And as for Pa and Ma, of course,
They had promised Tom a hobby-horse,
And Mina a tea-set, a doll, and ring;
And doubtless they had some better thing
In store for herself. "Now, come, let me see,
What sort of a thing can it possibly be?
A brooch, a locket and bright gold chain,
A bracelet, a necklace, a chatelaine?"

A photograph-album all blue and gold?—
She knew where such darling albums were sold—
Or a bonnet, what say you?—a love of a bonnet,
With a bird of paradise stuck upon it?
Or a sealskin jacket, with furs, a set,—
Muff, bon, gauntlets, and all complete?
Or, in short, a wishing-cap to bring,
Wish what she might?—the very thing!
’Twas a very dreamland of bright ideal,
And wanted but sleep to make it real.

Her head on the downy pillow lay;
But such fancies seemed to drive sleep away.
She tossed about, with an “Oh, dear me!
’Tis strange; so sleepy I seemed to be;
And yet—and yet;—why, who is that?”
Right opposite her, in a high peaked hat,
With star-spangled bodice and silvered hose,
And a lily for sceptre, there suddenly rose
Such a curious dame, in a dazzle of light,
She’d have laughed right out, were it not for
fright.

“Who sent you here?” asked Rosa Mary;
“I believe, on my word, you are just the fairy
Stepped out of Alice’s book, so grand,
With all her strange doings in ‘Wonderland.’”

R CARA.

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GOOD MOTHER CARA.

By this time Rosa had lost all fear,
As the fairy said, “ My little dear,
I’m good Mother Cara, the Christmas fairy,
Just come with some gifts extraordinary
For the good little girls and boys who mind
The Golden Rule, so wise and kind,
And ever strive to keep in view—
“ *Do as you’d have others do to you ;* ”
And who watch at this Christmas season for fear
They should spoil the mirth of a happy New Year
By forgetting Him whom the shepherds spied
In the manger on that first Christmas-tide.
Now, look, Miss Rosa, here are a pair
Of bright glass slippers for you to wear.
You see they are bright, without speck or blot,
Pure and stainless from flaw or spot.
If you follow their guidance, you are sure
Yourself to be no less bright and pure.
They’ll unerringly, ‘mid temptations’ deceit,
Be a light to your path, and a lamp to your feet ;
And change the thorniest roads with ease
Into ways of pleasantness and peace.
Now just try their guidance for this one day ;
Never, for once, a naughty word say,
Nor frown, nor pout, nor look sour or morose,
For a single day, and then wish what you chose.

And you shall have it! "Why! oh, so nice!"
The slippers were seized, and on in a trice.
"For a day! Why, I should be good for a year,
If only such beautiful slippers to wear.
And now, let me see, when the day is out—
For shan't I be good? Of course, no doubt!—
Why, then, I shall wish—let me see—a doll,
And a well-furnished doll-house, with the whole
Complete as it should be, a perfect palace,—
With couches covered with silks and lace;
Tea-things, of course, of prettiest ware;
A footstool, a table, and rocking-chair.
And next—let me see—oh! won't it be grand?
I'll have Alice's Mirror and Wonderland.
Nay, a better and bigger mirror, and straight.
Please, good Mother Love, why should we wait
For a whole long day, when you know, or should,
That I cannot possibly fail to be good?
Just one little wish is my heart's desire,
You cannot such long probation require;
Since I promise I'll make not one single error,
Give me just one peep into Alice's Mirror."
"Into Alice's Mirror?" said the fairy;
"Well, I don't mind for once to vary
From my strict rule, at this Christmas time,
And give you a peep of that wondrous clime."

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The fairy scarce spoke ere there rose before her
 A mirror that cast such a brightness o'er her
 It dazzled her very eyes with the light,
 Its clear, polished surface shone so bright.
 She winked her eyes, and there seemed to be
 The very things she had wished to see—
 Toys, dolls, and dresses, and, finer still,
 Ribbons and jewels and gems at will.
 She winked again, and the garden fair
 Seemed radiant with flowers so rich and rare
 Their very beauty dazzled her quite
 With the wondrous colours that flashed so bright.
 She cast down her eyes, and there were seen
 Her gay glass slippers' silvery sheen.
 She looked up again, and all was changed.
 Around her a glorious landscape ranged;
 Valley and highland stretched away
 To the glowing sunset's parting ray,
 And the vaulted dome of heaven o'erhead
 With the dying effulgence was overspread:
 Azure, emerald, and crimson fold,
 Tint by tint, into burnished gold
 Blended the wondrous sunset rays
 In the dreamy mists of its rainbow haze,
 And faded off into night's deep blue,
 With the evening star just peeping through.

The spangled meadows were laced with rills
That meandered on from the azure hills,
And the grassy plain spread out below
Just tinged with the gleam of the sun's last glow,
And fringed, and scattered, and dotted o'er
With the flocks from the herdsman's folded store.
The lowing herd, and the bleating lambs
In musical quest of their fleecy dams,
And the shepherds abiding there in sight,
Keeping watch and ward o'er their flocks by night.
As she gazed and wondered, the sunset's wane
Seemed to settle down on that grassy plain
With a quiet, holy calm, that stilled
Her very pulse, while her heart seemed filled
With gentlest thoughts of peace and love,
And good will to all; as though heaven above
Had come down to earth, and Christ once more,
As of old from the Galilean shore,
Saw his disciples toil in vain,
Wildly tossed on that heaving main,
Where the winds blew loud, and the waves ran high,
And no star gleamed forth from the stormy sky,
And the hearts of those lone ones with fear were chill
Till He spake the word, and all was still.
She seemed to be stilled with that hush of love,
Like the welcome home of the messenger-dove

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Settling down, from its faithful flight oppressed,
 On the mossy folds of its mated nest,
 To the perfect joy of a dreamless rest.
 The glorious landscape that round her lay
 With the glow of the sunset faded away,
 And the sweet oblivion calm and deep
 That settles down on childhood's sleep,
 Seemed now to woo her. She shut her eyes;
 But opened them soon in glad surprise:
 For she heard such music, so sweet and clear,
 It seemed as if heaven were coming near;
 And right in the mirror an angel-band,
 Each with a golden harp in hand,
 With glistening wings and radiant smile,
 And wondrous the songs they sang the while.
 She saw, as she thought, a valley fair:
 'Neath the stars were the shepherds abiding there;
 And they, too, listened, as each glad note
 Seemed from the starry heavens to float
 So sweet, so joyous, so winged with pleasure,
 Earth never heard a sweeter measure:
 And as each golden harp-string rang,
 'Twas thus that choir of angels sang:—

"Glory to God in heaven high:
 O earth, lift up the raptured eye:

Children, rejoice, this happy Christmas morn,
For unto you this day a Child is born ;
To you we herald now the Saviour's birth,
Glory to God on high, and peace on earth.

“Wish what you will, you cannot ask
For love too great His love to task,
For gifts too precious for His store
Is boundless—you may still ask more.
Eye hath not seen, nor heart conceived,
The wondrous gifts from Him received.

“Children, rejoice! this Christmas-tide
Heaven's golden gates are opened wide.
Into the land of gladness gaze,
List to its joyous songs of praise,
And all its glorious wonders view ;
For Christ has bought them all for you.”

With that the wondrous vision seemed to fade,
The mirror's self vanished in the shade
Of the gray dawn, as May with wakeful eyes
Listened, and heard the bells, in sweet surprise
For night was nearly gone, and with the dawn
Right through the trees, across the garden lawn

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The merry chimes on the crisp air were borne
 As the church-bells rang in the Christmas morn.

Quick to the floor she sprang and rubbed her eyes,
 Then woke the silence with her glad surprise.

She saw enough to make her stare.
 Mother Love, the fairy, had sure been there !
 There was Miss Doll, and carriage so neat ;
 The doll-house, with furniture all complete ;
 A locket and chain, a brooch, a bracelet,
 Album, and chatelaine, and tea-set ;
 Fron. Grandma, Aunty, great and small,
 Tom, and Mina : and—best of all,—
 For what if this can be what the good fairy
 Meant as her present to little Mary ?—
 Slippers of glass she called them, to light
 Her way, to walk through the world aright ;
 With each innocent wish they could inspire
 The roving fancies or heart's desire ;
 And guide her pilgrim feet on the way
 Safe to the realm of endless day :
 For there, apart from every other,
 Lay the loving gift of her own dear Mother—
 A Bible, in satin, and clasped with gold ;
 And on the leaf these words, that told

Of the dear giver's heart's desire :—
" For Rosa May. May its words inspire
With Christ's own love; and prove most meet,
A lamp to her path, to guide her feet
Through tempting coverts and thorny ways
In earth's most troubled and cloudy days;
To guard her from sin, and guide her to pray
That Jesus may lead her all the way,
Till, safe in His everlasting love,
By the river of life she shall walk above,
And tread with Him the streets of gold
In the Good Shepherd's heavenly fold."

D. WILSON.

