

THE LITTLEST DRYAD

EXQUISITE FAIRY STORY OF DRYADS, FAUNS AND FOREST SPIRITS, BY ALDES DUNBAR.

THE Heart of the Forest was filled with sunshine, for it lay open to the blue sky. It was ringed around with spreading oaks, and the softest green grass grew under foot.

One morning in Spring, came a sweet wind, brushing the leaves as it passed them; but when it reached the Heart of the Forest, it whispered "Hush!"—laughing a little for there the warm sunlight, by a newly sprung sapling, sat the littlest Dryad, waiting alone.

"Why?" sighed the wind, lifting a golden curl from her cheek.

"It's nothing but a twig, and not a tree at all," wept the littlest Dryad. "Why couldn't I have had a big oak tree, like the others? O, it has only a tiny stem, and hardly any leaves!" She screwed her chubby fists into the big brown eyes—for truly there were tears in them, one in each—while the wind flew away to tell the Forest.

When the Forest knew, there was a fluttering of leaves. From the nearest of the great oaks glided four slender figures dressed in palest green tissue, which floated behind them as they ran lightly out into the sunshine and knelt around the youngest sister.

"Why do you weep, little Nephelie?" asked Maia, swiftest of all Dryads. "Because my tree is so very small, and because it isn't an oak, like yours, and can have no acorns on it," sobbed the littlest Dryad, as one round tear crept down over her cheek.

"But your tree will grow," whispered Sylvia. "Has no one told you that we spirits of the trees live only while they do? The water spirits live forever, but when my oak falls I shall pass away like a mist in the wind. Your tree is newly born, little sister, and if you guard it well, you will have a long life in the lovely Forest."

"And besides," laughed Oenone, "our trees are all the same—with bitter acorns—while you have been given one that is quite unlike any other. See the leaves have tiny points."

"I didn't think of that," said the littlest Dryad, brushing away the second tear, and beginning to smile.

Then Euphrosyne, who had been watching for that, caught her sister's hands, and together they all danced around Nephelie and her baby tree.

Now that both tears had disappeared, the littlest Dryad stood up, too, and tripped about merrily on the tips of her toes.

"It's my tree, isn't it?" she asked presently.

"Surely," came the four sweet voices. "And can I do just what I like with it?"

"If you do not harm it in any way," answered Oenone. "If you should, the water would be to your own life as well."

"I shan't hurt it the very wee-est bit. It's my dear little tree." She bent over and put her arms around it, looking over her dimpled shoulders at the other Dryads. "Please go back to your big old oak trees, and let me take care of it myself."

Her sisters looked at each other in amazement for a moment—then at the wilful littlest Dryad, and all began to laugh, until it seemed like silver bells chiming in the Forest. The wind carried the sweet ringing sound onward, and all the woodland laughed, too—even the brook as it pattered over the white stones beneath the trees.

So all the sisters flitted back into the cool shade, and left the littlest Dryad alone with her tree.

For a long time she stayed close to it, bringing fresh water in a folded leaf to pour on its roots when the sun was hot and the ground around it seemed dry, and never straying far; but as it grew taller, she often slipped away, running beside the brook to peep down the hillside, where the vines grew that would soon be heavy with purple grapes.

Once, at sunset, she heard singing down in the valley, and the words lingered in her ears as she went slowly back to her tree.

"Could I sing, too?" she wondered; and before she knew her voice was following the same merry tune, while the squirrels sprang across the branches to listen, and the rabbits sat up, perking their furry ears. Even a little porcupine crept from its hiding place.

Last of all, a roughish face peeped out from a bush, and when they saw it all the little living creatures whisked away in a flash, for they knew mischievous Ion, with his pointed ears and tiny goat's feet, and all feared him except the porcupine.

"Why do you frighten all my rabbits and squirrels, naughty Ion?" asked the littlest Dryad, trying hard to frown.

"Who gave them to you?" asked Ion, laughing, as he capered across the grass and pranced before her.

"They have always been mine," replied Nephelie, just as my tree is my own. They are never afraid of me."

"Oh, your tree?" chuckled Ion. "You



"PLEASE GO BACK—AND LET ME TAKE CARE OF IT ALL BY MYSELF!"

do not even know what kind of tree you dwell in."

"But I do," said the littlest Dryad. "It is not an oak."

"Ha, ha, ha! Not an oak! Is that its name? Has it nuts?"

"What are nuts?"

"Oh, ignorant little Nephelie! Nuts are like the acorns that fall from the oaks of Maia and her sisters, but they are sweet, instead of bitter."

"My tree shall have nuts," decided Nephelie.

"You cannot tell what they should be like," said Ion. "Ask me, I have seen many trees with pointed leaves."

"No," said Nephelie. "This is my tree, and it shall have only the nuts that I wish. None shall be foreign to me, because you frighten the Forest dwellers."

Ion caught up water in his palms to sprinkle over her, but the little Dryad only yawned a dear little yawn—leaned back against the sapling, and when Ion looked again, he saw nothing but a slender young tree, waving in the evening breeze.

"If that isn't just like a Dryad!" he said, provoked that she should have eluded him so easily. He tried to catch the porcupine, to tease it, but it pricked him, and he ran away to the vineyard.

One day the little Dryad noticed that her tree was putting out long yellow tassels—almost the same color as her own golden curls.

"They do not look like nuts," she thought, ruefully. "Little tree of mine, you must have nuts. Do you hear?"

The tree shook and quivered, and at last a gentle whisper came from the boughs.

"How? I never had any. What are they like?"

"Like acorns," said Nephelie. "They must be pale brown and shiny, like the acorns—but with a sweet white kernel."

"Yes," breathed the tree. "I'll try. But the acorns turn darker as the sun shines on them."

"Then the nuts may do it, too," returned Nephelie.

So, after the Summer passed, the tassels dropped, and the littlest Dryad saw the brown, shiny nuts on her tree.

"See," she laughed in triumph. "See, Maia, Sylvia! Look, sister Euphrosyne, at the nuts on my tree. Are they not better than acorns?" and she danced across the grass in glee.

But among the bushes was one hiding. "Yes, better than bitter acorns," said Ion, nodding his head as he ate one of the tree kernels. He bounded away to tell all his brother fauns, who dwell in the Forest; and when the littlest Dryad came back she found every ripe nut gone.

"Who did it?" asked the littlest Dryad, ready to cry.

"Ion," sighed the tree, sadly.

Then she did cry, a very small cry—after which she felt better, and ready to find a remedy.

"You must cover all the other nuts with soft brown fur, like the rabbits," said the littlest Dryad, "and then the fauns can not tell whether the nuts are ripe or not, and they may not take them."

"I'll try," promised the tree; and in the morning every nut was dressed in silky brown fur, like the ears of the baby rabbits—down like the ears of the baby rabbits—and Nephelie tripped away to her sisters, to tell them what she had done.

Alas the day! When she returned, only a few unripe nuts hung on the highest boughs. She sat down by the brook and dropped many salt tears into the running water, until Nals peeped up through the waterlilies to see who was weeping so bitterly.

"What troubles you, little Nephelie?" asked the rippling voice.

"Ion, the naughty faun, has taken my nuts. They were beautiful and brown and shiny, so I told the tree to cover them with soft fur, that he might not find them; but he brought the other fauns and tore them from the branches."

"Dread down and listen," said Nals. "I have seen many little fauns."

So Nephelie leaned close to the water, and the spirit of the brook whispered—

just a few words, but enough to make the littlest Dryad clap her hands and run quickly back to her tree.

"Little tree, hearken!" called Nephelie. "Yes!" replied the tree.

"You shall keep the sweet white kernels, with their shining brown coverings, and the soft fur shall be around to keep them warm. But outside of all you must grow little sharp spines, like the porcupine. Then Ion and his brothers cannot touch our nuts."

"I'll try," sighed the waving branches.

It was troublesome work for so young a tree, which knew so little about nuts—but by the next morning all those that remained were concealed by a prickly coat, and the littlest Dryad nodded her sunny head, knowing that Nals was wise.

She hid behind the nearest oak—that wherein dwelt Oenone—and waited. And before many hours had passed little pattering feet were heard, and there were the fauns, ready to rob the tree of its past nuts.

"Where are they?" asked one.

"At the top," said Ion. "Throw up stones. Or wait, and I will shake the tree."

The tree cared little for what Ion could do, but at last it let one nut fall. All the fauns were on it at once—and all sprang up with prickled fingers—very angry.

"You have tricked us," they said to Ion. "You have taken the nuts away when we were far from here, and have put baby porcupines in the tree to hurt us. Soon their mother will come and shoot her sharp quills at us."

"No, no!" said Ion. "It must have been little Nephelie."

"Her hands are too soft and tender," answered the other fauns. "No; it was you. Come, brothers. Let us put Ion in the brook, and ask Nals to hold him under the water until he gives us the nuts."

Ion did not wait for that. Off he rushed, through bushes and vines, and never paused until he was far down the hillside.

"If that wasn't just like a Dryad!" he thought, out of breath and in a very bad temper.

But the littlest Dryad laughed happily, with her sisters—and Nals laughed, too—for she had seen many little fauns.—Copyright, 1902.

CANDY MAKING.

Amateurs May Concoct Fine French Bon-Bons at Home.

THERE are a few important minor matters to be borne in mind if one would play the amateur confectioner to perfection.

Have everything in readiness before beginning.

Use only best granulated sugar for boiling and confectioner's XXX for kneading.

Butter used in candies—tasty and caramel—should be specially fresh and sweet flavored, and that used in brushing the pans in which candy is turned out should be well washed, to get out the salt as much as possible. Oil is preferable for brushing pans in which nut candies are placed. Nuts should be warmed so as not to chill the candy.

The spoon or spatula used should be wooden. A long needle, such as is used by upholsterers, is necessary in handling balls or squares of candy.

Mold on a marble slab if possible. Do not handle any more than can be helped, or the transparency is lost. Never stir the sugar and water after the sugar has dissolved. Wipe down constantly the granules forming on the sauceman. Do not shake or move the sauceman while the syrup is boiling. As soon as the sugar begins to boil it constantly in ice water.

"Boll to the crack" is a general direction in candy making; this means until a few drops of the syrup thrown in cold water forms a little mass. French cooks plunge their fingers into ice water and then into the boiling syrup to pick up a drop, and this is the best way to test the syrup when making fondant for French candies. But one must be an expert to try this. The moment the drop of syrup between the fingers turns to a soft little ball, and does not cling to them, the syrup is ready to be removed from the fire. It takes about 15 minutes to reach the "boll" state.

Confectioners technically divide the processes of boiling into nine degrees: the small thread, the large thread, the little pearl, the large pearl, the blow, the feather, the ball, the crack and the caramel, all of which are produced by a heat ranging from 230 to 300 deg. It is curious to note that the ninth, or caramel, degree, was first intelligently noted by Count Albufrage Caramel, of Nismes, for whom the degree has been named.

To avoid granulation add a little lemon juice, vinegar or cream of tartar to the syrup, but only a trifle, as too much acid causes graining. A wee pinch of salt improves caramels or chocolate candy. A teaspoonful of baking soda added to molasses candy when boiling helps to whiten it. Never grate chocolate; break it into small pieces and dissolve in a bowl placed over a kettle of boiling water. To color candy brown add melted chocolate or caramel. A few drops of tincture of saffron will make a yellow tinge and caramelized with carmine gives orange yellow. Cochineal, carmine, saffron and Prussian blue are perfectly harmless, but so strong that a bit the size of a gum-drop will color 5000 pounds of candy. A delicate color is always preferable.

When liquid flavors are used, if the fondant becomes too soft, mix in a little confectioner's sugar. Work in flavors and colors by hand. For creamed fruits the hulls are left on strawberries and the stems on grapes and cherries.

To cool candy, place in a dry place. To keep candy put between layers of waxed paper in tin boxes. A damp day is a poor one for candy making. Select a dry day or everything will probably go wrong.

It is a fact which is rather surprising in this age of machinery that the bulk of the best candy is made by hand. We get our name "candy" not from the Cingalese city of that name, but from "quand," meaning sugar. Sugar is crystallized juice of one of the gigantic grasses—sugar, cane, sorgho, etc.—boiled grass juice. Anciently the crystals of sugar were called sweet sand and gravel, the Sanskrit word caraka (our sugar) meaning gravel.—From What to Eat.

VACATION TRIPS.

New Reces Games to Quicken the Memory.

All recess games are intended to do three things—first, to amuse you; second, to help your studies, or at least to refresh your memory; and, third, to teach you to think quickly and to answer promptly. The third object is perhaps the most important, for quick thought and readiness of expression will be of immense service to you as you grow older.

This game, like the others, has been made up specially for the boys and girls, and is now printed for the first time. There may be any number of players, but we will suppose there are 12, not counting the leader. He, by the way, should be selected at least a day ahead, so that he may prepare himself for properly conducting it, or if he is a bright scholar, perhaps he may get along without any preparation of his kind.

He takes his stand in front of the players and tells them that he is going to send each of them on a little journey during the coming vacation. As he considers it very important that all boys and girls should be well informed about their own country, all the journeys will be made here, and not abroad.

He will send the 12 players to 12 states, each to a different state, of course, and the only return he will ask is that each traveler shall bring back with him a small part of the principal product of products of the state to which he is sent.

For instance, he begins by saying to the player at the head of the line to his right: "John, I am going to send you to the

NIGNI, THE DWARF

THE ADVENTURES OF A LITTLE MAN, AS WRITTEN BY HIMSELF.

NO. III.—PLAYING TOREADOR WITH A GOAT.

I HAVE told you of my battles with the grasshoppers and the Bantam rooster, and I must relate yet another adventure. When I was 4 years old, and yet so small that I could hide in the sugar bowl, my father brought home a goat in order that we might try an experiment. Several people had told him that if I drank plenty of goat's milk I would begin to grow fat and tall, and so he paid \$3 for a goat. I can tell you that the milk did no good at all, though I drank a quart a day for many weeks, and the folks who thought themselves so wise had to admit their mistake. The goat and I took a dislike to each other from the start, and seeing this, my father said to me:

"Nigni, you must beware of the goat. She cannot only strike a hard blow with her feet, but she can smash in the head of a barrel by butting it. If she should get in a fair blow at you with her head she would break all your bones. I have known a goat to knock a strong man down and do him a great injury."

I promised to keep away from her, but at the same time I used to go out to her when she was tied up and wish that I was old enough and big enough to give her a fair fight. She would beat at me and shake her head in anger, and no doubt she was saying that if she could only break her rope she would make short work of me. One day, as my mother went to market and left me on the doorstep alone, a boy came along and presented me with a new tin sword. The coat was only a penny, but I had never had one before. He was a boy who had always spoken kindly to me, and he had bought the sword as a present. I had no sooner waved it around my head than I began to feel very brave, and soon after the boy had left me I went out into the garden and walked up and down before the goat to show her that I was not afraid. When she shook her head and stamped her feet I threatened her with the sword and shouted:

"I am only a dwarf and 4 years old, but my name is Nigni, and I am not afraid of man or animal! Should you ever break loose and attack me I will stab you to the heart!"

My words seemed to be understood by the goat and to excite her to anger, and as she tried to reach me her rope broke and she was free. I was not the boy to run away after what I had said, but I may tell you that I was badly frightened for a minute or two. She was a big, strong goat, and she was so mad that her eyes glared like a dog's. No sooner did she find herself free than she lowered her head and made a rush. Had she struck me, I would have been smashed like an empty box, but I had my eye on her and leaped aside just in time. Her head struck an apple tree instead of my body, and with such force that she bounded back and fell over on her side. Some-



PLAYING TOREADOR WITH A GOAT.

thing told me that now was my time, and as the goat slowly rose to her feet, wondering what had happened, I seized her long hair and mounted to her back. As soon as she felt me astride of her she began jumping up and down like one of those bucking bronchos you have seen with a circus, but try as hard as she could she could not throw me off. When she was tired of bucking she began to run around the yard and to try to rub me off against the trees and bushes, but all her efforts were in vain. I not only kept my place, but when she had tired herself out I slit her ears with my sword and

made her gallop around for my pleasure. It was my first horseback ride, and I was very proud that I could stick on without a saddle. The goat was not only tired out, but very humble in her mind when I slid off and let her go, and from that day on as long as I remained at home she was afraid of me. When my mother learned what had happened she threw up her hands and fainted away, and father was so frightened for a moment that he turned pale and could not speak. It did not seem possible to them that their dwarf had got the better of a savage goat.

THE DOROTHY BROWN PAINT PICTURES

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The Captain Invites Dorothy and Reggie to Walk with Him.

III. DOROTHY, REGGIE AND THE CAPTAIN.

The first of the voyage was terribly rough. Each wave shook the steamer with awful rebuff. And poor Mrs. Brown was as sick as a dog.

But Reggie and Dorothy chuckled with glee. As each briny wave tossed the spray at their feet, and sometimes it wet them as they could retreat.

The gruff-speaking captain turned out to be fine. He called them true soldiers, and asked them to dine

One day, at his own private table, you know, An honor that pleased Reg and Dorothy so!

But these blessed children were pleased most of all "When the captain, in gold lace, in shining and tall, Took both for a stroll on the deck, hand in hand.

And told them his yarns of the sea and the land. The captain, of course, painted with dark navy blue, And for his gold lace some bright yellow will do.

Soft brown or a gray for our Reggie please use. And Dorothy, paint in harmonious blues. The woodwork and planking are plain white or gray, The portholes reflecting the sky, bluish gray.



There's an awful creature that flies by night, Seizing the one he catches light.

Dumpling and hanging here and there— Under the table, behind the chair.

Over the sideboard, against the wall, Down the dumb waiter, into the hall.

Upward and downward, fast and slow— In every household, in every town.

People hasten to hunt it down. Father, mother and Uncle Ned, Sister, brother and little Ted, Aunt Maria and Cousin Sue, Doctor Bonness—the minister, too—

All are striving with might and main, Tired muscles and weary brain, Gasping, panting and short of breath, Staggering, stamping, down to death— All the evening and half the night— Waging a hopeless, hopeless fight, Urging others to join the hunt.

Hearts of granite and feelings blunt, Duty, service and work forgot— Ducky, thirsty, disheveled, hot— Chasing the creature—rapt, intent— Sore and suffering, weary, bent. While over the stricken land is heard The horrid hoot of the Ping-Pong bird.

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