

TALES OF THE UGLY BRASS LAMP

By CHARLES BATTILL LOOMIS, Author of "Yankee Enchantments," etc.
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MRS. DEMPSEY was downright slovenly. Her business was washing clothes, but she drew the line at clothes, and never thought of scrubbing her floor or polishing her pots and pans and other utensils. That is probably why her ugly brass lamp looked so dingy, and one day when it was accidentally knocked off the table and set fire to the house, Mrs. Dempsey flung it through the open window, and the blazing comet that descended to the street below gave the alarm of fire.

The fire cleaned out her place pretty thoroughly; in fact, so thoroughly that it burned up not only the dirt, but about everything else that the poor woman had. But the chief loss, if she had but known it, was the loss of the lamp.

That battered piece of furniture burned for awhile in the street and then, as if worn out by its exertions, it lay on its side, a useless thing more ugly than ever. It was the next day that Harry Munn came walking along the street on his way home from school. He had gone a block out of his way in order to see the blackened window that marked the place of yesterday's fire, and, like dozens of others, he saw the lamp; but, unlike dozens of others, he stooped and picked it up because—well, because he was a boy, and boys know the value of rubbish.

It was not like any other lamp that he ever had seen, and good reason. Mrs. Dempsey's husband had been a sailor, and he had picked up the lamp in a place called Jangar, somewhere on the coast of India.

Harry took it home with him, and when he walked into his mother's bedroom with his cap on and the lamp in his hand, she said two things: "Where's your cap, Harry?" and "Oh, where did you get that dirty thing? Do throw it away. Your coat is all smutted up from it."

"Throw it away!" said Harry, tossing his cap upon the bed. "I'm going to make a stove out of it to use in our oven."

Harry lived in a little suburban town where the boys found endless amusement in making ovens in a clay bank and then they cooked sweet potatoes, burned their fingers and their trousers and otherwise enjoyed themselves. They also made clay images and fired them in the ovens and then, like as not, fired them away, after the fashion of boys.

Harry deposited his schoolbooks in the wrong place, and snatching up his cap, he rushed off to the clay bank.

None of the other boys was there, so he sat down on a heap of clay and began to do what Mrs. Dempsey had never done—that is, to polish the lamp. He had no rag handy, but he used something just as good—his coat sleeve.

Three times he rubbed the dusky brass globe, and then he dropped it with a cry of terror; for curling out of the top was a thin stream of greenish smoke, that twisted and twisted and rapidly grew larger, until it was 20 feet high, when it suddenly assumed the size and shape of a giant.

Harry had read of such things, but he never had seen one before, and at first he decided not to believe it. But what's the use of having eyes if you don't believe them? Harry's eyes never had gone back on him, and so he trusted them and started to run away from this spirit that his rubbing had evoked.

But in a roaring voice the smoke wrath said: "Don't run away, American boy. I am the slave of the lamp. It is not the lamp of Aladdin, but it was made by the same wizard. For years I have not been called. Now I am here. With quickly for the thing you most desire."

"I wonder why it is that when fairies or djinns give people wishes they almost always wish for some foolish little thing at first; for instance, Harry, the apple tree in his father's yard was loaded with ripe apples, and he could get all he wished just for the picking, but the foolish fellow said: 'I wish I had an apple,' and in an instant he held one in his hand, not one whit better than those on his father's tree."

The djinn burst into a smoky laugh. "I only stay three minutes, and more than two have passed."

"Have you ever tried to think quickly on compulsion? How much do ten apples was afterward proved when he shook the foundations of Rome."

"I intend to be a great scholar," said his companion, looking far out over the landscape with dreamy eyes. Before he was disconsolate, for the great Constantine, Emperor of Rome, had become Christian and forbidden the people to celebrate Saturnalia, the pagan festival lasting from December 21 to January 1.

An old Roman seer heard the complaint of the boys, and decided to do them a kindness. Walking up the bank of the stream until he was several hundred yards above the point where the boys loitered on the bank, he cast four strange objects out into the stream and waited.

The elder of the two boys was the first to see one of the strange objects. He thought it to be some small animal.

"Sinclius!" he cried to his companion. "See! There is a dog in the river!"

Sinclius gazed intently over the water. "There are two dogs," he said. "But they are not dogs."

"I see four men," said the first boy. "They are little gnomes," said Sinclius. "We will throw stones at them until we drive them ashore."

About a quarter of a mile down the stream the boys gathered in their prizes. They were not gnomes, as Sinclius had called them. They were curious emerald copper cylinders, and after some difficulty the boys succeeded in opening them.

Out of each copper cylinder came a thick bluish cloud which rapidly disappeared so much smoke. It was, however, curious and very wonderful smoke, and its effect upon the boys was immediately apparent.

Sinclius squared his shoulders and drew a deep breath. "I intend to be a great soldier," he said. And how well he kept his word



IT MADE SILAS SUPPOSE THAT HIS BRAIN WAS AFFECTED.

could have given you a bad penny just as easily. Why don't you ask for something worth while? Hurry up, too, for I can



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only stay three minutes, and more than two have passed."

"Have you ever tried to think quickly on compulsion? How much do ten apples

and five plums and six cherries and seven bananas and four pears and fifty-two grapes make? Answer quick!

You can't answer quickly when the teacher fires it at you like that. Perhaps you may there is no answer, but when you take time to it you discover that the answer is 84 pieces of fruit.

Well, Harry tried to think of something worth while, but his mind seemed to be as empty as a blown egg, and while he was fairly trembling in his effort to think, the smoke giant disappeared in a thin stream of smoke that went straight up in the air for a hundred feet and then leaped behind a cloud on the edge of the sky and was gone.

Then Harry felt mean enough. He looked at the apple in his hand and was so disgusted at it that he gave it a vicious pitch and it landed plumb in the forehead of Dick Sturges, who had come up to the ovens at that moment.

"Who yer blit?" said Dick savagely, for the apple had been delivered with all the strength of the pitcher of the Canfield nine.

A fight would have been unavoidable, for Dick was a spunky chap and never let an insult go unavenged, but Harry said: "I wasn't firm at you," and leaning over he picked up the lamp and once more gave it three rubs.

The appearance of the giant was the signal for Dick to disappear. He was not afraid of any boy that ever lived, and he had fully intended to make Harry smart for his freshness; but apparitions like the one before him were good things to get away from, and he took to his heels before Harry could explain matters.

The giant spoke. "This is my last appearance for a month. I cannot leave Asia more than twice a month. Quick, what do you want?"

Now, even while he was flinging the apple away, Harry had thought of an invisible automobile, and he blurted out the words so quickly that they tumbled all over each other.

"I want an invisible automobile. 'What?' said the djinn, angrily. If there is anything a djinn hates it is to be asked to do something."

"I want an in-vi-si-bi-le au-to-mo-bi-le," said Harry, as distinctly as he could, and with a queer smile the giant said: "It is yours," and once more rushed behind a cloud some seven miles away, and was no more seen.

Harry looked around him and saw nothing. There was no automobile.

"The old fraud!" said he. "He isn't any kind of genie."

He took a step forward, intending to hunt the lamp after the apple—for he was a quick-tempered boy—but as he stepped forward his head came in contact with something hard, and he started back with a cry of pain.

"That you, Dick?" he called, thinking that Dick was throwing stones at him from the other side of the bank. But no one answered, so he turned and walked a few steps to the right and then turned again to pick up the lamp, and this time he tripped over something and went headlong.

As he was falling it dawned on him that the djinn had kept his word. He must be the possessor of an automobile, but the reason that he could not see it because it was invisible. He could feel it all right, as his forehead and shins were bearing evidence.

He rose cautiously to his feet, and began to feel for the vehicle, and there it was; complete, but whether moved by electricity or oil or steam he did not know.

But it does not take a bright boy of 12 very long to find out how any old thing works, and in five minutes Harry had discovered that it was an electric motor of very simple mechanism. And in five minutes had learned how to run it and how to steer it, and he took an initial run along the lonely road that runs north from the clay pit to where the Canfield road intersects.

He met no person, but he did meet a dog, a water spaniel that belonged to pretty much every one in town, was so friendly. The dog ran yelping with terror as soon as he saw Harry five feet up in the air and moving rapidly forward.

Harry wondered what had frightened the dog, but he discovered very soon, for now, feeling that he knew how to manage the machine, he turned into the Canfield road and ran along at some ten miles an hour.

Silas Woodbury was hauling a load of blue stone up the avenue, and Harry did not soon forget the look of fright that came over his features when he saw a small boy rushing through the air at him.

To be sure, Harry steered the vehicle to the right and avoided a collision, but he also caused a runaway. Woodbury's horses were accustomed to visible automobiles, but the spectacle of a boy in a sitting posture with his hand held rigidly in front of him, kiting along five feet above the ground smoothly and swiftly, was more than they could stand, and they ran up Turner Hill with their heavy load as if they had been running loose in their pasture.

Fortunately, Silas controlled them before any damage was done, but after he had brought them to a trembling standstill he went to see a doctor, supposing that his brain was affected.

As for Harry, he thought of nothing but his delight at owning such a conveyance, and he determined to go home at once and take his mother out for a ride.

As he came in sight of the house he saw his father sitting on the piazza, and he put on a little extra spurt of speed, yelling to her with joy and exultation as he did so.

I do not believe that there was anything the matter with the steering gear; I think that Harry merely got rattled; but whatever the cause, Mrs. Munn looked up when she heard the yell and saw her boy flying through the air; first in a sitting posture but just as quickly within four feet of the telegraph pole he assumed a horizontal position, face downward and landed in the woodbine that shades the piazza.

For an instant there was a grinding sound in front of the house, and the telegraph pole trembled like an aspen, and then broke short off. At the same time there was the sound of the whirling of an automobile, and then the stone wall on the other side of the road seemed to have been hard hit, and then there was silence. But for several hours people who happened to use the path by the stone wall went beating over invisible obstacles, and then took to their heels in undignified haste.

As for Harry, he had come through the vine with no bones broken, and without waiting to explain matters to his mother, he made a bee line for the clay bank; he got the brass lamp, for he realized that he would need it again.

"More fun in a goat," he said to himself, as he hurried along.

As for Harry, he had come through the vine with no bones broken, and without waiting to explain matters to his mother, he made a bee line for the clay bank; he got the brass lamp, for he realized that he would need it again.

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PICTURES FOR CHILDREN TO PAINT

THE STORIES OF FERER AND ELLEN—By GERTRUDE SMITH.



Aunt Clarimond opened the pantry door and came in and caught Peter in her arms.

ONE morning Mary Amanda, the cook, came into the dining-room, and she looked very cross and said:

"Now, Peter and Ellen, listen to me. You must not go to the cookie jar and take all the cookies I bake. I never go to that jar, but I find it empty."

And Polly Parrot sat on the back of a chair and she put her head on one side and said:

"Tut, tut, tut; what a cross old thing." And Peter laughed, and Ellen laughed, but Mamma said:

"Why, Peter and Ellen, dears, do you go to that cookie jar and take Mary Amanda's cookies?"

And little Ellen said:

"I thought they were cookies to eat. I didn't know they were Mary Amanda's."

"Grandma always lets us go to her cookie jar when we go over to her house to play."

And Mary Amanda looked real cross and shook her finger and said:

"Cookies were made to eat when you come to the dinner table; not out in the yard."

"Go away, Mary Amanda!" And Peter and Ellen laughed, and Mary Amanda went back into the kitchen.

And Mamma said:

"Mary Amanda is very angry. You must ask me whenever you want a cookie, children."

And Peter and Ellen went out into the garden and walked about and looked at the flowers, and Peter said:

"I suppose we were wicked robbers, little Ellen, to take Mary Amanda's cookies."

And little Ellen felt real naughty. She tossed her curls and said:

"I like to be wicked robbers and take Mary Amanda's cookies!"

And little Ellen felt real naughty. She tossed her curls and said:

"I like to be wicked robbers and take Mary Amanda's cookies!"

"I like to play being a robber, but Mary Amanda is so cross I'll not take her cookies."

And just then they heard a "click, click" and the front gate opened, and in came sweet Aunt Clarimond. She was the youngest, sweetest, dearest Auntie you ever saw.

And sweet Aunt Clarimond said:

"Oh, good morning, Peter and Ellen. Good morning."

And Peter and Ellen said:

"Oh, good morning, sweet Aunt Clarimond."

And Aunt Clarimond said:

"You can come over to my house whenever you please and take cookies out of my cookie jar. Cookies were made to eat."

And Ellen hugged sweet Aunt Clarimond and said:

"Oh, what fun that will be. You can make better cookies than Mary Amanda."

And Peter said:

"May we play we are robbers and take cookies out of your cookie jar?"

And Aunt Clarimond said:

"Yes, we'll have a grand time together. Ellen and you may play robbers and come into my pantry and take my cookies—not more than one each time you come, though."

And little Ellen danced up and down and said:

"Oh, what fun that will be, Aunt Clarimond!"

And Aunt Clarimond said:

"I will come into the pantry and catch you and put you in prison—the prison will be my arm."

And Peter said:

"When may we come, Aunt Clarimond?"

And Aunt Clarimond said:

"You may come this afternoon, and now I must go home and bake cookies, for my cookie jar is empty."

And that afternoon Peter and Ellen put on their hats and went down the road to Aunt Clarimond's house. (Ellen took her little name monkey under her arm.)

And Peter said:

"Now we will play we are robbers, and we must go real still so no one will hear us."

And little Ellen said:

"Yes, we must go real still because we are wicked robbers."

And Peter and Ellen went on tip-toes around Aunt Clarimond's house, and crept into the pantry window.

And little Ellen said:

"Oh, here is the cookie jar! Isn't it a big, big cookie jar, Peter?"

And Peter said:

"We must remember we promised Aunt Clarimond only to take one cookie each time we come."

And Ellen said:

"Yes, I can take only one cookie, but my little monkey can take one, too. He is a wicked little robber."

And Peter stood on tip-toes and looked into the cookie jar, and little Ellen stood on tip-toes and looked into the cookie jar, and, oh! what do you think, that jar was filled with Thimble Cookies! Each little cookie was just the size of the circle of sweet Aunt Clarimond's thumb!

And Ellen said:

"Oh, oh, what dear, little, cunning cookies!"

And Peter looked cross and said:

"Aunt Clarimond has played a joke on us! One of these tiny cookies will only make one bite!"

And the little monkey jumped on the edge of the cookie jar and stole two little cookies.

And little Ellen laughed and said:

"Aunt Clarimond didn't tell this wicked little robber how many cookies he could steal!"

And just then Aunt Clarimond opened the pantry door and came in and caught Peter in her arms and said:

"Oh, here are these little robbers in the pantry taking my baby cookies!"

And little Ellen said:

"There are three little robbers, here Aunt Clarimond."

And Peter said:

"These cookies are so little they only last a minute."

And Aunt Clarimond said:

"Come, you three wicked little robbers, I have some handcuffs to put on your hands because you took my cookies."

And Aunt Clarimond led Peter and Ellen out into her kitchen, and there, on a plate were three very large cookies—three very large cookies, and each had a hole in the middle.

And Aunt Clarimond slipped one big cookie over little Ellen's hand and one over Peter's hand, and the other over the little monkey's neck.

And Aunt Clarimond said:

"There, you three naughty robbers, you have handcuffs on because you took my thimble cookies."

And the little monkey ran and jumped up on Sweet Aunt Clarimond's shoulder, and began to nibble the big cookie on his neck.

And little Ellen laughed and said:

"Oh, what splendid big cookies these are!"

And Peter said:

"I would like to have taken my pockets full of those little thimble cookies."

And Aunt Clarimond said:

"If a little girl named Ellen and a little boy named Peter come to see me some day and ring my front door bell I will fill their pockets with little cookies."

And little Ellen clapped her hands and said:

"Oh, good! I love little thimble cookies. They melt in my mouth in a minute."

And Peter said:

"We'll come over tomorrow, Aunt Clarimond, and ring your front door bell."

And then Peter and Ellen went home. The little monkey rode on Peter's shoulder, and the big sugar cookie was still on his neck.

"BRING YOUR BOATS ASHORE"

ONE December in the fourth century, two Roman boys were sitting on the bank of a little tributary of the Tiber. They were disconsolate; for the great Constantine, Emperor of Rome, had become Christian and forbidden the people to celebrate Saturnalia, the pagan festival lasting from December 21 to January 1.

An old Roman seer heard the complaint of the boys, and decided to do them a kindness. Walking up the bank of the stream until he was several hundred yards above the point where the boys loitered on the bank, he cast four strange objects out into the stream and waited.

The elder of the two boys was the first to see one of the strange objects. He thought it to be some small animal.

"Sinclius!" he cried to his companion. "See! There is a dog in the river!"

Sinclius gazed intently over the water. "There are two dogs," he said. "But they are not dogs."

"I see four men," said the first boy. "They are little gnomes," said Sinclius. "We will throw stones at them until we drive them ashore."

About a quarter of a mile down the stream the boys gathered in their prizes. They were not gnomes, as Sinclius had called them. They were curious emerald copper cylinders, and after some difficulty the boys succeeded in opening them.

Out of each copper cylinder came a thick bluish cloud which rapidly disappeared so much smoke. It was, however, curious and very wonderful smoke, and its effect upon the boys was immediately apparent.

Sinclius squared his shoulders and drew a deep breath. "I intend to be a great soldier," he said. And how well he kept his word

was afterward proved when he shook the foundations of Rome."

"I intend to be a great scholar," said his companion, looking far out over the landscape with dreamy eyes. Before he was disconsolate, for the great Constantine, Emperor of Rome, had become Christian and forbidden the people to celebrate Saturnalia, the pagan festival lasting from December 21 to January 1.

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