

FOR EVERY BOY AND GIRL



How the King Chose his Wife

By ADELE BARNEY WILSON.

SOME ages ago,—a dozen perhaps,—
In a far-away land that is not on our
maps,
There lived a young king whose riches and
greatness
Were only surpassed by his youthful se-
dateness:
He read and he studied when his work was all
done;
His wisdom and justice amazed every one!
And money he spent with such careful intent
That the national debt was reduced to a cent.
But in the whole kingdom complaining was rife,
Because the young king had ne'er taken a wife.

"It is all very well while he lives," the folk said,
"But who will rule o'er us when once he is dead?
Perhaps his proud cousin from over the ocean
Will make us his subjects—we don't like the no-
tion.
We want him to give us a son for his heir,
To whom our allegiance forever we'll swear."
And one day they vowed they would go in a
crowd
To make known their grievance that hung like a
cloud.

And so they drew up a petition to carry
To the popular king to persuade him to marry.

The petition was penned by a learned committee,
And signed by his subjects in country and city;
And when to receive it the king had consented,
The ponderous scroll was duly presented.
He read it all once, then read it once more.
The force of its logic he could not ignore.
"Good people," he said, "to please you I'll wed,
And soon to the altar the bride shall be led;
A wife and a queen I've no cause for refusing,
But I'll have my own way in the method of choos-
ing."

Next morning the king took his usual ride,
His favorite courtiers close at his side;
Each high-stepping steed with proud arching neck
A-quiver with life and impatient of check;
The laughter and singing, the bugle-calls ringing,
The flowers that before them the children were
flinging,
United in making so gay a procession,
Of its beauty words give but a feeble impression.

The cavalcade passed from the old city gates
To the beautiful roads of the country estates,
Then on to the farms, where the vines and the
flowers
Transformed humble dwellings to fair floral bow-
ers,
And stopped at a door where a plump, blooming
lass



To the Palace they wended

Peered through the small panes of diamond-
shaped glass.
With heart wildly beating, she curtsied her greet-
ing:
"He's seeking a wife!" her brain kept repeating.
And the king, who had never looked grander or
graver,
Said kindly: "Dear maiden, pray grant me a favor.

"Of course," he continued, "you know how to bake,
And often make biscuits and cookies and cake?"
She answered with pride which she could not
disguise.

"And patties," he queried, "and tartlets and pies?"
"Your Majesty, yes; even now I am making
Some pies that are very near ready for baking."
So then he explained that his call appertained
To a wish for the bits of the dough that remained,
As his horse, he averred, had a curious passion
For eating these scraps in a ravenous fashion.

"I'll give him a treat, then," she cried, running
toward
The table, where lay the great white molding-
board,
And scraping a cupful, she carried it out.
"The quantity please," she thought, "without
doubt.
Though, alas!" and her face grew suddenly
doleful,
"Had I known it in time I'd have saved a whole
bowlful."
But as the gay throng swept laughing along,
She returned to her work with a jubilant song,
And spent the whole day dreaming dreams most
romantic,
And building air-castles whose size was gigantic.

From that morning on, the king stopped every day
At some humble cottage along the highway,
And begged for his horse the scraps of rich dough
Which all the fair cooks seemed so glad to be-
stow;
But, spite of his courtiers' nudges and winks,
Preserved his own counsel, close-mouthed as a
sphinx;
While each damsel tried, as a matter of pride,
To see who the largest amount could provide.
And his horse, which seemed to approve the whole
matter,
Kept on every day growing fatter and fatter.

"The scrapings of dough? I'm sorry it's so,
But I never have even a crumb left, you know!
My mother has taught me it's wicked to waste
The least little fragment of pie-crust or paste.

"I measure with care the smallest ingredient,
To make the amount which she thinks is expedi-
ent.
And into the dough she says that I must
Most carefully work every scrap of the crust;
And if all has been planned exactly and true,
My molding-board's clean when I am quite
through.
Yes; there in the oven are my pies in a row,
And here is my board without one scrap of dough."
"Economical maid!" the king cried in rapture,
"You're exactly the one I've been trying to cap-
ture."

Their prodigal habits have filled me with scorn,
But such thrift as yours a throne should adorn.
So, unless you object, I command and direct
The people to hail you the king's bride elect.
You shall rule by my side over all this broad land,
And be bent low to kiss her tiny brown hand.

She trembled and blushed, quite unable to speak,
And her long lashes lay in a fringe on her cheek.
While proudly he led her out of the door,
Rejoiced that his search was happily o'er;
And cheer after cheer rent the soft morning air
From the loyal young courtiers who stood waiting
there.

To the palace they wended, with triumph and
tended,
And a great gala-week with a wedding was ended.



And begged for his horse the bits of rich dough

Where others are reckless, you take pains to
measure;
The bits they would squander you frugally treas-
ure;
And the king ne'er regretted throughout their some-
life
The method he followed of choosing a wife.

A Composition on an Apple



By H. B. M. TASKER.

TOMMY ATKINS was not a British sol-
dier in a red coat and a smart forage-
cap, jauntily swinging a two-foot stick
as he walked along, but a little red-
checked country lad away up in Maine.
Tommy was just an every-day little
chap, with no wits to spare when it was a matter of
parsing and writing compositions at school, but a
smart enough lad for the ordinary purposes of life.
He was original, too, in his way, as you will see,
but deplorably matter-of-fact, and he took at least
two days to see a joke.
One day, just before school broke up for the sum-
mer vacation, Tommy's teacher, a bright-faced wo-
man whom Tommy secretly adored, made this an-
nouncement:
"Children, the pupils of this grade are extremely
deficient in composition. To correct this and pave
the way for more earnest work next year, I will
assign a task for the vacation, for which I will offer
a prize."
At a murmur of curiosity and excitement passed
through the room. A prize! A prize! Tommy's fat
cheeks bulged more than ever as he shut his lips
firmly.
Miss Sanderson paused impressively and each boy
held his breath. I expect each pupil, even
the youngest, to write an original composition,
not to exceed two hundred words, and to present
the same at my desk on September first next! and in
order to stimulate your powers of observation, and to
keep you in touch with nature study, I shall ask you
to write a composition on an apple."
"An apple—that's easy," whispered Johnny Dale,
again. A shade of scorn, even, passed over the face
of Harold Ball, the head boy, who, upon occasion,
could write verse that sounded like Casabianca.
"An apple—a composition on an apple," pondered

Tommy Atkins over and over all the way home. He
could not see the simplicity of the theme; in fact, he
could not even get it through his little thick head
how the thing could be done at all.
"Not more than two hundred words on an apple!
I guess not," reflected Tommy.
"What is the subject?" asked his mother, on hear-
ing of the competition.
"I dunno," said Tommy; "I did n't hear her say.
But it's got to be on an apple."
Tommy worried a good deal about the competi-
tion during early vacation-time.
But one day, as he lay in the long grass of the
orchard, idly watching the green globes and gray-
green leaves of the sturdy old apple-trees above him,
a bright idea came into his head. He saw at last
how it could be done; he even decided upon the sub-
ject, which Miss Sanderson had apparently forgotten
to mention, and the very words it should contain.
That night, when the chores were done, Tommy
hunted up a sheet of writing-paper and his mother's
sharpest scissors. His hand was ever more nimble
than his wits, and with great neatness and dexterity
he drew and erased and clipped away until presently
he had a pile of little paper letters. During this
process he sniffed and squirmed and wriggled, after
the fashion of active boys when engaged in a close
piece of work; but at last the work was done to his
satisfaction and the letters were formed into words.
These he read half aloud to himself. They sounded
well. His teacher would surely be pleased with this
composition. True, it was short, but he decided it
was as much as he could reasonably get on an apple.
Then he stole out into the wood-shed for a lan-
tern, and hid him to the orchard as fast as his fat
legs could run. Climbing the ladder, he selected
with great deliberation, from an old apple-tree, the
largest, roundest, smoothest green apple he could

spy, and carefully broke it off, stem and all. In an
incredibly short space of time (for Tommy) the task
was finished. The letters were gummed and put in
their places on the apple, and the apple itself care-
fully placed on a window-sill where the morning
sun might reach it first. Henceforth it was literally
"the apple of his eye." A dozen times a day he ran
to see it was ripening the proper way or if any
of the letters had come off.
September came. A double row of bright-faced,
freckled, sunburned boys, spick-and-span in clean
sailor waists, stood at the school-house door on
opening day.
The pupils of Miss Sanderson's class could easily
be detected by the important way each boy carried
a roll of neatly tied manuscript.
Tommy Atkins, however, had no roll of paper and
no important air. Indeed, it was with a feeling of
blank surprise and not a little uneasiness that he be-
held the aforesaid manuscripts.
"What had he done? What had they done?" he
asked himself.
The teacher had a bright smile of welcome for
each returning pupil. As each boy in turn brought
up his roll of paper and deposited it with a confident
or anxious air, according to his temperament, Tommy
Atkins's heart sank lower and lower. He was the last boy
to go up to the desk. Laying down his composition,
carefully wrapped in silver-paper and tied with lilac
"love-ribbon," his lips quivered with anxious fear
when he heard the teacher say, as she felt the hard
round parcel.
"Why, what is this, Tommy?"
"It's my—composition,—ma'am," stammered
Tommy. "I guess—I did n't—do it right." He
blinked back the tears which would come. He was
a conscientious little chap and took his schooling
seriously.
Then he broke down, for, after all, he was only
a little boy and not a British soldier as you might
imagine from his name and he had put so much heart
into this effort! He did not want the prize so much,
but he wished to please his teacher. Now he began
to see that he must have missed something that his
quicker schoolmates had grasped. It seemed as if
it were love's labor lost, and Tommy was sorely
disappointed.
The teacher opened the wrapper, and disclosed to
the astonished eye of herself and her pupils the
most unique "composition on an apple" ever seen.
Tommy's matter-of-factness had resulted rather
originally this time. There stood a rosy apple, its
crimson globe delightfully streaked with faintest
creams and yellows, and girdling it like an emerald
zone were a number of words in the vivid green of
the unripe apple.
What did the words say?
A buzz of curiosity filled the room. Even Harold

Ball, the head boy, forgot his supercilious smile of
contempt for all things below his standard of ex-
cellence.
The teacher held it up high—but the hand was
unsteady, for a trembling child with all his heart in
his brown eyes and an agony of disappointment in
his chubby face was awaiting her sentence of doom.
The teacher read slowly: "You are the nicest
teacher in the bunch. I love you alwuz. Tommy
atkins."
The class giggled and the teacher smiled, but her
eyes were dim with tears.

"The English is faulty and the spelling poor; but
the workmanship is good and your composition is
certainly original."
Tommy breathed again, and went soberly to his
seat.
And when a committee of the teachers read the
boys' effusions, and compared Tommy's originality
palmstaking effort, and loving heart with sheets of
 commonplace statements,—such as, "An apple is
good to eat," "Apples grow on trees," etc., etc.—
it was unanimously decided that Tommy Atkins should
receive the prize.

