

# FOR EVERY BOY AND GIRL

## THE UNLUCKY PARROT

BY RUTH HUNTINGTON SESSIONS.

ONCE upon a time, in a far Eastern country, there lived a young prince. He was good-natured, gentle, and so fond of the people, his father's subjects, that his favorite amusement was to wander about the imperial city disguised as an ordinary boy, and make acquaintance with all kinds and conditions of workers, often helping them and sharing their toil. It was the custom of the country that all members of the royal family should be saluted when seen in public; so you may imagine that the prince was very glad to be able to do away with this ceremony by going about "incognito," as it is called, and being treated a little more informally than when in company of his suite.

ing boughs of trees which obstructed the path. Suddenly the parrot, with a shrill scream, flew directly down upon the top of the horse's head, and dug its sharp beak into the animal's flesh. The horse tossed its head in annoyance, stumbled and threw the rider, blinded as he was by the boughs, to the ground; then, as the parrot let go, escaped with a wild snort, and broke away into the thicket, thus leaving the prince on his back alone, the rest of the hunting-party being already out of sight, and the bird, which had now seated itself upon the nearest tree, looking down at him with an evil leer.

The prince shouted and called and whistled, but in vain, for only an echo answered him. Then he sat

becoming excited once more; so he made a low bow to the rabbit, and requested him to lead the way toward the magic palm at the three wells.

The rabbit hopped gleefully along in front, and the prince was following, thinking the road quite smooth and comfortable, when suddenly the parrot, which had been flying ahead of them, lighted upon a stone and flapped its wings, at the same time giving a cry. Immediately there was a sound of rushing water, and the next moment a roaring stream dashed across his path, cutting him off completely from further progress, since it was too deep for wading and too turbulent for swimming. The parrot, meanwhile, had managed to fly safely to the other side, and sat on a stone, screaming:

"Get over, if you can! Get over, if you can!"

The prince looked about him for bridge or boat, but saw none. The rabbit, however, lost no time in putting the little silver whistle to its mouth. It blew a shrill blast, then listened. A burrowing and scratching sounded in the underbrush, and in a few moments an army of beavers, moving with the precision of a regiment, appeared. The prince watched them.

"I believe they are going to build a dam," he said to himself; and, to be sure, this was the case. The

Even the rabbit was silent and inactive, and did not make any attempt to clear up the difficulty. But just as the prince began to be discouraged and to think help was never coming, a bird with red wings flew down near him. It had such a look of understanding that the prince ventured to address it in his own language: "Could n't you take a message," he said, "to the old woman of the woods?" "I'm sure she could tell me what to do. Please ask her to send me a word of advice."

The bird spread its wings obediently and flew off, and the animals all nodded their heads sagaciously, as if they approved of this. In a few moments a flapping was heard above them; and a great eagle, carrying something on its back, began to descend, and this something, as it drew nearer, was discovered to be the little old woman herself.

"You had no business to send for me," she remarked rather sharply to the prince; but I'll consent to help you out of your trouble just once, for the sake of getting rid of that nuisance of a parrot. Now listen. And she whispered in the prince's ear: "The only way to make it impossible for that bird to get away is to paralyze him by drawing a circle round him."

"But what shall I do with it?" the boy inquired.

"I have not even a piece of chalk nor string. Besides, if it sees me trying any such thing, it is sure to fly away at once, before I finish."

The old woman would not say anything more.

"I shall not make any further suggestions," she declared. "All I can do is to tell you what is necessary. The animals must help you out." And with this she climbed on the back of the eagle once more, and rode away.

The prince was determined to make the rabbit bestir itself, as he began to grow impatient after his chase of the parrot. He went up and seized the little creature by its long ears, giving it a mild shake. Now came about a most curious thing. The head of the rabbit, ears, nose, mouth, and all, and its neck, slipped out of its body like the heads of the Easter rabbits made of plaster which are bought in the confectionery stores. From the hole that was left came forth a small head and face then the rest of the body dropped away, and there stood a tiny man, smiling.

"You have set me free," he declared. "I am a fairy prince, who for disobedience to the king of the fairies was condemned to take the form of a rabbit until some human being should shake me out of it. I have power over the animals, and now that your touch has given me command of speech again, we will consult how to get you out of this trouble. In the first place, we have to draw the circle round the parrot without its seeing what we are about. This will have to be managed very carefully, but I think the animals and insects can help us there. Wait and you shall see."

And, picking up the whistle as it lay on the ground beside the rabbit-skin, he blew very softly on it.

The animals all crowded round him closely, and, to his joy, the prince found he could understand the little man as he spoke to them.

"Now," he said, "find me a snake and a spider. You," turning to the prince, "must engage the parrot in conversation."

This was not very difficult to do, as the bird was so ready with its saucy answers that the prince could easily keep it talking to him and mocking him by pretending to coax it nearer. Meanwhile the snake and the spider arrived, and received their instructions from the fairy. The spider seated herself on the end of the snake's writhing tail, and as he crawled along unseen through the grass, she spun her web and threw

it out behind them thus drawing a delicate but very firm line round the tree where the sorcerer-bird sat. Suddenly they saw it puff out its feathers and draw up its eyelids as if ill; then, with a cry, it settled down on its perch; and as the prince crept up and gently laid the leaf across its back, the malignant sparkle died out of its eyes. Its magic power was gone.

The animals began leaping about in great joy; but just at this moment a hunter's horn sounded, and not far away. In an instant they were scattering in all directions. The foxes darted into their holes; the beavers made for a stream near by; the squirrel disappeared in the top of the nearest tree; the monkeys, with a chatter, swung themselves out of sight amid the green branches; the snake and the spider hid themselves securely in the grass. "Good-by, comrade" called the fairy prince as he, too, vanished; and the mortal prince, glancing down a sunlit path before him, saw his father's hunting-party approaching, the king riding ahead with an anxious face. The meeting between father and son was most joyful, and of course many explanations followed. Now that the parrot was reduced to a harmless bird once more there seemed no reason for not keeping it, though the prince resolved to put it securely into a cage on his return home.

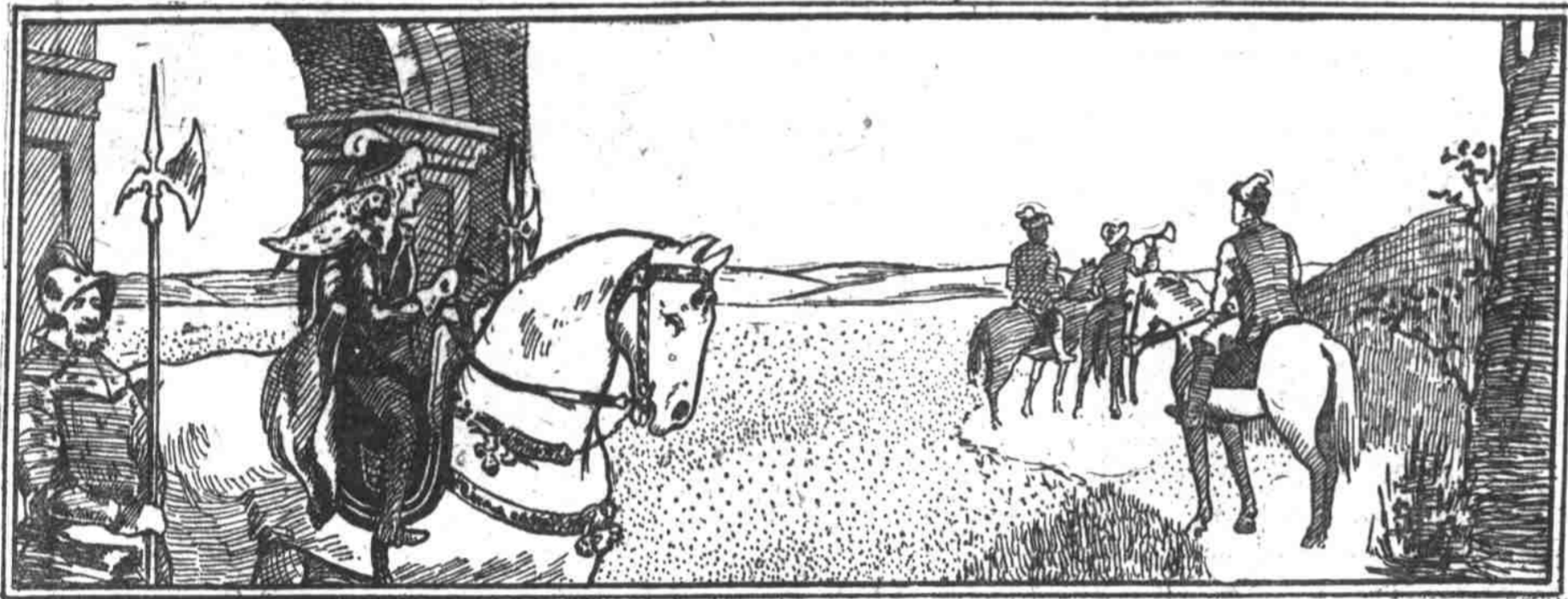
The next question was how the wicked old man could be despoiled of his power as a sorcerer and worker of mischief. He had already, with his magic instinct, discovered the fact that the parrot could no longer be his slave, and was therefore planning some way to prevent the vengeance which he knew the king would execute upon him. But just before leaving the wood, the prince discovered that the fairy had dropped the whistle in his hurried departure. He picked it up and put it in his pocket, feeling sure that it would lead to an opportunity of seeing his little friend again; and that night, after returning to the palace, he determined to try what could be done with it. So, after nightfall, he slipped out into the moonlit garden by the spring, and blew it gently. In an instant the small man stood before him.

"Can you tell me," the prince asked, when they had greeted each other, "how we can prevent the old man who conferred that evil power on the parrot from doing any more such mischief?"

"I can," said the fairy. "All you need is to touch him, also, with a leaf from the magic palm. To-night, while all are asleep in the palace, I will send one of the wood-fairies, in the form of a bird, to drop one here by the spring. You will find it in the morning. Now give me my whistle, for I must not leave it in the hands of a mortal. Farewell!" And he melted into the moonlight before the prince's astonished gaze.

The next morning there lay a large green leaf beside the spring. The prince carried it to his father, who sent a guard of soldiers from the palace to overpower the old man and touch him with it; and then, despoiled of his wicked faculties, he was brought before the king. He begged so hard to be allowed to return to his shop that the request was granted; but ever after a watch was kept on him, and the young prince, after his severe lesson, never allowed himself to be persuaded again to give water from the magic well to any of his father's subjects.

And what became of the unlucky parrot? It remained a very sulky bird, always mourning, apparently, over its lost gift; but as parrots are said to have extraordinary long lives, and its death has never been announced, it may, to this very day, be a pet of some one of the prince's descendants. Who knows?



THE PARROT LIGHTED UPON HIS SHOULDER

One day, while disguised in plain clothes, as he was passing through a dark, narrow street, lined on each side with booths and dens of merchants, he heard the sound of a voice calling:

"Come in! Come in!"

At first, peering into the dark interior of the small shop before the door of which he had paused, he could see nothing, and was at a loss to find out whence the voice came. But presently, in a cage just inside the door, he spied a parrot, a most beautiful bird, with plumage of red, green, and yellow. Now, of all things, the prince had always wished to possess a parrot. He stepped inside the shop filled as it was with all kinds of curious lamps, jugs, and spicy-smelling Oriental stuffs, and at the very back of it saw a little old man, dark and crafty-looking, whose long beard almost touched the ground.

"Is your bird for sale?" asked the prince, politely, of the shopkeeper.

Now the old man was quite well aware that a member of the royal household stood before him, but he was too cunning to let the prince know it; so he answered as if he were talking to an ordinary purchaser:

"Yes, it is for sale, but only at one price. I will not part with it for money, as I value it too highly."

"How can I purchase it, then?" inquired the prince.

The old man hesitated a moment, then he said:

"Bring me a cup of water from the spring that flows by the image in the palace garden. Then you shall have the parrot. But you must say nothing to any one. The bargain must be kept a secret between you and me."

The prince did not know (what to the clever old man had long been the subject of his plots and schemes) that a cup of water, given to anybody from this spring by the hand of a prince of the royal blood, would render the drinker able to use fairy power and endow any animal with it. This fact had never been told to the boy, because it was so entirely contrary to the rules of the court that he should perform any service whatever for a person outside of his own family. But in mixing with the common people, and seeing their many ways of helping one another, he had forgotten this regulation. So it seemed quite a natural thing for him to run home at once, fetch a silver cup, and from the bubbling spring which, surmounted by a stately image, flowed in a corner of the beautiful garden of his father's palace, to fill it with water, and return at once to the dingy shop where the owner of the parrot awaited him.

"Come in! Come in!" shouted the bird again, and the prince held out his cup to the little old man, who eagerly clutched it and immediately drank its contents.

"You shall have the parrot now," he said, with a crafty smile; "but first let me get it ready to go with you."

He took the parrot down and carried it into the back of the shop, stroked its feathers several times, and whispered a few words in its ear which the prince supposed to be a tender farewell. Then he handed it to the boy, who ran off delighted with his prize, and unconscious that he was carrying with him the servant of a dangerous sorcerer, who was only waiting for a chance to work some injury upon him. The parrot was not shut up in a cage, like other pets, but was set on a golden perch and was daintily fed; and soon the bird amused every one in the palace by its speeches.

Two or three days after this the prince was invited to go out hunting with his father, the king. Just as he was mounting his horse at the palace door, the parrot flew from its perch and lighted upon his shoulder.

"Take the bird away," he called to a servant. "I shall be gone all day, and cannot take care of it."

The servant sprang to remove it; but each time he did so, the creature flew back and took its stand once more on the shoulder of the prince. The king was impatient to be off, so, at last, finding it difficult to be rid of his pet, the prince allowed it to remain where it was, and they started, the sharp claws of the bird clinging to the boy's hunting-clothes. For a while all went smoothly; but finally they came into a dark wood, where it was necessary to ride carefully over a rough road, in single file. The prince was behind the rest of the party, bending his head now and then, as did those in front of him, to escape the hang-

up, looked about him, and considered how he could best find his way back to his home or catch up with his father. The path before and behind him seemed to have disappeared. There was not even an opening among the trees to guide him to an outlet from the bewildering mass of green which surrounded him on all sides. The parrot had succeeded in the plot imparted to it by the old man, and had led the poor prince into a complete trap, from which it appeared impossible to escape. But the wood was full, fortunately, of friendly little animals who were on excellent terms with the wood-fairies, and ready to join with the latter in helping mortals out of the toils of a sorcerer when necessary. So the prince, staring in a discouraged way at the dense thicket about him, presently noticed a big bee, which buzzed round and round his head in a mild, not at all alarming, fashion, and, without touching him, seemed to have some reason for keeping near him. Pretty soon it flew a little way off, then back again; then, perching on a leaf, looked at him with an expression which, for an insect, was truly remarkable. The prince then began to notice that the parrot was making extraordinary efforts to catch this bee, but that the latter managed to fly away each time it came near, and always returned to its post near him.

"What do you want of me, I wonder?" he said to himself. The bee buzzed again, and this time the prince followed it as it flew off, till it lighted on a thick vine which twined itself back and forth across a couple of tall trees. On examining this vine, he found it had grown exactly in the form of a ladder, upon which, if he liked, he could climb upward.

"Ah!" he exclaimed. "Now I can ascend high enough, perhaps, to see over the tree-tops and get an idea how to find my way out of this place." So, unheeding the shrill cries of the parrot, which followed him, pecking angrily at the leaves as it hopped from twig to twig, he scrambled eagerly up the long vine ladder.

It was a very long climb, and at the top he found himself at the end of a long corridor, with a floor of interlaced twigs, where the vine had grown across between the tree-tops and interwoven itself firmly, and with walls of thick green. Passing down this corridor, he came to a tiny house of the same materials. And within the house, on a throne of pine cones, sat a little old woman.

The prince, who never failed to show his good manners, made a low bow.

"Who are you, pray tell?" inquired the old woman.

He told her how he had been lost in the woods, and she shook her head with a frown.

"The work of some sorcerer," she muttered; "very likely that parrot there." At which the bird ruffled up all its feathers and gave a more piercing scream than ever. "And I am the old woman who looks after the forest. I know all the animals and insects and birds, and my business is to see that they keep it in order. I can't go with you to show you the way out, but I'll help you as much as I can. In the first place, you'll have to do something to that bird, for it is bound to bring you ill luck. You'll never get anywhere till you break its power. And that can be done by touching it with a leaf from the magic palm by the three wells. Do you see the tree just beyond the edge of this forest?"

She pointed with one finger out of the window of the hut, and in the distance the prince could see the top of palm-tree.

"That is it," explained the old woman. "Get to it, climb up and pluck a leaf, rub your evil-eyed parrot with it, and there will be an end of the power that is keeping you shut in this wood. Once free from it, you'll find the path easily enough. Now climb down the ladder again, and at the bottom you'll find a guide who can show you the way to the palm; but keep your wits about you, for that bird of yours will stir up more trouble if it can."

The prince thanked her heartily, and in a moment was scrambling down the ladder again, wondering what kind of a guide the old woman had provided for him. He did not hear her give any orders, but on reaching the ground, he saw a little rabbit, sitting up on its haunches and looking at him with a most intelligent air, while round its neck was slung a small silver whistle. The prince made no doubt that this was to be his companion, particularly as the parrot was

clever little animals did not stop until a regular beaver-dam was finished, on which the rabbit and the prince crossed safely. The parrot glared at them in a revengeful manner, but made no more noise, and the three proceeded for nearly a mile, when suddenly a weird laugh from the bird made the prince start and look upward. There, in front of them was a frowning precipice of gray rock, seeming almost to touch the sky, and without a foothold on its surface.

The prince glanced at the rabbit, who was again equal to the occasion. Setting the whistle to its lips once more, it blew two blasts this time, and looked up along the face of the cliff. Presently some queer little figures appeared, slowly crawling downward, and as they drew nearer they turned out to be monkeys, who were hanging by one another's tails and thus making a sort of rope. When they had brought it within a few feet of the prince, the lowest one waved its tail, and the rabbit, giving a jump, landed on its back. Then followed the boy; and lastly the parrot, which contented itself with administering vicious pecks to the poor apes as it flew alongside of them up the cliff.

Now came a long climb down on the other side of the precipice, and then the palm-tree began to seem quite near, and the prince could make out the three wells underneath its shade. But just as he was congratulating himself on this welcome sight he heard the parrot call out: "Good-by; there you go!"

At the same instant he felt himself begin to sink. Down, down, down he went, into a mass of soft sand, which in a moment was up to his neck, and threatened to cover him altogether. But the friendly rabbit had noticed it, and had blown three loud whistles, at which there was an instant sound of scratching and tearing and rushing. Up from the ground, where they had lived in holes, out of the underbrush, and down the hill behind came a hundred little foxes with bushy tails. They rushed up to the sand-hill which was swallowing the poor prince, and began to scratch, scratch with their small paws, and in a "jiffy" they had set him free by pulling the sand away so that he could scramble out. He shook the dirt off and tramped on, now seeing the magic palm-tree very near, and in a few minutes he stood beneath it. But alas! what a discouraging sight confronted him! It was a magic palm-tree indeed, for in an instant it shot up to a great height before his astonished eyes. The tree grew enormously tall, and its leaves were at the very top; and between him and them was the slippery trunk, up which, try as he would, he could not climb, since there was not the least hold for hand or foot. Gradually it shrank again until the leaves were only a few feet above his head, but at the first motion he made to reach up for one, or to climb the tree, it suddenly lengthened itself to a great height again.

"Ha, ha!" screamed the parrot, perched in the tree's branches. "Not so easy, my friend!"

"You wretched bird!" the prince cried angrily. "I will find some way yet." Then he turned to the rabbit once more, feeling sure it would help him out of his difficulty. There was quite a little group of animals by this time, as a few of the beavers, monkeys, and foxes had followed along out of curiosity, and were standing in a semicircle, looking up at the tree. The little rabbit seemed to have a sudden idea. It drew out its whistle, and sounded four blasts from the silver mouth. There was no noise in answer to this, but, quick as a flash, a little red squirrel came running into the middle of the group. It ran up to the rabbit, and the two rubbed their noses together in friendly fashion, the squirrel evidently receiving its orders. Then the parrot, seeing what it was about to do, made a rush at it, and opened its beak as if to seize it by the tail; but the swift creature was too quick. In an instant it had sprang away, up the tree, and in another it was back, holding in its mouth a great leaf of the palm.

"Now I have you!" cried the prince to the parrot, taking the leaf in his hand and making a jump after it; but the wicked bird only flew a short distance away to the branch of a tree, where it perched, laughing wickedly.

"Why don't you catch me?" it cried.

The prince, after a few more attempts, realized that it was of no use to try this sort of game, for the bird escaped him as often as he chased it. The animals were looking on with much interest; but, to the disappointment of the wanderer, who was depending upon their protection, they seemed to have nothing to suggest.



### In New Amsterdam

BY MARY VAN DERBURGH.

PERRITS, Deitric, and little Jan  
Were all the sons of a stout Dutch Van.  
Annetje, Tryntje, and Betticoo,  
These were all his daughters, too.  
In the happy month of May  
Forth they wander, blithe and gay,  
Through the groves and meadows flowery,  
Till they reach the famous Bouerie.  
There each little man and woman  
Gathers the sweet "pinksterblumen."  
Checks like roses from their walk,  
In their arms the fragrant stalk;  
In their gowns a "winklehawk"  
Home they hasten in the gloaming,  
Where the vrouw waits their coming.  
Tucks them in their trundle-bed,  
Cooning soft above their heads:

"Triep a triep a tronjes,  
De varkens in de boonjes,  
De keejes in de klaver,  
De paarden in de haver,  
De cejes in de waterplaat,  
So groot mijn kleine Jaria waast!"



\*A "winklehawk" is a gown is a tear like this: T