

FOR EVERY BOY AND GIRL



An Island Fable

A MORAL
FANTASY
FOR CHILDREN

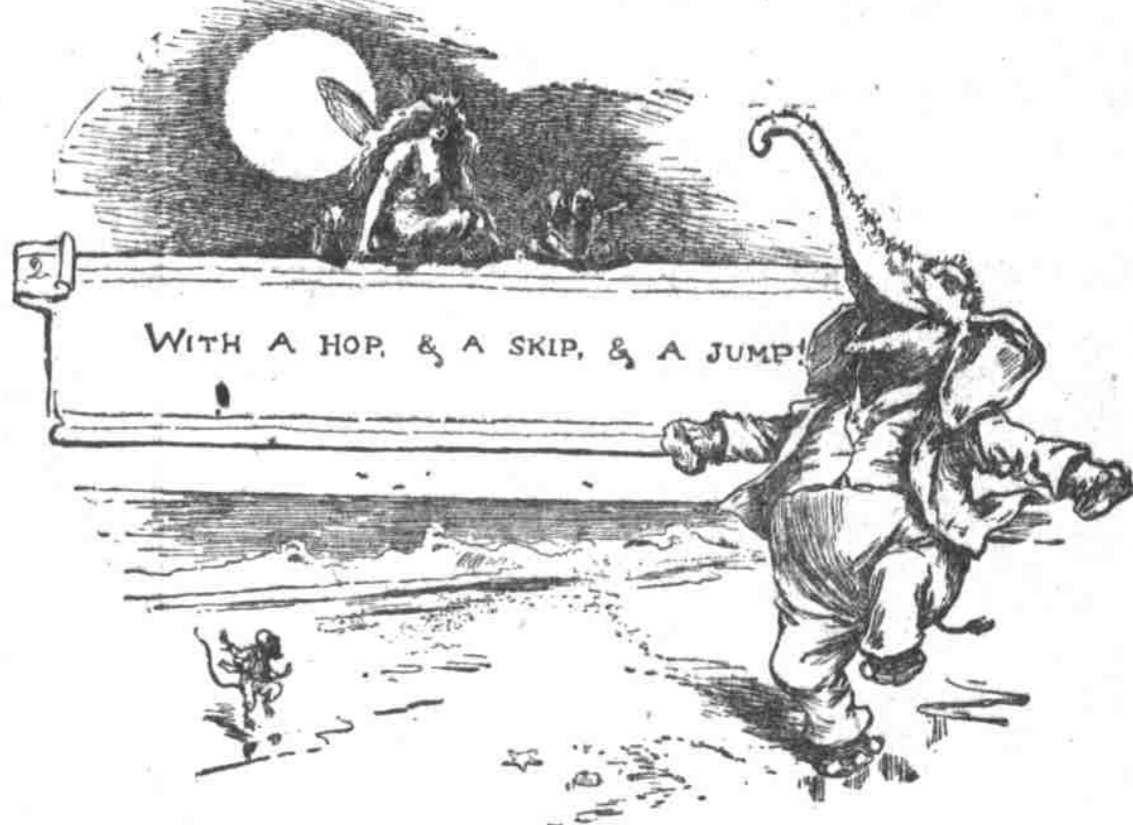
The Mouse and the Elephant lived at ease
On the island of Where-and-Why.
But the Elephant mourned,
In his ponderous way,
That he was so wide and high.
The mouse, on the other hand, squeaked with grief,
And crossed his beautiful eyes,
Lamenting that he
Was so very small—
Each envied the other his size.
One night, when the moon was over the left
And the wind was sounding his trumpet,
A Fairy came forth
From her home in a cleft,
With a hop, and a skip, and a jump,
And placed a spell on the sleeping pair,
When, lo! at the morning's call,
The Mouse, it was plain,
Had been growing large,
And the Elephant growing small.
Then danced they a jig in their greenwood
bower—
What less could the Fairy expect?

And each one remarked,
In merriest mood:
"We certainly are the elect."
The change soon completed, their sizes reversed,
Again they would live at their ease—
The Elephant dined
On a thimble of hay,
The Mouse on a cart-load of cheese.
Grimalkin and traps no terrors possessed
For the Mouse in his new disguise;
The Elephant scoffed
As hidden he watched
The tents of the circus arise.
But joy was short-lived; sorrows gathered apace:
They were strangers among their own kind,
They kept open house,
The Elephant had
Little use for his trunk,
And the Mouse for his length of tail.
As good neighbors should;
Yet no former companions dropped in,
Their talents were wasted in dozens of ways,
Which caused them still more to bewail:



At last, when their griefs could no longer be borne,
And they hadn't a single friend,
They both laid them down
By the pitying sea,
Their lives and their troubles to end.
Again, the pale moon being over the left,
And the wind a-sounding his trumpet,
The Fairy came forth
From her home in the cleft,
With a hop, and a skip, and a jump,
And, lifting the spell from the perishing pair
By the side of the whispering wave,
She bade them return
Each one to his own,
And be happy; and good, and brave.

MORAL
(FOR LARGE CHILDREN)
Let each be himself, not somebody else,
Nor covet what others may hold.
Each one has his place,
That he can best fill:
Contentment is silver and gold.
MORAL NUMBER TWO
(CONFIDENTIAL FOR SMALL CHILDREN)
When fairies come forth, with the moon on the left,
And the wind is sounding his trumpet,
Good children had better
Be scampering home,
With a hop, and a skip, and a jump!



The Out Curve

By Leslie W. Quirk.

THE minute the game was ended, Kenton, the captain of the varsity crew, rushed out on the diamond and grasped the hand of Elton, the big pitcher.
"You pitched a perfect game, Baby," he cried, with his face flushed and his eyes bright. "Now there's only one victory between us and the championship. We must win it!"
"We will," said Elton. He hesitated just an instant. "At least, I hope so."
The home nine was trotting off the field after winning the game.
"Oh, Kenton," called Elton, as the man was turning away, "I want to have a little talk with you. Will you be in your room to-night?"
"Office hours from seven to ten," declared Kenton, good-naturedly. "Come when you like, and stay as long as you please." He noticed that Elton did not smile; even the honor of winning a critical game seemed to have left the pitcher in low spirits.
Elton called early, and was ill at ease. He found Kenton sitting on the lounge playing the mandolin. After a time the conversation turned to baseball, and Kenton grew enthusiastic over the probability of winning the pennant. Elton's fingers clenched about the arm of his chair.
"It's that game," he said, with a little catch in his voice, "that I wanted to talk to you about."
Kenton looked up quickly. "Yes," he said encouragingly.
"Well, it is n't till Saturday, and I know Landebin will put me in the box again. My arm is pretty strong, and will be as good as ever by that time. But—" he stopped and looked out the window—"but I'm afraid."
"Oh, it will be a game worth seeing," said Kenton, "but I don't think we need worry."
"It is n't that," said Elton. "It's simply that I'm afraid. I lack steadiness. Do you suppose I did n't know how things were, even back in the early spring, when we were practising in the cage? Do you suppose I did n't understand when Landebin used to watch me throw at that parallelgram on the canvas, and used to say, 'Good!' and 'Neat!' every time the ball curved in between the black lines, and then used to tell me to go easy and take my time? He knew I was apt to 'go to pieces,' and I did it, lots of times, up there in the cage. I'm afraid I'll 'go to pieces' in Saturday's game, that's all. I could n't tell this to anybody but you, Kenton."
The big oarsman looked at Elton thoughtfully.
"Yes, Baby," he said encouragingly, "I understand. I've been watching you all season, perhaps a little closer than you imagined. I talked with Coach Landebin about this same thing once, when he was afraid you would fail us. I told him that you would not; that there was too much in you for anything of the kind; that you would hold yourself in check by sheer will power."

Landebin laughed. "Oh, there's no harm in it," he said, "only it is apt to make you look as if you were nervous. We want a cool pitcher to-day, Baby. By the way, you and Peters had better get to work warming up. We bat first, but our half of the inning won't last long."
It did not. Two of the batters fanned, and the other one knocked a ball straight into the hands of the short-stop.
Elton walked out to the pitcher's box with his heart thumping rapidly. Peters slipped on his mask and protector, and held out his hands. A sudden desire to show his catcher that he could put the out-curve over the plate made Elton send in the ball without warning. He threw it with the snap of his wrist that meant speed, and it curved neatly over the center of the plate. Peters grinned.
He stopped and looked at the boy. Elton was breathing quickly.
"Once you came to me with this same confession in your heart. I pretended not to see it there, and we sat and talked of other subjects. I told you of other fellows whose courage had been doubted, and who stood firm and true at the last. I took up my mandolin and strummed a few chords of 'Varsity! Varsity!' Your lips closed, Baby, and your mouth grew firmer; and the next day—do you remember that Michigan game?—you went into the box and pitched as no man ever pitched on our diamond before."
Elton laughed in an embarrassed manner, and rose to go. At the door he turned around to his big comforter and said:
"Yes, I remember it very well. I played that game as if my life depended upon it. Then when it was over, and you held my hand a minute and said, 'You're true blue, kid!' I felt like sitting down and crying. I did n't understand, but I knew you had done a very great deal for me."
"I have done nothing," declared Kenton, "except to show you that you must not fail us, and that you need not. I was perfectly confident that day, and I am just as confident about you in Saturday's game. Dobbins and Peters and Edgren and the rest of the heavy hitters may get the glory, but the winning or losing will be in your hands. I am not in the least afraid of your falling us. Good night, Baby."
Saturday dawned clear and warm. Early in the morning, before the sun was hot, Coach Landebin took his squad of players out to the athletic field, and for an hour they batted and fielded. Elton was put to work tossing a few balls to Peters, the big catcher. The boy's arm felt strong, and his curves were good.
He had thrown perhaps a dozen balls when Peters called for an out-curve. Elton shifted the ball in his hands, and his fingers gripped it firmly. Then he stepped forward and threw. The ball went wide.
Again they tried it, and again the ball was a foot from the plate. Peters frowned just a little, and changed the signal. Presently he tried the out-curve once more. This time the throw was hopelessly wide, and Peters, who understood, gave up the attempt. He would call for as few outs as possible during the game.
By three o'clock the grand stand was full, and the "rooters" were piling into the "bleachers."
Up in its place in the grand stand, the university band was playing rollicking airs. Both nines were on the field.
Elton was standing near the players' bench, looking up into the sea of faces in the grand stand. His foot

was keeping time with the music, and there was a bright flush on his cheeks.
"I would n't do that, Baby," said Coach Landebin's voice. Elton turned quickly, and found the man eying the foot with which he had been beating time.
"I beg your pardon, sir. I did n't know I was doing it," Elton said.
"Play ball!" ordered the umpire.
The first batter was a short, wiry fellow. He smiled pleasantly at the pitcher, and Elton tried to smile back. But the attempt was a pitiful failure, for the fear which he had been fighting gripped his heart. Then Peters opened the clumsy catcher's gut, and signaled for an out-curve.
Elton put his fingers carefully about the ball and hesitated. The batter seemed hundreds of feet away, and the home plate looked like a white dot in the distance. Peters waited impatiently.
Then Elton threw. The ball started straight for the plate, but after going a few feet curved slowly away from the batter.
"One ball!" said the umpire.
Peters signaled for another out-curve.
"Two balls!" said the umpire.
It was to be an in-curve this time. Elton's heart felt like a throbbing engine, and he seemed to see the batter through a haze.
"Three balls!" called the umpire, and there came a groan from the bleachers.
"He will expect another ball," Elton told himself, "and won't try to hit it. I must throw a strike. Peters must understand—"
The big catcher did understand. He called for a straight ball, and Elton threw one.
An instant later there was a sudden sharp report. The rooters of the other nine yelled and cheered frantically. Horns tooted. Megaphones bellowed. The noise was frightful.
It was a home run; even Elton knew that. The batter had caught the ball just right, and sent it far over the head of the left-fielder. It meant a run in the first inning, and runs are precious things in a critical game.
Peters was unmoved by the home run. He smiled a little and slipped on his mask again. Then he stepped into position, and called for the next ball. It came, whistling shrilly and cutting the plate in two. Another, with the same curve, fooled the batter; and after the third ball the umpire said, "Batter out!" and Peters and Elton grinned at each other like two children.
It was a wonderful game. The innings passed without a score. Elton pitched faultless balls, but Peters dared not call for the out-curve.
In the first half of the ninth, Edgren unexpectedly lined out a three-base hit, and scored on a single which Peters dropped into right field. A minute later Peters stole second. It was the first stolen base of the game, and the crowd cheered frantically. Ganley, who played first, was up. He gripped the bat firmly, and stepped up to the plate. Two strikes were called on him as he stood waiting for the ball he wanted. At last it came, waist-high and swift, and he met it squarely with

his bat. Peters was off for third at the crack of the stick. Elton was coaching, and as he saw the right-fielder fail to handle the ball neatly he yelled for Peters to go home.
The player had the ball almost before Peters left third. Elton raced toward home with the big catcher, keeping just outside the line, and urging him on wildly. It was nip and tuck between Peters and the ball. Elton yelled to him to slide, and the big catcher put out his hands and dived for the plate. A cloud of dust arose, and almost hid the play. But out of it came the even voice of the umpire:
"Safe!"
It was Elton himself who struck wildly at the first three balls pitched to him, and who retired the side without another run. Pitchers are notoriously poor hitters, and Elton was no exception. He threw down the bat with a queer look on his face that made Peters wince.
"Peters," he said, with the little egotistical note in his voice that the big catcher liked, "we are one run ahead, and it's the last half of the ninth. I am going to throw that out-curve now, and I shall put it over."
So Peters called for the out-curve. It came, straight over this time; but the batter caught it and singled to left field. Elton gave the next man his base on balls, and was safely hit again. The bases were full, and nobody was out.
"It has come," said the boy to himself, drearily. "I went 'up in the air' just when I should have been steady. I knew it."
Landebin called to him. Elton nodded. "I am to be put on the bench, I suppose, and Farley is to finish the game. I deserve it, but—" He walked slowly over to the coach.
"Baby," said Landebin, with a smile, "you have pitched the best game of your life up to now. Just keep it up. You're in a bit of a tight place, but you will pull out. That's all. Go back and win."
Elton's shoulders squared. "I will, Mr. Landebin," he said.
He went back into the box and picked up the ball. He hoped Peters would call for the out-curve, but the catcher did not dare. He noticed that the sun was not as hot now, and that a little breeze had sprung up.
"Play ball!" ordered the umpire.
The next player waited, impatient for the honor of winning the game. Elton grinned at him, and Peters, behind the bat, saw the boy's face and grinned too. Then Elton twisted his fingers about the ball, swung his arm in a half-circle, and threw. Three times he did it, and three times the batter swung without touching the ball. The crowd was down on the grounds now, piled fifty deep just outside the picket fence.
Elton threw two balls to the next batter, then two strikes, another ball, and the third strike. Two men were out.
The next batter was one who had not secured a safe hit during the game. He stood close to the plate, and Elton was afraid he would hit him. So the first three pitched balls went wide.
The crowd groaned. The situation was very critical.

The bases were full, and the man at bat had three balls and no strikes.
"I must do it," said Elton, half aloud; "I must do it!"
Peters took a minute to adjust his mask, and the boy knew it was to give him time to cool down. Somebody over at the fence yelled, "All right, Baby!" and Elton recognized Kenton's calm voice. He shot the ball straight into Peter's waiting hands.
"One strike!" said the umpire.
Elton's heart was thumping again, and his cheeks burned. He was holding himself down by saying over and over, "I must do it; I must do it!" He drew back his arm and threw the ball.
"Two strikes!" said the umpire.
A perfect bedlam of noise broke forth from the crowd. The minute Elton had the ball again, the sudden stillness was terrible.
The batter looked at his coach; then he stepped a little closer to the plate. Even from the box Elton could see an unnatural strained look in his face. His forehead was drawn into deep wrinkles. Elton thought he looked as if he were about to be shot. Then he understood.
The bases were full. Four balls would force in a run, but the other coach had given up expecting anything but a third strike. The batter's chances of getting a safe hit were hopelessly small. There was only one alternative. The batter must allow himself to be hit by the next pitched ball and thus force in a run.
Elton took the ball in his right hand, and Peters called for an in-curve. He shook his head at Peters. The catcher's brow was puckered, but he signaled for an up-shoot, then for a down. Still Elton shook his head. Then Peters, who believed in the boy as nobody else on the team did, called for the out-curve.
It was one chance in a hundred, and Elton knew it. Even when he was calmer he had failed to put the ball where he wanted it. But he was no longer afraid. Something of the confidence of the coach, and of good old Peters, and of Kenton, inspired him. He drew back his arm in the semicircle, to which the players had grown accustomed, and threw an out-curve, with all the speed and all the rotary motion he could put into the ball.
It started straight as a bullet for the batter. The fellow saw it coming, and though a perceptible quiver ran over him, he stood his ground like a Trojan. The ball would hit him. There was no need to step forward. So he braced himself as best he could, and closed his eyes.
The ball curved gracefully out from the batter, and sailed straight over the center of the plate.
"Three strikes and out!" called the umpire. The side was retired, and the game won.
Landebin was the first to reach the boy. "Thank you, old man!" was all he said, but Elton knew he understood.
Peters grasped his hand with a vice-like grip. "I knew you'd do it," he grinned.
By this time Kenton was over the fence. "You did n't fail us, Baby," he said loudly. Then he repeated it, "You did n't fail us!"