

## THE UNAMBIVIOUS QUEEN.

A STORY FOR CHILDREN.

Once upon a time the king of a country which was always having quarrels with its neighbors grew very tired of reigning, and said he really thought he must take a vacation. So he called his family together, all but one second cousin, who was busy making jelly, and took them away to the Islands of the Golden Star, and there they were so happy for the space of three months and one day that they all determined to continue their vacation as long as they lived.

"The king is having such a delightful time, eating plums and playing football," said the messenger his majesty sent back to the court officers, "that he has decided never to reign any more; and all his children and nephews and nieces have also begged to be excused from succeeding him."

"But who will reign?" cried the Lord Chancellor, shaking his head till the powder flew from it in clouds.

"I don't know," answered the messenger, making his bow, and backing out of the council. "And the late king says he doesn't care. And, if your highness pleases I am in a great hurry myself to go back to the Islands of the Golden Star, to go on with my own vacation."

Then he ran away as fast as his legs would carry him, and presently they saw his little boat making sail out of the harbor.

"What is to be done?" asked the Lord Chancellor; and the keeper of the two hundred seals cried also, "What is to be done?"

"The only member of the king's family left here is his second cousin, Countess Brigitta," said the court genealogist. "Of course, we shall be obliged, according to the law of succession, to offer her the crown."

They were all greatly relieved to find the matter settled by such simple means; and so they polished up the crown until it shone again, placed it on a silken cushion and bore it away to the house of the Countess Brigitta, whom they found on the front steps, paring apples.

"Good afternoon!" said she, as they came up in solemn procession. "Do take seats. But my stars and blue ribbons! What are you doing with the crown?"

"We beg your acceptance of it madame," said the lord chancellor, pompously, laying the cushion at her feet. Then he went on to tell her what happened, and that it really was her duty to become queen.

As he continued, the Countess Brigitta grew more and more sober; and, when he had finished, she laid down her paring knife among the apples, saying sorrowfully:

"Well, what must be must; but it seems to me I shall make a very poor sort of queen."

"That may be, your majesty," said the court truth teller; "but poor queens are not at all uncommon."

"And I am neither handsome nor majestic," added she.

"Very true, your majesty," said the truth teller. "But the gems in a crown sparkle so brightly that it is hard for the sharpest sight to tell what is under it."

"And there is actually nothing agreeable to me in the idea of reigning, except, perhaps, the privilege of eating bread and honey in the kitchen."

"That has been, from time immemorial, a royal prerogative," said the lord chancellor, bowing. And seeing from all their faces that there was no hope for her, the Countess Brigitta placed the crown on her head, locked up her cottage, and, calling the cat and dog, went away to be queen.

For several weeks affairs went on very well, for even a kingdom can take care of itself for some time after it has been wound up and set going. But one morning, when the queen had settled herself with her knitting in a little rocking chair she kept beside the throne, the minister of war came in and told her that an ambassador had arrived from a neighboring kingdom, to find out when it would be convenient for the two nations to begin fighting.

"But what on earth do they want to fight for?" asked the queen, laying down her knitting, and looking at him over the top of her spectacles.

"Your majesty, it has been our custom to go to war with somebody every six weeks," said the minister; "and this time it is the turn of King Columba's subjects to fight us. If they had not come to arrange preliminaries, to-morrow we would have been obliged to seek them. Surely, your majesty remembers that the late king, your second cousin, was always going to war?"

"Yes, I do," said the queen; "but I never thought he liked it." "Well, send the ambassadors up here." And she rolled up her knitting, pushed the little rocking chair out of sight, and clambered on the throne.

"Something is due to public opinion," thought the queen, sitting up straight, and trying to look as majestic as she could.

Presently a great clanking was heard; and the ambassadors, all in heavy steel armor, entered and bowed before her.

"Howdy do?" said the queen. "How very uncomfortable you must be in all

that tinware! Do take it off, and make yourselves at home."

The ambassadors looked at one another in surprise; but the armor was hot and heavy, and their leader answered:

"If your majesty would permit us to retire into the ante-chamber, your majesty's request shall be obeyed."

"That's right," said the queen. "Let us all be comfortable as long as we can. You may be queens—no kings—some time; and then you can't. Take my word for that!"

So they clanked out of the room, and soon returned clad in their everyday clothing.

"There! now you look more at your ease," said the queen. "I've ordered a cup of tea since you've been gone. Be it at wedding or funeral, we're always the better for a cup of tea."

She poured the smoking beverage; and the ambassadors accepted and drank it, though, as they afterwards confessed, they were so amazed at this peculiar queen that their legs were weak for hours after the interview.

Queen Brigitta chatted so pleasantly that it was some time before they could broach their errand; but, finally, one of them seized a chance to say:

"Your majesty, our royal master, King Columba, has sent us to declare war upon your kingdom."

"So I hear," said the queen, frankly. "What does he want to do that for?"

Now it was illegal in those countries to go to war without an excuse; and so it had become their custom to seize upon some pretext, which no one ever thought of disputing, and immediately begin to fight about it.

"Your majesty," said the ambassador, "one of your subjects has declared that the lobsters on our coast have no claws; and that is an insult we cannot brook."

"Why, he must be a fool to say such a thing as that," cried the queen. "Of course they have claws! You can tell your master that I'm very sorry I've got such a foolish fellow in my kingdom; and, if I can find him, I'll set him to studying natural history."

The ambassadors looked at one another in despair. "So that's all settled," said the queen, briskly; "and now we can enjoy ourselves. Have another cup of tea!"

When the ambassadors took their leave that day, they were completely dazed. For the first time in their lives they had disobeyed orders, and failed to declare war; and it was with fear and trembling that they went into the presence of King Columba, and told him exactly what had happened. Fortunately for them, the king dearly loved a joke; and he reared with laughter till the walls rang.

"Ha! ha!" cried he. "Queens must have changed since my day. I'll ride over there and take a look at her majesty." And the ambassadors thanked their stars that he did not order them to the block.

After this Queen Brigitta received another declaration of war, this time from a king who stated that one of his subjects had been beaten and ill-used by one of hers. But the queen grew very indignant and threw her offending subjects into prison; while he sent the invalid jelly and gruel and broth and oysters.

"I'm ashamed of such carryings-on!" she said heartily to the ambassadors. "You tell your king so, with my compliments." And who could insist on fighting after that?

Another sovereign proposed to besiege her capital because she had in her possession some territory which belonged to him.

"Is this so?" asked Queen Brigitta of her prime minister. "Have we taken land that doesn't belong to us?"

"Yes, your majesty," answered he. "We have held it for over two hundred years; and, thanks to our good swords, we shall always hold it."

"No, we shan't," said the queen, setting her lips tight. "Not while I am queen. You just make out the papers, or whatever you have to do, and give that territory back this minute!"

And, though all her ministers were ashamed and angry in their hearts, they dared not disobey; and the stolen province was restored. Then there was great rejoicing in the land which had formerly held it. Queen Brigitta's name was daily crowned with blessings; and the people charged their children never, so long as time should last, to fight with the subjects of so just a sovereign.

Meanwhile King Columba had not given up his purpose of meeting her, and one day sent a messenger to say he would make her a little visit.

"Delightful!" cried the queen, who was so good a housekeeper that she loved to have company. "And I'll invite all the other kings round here." Now many of these sovereigns had deadly quarrels with one another, and had formally kept at the greatest possible distance apart, except upon the battlefield; but, as none knew the others were coming, they all promptly assembled in Queen Brigitta's palace at the appointed time. In deference to their hosts, they, of course, banished all idea of present hostilities, and followed her to the banquetting hall with as good a grace as they could summon. Still, their thoughts were bitter; but whenever the queen noticed a frown on any one of their brows, she would bustle up to one and another saying: "I'm afraid there's something you don't like. Is the meat under-

done? or does it need a bit of mint sauce?" And everybody was ashamed to seem quarrelsome, though each one thought within himself:

"I'll settle with him by and by."

The queen's guests stayed with her seven days, and every minute they grew more good humored and merry. Queen Brigitta had a great deal to talk about. She wanted them to help her plan a hospital and places where little children could run about and play the games they loved best.

"For, of course, we must keep ourselves very busy working for our subjects," she said. "They're so kind to dress us so well and give us so much bread and honey that we must try to deserve it all."

And the other kings and queens, who had thought always of their own pleasure before the good of their people, hung their heads, and were ashamed.

On the last day they sat together the queen proposed that they should all meet in like manner once a year.

"For I need you to advise me," said she. "You must have seen that I don't in the least know how to reign. I'm not a bit wise, and all I can do is to try not to harm anybody. I beg you won't go to war with me," she added, "because there never will be any need of it. If any of my subjects injure yours, you must tell me, and I'll make 'em apologize; and if anybody harms me, unintentionally, I shall be delighted to forgive him."

So all these kings and queens joined hands, and swore a solemn truce, after which they promised to meet once a year to talk over the good of their subjects. They also planned to keep their soldiers busy in teaching gymnastics to the children and carrying burdens for the old and infirm.

When Queen Brigitta's council saw that other sovereigns approved of her, they, too, began to grow very well satisfied.

"To be sure, she doesn't know how to reign," they confessed to one another, in the privacy of the council chamber. "But, then, she can't do much harm, with us always at hand to keep things in running order."

UNABLE TO WORK.

Mr. Jos. Currier, Victoria Harbor, Ont., writes: "I had Rheumatism in my knees, feet and elbows so bad I was unable to work. Nothing did me any good till I got Milburn's Rheumatic Pills. One box and a half completely cured me."

CHAPPED HANDS.

USEFUL HINTS OF INTEREST TO ALMOST EVERYBODY.

Chapped hands are very painful and uncomfortable things, and more often than not they are caused by the hands being insufficiently dried after washing, or by the towel that is used being damp, and still more often by the water being hard or else used too hot. Too much stress cannot possibly be laid on the necessity of always having the water soft. A pinch of borax in the water jug will easily and quickly achieve this result.

Now, having seen that the water is soft and neither too hot nor too cold, but just pleasantly warm, a very good soap should be used, and when drying the hands take each finger separately and dry, as it is just between the fingers where the skin is very apt not to be dried sufficiently; then if they are rubbed over once a day with a slice of lemon and a little cold cream or mutton tallow rubbed into them say twice a week before going to bed, there will be very little fear of the skin becoming chapped or sore. Another precaution that must be taken is not to sit too near the fire; this heat at all times makes the skin feel rough, and is particularly injurious in frosty weather; it makes the skin very tender, and so it falls a victim to Jack Frost.

The hands should not be washed more often than is necessary, as the less often they are in the water the less probability there will be of their being left in a damp condition, and gloves are worn as much as possible in the house, as well as out of doors, the skin will not become soiled so quickly, therefore there will be no occasion for the constant washing. If they become rather hot, sticky and uncomfortable, it is a good thing to wipe them over with a soft handkerchief, dampened with eau de Cologne—that bearing the brand 4711 is splendid to use for this purpose. The palms of the hands should be rubbed very briskly with this eau de Cologne, which can be diluted with water if preferred.

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A servant girl, writing home to her parents said:

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## POISON IN THE CANDY.

KARL NORCROSS WANTED HIS BROTHER'S LIFE.

UNIONTOWN, Pa., Feb. 17—Karl Norcross, a well known young man of this place, has been arrested on a charge of attempting to end the life of his brother Allen, eight years old, who is heir to a \$12,000 estate. Norcross attempted to take his own life in jail.

Karl and Allen Norcross are the only heirs of their mother, who died in an insane asylum two years ago. Karl was of age and received his share of the estate without delay. It is said that he has squandered all of his property.

Sylvester Hetterman, who is charged with complicity in the alleged attempt on Allen Norcross's life, yesterday made a confession to District Attorney Crow. Hetterman declared that he was hired last week to deliver a package of poisoned candy to the intended victim, who lives with his uncle, J. S. Zundel, in West Newton, and that he was to receive \$500 if he succeeded. He was accompanied to that place, he declares, by Norcross and given full instructions as to how to accomplish his work. As soon as he was left alone, it appears he fled in terror.

John Devlin made a similar confession to-day. He said he had been hired to poison the Norcross boy last November, and that he was to receive \$500. Norcross, he asserts, gave him money with which to purchase poison, but on his failure to get the required drug, he says, Norcross took the money from him. Devlin adds that he and Norcross went to West Newton, arriving there after dark, and that the deadly potion was prepared by candle light in a secluded spot, arsenic being inserted in chocolate drops. Norcross, according to Devlin, left town on the midnight train, and Devlin says he weakened at the last moment and left on a freight train.

When Norcross was placed in jail last night he was closely searched, but no trace was found of the morphine with which he tried to end his life. He talked to the guards in a threatening and desperate manner at midnight, intimating that he would never be tried.

While on his first round at six o'clock this morning, the guard found Norcross lying unconscious in his cell breathing heavily. Physicians were called and at noon he was revived, but suffered terrible pain and talked in a rambling way. He will recover.

Norcross' father committed suicide two years ago.

125 MEN ENTRENCHED.

From the *Inroads of Dreaded Catarrh*—What Dr. Agnew's Catarrhal Powder Did for Mr. LeBlanc, He Proves Will do for Others.

Alfred LeBlanc, of St. Jerome, Que., was a great sufferer for years with catarrh of a very severe type. Dr. Agnew's Catarrhal Powder rescued him when everything else failed. To-day when he goes to his lumber camp with his 125 men, this great remedy is considered as much a necessity to comfortable camp life as anything else. It relieves cold in the head in ten minutes; prevents the growing of catarrh germs, and when they are sown it cures them. Sold by W. W. Short.

On Friday last an attempt was made between Bordeaux and Paris to rob a railway passenger by chloroforming him. The only passenger in the compartment of the coach where the robbery was attempted was beginning to doze when he perceived a strange odor. He woke up and saw a man trying to open the door. Mr. Roux then pulled the alarm bell and the man disappeared. An investigation revealed that a hole had been made in the partition of the compartment into which a tube containing chloroform had been inserted.

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