THE A.L

BRIGHT STORY READERS

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FAIRY STORIES FROM AFRICA

Re-told by F. A. TAPSELL

Grade 2

No. 125

FAIRY STORIES FROM AFRICA

AL-AMEEN ISLAM HIGH SCHOOL, ERNAKULAM.

RETOLD BY

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FAIRY STORIES FROM AFRICA

THE WHITE COW

TWO brothers once left the home of their father that they might go and seek their fortune. The elder was called Macilo,* and the younger Huka.†

2. After they had walked many days, they came to a place where two roads lay before them. One led to the east, the other to the west. The road which led to the east was dented with the hoofmarks of many cattle, while upon the other were the footprints of dogs without number.

3. Here they agreed to part. Macilo was the elder, so he had the first choice, and he chose the road along which the dogs had passed. Huka was glad of this, for he wished to try the road that led to the east. He had brought his own two dogs with him, so he wanted no more dogs.

4. Each set out on his way. After he had been walking some days, Huka came to a hill. He climbed to the top. It was just like the top of any other hill, except that dotted about it

* Pronounce *mâ-sē'-lō—â* as in "father"; *ē* as in "me"; *ō* as in "no."
† " *hoo'-kâ—oo* as in "moon"; *â* as in father."

were a number of great pots, all turned upside-down.

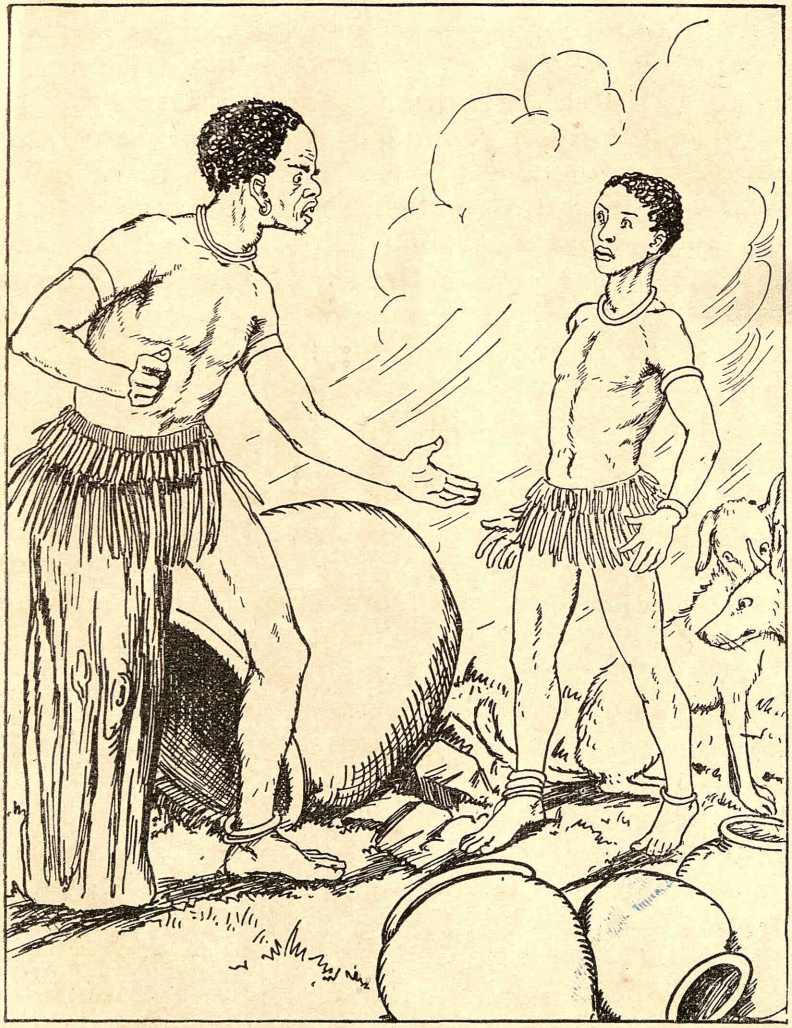
5. "This is strange," thought Huka. "Do they *grow* here, I wonder? I will go and turn every one of those pots over to see what is under them. It may be there is some treasure hidden beneath the pots."

6. He set to work with a will. He had already turned up a great many of them, only to find they were empty, when he came to the very largest pot of all. He tried hard to push it over, but the pot would not stir. Again and again he tried, but not all his efforts could move it.

7. Now, Huka did not like to be beaten, so he put all his strength into one last effort. Then he nearly lost his balance, for this time the pot yielded with ease. The lad shrank back in dismay as it lifted, for from under it sprang a giant-like man.

8. "How dare you come and upset my house while I am at work?" he shouted, in angry tones. As Huka looked at him, he saw that one of his legs was like the trunk of a tree, while the other was quite of the right size for a man.

9. As well as this, he was very ugly and looked very fierce. Huka turned to run away, but he was too late, for with a great leap the man sprang upon his back, crying, "To pay for what you have done, you shall carry me to the forest."



'One of his legs was like the trunk of a tree'—*Page* **2**

10. The poor lad could only totter a few steps under the heavy weight of the man; then he fell to the ground. But the man beat him until, with a mighty effort, he rose again. He struggled on for a few yards; then fell once more.

11. Again the man beat him and urged him on, and on Huka had to go. Falling after every few steps and then rising again, he was becoming more exhausted every moment. At last the sight of some deer a little way off gave him an idea. "Master," he said, "do you sit on the ground for a moment. I cannot carry you for want of something to fasten you to my back. I will go and kill one of those deer, and we will make thongs of its skin."

12. The man agreed, and Huka set off with his dogs as if to catch one of the deer. But this he did not even try to do. He ran, and ran, and ran, until he had put a long distance between himself and the man of the pot. At last he came to a cave. He crept into it, and there he lay hidden, hoping the giant-man would not find him.

13. After a while the giant-man grew tired of waiting for Huka to return with the deer. Still he waited, until all at once it came into his mind that perhaps Huka had run away. He set off after him, tracing him by his footmarks in the sand. All the while he kept saying to himself, "There is the little foot of Huka, who is now mine. There is the little foot of Huka."

14. The wind took up his words and carried them to the cave before he got there; so that Huka heard them, and a moment later he felt the earth tremble under the heavy footsteps of the giant. He knew then that he must be very near the cave.

15. Poor Huka was in despair. He did not know what to do. There was no time to run; so he called his dogs and said, "Kill him. Devour him whole, so that there is none of him left."

16. The dogs at once ran to obey. They rushed at the giant-man, killed him, and ate him up. When, at last, Huka crept out of the cave to see what was done, he found they had eaten every bit of the giant-man except his big leg. This they had not touched, for the very good reason that it was made of wood.

17. Huka took up his axe, and with one blow split the great wooden leg in two. Then he sprang aside in surprise; for out of the great trunk of wood there came a whole herd of cows —such fine cattle as would have made the heart of any man glad.

18. Among the herd was one cow which was as white as snow. Huka saw at once that this was the best of them all. Full of joy, he drove the herd before him and took the road that led to his father's kraal, as a village is called in many parts of Africa.

19. Now, while Huka had been busy with

the giant-man, his brother Macilo had found, fought for, and taken a pack of dogs. He, too, was on his way home; and the two brothers met at the place where they had parted, the one with his cows, the other with his dogs.

20. They stopped where they met, to rest and tell each other of their doings. Then Huka, seeing that he had had the better luck, said to his brother, "Macilo, you may take as many of my cattle as you like. Choose which you please, so long as you do not take the white cow. That must belong to no one but myself."

21. But of all the herd it was the white cow that Macilo most wished to have. He begged hard that his brother would give it to him; but Huka only said, "No, that one *must* be mine; but you may take any of the others."

22. When they had rested, they went on their way. On the third day they came to a spring. "Let us stay here for a while, for I am very thirsty," said Macilo. "We will dig a deep hole and turn the water in the stream into it, so that it may become cool and quench our thirst the better."

23. So, when the heat of the day was past, they dug a hole and turned the stream that the water might run into it. When this was done, Macilo brought a large, flat stone and laid it over the top of the hole to keep the rays of the sun from touching the water.

24. When time enough had passed for the water to be cool, Macilo drank of it. "Ah!" he said, when he had quenched his thirst, "it is very good. Do you also drink of it, brother Huka."

25. So Huka took his brother's place and knelt down beside the well they had made. The water was so nice and cool that he drank and drank; but, while he was leaning over to drink, Macilo crept up behind, pushed his brother into the hole, and then laid the big stone over the top of it.

26. He did not think what a wicked thing he had done, but smiled to himself. He was now master of all the herd—the white cow as well as the rest.

27. He set off to his father's kraal, driving the herd before him. But, before he had gone many yards, a little bird, with scarlet wings and pure white feet and bill, came and perched upon the horns of the white cow. "Tsiri!* Tsiri! Macilo has killed his brother, because he wished to have the white cow for his own. Tsiri! Tsiri!" it sang.

28. "This will not do. The bird tells tales," thought Macilo. He took up a stone and threw it at the bird, which fell to the ground; then he went on his way.

29. But in a very little while Macilo saw a second bird exactly like the first, sitting on the

* Pronounce *tsē'-rē—ē* as in "me."

horns of the white cow; and it began to sing, "Tsiri! Tsiri! Macilo has killed his brother, because he wished to have the white cow for his own. Tsiri! Tsiri!"

30. "What! Has the bird come to life again?" cried Macilo. He picked up a stone and knocked the bird to the ground; then he beat it with his club to make quite sure that it was dead.

31. But less than five minutes after a bird, also with scarlet wings and pure white feet and bill, was sitting on the horns of the white cow, singing, "Tsiri! Tsiri! Macilo has killed his brother, because he wished to have the white cow for his own."

32. "Wilt thou not hold thy peace?" cried Macilo, in a great rage, and once more he killed the bird. This time he made a fire and burnt its body in the red-hot ashes that he might be sure that *this* bird, at any rate, should trouble him no more.

33. Then he went on until he came to the village in which he lived. All the people flocked round to look at his great herd of cattle. Macilo felt very proud to think they were his, and almost forgot how he had come by them.

34. But after a while one and another began to ask him, saying, "Where is Huka, thy brother, who went forth from thy father's house with thee?"

35. "I do not know," Macilo replied again and

again. "We did not go the same way. He went to the east, and I to the west." Then he turned to his herd once more.

36. Ever since he had come into the village there had been a little crowd round the white cow. "See how fine her coat is!" said one. "See how pure her colour!" said another. "Happy is the man who has such a cow!" cried a third. And Macilo felt as proud as could be that the cow was his.

37. Then, all at once, loud and clear amid the babble of voices, a little bird began to sing. It was a very handsome bird, with scarlet wings and a pure white bill. It perched upon the horns of the white cow, and it sang, "Tsiri! Tsiri! Macilo has killed his brother, because he wished to have the white cow for his own."

38. "What!" cried the people. "Can this be true? Has Macilo killed his own brother?" And, filled with horror, they turned away in silence and went to their own homes.

39. In a very little while only his sister was left with Macilo, and to her the bird sang, and sang again, "Macilo has killed your brother Huka. His body lies in a hole by the stream. Follow me, and I will show you."

40. At first the girl refused to listen to the words of the bird. But it kept on repeating the same thing over and over again, at last even flying on to her shoulder and singing in her ear,

"Macilo has killed your brother. Follow me, and I will show you"—so that, after a while, she could not help thinking there must be some truth in it, and she whispered, "I will come."

41. The little bird flew away, and the girl set off after it. Every now and then the bird would perch upon a tree and wait for her to come up; then it set off again, and so they went on until many miles were passed. At last they came to the hole the two brothers had dug by the side of the stream.

42. Over the hole lay the stone. The girl found it hard work to move the stone, for it was heavy; but at last she had rolled it away from the hole. Below she saw the body of her brother. She took it from the hole; then breathed her warm breath into his mouth until she had brought back life to the still form. By and by her brother sat up and looked about him. "Sister," he said, "how come you here?"

43. She told him how the little bird had led her to the spot; then she cried, "Make haste and come home, lest Macilo should take your herd of cattle and set off to a far land."

44. With great speed they made their way home. When Macilo saw them coming and knew that his brother was alive, he was afraid. Before they could reach the village, he called his dogs and set off; and he never returned to his own land again.

45. So Huka was sole master of the herd he had found. When his father died, he also became master of all that his father had owned; so that he was then a very rich man. The white cow he always kept, for he felt sure in his own mind that it was she who had brought him all his good luck.

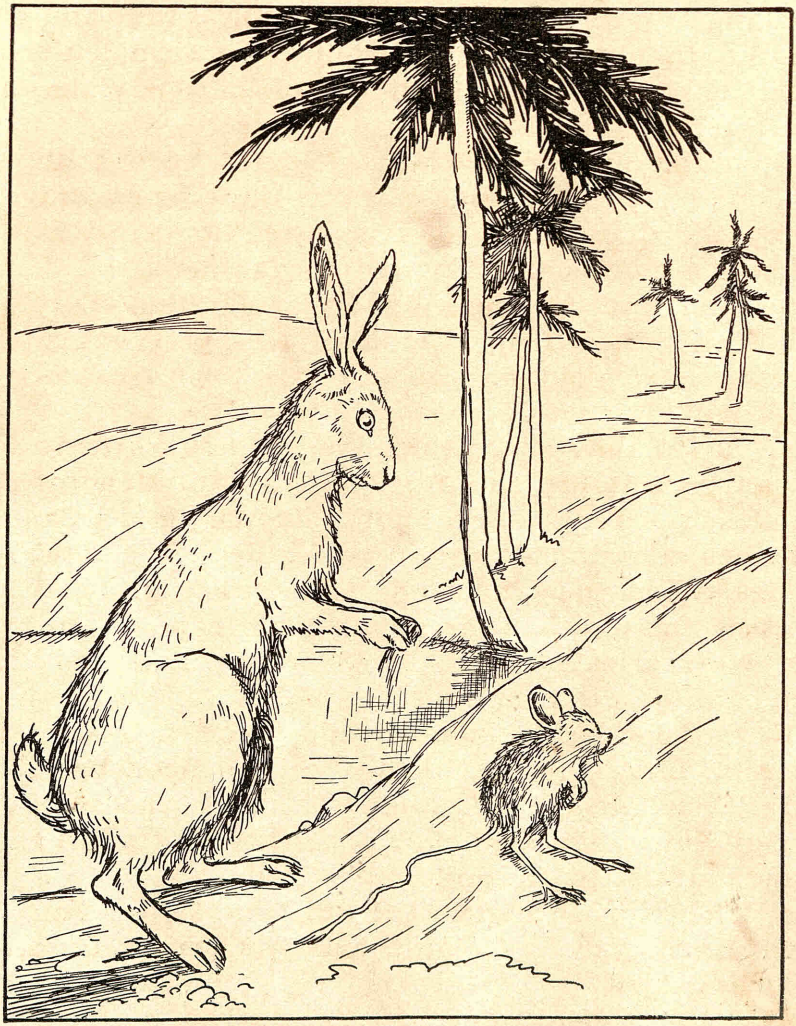
THE ARTFUL HARE

IN a great African desert there was a pond of water that belonged to the king. No man had ever been to that desert place; so an elephant was king of the land and owned the pond. No one but he was allowed to drink from it.

2. One night a hare, who was sleeping near the pond, awoke feeling very thirsty. There stood the pool of water right before his eyes, and oh, he wanted a drink so badly!

3. He was by no means a good little hare; so he did not stay to think if it were wrong, but ran swiftly down to the pond and drank and drank until the pond was half empty.

4. Now, on the bank close to the pond lay a jerboa, a sort of jumping mouse, with long hind legs. It was fast asleep; so what do you think the naughty hare did? He had begun to fear they would find out he had drunk water out of



'On the bank lay a jerboa'—*Page* 11

the king's pond; so he took some mud and smeared the mouth and legs of the jerboa with it that it might be thought the jerboa had drunk the water.

5. In the morning it was at once seen that someone had been drinking out of the king's pond during the night. "Who has dared to drink of the king's own water?" cried the animals.

6. They ran to the king and told him what had been done. King Elephant was very angry indeed. He called all the animals together and bade them appear before his throne.

7. When they heard their king calling to them, the animals came running from all quarters of the desert. There were lions, hyenas, leopards, buffaloes, antelopes, and many others, big and little. When the king said, "Someone has been drinking the water in my pond," they leaped about him with cries so shrill and hoarse that they made the desert tremble.

8. As soon as he could make himself heard, the king turned to the hyena. "You have good teeth. Go and kill this enemy of mine," he said.

But the hyena replied, "I cannot do it, for I cannot attack in the open."

9. The king turned to the lion, and said, "You have sharp claws. Go and tear my enemy limb from limb."

But the lion replied, "I cannot do it, for I injure only those who attack me."

10. The king next appealed to the ostrich. "You can kick well. Go and find him who has stolen my water and kick him to death," he said.

But the ostrich replied, "I cannot do it, for the thief may be hiding in the earth and I cannot burrow after him."

11. All this time the hare who had stolen the water had been standing with the other animals round the king's throne, and now he said, "Oh King, do you not see it is the jerboa who has drunk your water? See, its knees are stained with mud where it knelt down by the side of the pool to drink. See, too, it has drunk so much and so deep that the mud has even stuck to its lips."

12. The king turned to look at the jerboa. Yes, true enough, there *was* mud on its lips and on its knees. The animals all began to dance round the poor creature, crying, "It is the jerboa who has drunk the water of the king. The jerboa deserves to die." And soon after, by the king's orders, the jerboa was put to death.

13. The hare was so wicked that he was not even sorry for the fate of the poor jerboa who had paid the price of his own wrong doing. He even made a flute out of the bones of the poor victim and was pleased when he could play merry tunes upon it.

14. One day he was singing one of his songs, and he must have forgotten that some of the other

animals might be near enough to hear; for the words he sang were,

"Little hare, little hare, how clever thou art
To cause the jerboa to die in thy stead!"

15. But for once he had been *too* clever. Some of the other animals of the desert heard him. They were very angry indeed to think how they had been deceived. With fierce cries they all set out after him, meaning to kill him as soon as they could catch him.

16. But a hare is not always easy to catch, when he is running for his life. This hare could run faster than any of the other desert animals. He fled from before them and hid in a place they did not know of, and where he knew he would be safe. There he lay and laughed and laughed to think he had been more clever than they, after all.

17. But early one morning, while the hare still lay asleep, a lion came along. He saw the hare. "Ha," he thought, "here is a good breakfast for me!" He laid one great paw upon him and was just about to kill him when the hare woke, and cried out, "Good lion, do not kill me."

18. "Why should I not kill you?" asked the lion. "I am hungry, for food is scarce of late. See how thin I am! Why should I not kill you?"

19. "Because, if you let me live, I will show

you how to catch more prey than you can eat. All those animals which you like best shall be yours, to kill and eat as you wish," said the hare.

20. The lion thought about it for a little while; then he said that he would spare the life of the hare, but that, if he did not keep his word, he would very soon eat him up.

"Never fear. I will keep my word right enough," said the hare. "But now you must do as I tell you."

21. He then made the lion build a strong fence round a certain space, leaving only a narrow gateway by which anyone could enter. When the fence was made, he told the lion to dig a hole in the ground deep enough to lie in; and when the hole was dug he told the lion to lie down in it, and keep quite still.

22. Then the hare began his part of the work. To and fro he went, bringing grass and leaves with which to cover up the lion. He piled them over him until nothing but his great teeth showed. "Now lie quite still, and show no sign of life until I bid you," said the hare.

23. Then he ran far out into the desert, and cried aloud at the top of his voice, "Animals of the desert, come and I will show you a wonder of wonders! Come and see a jaw that has grown up in the earth!"

24. The animals came running, jumping, and

leaping in from every side of the desert—animals of all sizes and of all kinds. The hare led them within the fence where the lion was hidden.

25. When they were all safely inside and the gate was shut, he said, "See the wonder of wonders—a jaw growing out of the earth!" And he pointed to where the teeth of the lion showed white above the grass and leaves.

26. The animals looked, the ones behind pressing forward so that they too might be able to see; then they cried in their turn, "Oh wonder of wonders, teeth have sprung up in the earth!"

27. Now, among the animals was a monkey, with her young one upon her back. She was not to be taken in like the rest. She guessed the hare was playing them a trick, so she went straight up to the hole, picked up a stick, and with it gently stirred among the grass and leaves. She felt something hard beneath; with all her might she flung away the leaves until the body of the lion was plainly to be seen.

But even then the lion did not move. He lay quite still as the hare had told him, hardly daring even to breathe.

28. "What is this dead body?" asked the monkey; then she must have seen a quiver pass through the body of the lion, for all at once she cried to her little one, "Child, hold fast to my back; there is still life in this body."

Having said these words, she leaped from

the side of the hole, climbed the fence, and ran away and away to the farthest corner of the desert.

29. At the same instant the hare made a sign, and the lion sprang from the hole with a sudden leap. He began to kill the animals, as many as, and more than, he could eat. For some weeks the lion fared very well; for, when he was hungry, he had only to kill and eat one of the animals in the little place that he had put the fence round.

30. But even the best of good things must come to an end at last; and, when all the food was gone, the lion was hungry once more. One night he came upon the hare lying asleep. He crept up and would have killed him there and then, had not the hare awoke and sprung away.

The hare was very angry that the lion should treat him thus, after all he had done for him. He made up his mind he would have his revenge.

31. He did not let the lion see how angry he was; but one day, when the rain fell in torrents and the wind blew hard, he said, "My friend, why should we be out in all this rain? Let us build a hut where we may shelter when the weather is bad."

The lion agreed. He thought it would be very nice to have a hut in which he could sleep; but he was lazy, so he left the hare to do most of the work.

32. The hare began, and what do you think he did? While the lion lay asleep, he took the end of the lion's tail and wove it in with the stakes and reeds of which he was building the hut. So well did the hare do this, that when the lion woke he found he could not move.

33. When he cried for mercy, the wicked hare only laughed; and though the poor lion tried again and again to free his tail, he could not do so. The hare left him there, and before long the poor lion died from want of food.

34. When the lion was dead, the hare took his skin and wrapped himself in it. He felt very grand and looked over his shoulders this way and that to get a good view of himself. Then he went out into the desert, looking a very funny animal indeed.

The other animals did not know him in his new dress. "See what a strange animal is there!" they cried. "Never have we seen such a creature as he."

35. As soon as a few of them had seen him, the hare went back to the fenced-in place. He thought the others would soon come to have a look at him. And he was right. They came from all sides that they might gaze upon him. Because he was so strange to their eyes, they thought he must be a creature come from some land far away.

36. They began to look upon him as a great

wonder. Many brought him gifts, which they threw over the fence to him. All day long they sat and watched his every movement. They even talked about making him their king instead of the elephant.

37. The hare sat still and let them gaze at him as much as they wished; but within the lion's skin he was laughing all the time to think that he should have been thus able to trick the animals of the desert once again.

38. After a while he became very vain with all the notice that was given him, and at last he grew careless. One day, when he was trying to sit up and look as big and grand as he could, he let the lion's skin slip off his head.

39. Then the animals saw that the stranger to whom they had given so much was none other than their old enemy, the hare. Such cries, roars, and groans rent the air that they were heard miles away over the desert.

40. With one wild rush they broke down the fence and crowded into the space within. But the hare was not to be caught yet. He leaped over their heads and ran to a forest where animals did not have all their own way, for men dwelt there.

41. In this forest he lay hid, so fearful that some of the animals might find him that he dared not leave shelter even to search for food or water. Hungry and thirsty he lay there,

wishing he had not done so many foolish and wicked things.

42. After many days he was so hungry that he felt he *must* go and find food. He crept from his hiding place, and that very day he was killed, not by the animals he feared, but by a man who was out hunting for food; and so ended the life of the "Artful Hare."

THE PRINCESS AND THE SERPENT

THERE was once a king whose palace was attacked on all sides by foes. He feared for the safety of his only daughter, so he bade her creep away under cover of the night and make her way to his brother's kraal, which was many miles away.

2. So, as soon as night fell, the princess said good-bye to her father and set out, with nothing but a little basket in her hands. Safely she passed the place where her father's foes were camping; then sped on over the open plains, guiding herself by the moon, which had now risen.

3. She had soon passed the little part of the country which she knew, and then she came to land that was quite strange to her. For many

days she walked on, feeding on berries and on roots which she dug out of the ground.

4. One day she was resting, when she saw a great serpent creep out of the bushes. She shrank back, for he was making his way towards her. But he said, "Fear me not, maiden. Who are you, and how come you to be here, alone in the wilds of this great forest?"

5. "I am a princess, and my father has bidden me to go to my uncle's kraal that I may be safe from the foes that attack the palace of my father," she replied.

"But how will you find the way?" asked the serpent.

"I will ask it of all those whom I meet," was the princess's reply.

6. Then the wily serpent said, "I know the road well enough; indeed, I am going that way myself and shall be happy to guide you."

The princess, who knew very little of the world, thought that here was a kind friend indeed. "Thank you very much," she said. "I shall be glad to go with you. I have been lonely, walking all alone."

7. They went on side by side, and on the way the serpent told the princess many things about life in the forest. After they had been walking for some time, he stopped and said, "Princess, will you lend me the girdle that you wear?"

8. The princess had no idea of the power of the

girdle she wore around her waist, so she took it off and gave it to the serpent. She was quite glad to be able to do this in return for his kindness to her.

The serpent did not put on the girdle at once. He was too clever for that; for he knew that, as soon as he tied it round him, he would be changed into the shape of the princess. He did not wish this as yet, so he carried it in his mouth as he went along.

9. They walked on and on for many a mile until at last they came near to the kraal where the princess's uncle lived. The serpent pointed to a fallen tree. "Sit here and rest while I go to the gate and tell them you are coming," he said.

10. As soon as the princess had seated herself upon the log, he ran to the kraal. No sooner was he out of the maiden's sight than he threw the girdle round him. He was at once changed into an exact likeness of the princess. No one would have known but what he was the princess herself, save that he had a harsh, instead of a sweet, voice.

11. He went to the gate of the kraal and knocked. The gate was opened by the princess's uncle. The serpent, pretending to be his niece, said that her father had bidden her come to him.

12. Not for a moment did the uncle of the princess doubt what the serpent told him. He



She took the girdle off and gave it to the serpent —*Page* 23

took the serpent into his house and made much of him. The people of the house gave him of the best they had and treated him in all things as the daughter of a king should be treated. The serpent laughed to himself and thought it was a great piece of luck for him that he should have met the princess in the wood.

13. Meanwhile the real princess sat and waited for the serpent to return. Hour after hour passed and still he had not come. At last she would wait no longer.

She sprang up and ran to the kraal in which her uncle lived. She knocked at the gate just as the serpent had done. But, when her uncle came to open it, he looked at her in surprise, and said, "What do you want here?"

"I am your niece. My father has sent me to you," she replied.

14. After her long journey her clothes were all in rags and her face was dirty, so that she did not look much like a princess. Her uncle looked her up and down. "My niece, the princess, came more than three hours ago," he said. Then he called to the serpent, "Come here, my niece, and tell me if you know who this may be."

15. The serpent came running to the gate. "Oh," he cried, in scorn, as soon as he saw her, "that is a beggar girl I met upon the road. Do you not see how dirty and ragged she is? Her name is Dog's Tail. You can keep her here to

work for you, if you like; but she had better take care not to call herself a princess any more."

16. "But, uncle, surely you know me, the daughter of your own brother," cried the princess. "I know I am dirty and in rags, and not dressed as a princess should be, but I have travelled far. Surely your eyes cannot be so blinded by that creature," pointing to the serpent, "as not to know your own niece."

17. Her uncle looked at her with a puzzled face, as if he knew not what to think; but before he could say a word the serpent thrust himself forward, saying, "This is a nice return to make for the kindness I showed you in the forest. How dare you, Dog's Tail, try to make up such a story as this? I am the princess; you are but a beggar girl."

18. The real princess turned away with a sob. It was of no use for her to speak out against the wrong done her. She saw that her uncle would not believe her.

He, thinking she was but a beggar girl, took her in and made her work hard from early morn to late at night. The serpent who had taken her place lived a life of ease and luxury. Whenever he saw the princess, he would mock at her and taunt her with the name of Dog's Tail.

19. The princess bore it all as best she could. She did as she was told; for, if she did not, she was beaten. She was given so much to do that

she had no time to think; and she was given so little food that she was always hungry.

Once or twice she tried to run away; but she was always brought back and then her work was made harder than ever.

20. By and by the summer days came and the corn began to ripen. This meant a welcome change for the princess, for she was sent to the cornfields to drive away the birds.

In the fields there was no one to scold her from morning to night, and she was out in the fresh air with the beauties of Nature all around her—the gently waving corn, the blue, blue sky, and the sparkle of the sunlight upon the rippling water of the river that ran close by.

21. She had been given this task, because it was such hard work to run after the birds all day in the great heat that no one else wanted to do it. It was always the tasks that no one else would do which fell to the share of the princess.

22. But she did not find it hard work. I will tell you why. When she set out for the cornfields, she took with her the little basket she had brought from home. The serpent did not know of the magic power of this little basket, or he would certainly have taken it from her.

23. Just before she came to the cornfield she set it down on a bare patch of ground. Then she looked up into the sky and gave three calls, each one more loud and shrill than the last.

In a few moments all the birds for miles round came flying to the spot where she had placed the basket and settled there. They could not fly away again. She had cast a magic spell upon them; and there they had to remain until she chose to let them go.

24. The corn was thus safe from being eaten by the birds, so there was no work for the princess to do. She would leave the flock of birds round the basket and run down to the river, where there was cool shade to be found under the trees.

25. As she stood upon the bank, she would clap her hands three times. From out of the water there at once arose servants from her father's palace. They brought her fine clothes such as she used to wear, and rich food, more than she could eat.

26. The princess then slipped off her rags and bathed in the river. She washed away the dirt that covered her soft, dusky skin, dressed herself in rich clothes, and sat down to enjoy the food which her father's servants had brought; then for the rest of the day she had a nice lazy time in the cool shade by the river.

27. Just before sunset she again dressed herself in her rags, rubbed some mud over her face, and went to set free the captive birds. This done, she ran back to her uncle's kraal. Of course, they thought she had been driving the birds from the corn all day long.

28. But, as time went on, her uncle began to wonder how she could chase the birds so well that not a single ear of the corn was eaten. No other watcher of the corn had ever been able to do this before.

As well as this, he noticed that she never seemed to want anything to eat; yet, instead of growing thin and worn, she became more plump and comely as the days passed.

29. At last he made up his mind he would have her watched; so, one day, he and some of his men hid among the tall corn in the field. They saw her stand her little basket upon the ground. They heard her call the birds and saw how she cast a spell over them.

30. Then she went down to the river. They crept after her and saw how she called her father's servants to bring her clothes and food. "Can this really be the princess, my niece, after all?" thought her uncle.

31. While she was lying upon the bank of the river, dressed as was fitting for a royal lady, with servants at hand to do her every wish, he went up to her. "Come," he said. "You must tell me all about this and by what power you are able to do these things."

32. "It is because I am a princess," she replied. "Who but a princess has the power of casting spells over animals and birds, or of calling her servants to her from the depths of the water? I

am your niece, and my father is a king, though you will not believe me when I say so. Listen"; and she told him the story of how she had met the serpent in the wood.

33. "I do believe you now," he cried, when she had finished. "It is the wicked serpent who has deceived me; but he shall suffer for it."

He called his men to him and bade them go and kill the serpent. "Let me not find him alive when I return to the kraal, or you shall also die," he cried, and the men ran to do his bidding.

34. Thus it was that at last the princess took her own place in her uncle's house. With servants about her to do her bidding, and with all that could make life happy, she lived with her uncle until her father, having beaten his foes, came to take her back to his palace in the land where he reigned as king.

JIVA, THE COWHERD

IN the long-ago days of Africa there was once a man who had a herd of very fine cattle. No other man in the land could boast of such a herd as his. He kept a boy whose sole work it was to look after this herd. The boy's name was Jiva.*

2. Every day Jiva had to take out the herd that they might graze on the rich grass of the plains. While they were there, he must watch lest they should stray too far, or wild beasts might attack them.

3. The boy grew quite fond of the cows with which all his time was spent. They loved him too, and would come at his call and follow wherever he chose to lead them. They did not need to be driven, only to be led.

4. Sometimes the days seemed long to the boy, as he lay and kicked up his heels on the grass. Sometimes he wished that something new and strange might happen. It was not that he was unhappy in his free, open-air life; but, like all young people, he felt the need of change.

5. The change came all too soon. One day, as he lay half asleep in the shade of some trees, he heard the sound of horses' hoofs.

* Pronounce *jē'-vȧ*—*ē* as in "me"; *ȧ* as in "father."

He was on the alert in a moment. From behind the shelter of some scrubby bushes he peered out over the plain. Far away to the west he could just make out a troop of horsemen.

6. As he watched, they drew nearer and nearer. At last they were close enough for him to know them for a band of robbers that was feared by all the country round. What was he to do? He had his master's cattle to think of; but it was too late to drive them away out of sight; the robbers must have already seen them.

7. On came the riders until they were up to the cattle, and close enough to Jiva for him to be able to hear what they were saying. "Look at these beasts," said one. "Finer cattle than these have I never seen. Shall we take them home with us?" he asked, looking to the chief of the band.

"Indeed we will," replied the chief. "Before the sun sets, those cattle shall be mine. Go, men, and round them up."

8. It was not the least use poor little Jiva trying to fight against these strong, well-armed men. All he could do was to watch and see what happened. He was feeling very sorry for himself, his master, and, above all, for the cows. They were not likely to meet with very gentle treatment from the robbers.

9. At the orders of their chief some of the men rode one way, and some the other, until

they were all round the herd of cattle. "Now drive them," cried the chief, "and they must come our way."

10. But to his surprise the cattle did not stir. The men shouted, and clashed their spears, and made such a noise that all the birds for miles round were driven away; but the cows merely looked up as much as to say, "Dear me, what an ugly noise you are making!" Then they went on nibbling the grass, or chewing the cud, just as if the noise had nothing to do with them.

11. From his little nook among the bushes Jiva smiled to himself. He knew that the cattle would not move until he called them. But the robbers did not smile. They were very angry. They tried again and again to make the herd move on; but nothing they could do would make the animals take a single step. At last they said, "Someone must have cast a spell over these cattle. Who can it be?"

12. "We will not leave this place until we find out," cried the leader of the robber band. "Search, men, and bring me anyone you find."

So the men began to hunt all about the plain. They looked behind the bushes, among the trees, and even in the long grass; but they could not find Jiva. The reason was that, when he saw them begin their search, he had slipped from behind the bush and now lay hidden in a hole in the ground, of which he alone knew.

13. The search went on for so long that he hoped they would give it up and go on their way. But this was too good to be true. One of the horses passed so close to the hole where he lay that it caught its hoof in the jagged edges at the top of the hole and fell to the ground.

14. Its rider fell upon the grass right in front of Jiva. He could not help seeing the lad. "Here he is! I have found him!" he cried, and, having hauled Jiva out of the hole, took him to the robber chief.

15. "Then it is you who have laid a spell upon this herd," said the chief, looking fiercely at the small boy before him. He looked very small indeed before the great man on the great horse. "Now you shall drive them where *I* wish, or my men will kill you. Come, set off at once. We have wasted too much time as it is."

16. Jiva knew there was no help for it. He must do as the robber chief bade him, or lose his life. First he gave a gentle whistle; then he called, "Gi-li-li-li.* Cows, go on. Gi-li-li-li." At the sound of his voice the cows all came about him and he led them in the wake of the band of robbers.

17. All the rest of that day they marched over the hot, parched plain. The tongues of the cattle were so dry that they hung out of their mouths, but there was no water which they might drink.

* Pronounce *gē-lē-lē'-lē—ē* as in "me." An African cowherd's call.

Their heads drooped sadly; yet, as long as Jiva whistled or sang "Gi-li-li-li," they never paused, or tried to stray from the path.

18. At sunset they came to a large kraal that Jiva had never seen before. With hanging heads the weary cattle stood and waited outside the gate until, at a sharp order from the robbers, Jiva once more began to call, "Gi-li-li-li. Gi-li-li-li." Then they rushed in at the gate, so eager to enter that they almost tumbled over each other. They seemed to know that they would find food and drink within.

19. With eager eyes the robber chief looked over the herd as they passed him. It was a great prize he had chanced to come upon this day. As a reward for the men who had brought them in, or rather tried to bring them in, he gave orders that the finest of the cattle should be slain and a feast made.

Poor Jiva! It made him very sad to see one of his herd led off. How soon would it be before all the rest were gone as well? Yet what could he do, one among so many?

20. As soon as the ox was cooked, the men sat down to the feast. They made very merry over it. They called to Jiva to join them; but he would not eat of the flesh of one of the cattle that had been left in his charge. Had he done so, he felt he could never have faced his master again.

21. As he sat apart, an idea came into his mind. Perhaps he could save the rest of the cattle for his master, after all. The men had eaten and drunk so much that many of them seemed to be getting very drowsy. One by one, they fell asleep where they sat.

22. Jiva watched and waited until they were all asleep. It was a long while to wait, and hard work not to follow their example; for, by this time, he was feeling very sleepy himself. He heaved a big sigh of relief when he saw the last man drop his head upon the ground and heard him begin to snore.

Then, very softly, he rose and crept to where the cattle stood in one corner of the kraal. In a low voice he began to sing, "Gi-li-li-li. Gi-li-li-li. Arise, O cows. Gi-li-li-li."

23. The whole herd arose as one when they heard his voice. He counted them to make sure they were all there. To his surprise he found there were as many as when he set out from home, nor could he see one that was a stranger to the herd. It was just as if the one that had been killed had come to life again at the sound of the call they knew so well.

24. Full of joy to think that now he had not lost a single one, Jiva led the way out of the kraal and over the plain. Pad, pad, came the hoofs of the cattle behind him, and by the light of the moon he led them by the right path.

25. In the early dawn he reached the kraal of his master. He drove the cows into it; then went to the house, and said, "Master, the cattle are home. Robbers stole them and even killed one, the finest of the herd; but, by my magic call, I have brought it to life again and so saved them all from the robbers."

26. His master was so pleased with the lad who had thus bravely saved the herd for him that he gave him, for his own, seven of the cattle which he had rescued. With this little herd Jiva started in life for himself.

He worked hard and all things went well with him; so that in after years, from being but a little cowherd, he became a rich man among the Zulus.

THE STORY OF SEMAI AND SOBU

IN the long-ago ages, when all kinds of wonders used to happen, there lived two Kafir boys whose names were Semai* and Sobu.† Their father was but a poor man, so they lived in a tiny hut made of mud. There were no cattle in their kraal, as in the kraals of those who lived round them.

* Pronounce *sā'-mā-ē—ā* as in "mate"; *ā* as in "father"; *ē* as in "me."
† " *sō'-boo—ō* as in "no"; *oo* as in "moon."

2. A piece of land was theirs, and that was all they owned. Out of that their living had to be made. All the food they had was grain and roots grown on this land. The boys had hardly ever tasted milk or meat.

3. One day they set out with their father to dig a fresh piece of land and make it ready for the sowing of the seed. All day they worked; and they worked hard too—at any rate, while their father's eye was upon them. Their part was to turn up the sods, digging in the rank grass and weeds so as to let the fresh air enter the soil and sweeten it.

4. As soon as the dusk fell they left off their work and went home. For once their father was pleased with the amount they had done. "You have worked well to-day, boys," he said; and indeed they had, for it was quite a large patch of land that stood ready for sowing.

5. Very early the next day they set off again. After a brisk walk they came to the patch of ground upon which they had worked so hard the day before.

They looked at it. They rubbed their eyes and looked again, for they could hardly believe they had looked aright. All their work had been undone! There was the piece of ground, with every tuft of grass and every weed growing just as it had been before they had touched it.

6. "Who has done this?" cried their father,

in angry tones. "Our whole day's work is wasted. Set to work at once, boys. We shall have to work harder than ever to make up for this."

So all day long they toiled without a rest. They worked until the sweat poured off their faces and the boys felt as if they would drop with fatigue. By the time the sun set they had dug over again the same piece of land, and a good-sized patch of fresh ground besides.

7. Semai and Sobu were so tired that they hardly knew how to drag themselves home. As soon as they had eaten the meal their mother had made ready for them, they lay down and slept like a couple of logs until their father woke them at break of day.

8. "Get up," he said, "it is time we were off to work. We must dig the rest of the land to-day." But once again they found all the labour of the day before wasted. The grass was growing, and flowers were blooming all over the ground as if not a single sod had been turned.

9. "Boys, we must find out who it is that is doing this," cried the father. All the day they toiled hard to dig over for the third time the same patch of ground. To-day their mother also had come to help in the work, so that by the setting of the sun it was again made ready for the seed to be sown on the morrow.

10. At dusk the woman and her two sons took up their tools to depart, but the man said,

"Yes, do you and the boys go home. I will stay, and watch, to see if the land is again disturbed."

When the others had gone, he hid behind some bushes and waited to see what would happen. He had a long time to wait, so long that he had almost made up his mind to get up and go home. But at last he heard the flutter of wings, of wings too large for any bird that he had ever seen.

11. He peered out from behind the bush. The dawn was just breaking, and in the dim light he saw a huge bird fly down on the newly turned sods. Its feathers were scarlet, and blue, and yellow, and green, all of the very brightest shades, and it had a long, black beak.

12. It flapped its wings and began to sing in a hoarse voice, "Stwang, stwang, stwee," over and over again. The man counted; and when it had sung the same sound seven times seven times, it flapped its wings again. Then, just as the last note died away, every sod in the piece of dug ground turned over, the blades of grass were swaying in the morning breeze, and the buds lifting up their heads as if waiting for the sun to open them.

13. The man saw what was happening, and guessed that it was through the bird's "Stwang, stwang, stwee." Very softly he crept up behind the bird and seized it by the wings so that it could not fly away. "Never again shall you



'He crept up behind the bird and seized it by the wings'—*Page* 40.

undo all the work that I have done," he cried, and began to kill it.

14. But the bird cried, "Spare me. Spare my life, oh man! I meant no harm. I only grieved for the grass and flowers that had been dug up and left to die. I will give you more cream and milk than you can use every day, if you will but let me live."

15. When the bird began to speak, and in the same tongue as he himself used, in his surprise the man nearly let go his hold of it. "You must be a fairy bird," he said. "I have heard there are such birds. Well, if I find that what you say is true, I will spare your life, but you must prove your words."

16. He took the bird home and showed it to his wife. "Wife," he said, "see this strange bird which I have caught. It is this bird which has undone all our work. I caught it in the act."

His wife came and looked at the bird. "It is very pretty," she said. "But what is the use of that? We want food to eat rather than pretty things to look at. Besides, it has already done us harm; kill it, for it will at least make us a meal."

17. "I am not going to kill it," said the man, "for, if it but speaks the truth, it will give us much food. Bring me the largest bowl there is in the hut."

His wife fetched a great bowl and stood it in the middle of the hut. "Shut the door," he said; then he put the bird upon the ground. "Now prove the truth of your words," he said to it.

18. The bird flapped its wings, flew three times round the hut, then came to rest upon the edge of the bowl. "Stwang, stwang, stwee," it sang, and sang it three times three times.

Then a strange thing came to pass. All the time the bird sang, the bowl slowly filled with milk—milk so rich that the cream stood thick upon it. The bird sang on until the bowl was full to the brim; then it ceased its song.

19. The mother was full of joy. "My boys will grow fat and well, if they have good milk like this to drink," she cried; then she added in a whisper, "We had better not tell other people about this bird, or perhaps they will try to steal it from us."

20. "You are right," said the man. "It would be best not even to let the boys know of it; for they will tell their friends and then the news will soon be all over the village. No, we will keep this piece of luck to ourselves."

So the bird was hidden away under a basket in the corner of the hut, and the boys were told that a bowl of good milk had been sent for them to drink, but who had sent it their mother did not say.

21. Boy-like, they drank of the milk and found it very good, but they thought little of how it had come. It was there, and that was enough. Now they could work with light hearts and sing merry songs the while, for they were no longer hungry.

22. But when a week had passed and each day the bowl stood full of rich milk, even the boys began to wonder how it came. "Where does Mother get it from?" Semai said, one day, to his brother.

"I cannot think," replied Sobu. "It may be that someone brings it at night after we have gone to bed."

23. "Suppose we watch and see," said Semai. So that night, when they ought to have been asleep, they watched and saw their mother take the bird with the gay feathers from under the basket in the corner of the room.

They saw it fly three times round the room, then perch on the rim of the bowl. They heard it sing and they saw the bowl filling with milk. "Oh!" they said to themselves, "so that is where the milk comes from."

24. The next day the man and his wife had to go on a long journey. The two boys were left behind to amuse themselves as best they could. Their parents were away all day. It was sunset when they at last reached the hut.

The boys ran to meet them. They were both

crying bitterly—crying so that they could not find words to tell their parents what was the matter. They could only point to the hut.

25. Their mother ran quickly in. She found the whole of the floor covered with milk. Pots, pans, and baskets were swimming in it. She ran to the corner where she had kept the bird hidden; it was gone. "Boys," she cried, "what *have* you done?"

26. "Last night we were awake and saw how you told the bird to fill the bowl," they sobbed. "While you were out to-day, we tried to do the same. We could make the bird do it, but we could not make it stop. At last we were afraid we should be drowned, so we drove the bird away."

27. "You bad boys!" cried the father, and he was in such a rage that he took up a stick with which to beat the lads.

The boys dodged and ran, their father after them. They ran out of the kraal and away over the plain; on and on they went, for they feared the stick their father carried—they had felt it before, and, whenever they looked back, they could see their father hurrying after them.

At last they came to a thick forest. Here they knew their father would no longer be able to find them, so they roamed about under the trees as they pleased, sleeping when they were tired, chasing the birds, and fishing in the streams.

28. They lived in the forest for many weeks. They found berries that were good for food and they also dug for roots, so that they did not starve. But they were very sad, for they thought of the home they had lost, and all because they had been curious about things that were not meant for them to know.

29. One day, when they were picking berries, they saw the fairy bird perched in the tree above them. It at once began to talk to them. "I am sorry to see you looking so sad," it said. "I fear it is because you set me free. See, to make up for this I will give you this twig. It will provide you with a home and give you food."

30. The bird dropped a little stick at the boys' feet. It was but a tiny twig, such as might have been plucked from any tree or bush. Semai stooped and picked it up. "What are we to do with it?" he asked.

"Walk on through the forest until you come to a great white rock," replied the bird. "Beat upon the rock with the stick, and say, 'Open, rock, and let us in.' You will then see what you will see."

31. As soon as the bird had said these words, it flew away, so that the boys could not ask the questions they wished to put. *Could* it be true, what the bird had told them? It looked such a very common little piece of stick to have a magic power.

Still, it was worth a trial; so they took the stick and went on their way. By and by they came to a rock so tall and white that they felt sure it must be the rock of which the bird had spoken.

32. Semai took hold of the stick and beat upon the rock with it. They both said, "Open, rock, and let us come in"; then they waited. They had not long to wait; for, almost at once, the rock flew apart where Semai had struck it. They saw there was a great cave within.

33. "Ho, this is fine!" cried Sobu, and in they crept. But there was still more to surprise them inside. There were mats for them to sleep on, furs to keep them warm in winter, bows and arrows for them to shoot with, and what pleased them most of all at the moment, great bowls of milk, mealies, and corn.

34. "Why," cried Semai, "we shall be able to live like kings here."

"Yes, the bird has been our good fairy after all," replied Sobu; and, with this cave as their home, they lived in the forest until they grew up to be men.

35. They spent their days hunting, fishing, and roaming through the woods. When, at night, they went back to their home in the rock, there was food ready for them to eat. The bowl was always full of milk, and the baskets of mealies and corn were never empty.

36. "I wish Father and Mother were here to share all the good things with us," said Sobu, one day.

"We will go and bring them to live with us here," replied his brother. But, though they hunted through many days and weeks, they were never able to find the place where their parents lived and where they had spent all the earliest years of their lives.

EDITOR'S NOTE

The folklore of the various nations of Africa is rich in fairy tales and stories of magic and the supernatural. MISS TAPSELL'S most interesting little book gives us an excellent idea of what they are like.

The young Africans love to listen to these tales. They follow the narrative with intense interest; and, when the climax of the story is approaching, they not infrequently become so excited that they take up the words at the end of almost every sentence, and repeat them like a chorus. The love of fairy tales is, indeed, common to juvenile humanity, and is a bond which makes the children of the world as a great kindred, despite all differences of complexion and civilization, and all vicissitudes of international relations.

QUESTIONS

THE WHITE COW

1. What did Huka find on the top of the hill ?
2. How did Huka escape from the giant ?
3. Where did he find the herd of cattle ?
4. Say how it was discovered that Macilo had killed his brother.

THE ARTFUL HARE

1. What is the picture about opposite page 13 ?
2. How did the other animals find out who it was who had really drunk from the king's pond ?
3. Tell me what was the end of the Artful Hare.

THE PRINCESS AND THE SERPENT

1. How was it that the serpent was able to make people think he was the princess ?
2. Tell me how the princess kept the birds from eating the corn.
3. In what manner did the princess pass her time in the cornfield ?

JIVA, THE COWHERD

1. How was it that the robbers found Jiva, and what did they make him do ?
2. Tell me how Jiva rescued the cattle.
3. How did his master reward Jiva ?

THE STORY OF SEMAI AND SOBU

1. What had the wonderful bird done to the land which the Kafirs had dug ?
2. Why did the boys drive the bird from their home ?
3. How did the bird repay them for setting it free ?

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Very good Book

M.I.H. School

E.K.M.

This is a very good book. because the stories are very fine a beauty and the language is very simple. so. it is easy to read and we can under stand the summary.

By T.A. Abdul Rahim

Very Good

Good Book

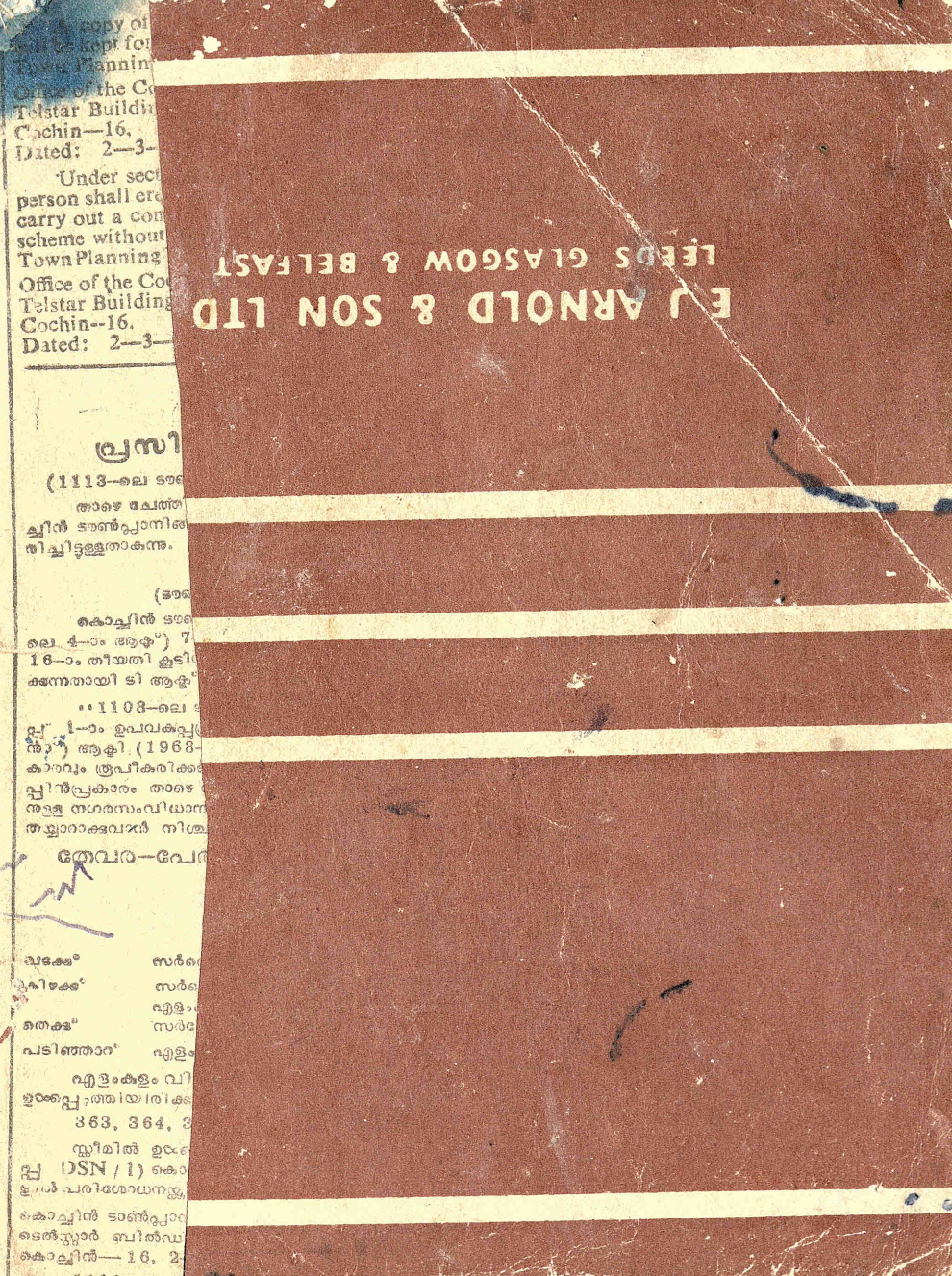
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