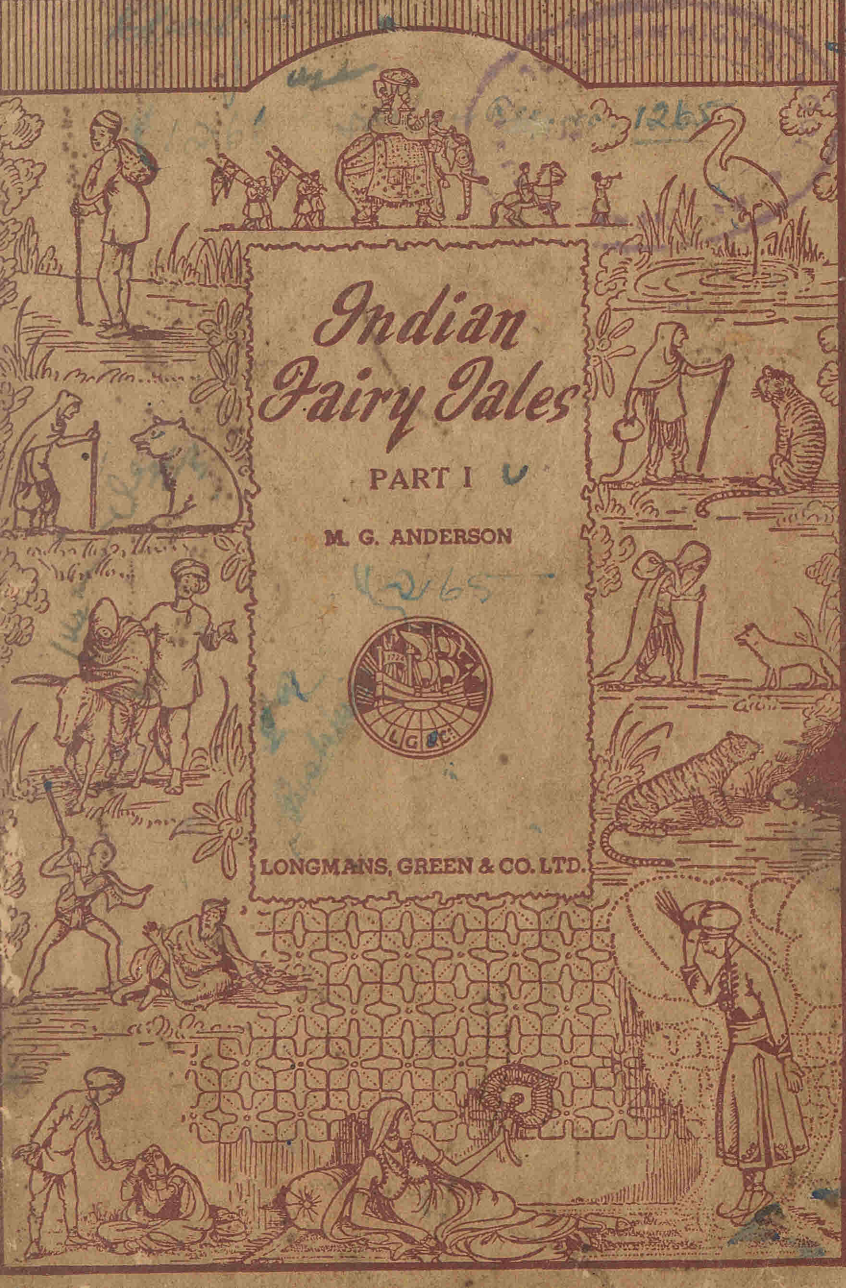


Indian Fairy Tales

PART I

M. G. ANDERSON

LONGMANS, GREEN & CO. LTD.

INDIAN FAIRY TALES

PART I

Reg. No. 1265

BY
M. G. ANDERSON

ILLUSTRATED



Ninth Edition

Distributors
KATTOOKAREN BOOK STALL
BROADWAY ERNAKULAM

LONGMANS, GREEN AND CO.
BOMBAY ◆ CALCUTTA ◆ MADRAS
1947

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Price As. 4.

CONTENTS

		PAGE
1.	THE RAJAH WHO WAS TOO GENEROUS ...	3
2.	THE MOON PRINCESS	22
3.	THE PRICE OF A BUFFALO	41
4.	THE CLEVER JACKAL	53
5.	THE CLEVER OLD WOMAN	62

PRINTED IN INDIA

BY THE DIOCESAN PRESS, MADRAS (P.I.C. NO. Q.H. MS. 5)

FOR MESSRS. LONGMANS, GREEN & CO. LTD. MADRAS, (P.I.C. NO. MS. 3)

3-1-1947. C2355

PRICE: Rs. 6

HIGH SCHOOL

THE RAJAH WHO WAS TOO GENEROUS

ONCE upon a time there was a Rajah far-famed for his generosity. It was said that whatever favour anybody asked was always granted.

One day there came to his court a Fakir who said he had a request to make. So he was immediately taken before the Rajah. He spoke to him kindly and told him to ask whatsoever he wished, and it would be given to him.

"It is true I have a thing to ask of you," said the Fakir, "but I fear your Royal Highness will never grant it to me."

"Ask!" said the Rajah, "I will surely give it to you."

"Nay," replied the Fakir, "I shall be refused!"

"I swear I will give you what you desire!" the Rajah assured him.

"Will you swear it thrice?"

"Thrice, if it please you!"

"Well, will you give me your kingdom, and let me be Rajah in your place?"

"Wait one moment," said the Rajah, who was greatly taken aback at this demand. "I will give you your reply presently." Saying this, he went to his wife and told her what had happened, and asked her if she were willing that he should keep his oath. The Rani was of the opinion that he was bound to do as he had sworn to do, and there was nothing for it but to hand over the kingdom to the Fakir.

So, coming back to the Audience Chamber, the Rajah told the Fakir that his request was granted, and that he would forthwith be installed as Rajah.

All the nobles of the court were called together, and the Fakir was introduced as their new Rajah. When all the ceremonies were completed the old Rajah

(whose name was Amb) took his wife, Ambli, and his two sons, Surva and Neer, and departed from his home and kingdom.

For many days they travelled on foot, and as none of them had ever walked far in their lives, they were soon footsore and weary. Great blisters arose on their feet, and the sun burned them, and hunger overcame them. The Rani especially suffered, for she had been in purdah all her life, and had never been out even for a walk.

At last they came to an inn kept by a very cross old woman. The Rajah begged her to let them sleep there for the night, and she agreed. They very gladly lay down to sleep, hungry as they were, for they had no money to buy food.

In the morning the old innkeeper came and demanded money for their night's lodging.

"Alas!" said Amb, "I have no money, but if you will give me some work to do for you, I will pay you that way."

The old woman was furious at first, but when she saw it was true that they had no money, she was obliged to agree. She sent Amb into the jungle to gather dried sticks for her. In this way Amb not only paid for their lodging, but was able to buy some very cheap, coarse food for his family.

One day, when Amb was away looking for firewood, a very rich merchant came to the inn. He had a great ship moored near by, and had come into the town to do business. Ambli saw him coming, and quickly drew down her veil, for having been a purdah woman all her life, she did not like a man to see her face. But quick as she was, the merchant had seen her, and he immediately fell deeply in love with her for her great beauty.

Going to the old innkeeper, he asked who the woman was.

"I don't know who she is!" said the old hag. "She came here with her husband and two boys, and they pay little enough for their keep, but she puts on all the airs of a Rani!"

The merchant was so consumed with love that he determined to carry off the beautiful pauper who had so taken his fancy. He paid the old woman handsomely to help him, and between them they made a plot. The old hag told Ambli that she had been ordered to serve a meal to the merchant on board his ship, and offered to give her a rupee if she would help to carry it on board. Ambli agreed willingly enough, for they were so very poor.

Once they got to the side of the ship, the old woman pretended to be afraid.

"I have never been in a ship in my life!" she cried, "and I don't like the

look of it. Do you go and serve the meal, and I will pay you double."

So Ambli went on board with the baskets of food, and no sooner was she safely on, than the merchant gave orders for the ship to sail.

Imagine poor Ambli's distress when she discovered the trick that had been played on her! The merchant tried to console her, telling her that if she would marry him, she should have everything she desired, but Ambli would have none of him. She wanted her husband and children, and would not listen to the merchant at all.

He thought that time would change her mind, and left her alone, but from that day Ambli stayed in the cabin that he had prepared for her, and would not come out.

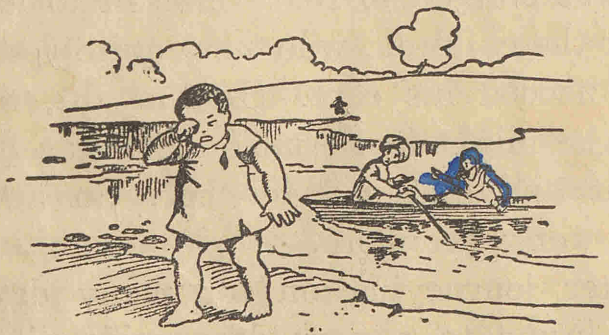
"I am ill," she would say whenever anybody tried to coax her to come out, and she fretted so that soon she *was* ill.

And poor Amb! When he got back from the jungle and found Ambli gone he didn't know *what* to think. The wicked old woman would not give him the least help, and what was more, she turned him out of the inn, and set him and his two boys adrift once more. Poor Amb's heart was broken at his loss. But he was obliged to rouse himself to look after the children, who were quite young and needed his care. He thought, too, that he might find Ambli if he travelled about and searched for her. So away they went once more.

After journeying on for many days, they came to a very deep wide river. Amb was not able to take both the children across at once, so he took one over and left him, and came back for the second. Alas, in the middle of the stream he lost his footing and was swept away by the current! And so the two poor little boys were left fatherless and

motherless, and with a river between them.

Small wonder that they soon began to cry. Now an old dhobi and his wife lived near the river, and the wails of the deserted children soon attracted the attention of the old woman, who adored children and had none of her own.



"Husband," she said, "do go and see why those children are crying. It has been going on for some time now, and may be the poor mites are lost."

So the dhobi, who was a kind old soul, took his boat and rowed up the river. There he soon found the two

boys, one on each bank, and brought them back to his wife. She comforted them and questioned them as to where their parents were. At that, fresh tears began to fall, and the elder boy, Surva, explained as well as he was able that their mother had disappeared, and their father had been drowned while crossing the river.

"Not drowned, darling!" said the kind motherly old soul, "He is only bathing. He will come back."

And she petted and comforted the poor forlorn babes till they forgot their troubles. As no parents came to claim them the dhobi and his wife adopted the boys as their own, and for many years they lived with them very happily.

But the Rajah Amb was not drowned, though he very nearly was. He was swept along by the current, but he managed to grasp a floating branch which kept his head above water. At

last he was able to reach the bank and struggle ashore. Very draggled and utterly exhausted he lay there for some time, and then seeing a great procession coming towards him, he rose to get out of its way.

But imagine his astonishment when he found himself seized, and asked who he was. He meant no offence, and explained that it was quite by accident that he was there, and that he had not meant to get in the way of the procession, which he now saw was a funeral. But he was taken before a Vizier and told to repeat his story.

When he had finished relating it, the Vizier came forward, and kneeling before him, offered him homage!

By this time Amb was convinced that he had fallen amongst lunatics, but his astonishment grew when he was told that it was the custom of that country to make Rajah whatever man first met

the funeral of the old Rajah by accident. As he had done so, they told him he was duly installed, but his heart was heavy, and he took no pleasure in his good fortune. He sent men up the river to look for his sons, but they could not find them, so Amb feared they had fallen in and been drowned.

No interest could he take in his new kingdom, and he left the government of it to his Viziers. For years this went on, and still the Rajah did not rouse himself from his despondency.

Meanwhile the two boys grew up into fine manly youths. One day they said to the dhobi's wife,

"Mother, it is time we went out and earned our own living. We have lived on you long enough, and you are getting old. Let us go out into the world and seek our fortunes."

The old woman did not like parting with them, but at last they persuaded

her to let them do as they desired. With her savings she bought them a horse each, and sent them away with her blessing.

The boys rode on, and chance presently brought them to the kingdom where Amb was now Rajah. Here they sought for employment at the court of their father. Both of them had grown out of all recognition, so Amb did not know them for his sons, but his heart leaped as he saw them, and he thought, "Just such boys would mine have been, if they had lived!"

After this he became sadder than ever, but he gave orders that the two youths were to be provided for liberally, but were not to be made to work. They lived at court, and everything was furnished for them in comfort. This made a great deal of ill-feeling, for men who had to work hard for their living felt it was not fair, and they hated the two young men accordingly.

One day a magnificent ship sailed up to the harbour and cast her anchor. The owner was the same merchant who had carried off the Rani Ambli years before. Ambli was still on board, but she still kept to her cabin and behaved like an invalid. The merchant had long ago given up all hope of winning her for his wife, but he still loved her, so she was provided with every comfort that money could buy.

When the ship was safely berthed the merchant went ashore, and went straight to the Rajah to ask for a guard to be put on his ship at night, as he had many valuables on board.

The Rajah granted his request, but as usual left it to his staff to carry out. Now the Daroga had been pining for a chance to make Surva and Neer do something unpleasant, so he seized the opportunity, and went to the boys and said,

"It is the Rajah's hukum (order) that you both go on board the merchant's ship, and keep guard all night. Beware you do not fall asleep, for if anything is stolen you will be responsible!"

So the two youths went on board and prepared to keep guard. They were not at all lazy, so were not sorry to have something to do.

"Now," said Surva, "we must do something to keep ourselves awake. Let's keep talking, and then we shall not get so sleepy."

Neer agreed that this was a wise plan, and they proceeded to keep up a conversation:

"What do you think is the most remarkable thing you have ever heard of, Neer?" asked Surva.

"Well, I think the way this Rajah got his kingdom was most remarkable," answered Neer. "Imagine being washed up from a river to find yourself being



made a King! What do you think, Surva?"

"Yes," replied his brother, "That certainly was extraordinary. He was lucky not to have been drowned, as our poor father was."

"Tell me about it again, Surva," pleaded Neer. "I was so small then that I do not remember anything."

So Surva proceeded to tell his brother the oft-told tale of how their father had been a Rajah who had given his Raj to a Fakir, and of their travels, of the disappearance of their mother, and the loss of their father in the river.

Now Rani Ambli had been disturbed in her cabin by their voices, and she was just about to protest and tell them to be quiet when she caught the names "Surva" and "Neer".

"The names of my babies!" she thought, excitedly. Then she came close to the curtain and listened. Her joy grew with each moment, for she was sure she had found her sons. But her husband, *could* he be the Rajah who was washed up out of the river? They had not said so, but her quick brain put two and two together, and she felt there was a chance that he might be. Anyway, she would have to go very carefully, for if the merchant heard anything about

it, he would just sail away with her, and she would never see them again. So she made a very cunning plan. She said nothing to the two boys, but let them go away, which they did in the morning.

Shortly after they had left, she complained to the merchant that the guards who had been on the ship at night had stolen some of her jewelry.

"Find out for me who they were," she said, "and we will take them before the Rajah for justice."

So the rich merchant went to the Rajah, and told him what Ambli had said, and asked for the guards to be produced. The Rajah asked the Daroga to produce them, and the Daroga, trembling in his shoes at being found out, did so. Then Ambli was brought in to make her charge. One look at the Rajah was enough—she knew him at once for Amb, her husband.

Throwing back her veil, she stood before him. Amb started up and gazed and gazed, then he leapt down from his throne and took her in his arms.

"Ambli!"

"Amb!"

The courtiers meanwhile stood gaping in wonderment. Then Ambli turned and embraced her two sons. You can imagine for yourselves the rejoicings there were at this family reunion.

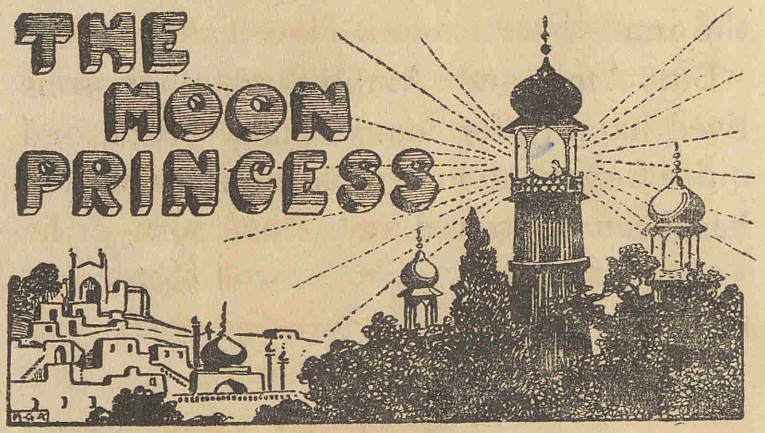
The merchant, as soon as he grasped the situation, faded tactfully away, and hurrying to his ship, he set sail and was far away before anybody missed him. He did not come back to that port ever again!

The old dhobi and his wife were so generously rewarded for their kindness to the two boys that they became like little Rajahs in their own country. But the old woman who kept the inn was punished for her wickedness, and she

died soon after, in prison, so she never hatched any more plots against guests in the inn.

But Amb and Ambli and their sons lived happily for many, many years, and quite forgot the miserable time when they had been separated.

THE MOON PRINCESS



THERE were once two boys who were great friends. One was the son of a carpenter, and the other the son of a jeweller, and they each learnt their father's trades.

When they grew up they decided to go abroad to seek their fortunes, so they set out together, and travelled till they came to the country of a Rajah who was known to be very rich, and who was always ready to buy any curious thing that took his fancy.

So the two young men settled down there, and set to work.

The jeweller made a silver fish that was wonderful to see. Every scale upon it was true to life.

The joiner made a wooden horse. It was cleverly made, and if one turned the keys on the neck of it, it would trot and gallop and behave like a real horse.

With these two works of art the youths went to the Rajah, and begged that he would buy them.

The Rajah was much pleased with both, and immediately ordered that each young man was to be given a thousand rupees.

But the jeweller said,

"Your Majesty has not yet seen what my fish can do. Let a tank of water be prepared, and I will show you."

So a tank of water was prepared, as if by magic, at the order of the Rajah, and in this the fish was put. It immediately

swam about, turning and twisting like a live fish.

"Give the man three thousand rupees!" said the delighted Rajah. So three thousand rupees were given to the jeweller, and he went away content.

"Will Your Majesty ride my horse?" said the joiner.

So the Rajah mounted, and the boy showed him how to turn the pegs so that the horse should run.

"But never, never strike it with a whip!" he added.

"What? Am I not to use my whip on this miserable wooden horse?" cried the Rajah, "I, who ride the most valuable horses, and strike them?" And so enraged was he, that he struck the horse as hard as he could.

Immediately the wooden horse leapt into the air, and flew away into the sky, carrying the Rajah with it!

What a noise there was then! All the

court came running, and they stood gazing into the sky, and shouting and shrieking, but nobody could do anything! Away flew the horse, till it was lost to sight.

When they realised that the Rajah was really gone, they fell upon the youth, and blamed him for it all, and threw him into prison, where he languished for many days.

But where was the Rajah meantime? The horse flew with him over mountains, over seas, over deserts, rivers, and volcanoes, till at last it came to earth in a large town.

It was a place the Rajah had never seen before, and he looked about him for a place where he could find some food, and a bed, for he was very weary after his long ride.

He found an inn, and putting his horse in the yard, he went in and ordered a meal. When he had eaten it, he asked for a room, and was shown to one. It was nearing

evening by this time, so he said to the landlord,

"Bring me a lamp."

"A lamp!" cried the landlord, "You must not even mention lamps in this country! They are not allowed!"

"Not allowed? What do you mean? I must have a lamp, or how am I to see?" said the Rajah angrily.

"Oh no no! You can't have a lamp!" said the landlord again. "Don't you know where you are? This is the Moon Princess's Country! Every evening she sits at the top of her tower, and the whole country is lighted up. That is why lamps are not allowed, nor are they necessary."

"Oh ho!" said the Rajah. "This is something new! Where is this Princess?"

Just then the room was filled with a soft white light, like moonlight, and on going out to look, he could see that it came from the top of a very high tower in the middle of the city.

The next day the Rajah mounted his horse again, and hitting it with his whip, he made it fly with him to the top of the tower. Leaving it on the roof, he went down the stairs to explore. Very soon he found himself in the bedroom of the Princess. She lay asleep, for as she lighted the city by night, she had to rest in the day.

The Rajah was so entranced with her beauty that he fell deeply in love with her. He stood there gazing at her, and quite forgetful of the danger he was in if anybody found him.

Presently the lady's eyes opened, and seeing him there, she started up, frightened and astonished. But he implored her not to be afraid of him, and her curiosity overcame her fear, and she asked him,

"How did you get here? Do you not know that a hundred thousand soldiers guard this tower, day and night? How did you get past them?"

So then the Rajah told her all that had happened, and blessed the lucky chance that had enabled him to see her.

He begged her to marry him, but she said that her father would not allow her to marry. Many princes had come to woo her, but all had been refused. At this he was very sad, but he did not give up hope, and asked if he might visit her again.

Now the Princess had fallen as deeply in love as the Rajah, so he easily gained her consent to that.

After this, he visited her daily, always hoping that he would win her for his wife.

Now it came to the ears of the Princess's father that a robber had been seen in the tower, and he was very angry; he sent for his Vizier, and told him that the thief must be caught.

At this the Vizier was very sad, for he thought that if a man were clever

enough to get through a guard of a hundred thousand soldiers, he would be difficult to catch.

But the Vizier's daughter said,

"Cheer up, father! Ask the King if I may visit his daughter, and I will see what I can do."

So the permission was obtained, and soon the two girls were great friends. But never did the Princess let the Vizier's daughter see her lover, nor did she tell her about him. Nevertheless, the girl soon found out that somebody was in the habit of coming there, and she determined to lay a trap for him.

So taking some paint, she put it about in the Princess's room, very cunningly, so that it would not be noticed. Then she went to her father, and told him what she had done, and he gave an order that the whole city was to be searched for a man with paint on his clothes.

When the Rajah got back to his inn, he noticed that there were some paint marks on his coat, so he changed it, and calling a dhobi, he told him to wash the coat for him, and the dhobi took it away.

Now it happened to be the time of year when the bakers got married, and there were a good many weddings being celebrated among them. A certain baker's family, being too poor to buy new clothes, went to the dhobi to hire them for the occasion. So it came about that when the searchers came round, they found a baker in a coat stained with paint, and they arrested him.

But the poor frightened baker confessed that it was not his coat, and that it had been hired from the dhobi. So they went to the dhobi, and he told them that it belonged to a man living in the inn. Thereupon they went to the inn, and arrested the Rajah, and dragged him before the King.

When questioned, he confessed that he had been in the tower, but would not say how he got there.

"Take him away, and execute him!" cried the angry King, "and bring me his eyes as proof that he is dead."

So the guards hurried him away. As they went, the young Rajah began to talk to them, and he told them that he had great wealth, and that if they would go back to the inn, he would give it to them, for if he was to die, of what use was it to him? They agreed to this, and took him back to the inn. Once there, he gave them a few jewels that he had happened to be wearing when he left his home, but under pretence of getting more, he led them out into the yard, and hey presto! he was on his horse and up in the sky before they could blink!

However, they didn't care very much, and getting some sheep's eyes from the

butcher, they took them to the King, who was quite satisfied.



Very hurriedly the Rajah sought the Princess, and begged her to come away with him, for no more would he be able to live in that town. This time she agreed, and they both got on the wooden horse, and flew away.

Away they went towards the Rajah's own home, but they came down occasionally to let the Princess rest.

On one of these occasions they rested on an island, and suddenly the Princess exclaimed :

"Oh my necklace! I have left my necklace! And it is charmed, so that if anybody else wears it, I shall die! Oh, I must go back for my necklace!"

"Nothing easier!" said the Rajah. "Go back and fetch it, and then come back to me here."

They decided she would go alone because the horse could fly quicker with only one, and besides, it would be dangerous for the Rajah to be seen at the tower, and it was not the time when he usually came. So the Princess flew off alone. She soon reached her tower and leaving the horse on the roof, she ran down and fetched her necklace. Nobody saw her, and she was soon on the roof again, and mounted the horse.

Now it is sad, but true, that women nearly *always* turn a screw the wrong way, and the Princess was no exception to the rule. She turned the screw back-

wards, and immediately the wooden horse fell into little pieces!

What was she to do now? Frantically she tried to put the pieces together, but it was beyond her skill, and she could do nothing.

Sorrowfully she went back to her rooms, grieving at the thought that her lover would think she had deserted him.

And he, poor man, waited and waited, wondering what had happened, watching and longing for the Princess to come back. But she never did. For many days he lived on that island. His hair and his nails grew long, and his clothes were in rags. For food he had the fruit that grew on the island, and the fish he could catch.

One day he noticed a branch floating in the sea, and seeing that it had fruit on it, he waded in and fetched it ashore. Some of the fruit was ripe and some was not, so he chose a nice ripe one and ate

it. Imagine his astonishment when he found he was suddenly transformed into an old old man! His head shook, and his legs would hardly bear him, and his teeth fell out, and he was, in fact, like an old man of a hundred.

He then ate some of the fruit that was not ripe, and found himself transformed into a little boy of ten! And as he found that age more convenient than the other, he stayed so. But he carefully preserved all the fruit, drying it in the sun, and keeping it carefully.

Now it happened that the Head Cook in the palace of the Moon Princess's father was childless. Very much he wanted children, but had never been blessed with any. At last he determined to adopt one, and he went to the captain of a ship and said to him:

"If you come across any little orphan when you are abroad, bring him to me."

And the sailor promised that he would. So when this very ship came sailing by the island where the Rajah was, and the crew told the captain that there was a boy of ten living there alone, the captain remembered the cook, and decided to take the boy along.

The boy (for so we shall call him now) was quite willing, and the cook was delighted to have him, and very soon they settled down as father and son very happily. But the boy had not forgotten all that had happened to him, and was biding his time. Meanwhile, he helped the cook, and soon learnt the art.

At length, one day, the cook left him in charge of the Royal kitchen, while he went to dinner with a friend. This was the chance the boy was waiting for.

He took some of the ripe fruit from his branch, and mixed it into a pudding for the Royal Family.

When they had eaten of it, they all became old at once. The King, the Queen, the Moon Princess, and her little brothers and sisters—all looked like aged creatures of a hundred years, toothless, wrinkled, and very decrepit! Oh, what lamentations there were! What dismay was felt! No longer could the Moon Princess light the city with her beauty; everybody had to buy lamps!

The King made a proclamation that he would give a half of his kingdom, and the hand of the Princess in marriage to anybody who could restore them all to youth.

A great stream of doctors, magicians, astrologers and other learned men came to the palace, but none of them could remove so much as one wrinkle.

The cook's boy waited meanwhile, and said nothing. But when the last astrologer had departed sorrowfully, and

the last doctor had carried away his books, he said to his father,

"Father, would the King let me marry the Princess if I cured them all?"

"Assuredly, my son. The King has promised it to *whoever* cures them."

"Go, father, and tell the King that I will cure him!"

"Ah, my son, do not jest," replied the cook. "It is no laughing matter."

"But I mean it, father! Go, then, to the King and tell him what I say."

The old cook shook his head. He thought the boy was mad, but so insistent was the lad that at last he consented to go. Trembling at the boldness of his mission, he went humbly before the King, waiting till he should be spoken to.

Meanwhile the boy hurriedly prepared another pudding, putting into it the unripe fruit.

When the King had heard what the cook had to say, he was eager to try

anything, and promised to let the boy attempt the cure.

So then the boy sent in his pudding, and all the Royal family ate of it.

Imagine their joy and delight to find themselves made young again! They were even younger than before, and that pleased the King and Queen.

Then the cook's boy was sent for, and the marriage between him and the Moon Princess was arranged.

When they were alone together, he told her who he was, for she had not recognised him. The lovers were delighted to be together again, and had a great deal to tell each other. The Princess took the Rajah up and showed him the pieces of the horse, and he set to work and put them all together again.

After they were married, he told the King that he was the Rajah of a far country, and that he wanted to take his bride home with him. So when the

farewells had been said, the couple mounted once again on the wooden horse, and set out for home.

There were great rejoicings at the return of the Rajah. His people had been mourning and waiting for him, and when they saw his beautiful young bride, their joy knew no bounds.

The maker of the horse was taken out of the prison, and wealth was showered upon him, and altogether the Rajah and the people tried to make it up to him in a thousand ways, so that he was quite happy once again.

THE PRICE OF A BUFFALO

THERE was once a man who earned his living by singing and playing the drum in the house of a rich man.

One day the singer's wife said to him, "With all your singing and playing, we remain very poor, and we haven't even milk for our children to drink. Why do you not go to your master and ask him to give you a buffalo? I am sure he would give you one, for he has so many."

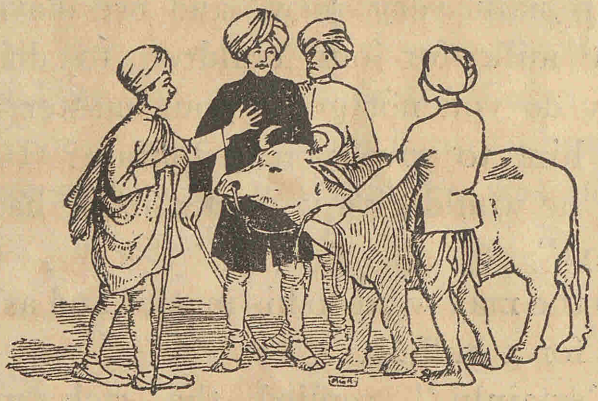
So the man went to his master and asked him for a buffalo.

"Certainly," replied the rich man. "Go into the fields and choose one for yourself."

The singer went out to look at the buffaloes, and he chose the biggest one in the field, and tying a rope round its neck, he led it home, feeling very well pleased

with himself. But when his wife saw it she cried,

"Why, you simpleton, you've brought a bull buffalo! What a fool you are! What have I done to have such an idiot for a husband? Go, take your buffalo back, and either change it, or sell it and buy me a nice little cow."



Feeling very sad, the man led the animal off. On the road he met three brothers who were thieves; these three at once began to talk to the singer, and asked why he was looking so worried; so he told them what had happened. The

thieves then offered to buy the buffalo from him, and one of them suggested five rupees as the price.

"No, no, brother," said another thief. "Four rupees." But the third thief suggested that they should go and consult their father as to the price. To this the man agreed, and they all set out for the little grass hut where the thieves lived with their old father.

"Four rupees are *quite* enough," said the old man, and the silly musician agreed to take that, and handed over the buffalo. When he had got his four rupees, he turned to go home, but one of the brothers stopped him.

"What!" said he, "here have I arranged the sale for you, and are you not going to give me a present? I shall certainly expect one rupee!"

So the man gave him a rupee.

"And I," said another thief, "did not I help you to lead the buffalo here? I

am not your servant, so I shall expect to be paid for my help."

The singer gave him a rupee too, and turned to go.

"Not so fast," cried the old man. "Here have I helped you out of a difficulty, and bought your buffalo for you, and are you not going to give me something for my trouble?"

So the stupid man held out a rupee to him too.

"What! Do you expect me to take the same as my sons got? I am an old man, and must get at least double."

So the foolish man handed him the remaining two rupees, and went off home feeling very sad.

When he told his wife what had happened, she wept with despair and rated him soundly.

Now the singer was not really stupid, but he was lazy and did not use his brains. When his wife scolded him and

abused him, he began to think what he could do. At last he said,

"Cease your scolding, wife, and go and bring me all your best jewelry and your wedding clothes."

Wonderingly, she obeyed, but he would not tell her what he was going to do. Instead, he dressed himself up in all her finery and pulling the scarf well down over his face, he set out.

When he came to the road where the thieves usually robbed the passers-by he sat down and waited. Very soon one of the brothers came along, and immediately the singer began weeping and wailing and making a great fuss.



"What is the matter, lady?" said the young thief.

"Oh, I don't know what to do! My husband and I were travelling through that jungle, and a tiger came out and carried off my husband! Now I am all alone in the world—ai, ai, what shall I do?"

"Don't cry," said the thief. "I want a wife! Marry me, and I will look after you. Come, I will take you to my home."

So the pretended woman got up and went with him, but she kept her scarf well over her face. As they went, they met another brother, and when he was told the story, he said *he* would marry her, and not the first brother, and he turned and went with them. Presently they met the third brother, and he wanted to marry the woman too, so they quarrelled and argued about it, and at last they said they would ask their father to decide which one she should marry.

When they reached the hut, and related the story to the old man, he said,

"None of you shall have her. I will marry her myself! I am getting old and weak, and it will be as well to have her here to help me guard the treasures we steal. So that's settled."

At this point the woman gave a great start, and exclaimed,

"Oh, I'd forgotten all about my money and my gold bangles! They are in a bundle, tied in red cloth, and I put them in a bush about three miles up the road. Run, oh run, and fetch them before they are stolen!"

Off ran the three young men in a great hurry, and when they were well out of sight, the singer threw off his scarf, and taking a stout stick, he began to beat the old man.

"You would buy my buffalo for four rupees, and then take the money back, would you?" he shouted. "I'll teach you to cheat! Now show me where you keep your money, or I'll beat you to death."



The old man wept and prayed for mercy, and pointed out a corner where a pot full of rupees was hidden under some old clothes.

With the pot tied in his scarf, the singer ran off and went home to his wife.

The three brothers returned after some time to explain that they had not been able to find the bundle, and they found their old father in a terrible state, groaning with pain and covered with bruises.

"You are fine clever thieves, you are!" he said between groans. "I thought I

had taught you better than that! That was no woman you brought here, it was the same buffalo man, and he has nearly killed me, and has gone off with the pot of rupees!"

The young men vowed they would wait for the man and catch him some day, but they were all very sad at the loss of the rupees.

The next day the singer dressed himself up as a Yogi, and taking some small boxes of ointment, he went and sat on the road near the thieves' hut, and began to chant that he had a wonderful cure for all kinds of hurts and bruises. Hearing this, the young thieves asked him to come in and cure their father, who was badly hurt. The Yogi went and examined the old man, and said,

"Dear, dear! This is very dreadful! How did he get all these wounds? I will do what I can, but I need some more ointment. Will you, young men,

go and ask my pupil for the big box he has? He is sitting on the road."

Now he had put his wife to sit on the road, and told her if anybody came, she was to run away as fast as she could. So when the thieves came along the road, she took to her heels and ran. They ran after her, crying that they only wanted the ointment, but she would not listen, and ran on and on.

While the sons were away, the Yogi took a stick and said to the old man,

"You would buy my buffalo for four rupees and then take the money back, would you? Now show me where the rest of your money is, or I'll beat you again!"

Terrified out of his senses, the old man showed him where he kept a box of sovereigns, and the Yogi went off with the whole box.

When the young men came back, their father stormed and scolded them, calling them idiots and fools, and told

them they were not to leave him alone again.

A few days after this, the singer went to a man in his village, and said to him,

"If you will do one small thing for me, I will give you a thousand rupees!"

The man was willing enough to earn such a large sum, and asked what he should do.

"You must go to that hut over there, and kick your foot through the grass wall, and shout that you are the buffalo man come again. After that, run for your life. You must save yourself if anybody chases you."

The man agreed to do it, and when he had got the money, went and kicked at the hut crying,

"I am the buffalo man, come again!"

Then he ran off as fast as he could, with the three young men after him. He ran and ran till he came to a village, and there he turned into a hut and begged

the people to hide him, and he would give them ten rupees. So they hid him, and the young men never found him.

But while they were away the singer once again visited their father, and threatening him with the stick, demanded further money.

"I have no money left, indeed I haven't," said the old man, "but I have jewelry that we have stolen from travellers. I will give you that if you will spare my life."

So the buffalo man took the jewelry, and went back to his wife.

"Now are you satisfied at the price I have got for the buffalo?" he asked; and his wife was more than satisfied. They took all their treasure and moved to another town, far away from the thieves.

As for the father and sons, they were stripped of all they possessed, and had to begin all over again to steal from travellers.

THE CLEVER JACKAL

ONCE upon a time there was a Jackal who lived by the bank of a river. There came a time when food became scarce, and the Jackal decided that he must go abroad and look for a place where there was more to eat. Having heard that on the other side of the river there were melons, cucumbers, water-melons, and all sorts of nice things growing, he cast about for a way to get across.

As he was sitting, looking across the river, his mouth watering for the good



things he couldn't reach, he suddenly spied an alligator lying on the bank. So

1265

he ran off to the alligator, and hailed him :

"Good morning, Uncle !"

"Hullo !" said the alligator, " and who may you be ?"

"I am your nephew," said the Jackal.

"My nephew, are you ? and what do you want ?"

"Well, Uncle, my wife has a younger sister, and we want to arrange a marriage for her."

"And whom do you want to marry her to ?" asked the alligator.

"We would like to marry her to you, Uncle !" replied the Jackal.

Now it happened that the alligator wanted a wife, so he said he was quite willing, and enquired where the bride was, for he would like to see her. The Jackal said that she lived on the other side of the river, and that if the alligator would take him across, he would arrange a meeting.

So the alligator took the Jackal on his back, and ferried him over to the other bank. Once there, the Jackal jumped ashore and ran off.

He found plenty of good things to eat, and he stayed till he grew fat, and could find no more food. Then he suddenly remembered his wife, whom he had left on the other side of the river. He decided to go back to her.

So he took a stick, which he stuck into the sand a little way up the bank of the river and on it he put a red handkerchief. Then he ran off to find the alligator.

"Well, you've been a fine long time!" grumbled the alligator who had been watching for him every day. "Where's my bride?"

"Oh, Uncle, I've been *so* busy with all the arrangements for your wedding, I couldn't come before. But it is all fixed up now!"

"And where is my bride?" asked the alligator again.

"There she is, up there, with the red scarf," said the Jackal pointing to the stick he had set up.

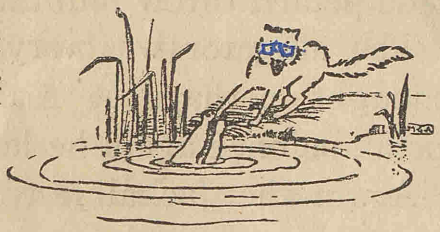
"Then I will go and have a look at her," said the alligator.

"Oh, no, no! You mustn't do that! You mustn't talk to her yet. Take me across the river, and then you may go and talk to her. She will wait for you."

So the silly alligator took the Jackal on his back once more, and took him over the river. Then he hurried back to meet his bride. When he discovered what a trick the Jackal had played him he was very angry, and plotted a revenge.

He knew the Jackal would have to come to the river to drink, so he sank himself in the mud at the edge and waited. When the Jackal came down and began to drink, he grabbed him by the leg.

"Oh, so it's you, is it, Mr. Alligator?" said the Jackal. "Well, you've caught the stick I brought down to beat you with! If you want it, you're welcome to it."



At this the alligator felt very foolish, and let go. The Jackal ran to a safe distance, and began to laugh.

"Oh you *silly* alligator! That was my leg you caught! Did you ever hear of a Jackal carrying a stick?"

Then the alligator was more furious than ever, and vowed he would have the Jackal yet. So he waited patiently, nursing his rage, till another opportunity came. This time he caught the Jackal's tongue, as he was lapping up the water from the river.



"Oh, it's you again?" said the Jackal. "What are you going to do with that rose petal I threw into the river?"

The alligator was very stupid, and he thought perhaps it really was a rose petal, so once again he let go.

Again the Jackal ran off and laughed at him.

"Oh, you great stupid! Did you ever hear of a Jackal going about with rose petals? That was my tongue!"

The alligator fairly gnashed his teeth with rage, but the Jackal was too far off to catch just then; so he had to think of a fresh plan of revenge. He remembered that the Jackal was very fond of plums; and he decided to go off to the plum tree and wait.

When the Jackal and his wife went to the tree for plums, they noticed the track the alligator had made in crawling through the dust, and they knew he must be about somewhere. So the Jackal, who was never at a loss, called out:

"Oh tree, good morning!" and when he got no reply, he said,

"Well, that's funny! The tree usually answers me, but to-day it hasn't. What can be the matter?"

The alligator thought that perhaps the tree did answer, and that perhaps the Jackal would run away if he got no reply. So he made a noise himself.

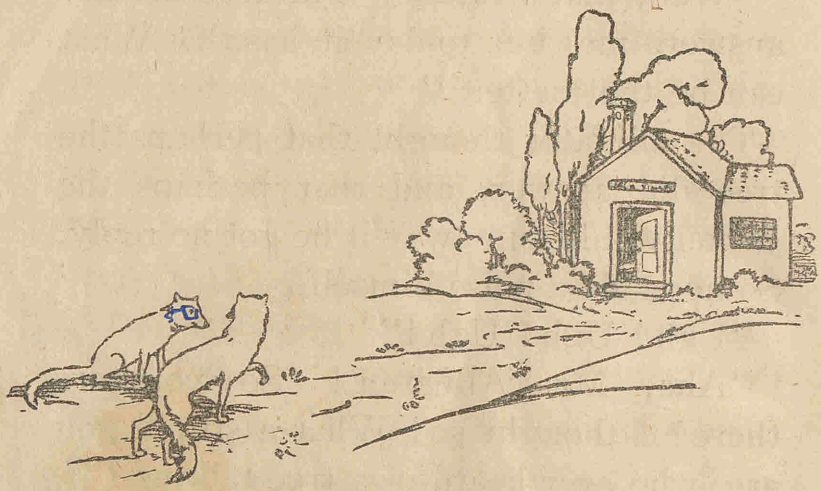
"Ugh! Ugh! Ugh!"

"Aha, Mr. Alligator! So you *are* there? I thought so! What a stupid you are, who ever heard of a tree talking?"

And the Jackal and his wife cantered off without waiting for any plums that morning.

The alligator was angrier than ever, so angry that he felt he simply *must* catch that Jackal somehow. So he gave up all plans of cunning, because he found the Jackal beat him at that every time. So this time he just went to the Jackal's house, and waited inside for him.

When Mr. and Mrs. Jackal came home, again they saw the track in the dust



which told them the alligator was there. So they sat down a little way off, and the Jackal cried,

"Hullo, little house!" and then,

"Why, what's the matter with my little house? It always answers me when I come home. I don't like this!"

So the alligator, stupid fellow, thought it might be so, and said softly,

"Oo! Oo! Oo!"

"Oh, Uncle Alligator! You there again? And as silly as ever. Who ever heard of a house answering? I guessed you were there all the time!"

After this the Jackal and his wife decided that as the alligator was in possession of their home, they had better go elsewhere to live, lest they should be caught some day.

So they ran far away to another part of the country, and there they had many fresh adventures.

THE CLEVER OLD WOMAN

THERE was an old woman who said to herself, "I must go and visit my daughter." So she set out on her journey. Presently she met a jackal, and the jackal said,



"Old woman, I am going to eat you!" But the old woman didn't want to be eaten, and she said, "What's the use of eating *me*? Look how thin I am! nothing but skin and bone. I am going to visit my daughter, and there I shall get lots to eat, and I shall get very fat. Why not wait and eat me on my way back?"

The jackal thought that was a good idea, and he let her go.

Presently she met a bear, and the bear said, "Old woman, I'm going to eat you!" "Oh, what's the use? I am so thin! Wait till I come back from visiting my daughter, then I shall be nice and fat, because she always gives me lots to eat."



So the bear let her go.

Presently she met a tiger, and the tiger growled horribly "wrrgh-wrrrgh! I'm going to eat you!" he said.



The old woman was terribly frightened, but she said, "Oh tiger, look how thin I am! I wouldn't make a mouthful for

you. But wait till I get back from my daughter's house, and see how fat I shall be!"

The tiger thought it over, and let her go, but he asked her when she would be coming back.

"In a week's time," said the old woman.

On she went, and soon she reached her daughter's house. There she had a good time, and lots to eat, and she grew fatter and fatter, till she really was quite fat.

When the time came for her to go home, she said to her daughter, "Alas whatever shall I do? I shall be eaten up on my way home!" and she related all that had happened to her on the journey.

"Dear me!" said the daughter, "that's dreadful. Now let us think what we can do about it. We must do *something*." And she thought and thought, and at last she said she had thought of a plan. She made the old lady get into a large

mutka, or *chatti*, and she covered its mouth with cloth, and set it rolling along the road.

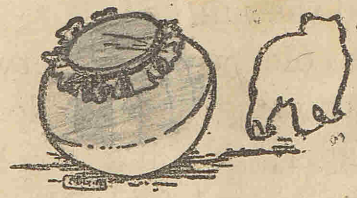
As the *mutka* rolled, the old woman inside sang,

"Chul, mera *mutka*, tummock-a-too!" and the *mutka* rolled on faster and faster.



On the road was the jackal, waiting for the old woman, and when he saw this strange thing rolling along, he got frightened and ran away.

The bear was also waiting. He didn't get so frightened, but went up to sniff the thing to find out what it was. Just then the old lady sang:



"Chul, mera *mutka*, tummock-a-too!"

That was too much for the bear, and he quickly shambled off, wondering what on earth it could have been!

Presently the *mutka* rolled along to where the tiger sat waiting. He, too, was very curious, and wanted to know what this funny thing was that rolled along, and sang as it rolled:

"Chul, mera *mutka*, tummock-a-too!"



So he went up to it, and with one blow of his paw he smashed the *mutka*!

And there sat the old woman, very frightened, and not knowing *what* to do.

"Aha," said the tiger, "so it's you! and I see you've got nice and fat! Now I shall eat you!"

"Very well," said the old woman. "But before you eat me, just let me go and bathe in the river. I am dreadfully dusty and dirty with my journey. I am sure I shall taste nicer if you let me bathe."

The tiger thought so too, so he let the old lady go down to the river, and while she bathed he kept calling, "Aren't you ready yet?" and she would answer, "Not yet!"

At last he got tired of waiting, and said, "Well, I'am coming to eat you, anyway!"



When she saw the tiger coming, the old woman quickly filled her mouth with

sand, and when the tiger came, she said :

"I'm ready now. You had better begin by eating my cheeks, because they're so fat !"

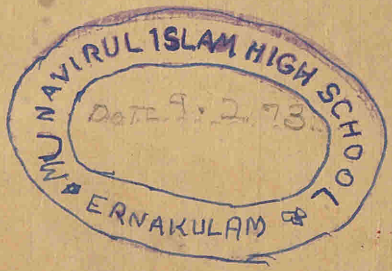
The tiger thought they did look fat, so he came with his mouth open, ready for a bite, when pooooh ! the old woman blew all the sand into his eyes, and nose, and mouth !



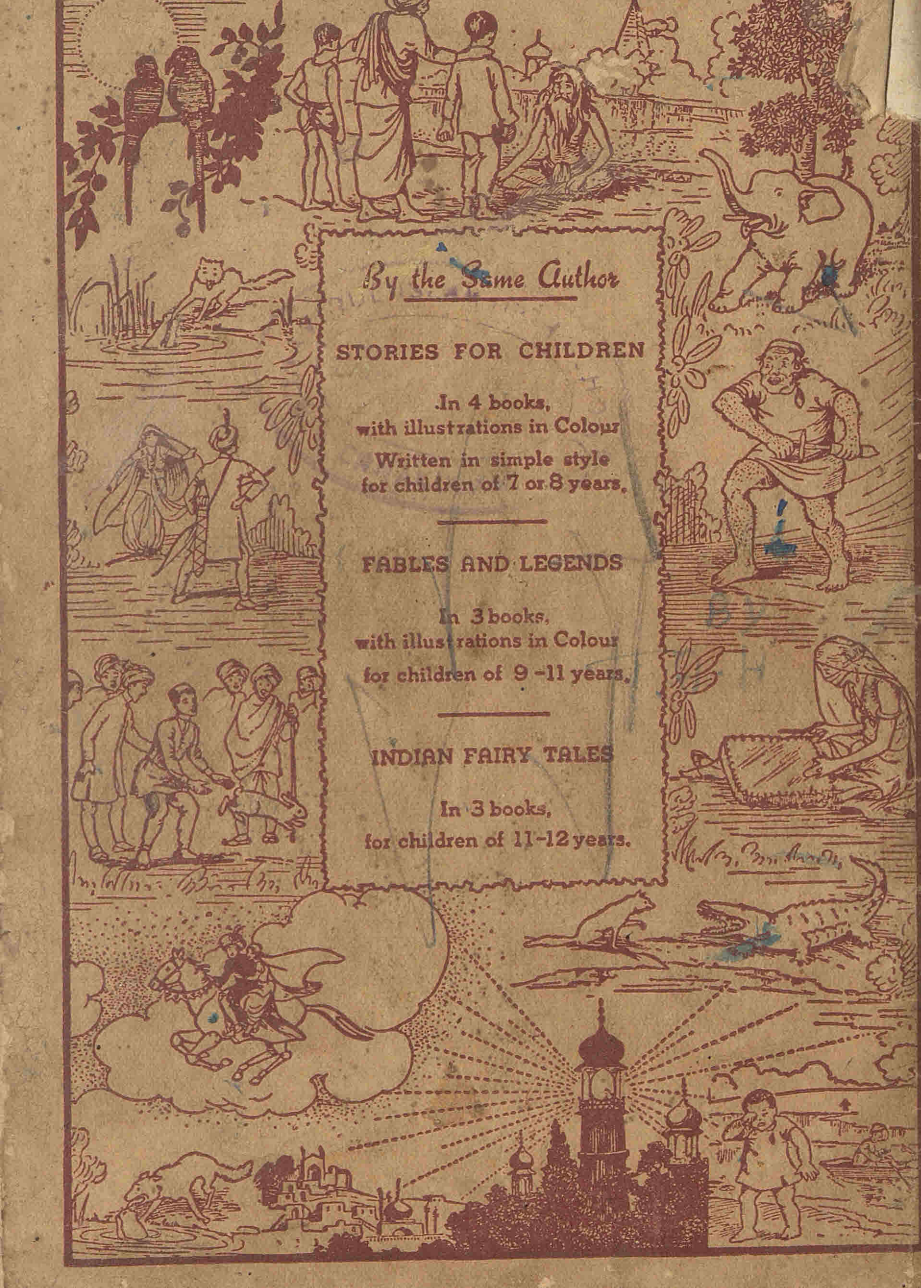
Then the tiger rolled about, sneezing and choking, and quite unable to see with all the sand in his eyes, and while he did so, the old woman ran home, which she reached quite safely.

And there she lived quite happily ever after !

This is a good story



1265



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