THE DIAMOND FAIRY BOOK

“From the Many Countries”

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VARIOUS

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UNIFORM WITH THIS VOLUME



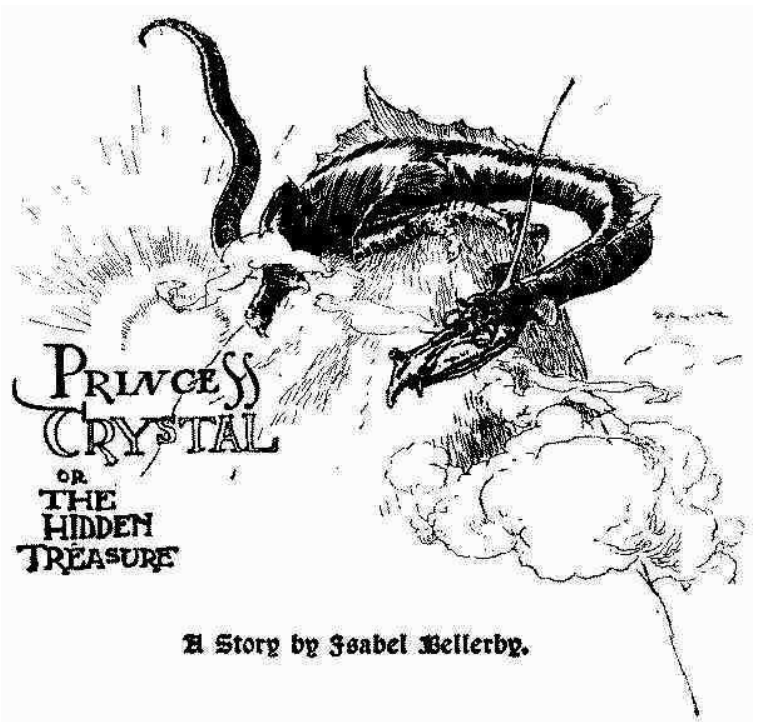
"Upon the back of his noble steed the Prince gallantly lifted his beautiful charge."



With 8 Coloured Plates by FRANK PAPÉ
and 82 Drawings by H. R. MILLAR

PRINCESS CRYSTAL,

OR THE HIDDEN TREASURE.



THERE were the four Kings: the King of the North, the region of perpetual snow; the King of the South, where the sun shines all the year round; the King of the East, from whence the cold winds blow; and the King of the West, where the gentle zephyrs breathe upon the flowers, and coax them to open their petals while the rest of the world is still sleeping.

And there was the great Dragon, who lived on top of a high mountain in the centre of the universe. He could see everything that happened everywhere by means of his magic spectacles, which enabled him to look all ways at once, and to see through solid substances; but he could only see, not hear, for he was as deaf as a post.

Now the King of the North had a beautiful daughter called Crystal. Her eyes were bright like the stars; her hair was black like the sky at night; and her skin was as white as the snow which covered the ground outside the palace where she lived, which was built entirely of crystals clear as the clearest glass.

And the King of the South had a son who had been named Sunshine on account of his brightness and warmth of heart.

The King of the East had a son who, because he was always up early and was very industrious, had been given the name of Sunrise.

The King of the West also had a son, perhaps the handsomest of the three, and always magnificently dressed; but as it took him all day to make his toilette, so that he was never seen before evening, he received the name of Sunset.

All three Princes were in love with the Princess Crystal, each hoping to win her for his bride. When they had the chance they would go and peep at her as she wandered up and down in her glass palace. But she liked Prince Sunshine best, because he stayed longer than the others, and was always such excellent company. Prince Sunrise was too busy to be able to spare her more than half an hour or so; and Prince

Sunset never came until she was getting too tired and sleepy to care to see him.

It was of no use, however, for her to hope that Sunshine would be her husband just because she happened to prefer him to the others. Her father—the stern, blusterous old King, with a beard made of icicles so long that it reached to his waist and kept his heart cold—declared that he had no patience for such nonsense as likes and dislikes; and one day he announced, far and wide, in a voice that was heard by the other three Kings, and which made the earth shake so that the great green Dragon immediately looked through his spectacles to see what was happening:

"He who would win my daughter must first bring me the casket containing the Hidden Treasure, which is concealed no man knows where!"

Of course the Dragon was none the wiser for looking through his spectacles, because the words—loud though they were—could not be heard by his deaf ears.

But the other Kings listened diligently; as did the young Princes. And poor Princess Crystal trembled in her beautiful palace lest Sunrise, who was always up so early, should find the treasure before Sunshine had a chance: she was not much afraid of the indolent Sunset, except that it might occur to him to look in some spot forgotten by his rivals.

Very early indeed on the following morning did Prince Sunrise set to work; he glided along the surface of the earth, keeping close to the ground in his anxiety not to miss a single square inch. He knew he was not first in the field; for the Northern King's proclamation had been made towards evening on the previous day,

and Prince Sunset had bestirred himself for once, and had lingered about rather later than usual, being desirous of finding the treasure and winning the charming Princess.

But the early morning was passing, and very soon the cheery, indefatigable Sunshine had possession of the entire land, and flooded Crystal's palace with a look from his loving eyes which bade her not despair.

Then he talked to the trees and the green fields and the flowers, begging them to give up the secret in return for the warmth and gladness he shed so freely on them. But they were silent, except that the trees sighed their sorrow at not being able to help him, and the long grasses rustled a whispered regret, and the flowers bowed their heads in grief.

Not discouraged, however, Prince Sunshine went to the brooks and rivers, and asked their assistance. But they, too, were helpless. The brooks gurgled out great tears of woe, which rushed down to the rivers, and so overcame them—sorry as they were on account of their own inability to help—that they nearly overflowed their banks, and went tumbling into the sea, who, of course, wanted to know what was the matter; but, when told, all the sea could do was to thunder a loud and continuous "No!" on all its beaches. So Prince Sunshine had to pass on and seek help elsewhere.

He tried to make the great Dragon understand; but it could not hear him. Other animals could, though, and he went from one to another, as cheerful as ever, in spite of all the "Noes" he had met with; until, at last, he knew by the twittering of the birds that he was going to be successful.



"'MY ROBE IS OF SNOW,' SHE FALTERED"

"We go everywhere and learn most things," said the swallows, flying up and down in the air, full of excitement and joy at being able to reward their beloved Sunshine for all his kindness to them. "And we know this

much, at any rate: the Hidden Treasure can only be found by him who looks at its hiding-place through the Dragon's magic spectacles."

Prince Sunshine exclaimed that he would go at once and borrow these wonderful spectacles; but a solemn-looking old owl spoke up:

"Be not in such a hurry, most noble Prince! The Dragon will slay any one—even so exalted a personage as yourself—who attempts to remove those spectacles while he is awake; and, as is well known, he never allows himself to sleep, for fear of losing some important sight."

"Then what is to be done?" asked the Prince, beginning to grow impatient at last, for the afternoon was now well advanced, and Prince Sunset would soon be on the war-path again.

A majestic eagle came swooping down from the clouds.

"There is only one thing in all the world," said he, "which can send the Dragon to sleep, and that is a caress from the hand of the Princess Crystal."

Sunshine waited to hear no more. Smiling his thanks, he hastened away to put his dear Crystal's love to the test. She had never yet ventured outside the covered gardens of her palace. Would she go with him now, and approach the great Dragon, and soothe its savage watchfulness into the necessary repose?

As he made the request, there stole into the Princess's cheeks the first faint tinge of colour that had ever been seen there.



"HE LEARNED THE SECRET AT ONCE"

"My robe is of snow," she faltered; "if I go outside these crystal walls into your radiant presence it will surely melt."

"You look as if you yourself would melt at my first caress, you beautiful, living snowflake," replied the Prince; "but have no fear: see, I have my own mantle

ready to enfold you. Come, Princess, and trust yourself to me."

Then, for the first time in her life, Princess Crystal stole out of her palace, and was immediately wrapped in Prince Sunshine's warm mantle, which caused her to glow all over; her face grew quite rosy, and she looked more than usually lovely, so that the Prince longed to kiss her; but she was not won yet, and she might have been offended at his taking such a liberty.

Therefore, he had to be content to have her beside him in his golden chariot with the fiery horses, which flew through space so quickly that they soon stood on the high mountain, where the Dragon sat watching them through his spectacles, wondering what the Princess was doing so far from home, and what her father would think if he discovered her absence.

It was no use explaining matters to the Dragon, even had they wished to do so; but of course nothing was further from their intention.

Holding Prince Sunshine's hand to give her courage, the Princess approached the huge beast and timidly laid her fingers on his head.

"This is very nice and soothing," thought the Dragon, licking his lips; "very kind of her to come, I'm sure; but—dear me!—this won't do! I'm actually—going—to—sleep!"

He tried to rise, but the gentle hand prevented that. A sensation of drowsiness stole through all his veins, which would have been delightful but for his determination never to sleep. As it was, he opened his mouth to give a hiss that would surely have frightened the poor Princess out of her wits; but he fell asleep

before he could so much as begin it; his mouth remained wide open; but his eyes closed, and his great head began to nod in a very funny manner.

Directly they were satisfied that he really slept, Prince Sunshine helped himself to the Dragon's spectacles, requesting the Princess not to remove her hand, lest the slumber should not last long enough for their purpose.

Then he put on the spectacles, and Princess Crystal exclaimed with fear and horror when—as though in result of his doing so—she saw her beloved Prince plunge his right hand into the Dragon's mouth.

Prince Sunshine had stood facing the huge beast as he transferred the spectacles to his own nose, and, naturally enough, the first thing he saw through them was the interior of the Dragon's mouth, with the tongue raised and shot forward in readiness for the hiss which sleep had intercepted; and under the tongue was the golden casket containing the Hidden Treasure!

The spectacles enabled the Prince to see through the cover; so he learned the secret at once, and knew why the King of the North was so anxious to possess himself of it, the great treasure being a pair of spectacles exactly like those hitherto always worn by the Dragon, and by him alone—which would keep the King informed of all that was going on in every corner of his kingdom, so that he could always punish or reward the right people and never make mistakes; also he could learn a great deal of his neighbours' affairs, which is pleasant even to a King.

The Princess was overjoyed when she knew the casket was already found; she very nearly removed her

hand in her eagerness to inspect it; but, fortunately, she remembered just in time, and kept quite still until Prince Sunshine had drawn his chariot so close that they could both get into it without moving out of reach of the Dragon's head.

Then, placing the spectacles, not in their accustomed place, but on the ground just beneath, and laying the golden casket on the Princess's lap, the Prince said, as he gathered up the reins:

"Now, my dearly beloved Crystal—really mine at last—take away your hand, and let us fly, without an instant's delay, to the Court of the King, your royal father."

It is well they had prepared for immediate departure. Directly the Princess's hand was raised from the Dragon's head his senses returned to him, and, finding his mouth open ready for hissing, he hissed with all his angry might, and looked about for his spectacles that he might pursue and slay those who had robbed him; for, of course, he missed the casket at once.

But he was a prisoner on that mountain and unable to leave it, though he flapped his great wings in terrible wrath when he saw the Prince and Princess, instead of driving down the miles and miles of mountain side as he had hoped, being carried by the fiery horses right through the air, where he could not reach them.

They only laughed when they heard the hiss and the noise made by the useless flapping of wings. Prince Sunshine urged on his willing steeds, and they arrived at the Court just as the King, Crystal's father, was going to dinner; and he was so delighted at having the

treasure he had so long coveted, that he ordered the marriage to take place at once.

Prince Sunset called just in time to be best man, looking exceedingly gorgeous and handsome, though very disappointed to have lost the Princess; and the festivities were kept up all night, so that Prince Sunrise was able to offer his good wishes when he came early in the morning, flushed with the haste he had made to assure Prince Sunshine that he bore him no ill-will for having carried off the prize.

Princess Crystal never returned to her palace, except to peep at it occasionally. She liked going everywhere with her husband, who, she found, lived by no means an idle life, but went about doing good—grumbled at sometimes, of course, for some people will grumble even at their best friend—but more generally loved and blessed by all who knew him.

THE STORY OF THE INVISIBLE KINGDOM.



From the German of Richard Leander.

IN a little house half-way up the mountain-side, and about a mile from the other houses of the village, there lived with his old father a young man called George. There was just enough land belonging to the house to enable the father and son to live free from care.

Immediately behind the house the wood began, the oak trees and beech trees in which were so old that the grandchildren of the people who had planted them had been dead for more than a hundred years, but in front of

the house there lay a broken old mill-stone—who knows how it got there? Any one sitting on the stone would have a wonderful view of the valley down below, with the river flowing through it, and of the mountains rising on the other side of the river. In the evening, when he had finished his work in the fields, George often sat here for hours at a time dreaming, with his elbows on his knees and his head in his hands; and because he cared little for the villagers, but generally went about silent and absorbed like one who is thinking of all sorts of things, the people nicknamed him "George the Dreamer." But he did not mind it at all.

The older he grew, the more silent he became, and when at last his old father died, and he had buried him under a great old oak tree, he became quite silent. Then, when he sat on the broken mill-stone, as he did more often than before, and looked down into the lovely valley, and saw how the evening mists came into the valley at one end and slowly climbed the mountains, and how it then became darker and darker, until at last the moon and the stars appeared in the sky in their full glory, a wonderful feeling came into his heart. The waves of the river began to sing, quite softly at first, but gradually louder, until they could be heard quite plainly; and they sang of the mountains, down from which they had come, and of the sea, to which they wished to go, and of the nixies who lived far down at the bottom of the river. Then the forest began to rustle, quite differently from an ordinary forest, and it used to relate the most wonderful tales. The old oak tree especially, which stood at his father's grave, knew far more than all the other trees. The stars, high up in the sky, wanted so much to tumble down into the green forest and the blue water, that they twinkled and sparkled as if they could

not bear it any longer. But the angels who stand behind the stars held them firmly in their places, and said: "Stars, stars, don't be foolish! You are much too old to do silly things—many thousand years old, and more. Stay quietly in your places."



"IN THE SWING SAT A CHARMING PRINCESS"

It was truly a wonderful valley! But it was only George the Dreamer who heard and saw all that. The

people who lived in the valley had not a suspicion of it, for they were quite ordinary people. Now and then they hewed down a huge old tree, cut it up into firewood, and made a high stack, and then they said: "Now we shall be able to make our coffee again for some time." In the river they washed their clothes; it was very convenient. And even when the stars sparkled most beautifully, they only said, "It will be very cold to-night: let us hope our potatoes won't freeze." Once George the Dreamer tried to bring them to see differently, but they only laughed at him. They were just quite ordinary people.

Now, one day as he was sitting on the mill-stone and thinking that he was quite alone in the world, he fell asleep. Then he dreamt that he saw, hanging down from the sky, a golden swing, which was fastened to two stars by silver ropes. In the swing sat a charming Princess, who was swinging so high that each time she touched the sky, then the earth, and then the sky again. Each time the swing came near the earth, the Princess clapped her hands with joy and threw George the Dreamer a rose. But suddenly the ropes broke, and the swing, with the Princess, flew far into the sky, farther and farther, until at last he could see it no longer.

Then he woke up, and when he looked round, he saw a great bunch of roses lying beside him on the mill-stone.

The next day he went to sleep again, and dreamt the same thing, and when he woke up the roses were lying on the stone by his side.

This happened every day for a whole week. Then George said to himself that some part of the dream must be true, because he always dreamt exactly the same

thing. So he shut up his house, and set out to seek the Princess.

After he had travelled for many days, he saw in the distance a country where the clouds touched the earth. He hastened towards it, but came, on his way, to a large forest. Here he suddenly heard fearful groans and cries, and on approaching the place from which they seemed to come, he saw a venerable old man with a silver-grey beard lying on the ground. Two horribly ugly, naked fellows were kneeling on him, trying to strangle him. Then George the Dreamer looked round to see whether he could find some sort of weapon with which to run the two fellows through the body; but he could find nothing, so, in mortal terror, he tore down a huge tree-trunk. He had scarcely seized it when it changed in his hands into a mighty halberd. Then he rushed at the two monsters, and ran them through the body, and they let go the old man and ran away howling.

Then George lifted the old man up and comforted him, and asked him why the two fellows had wanted to choke him. The old man said that he was the King of Dreams, and had come by mistake into the kingdom of his greatest enemy, the King of Realities. The latter, as soon as he noticed this, had sent two of his servants to lie in wait for him and kill him.

"Have you then done the King of Realities any harm?" asked George the Dreamer.

"God forbid!" the old man assured him. "He is always very easily provoked, that is his character. And me he hates like poison."

"But the fellows he sent to strangle you were quite naked!"

"Yes, indeed," said the King, "stark naked. That is fashion in the land of Realities; all the people, even the King, go about naked, and are not at all ashamed. They are an abominable nation. But now, since you have saved my life, I will prove my gratitude to you by showing you my country. It is the most glorious country in the whole world, and Dreams are my subjects."

Then the Dream-King went on in front and George followed him. When they came to the place where the clouds touched the earth, the King showed him a trap-door that was so well hidden in the thicket that not even a person who knew it was there would have been able to find it. He lifted it up and led his companion down five hundred steps into a brightly lighted grotto that stretched for miles in undiminished splendour. It was unspeakably beautiful. There were castles on islands in the midst of large lakes, and the islands floated about like ships. If you wished to go into one of them, all you had to do was to stand on the bank and call out:—

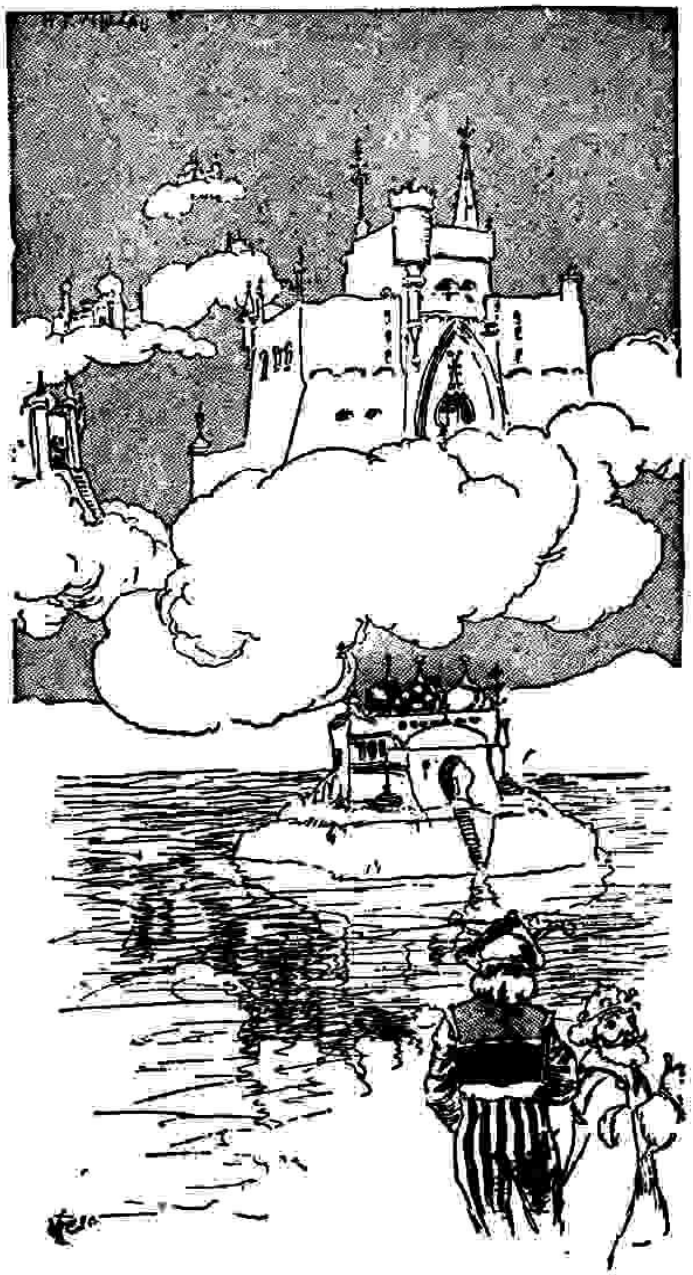
Little castle, swim to me,

That I may get into thee.

Then it came to the shore by itself. Farther on were other castles, on clouds, floating slowly in the air. But if you said:—

Float down, little castle in the air,
Take me up to see thy beauties rare,

They slowly floated down. Besides these, there were gardens with flowers which gave out a sweet smell by day, and a bright light by night; beautifully tinted birds, which told stories; and a host of other wonderful things. George could do nothing but wonder and admire.



"GEORGE COULD DO NOTHING BUT WONDER AND ADMIRE"

"Now I will show you my subjects, the Dreams," said the King. "I have three kinds—good Dreams for good people, bad Dreams for bad people, and also Dream-goblins. With the last I amuse myself now and then, for a King must sometimes have a joke."

So he took George into one of the castles, which was so queerly built that it looked irresistibly comical.

"Here the Dream-goblins live: they are a tiny, high-spirited, roguish lot—never do any harm, but love to tease." Then he called to one of the goblins: "Come here, little man, and be serious a moment for once in your life. Do you know," he continued, addressing George, "what this rogue does if I, once in a way, allow him to go down to the earth? He runs to the next house, drags the first man he comes across, who is sound asleep, out of bed, carries him to the church tower, and throws him down, head over heels. Then he rushes down the stairs so as to reach the bottom first, catches the man, carries him home, and flings him so roughly into bed that the bedstead creaks horribly. Then the man wakes up, rubs the sleep out of his eyes, and says: 'Dear me! I thought I was falling from the church tower. What a good thing it was only a dream.'"

"Is that the one?" cried George. "Look here, he has been to me before; but if he comes again, and I catch him, it will be the worse for him." He had scarcely finished speaking when another goblin sprang out from under the table. He looked like a little dog, for he had a very ragged waistcoat on, and he let his tongue hang out of his mouth.

"He is not much better," said the King. "He barks like a dog, and is as strong as a giant. When people in their

dreams are frightened at something, he holds their hands and feet so that they cannot move."

"I know him, too," interrupted George. "When you want to run away, you feel as stiff and stark as a piece of wood. If you want to move your arms or your legs, you can't do it. But often it is not a dog, but a bear, or a robber, or some other horrid thing."

"I will never allow them to come to you again, George the Dreamer," the King assured him. "Now come and see the bad Dreams. But don't be afraid, they won't do you any harm—they are only for bad people."

Then they passed through a great iron door into a vast space, inclosed by a high wall. Here the most terrible shapes and most horrible monsters were crowded together; some looked like men, others like animals, others were half men and half animals. George was terrified, and made his way back to the iron door. But the King spoke kindly to him, and persuaded him to see more closely what wicked people have to dream. Beckoning to a Dream that stood near—a hideous giant, with a mill-wheel under each arm—he commanded him to tell them what he was going to do that night.

Then the monster raised his shoulders, wriggled about with joy, grinned until his mouth met his ears, and said: "I am going to the rich man, who has let his father starve. One day, when the old man was sitting on the stone steps before his son's house, begging for bread, the son came and said to the servants: 'Drive away that fellow.' So I go to him at night and pass him through my mill-wheels, until all his bones are broken into tiny pieces. When he is properly soft and quivering, I take him by the collar and shake him and say, 'See how you

tremble now, you fellow!' Then he wakes up with his teeth chattering, and calls to his wife to bring him another blanket, for he is freezing. And when he has fallen asleep once more, I begin it all again."

When George the Dreamer heard this, he rushed out through the door, dragging the King after him, and crying out that he would not stay a moment longer with the bad Dreams. They were too horrible!

The King next led him into a lovely garden where the paths were of silver, the beds of gold, and the flowers, beautifully cut precious stones. Here the good Dreams were walking up and down. The first he saw was a pale young woman, with a Noah's Ark under one arm, and a box of bricks under the other.

"Who is that?" asked the Dreamer.

"She goes every evening to a little sick boy, whose mother is dead. He is quite alone all day, and no one troubles about him, but towards evening she goes to him, plays with him, and stays the whole night. She goes early, because he goes to sleep early. The other Dreams go much later. Let us proceed; if you want to see everything, we must make haste."

Then they went farther into the garden, into the midst of the good Dreams. There were men, women, old men, and children, all with dear, good faces, and most beautifully dressed. Many of them were carrying all sorts of things: everything that the heart can possibly wish for. Suddenly George stood still and cried out so loudly that all the Dreams turned round to look.

"What is the matter?" said the King.