CINDERELLA by Charles Perrault. Once upon a time there was a nobleman, who took for a second wife the haughtiest and proudest woman that had ever been seen. She had two daughters of the same temper, and who resembled her in everything. The husband, on his side, had a daughter, of unexampled gentleness and goodness. She inherited these qualities from her mother, who had been the best creature in the world. The wedding was hardly over before the stepmother's ill-humour broke out. She could not endure the young girl, whose good qualities made her own daughters appear still more detestable. She put her to do all the most menial work in the house. It was she who washed up the plates and dishes, and cleaned the stairs; who scrubbed the stepmother's room, and those of her daughters. She slept in a garret at the top of the house, on a wretched straw mattress, while her sisters occupied rooms with inlaid floors, and had the latest fashioned beds, and mirrors in which they could see themselves from head to foot. The poor girl bore everything with patience, and did not dare complain to her father, who would only have scolded her, as he was entirely governed by his wife. When she had done her work, she was in the habit of going into the chimney-corner and sitting down amongst the cinders, which caused her to be nicknamed Cindertail by the household in general. The second daughter, however, who was not quite so rude as her sister, called her Cinderella. Nevertheless, Cinderella in her shabby clothes, still looked a thousand times more beautiful than her sisters, although so magnificently dressed. It happened that the King's son gave a ball, to which he invited everyone of position. Our two fine ladies were among those who received an invitation, for they made a great show in the neighbourhood. They were now in great delight, and very busy choosing the most becoming gowns and head-dresses. A new mortification for poor Cinderella, for it was she who had to iron her sisters' fine linen, and goffer their ruffles. No one talked of anything but of the style in which they were to be dressed. "I," said the eldest, "will wear my red velvet dress, and my English point-lace trimmings." "I," said the youngest, "shall only wear my usual petticoat; but, to make up for that, I shall put on my gold-flowered cloak, and my clasp of diamonds, which are none of the least valuable." They sent for a first-rate milliner, that their caps might be made to fashion, and they bought their patches from the best maker. They called Cinderella to give them her opinion, for her taste was excellent. Cinderella gave them the best advice in the world, and even offered to dress their hair for them, which they were very willing she should do. Whilst she was busy with the hairdressing, t
hey said to her, "Cinderella, should you be very glad to go to the ball?" "Alas! you only make fun of me; such a thing would not be suitable for me at all." "You are right; they would indeed laugh to see a Cindertail at the ball!" Any other than Cinderella would have dressed their hair awry, but she had a good disposition, and arranged it for both of them to perfection. They could eat nothing for nearly two days, so transported were they with joy. More than a dozen lac
es were broken in making their waists as small as possible, and they were continually before their looking-glasses. At last the happy day arrived. They set off, and Cinderella followed them with her eyes as long as she could. When they were out of sight she began to cry. Her godmother, who saw her all in tears, asked her what was the matter. "I should so like--I should so like--" she sobbed so violently that she could not finish the sentence. "You would so like to go
to the ball, is not that it?" "Alas! yes," said Cinderella, sighing. "Well, if you will be a good girl, I will undertake that you shall go." She took her into her room, and said to her, "Go into the garden and bring me a pumpkin." Cinderella went at once, gathered the finest she could find, and brought it to her godmother, wondering the while how a pumpkin could enable her to go to the ball. Her godmother scooped it out, and, having left nothing but the rind, struck it with
her wand, and the pumpkin was immediately changed into a beautiful coach, gilt all over. She then went and looked into the mouse-trap, where she found six mice, all alive. She told Cinderella to lift the door of the mouse-trap a little, and to each mouse, as it ran out, she gave a tap with her wand, and the mouse was immediately changed into a fine horse, so that at last there stood ready a handsome train of six horses, of a beautiful dappled mouse-grey colour. As she was in some difficulty as to what she could take to turn into a coachman, Cinderella said, "I will go and see if there is not a rat in the rat-trap; we will make a coachman of him." "You are right," said her godmother, "go and see." Cinderella brought her the rat-trap, in which there were three large rats. The fairy chose one from them for her coachman, and
seen. She then said, "Go into the garden, and there, behind the watering-pot, you will find six lizards, bring them to me." Cinderella had no sooner brought them than the godmother changed them into six footmen, with their liveries all covered with lace, who immediately jumped up behind the coach, and hung on to it as if they had done nothing else all their lives. The fairy then said to Cinderella, "Well, there is something in which to go to the ball; are you not well p
leased?" [Illustration: '_The King's son gave her his hand._'_Cinderella._] "Yes, but am I to go in these dirty old clothes?" Her godmother touched her lightly with her wand, and in the same instant her dress was changed into one of gold and silver, covered with precious stones. She then gave her a pair of glass slippers, the prettiest in the world. When she was thus attired, she got into the coach; but her godmother told her, above all things, not to stay past midnig
ht--warning her, that if she remained at the ball a minute longer, her coach would again become a pumpkin, her horses, mice, her footmen, lizards, and her clothes turn again into her old ones. She promised her godmother that she would fail to leave the ball before midnight, and drove off, almost out of her mind with joy. The King's son, who was informed that a grand Princess had arrived whom nobody knew, ran to receive her. He handed her out of the c
oach and led her into the hall, where the guests were assembled. There was immediately a dead silence; the dancing stopped, and the fiddlers ceased to play, so engaged did everyone become in gazing upon the wonderful beauty of the unknown lady. Nothing was heard but a general murmur of "Oh! how lovely she is!" The King himself, old as he was, could not take his eyes from her, and observed to the Queen, that it was a long time since he had seen
so lovely and amiable a person. All the ladies were intently occupied in examining her head-dress and her clothes, that they might order some like them the very next day, provided that they might be able to find materials as costly and work-people sufficiently clever to make them up. The King's son conducted her to the most honourable seat, and then led her out to dance. She danced so gracefully that everybody's admiration of her was increased. A
s past eleven; she at once made a profound curtsey to the company, and left as quickly as she could. As soon as she had reached home, she went to find her godmother, and after having thanked her, said she much wished to go t
aid she to them, yawning, rubbing her eyes, and then stretching herself as if she had but just awoke, although she had had no inclination to sleep since she parted from them. "If you had been at the ball," said one of her sisters to h
ith delight. She asked them the name of the Princess, but they replied that nobody knew her, that the King's son was much puzzled about it, and that he would give everything in the world to know who she was. Cinderella smiled, an
Cindertail like you! I should be mad indeed!" Cinderella fully expected this refusal, and was rejoiced at it, for she would not have known what to do if her sister had lent her the gown. The next day the sisters went again to the ball, a
arning, so that she heard the clock begin to strike twelve while still thinking that it was not yet eleven. She rose and fled as lightly as a fawn. The Prince followed her, but could not overtake her. She dropped one of her glass slippers,
which the Prince carefully picked up. Cinderella reached home almost breathless, without coach or footmen, and in her shabby clothes, with nothing remaining of her finery but one of her little slippers, the fellow of that
so lovely. When the sisters returned from the ball, Cinderella asked them if they had enjoyed themselves as much as the first evening, and if that beautiful lady had been there, and if she had appeared as pleased than on
the preceding one, and if she had left behind her one pair of her glass slippers, the fellow of which the Prince had picked up? They replied that a very handsome Princess had certainly been there, but that she had left no one pair of her slippers, and that the sisters returned from the ball, Cinderella asked them if they had enjoyed themselves as much as the first evening, and if that beautiful lady had been there, and if she had appeared as pleased than on
d struck twelve, and in such haste, that she had dropped one of her little glass slippers, the prettiest in the world; that the King's son had picked it up, and had done nothing but gaze upon it during the remainder of the evening; and t
at he would marry her whose foot would exactly fit the slipper. They began by trying it on the princesses, then on the duchesses, and so on throughout the Court; but in va in. It was taken to the two sisters, who did their utmost to f orce one of their feet into the slipper, but they could not manage to do so. Cinderella, who was looking on, and who recognised the slipper, said laughingly, "Let me see if it will not fit me." Her sisters began to laugh an
d ridicule her. The gentleman of the Court who had been entrusted to try the slipper, having looked attentively at Cinderella, and seeing that she was very beautiful, said t hat it was only fair that her request should be granted, as he had received orders to try the slipper on all maid ens, without exception. He made Cinderella sit down, and putting the slipper to her little foot, he saw it slip on easily and fit like wax. Great was the astonishment of th
e two sisters, but it was still greater when Cinderella took the other slipper out of her pocket and put it on her other foot. At that moment the godmother appeared, w ho giving a tap with her wand to Cinderella's clothes, they b became more magnificent than those she had w orn before. The two sisters then recognised in her the beautiful person they had seen at the ball. They threw themselves at her feet to beg for forgiveness for all the ill-treatment she had suffered from them. Cinderella raised and embraced them, said that she forgave them with all her heart, and begged them to love her dearly for the future. She was conducted, dressed as she was, to the you ng Prince. He found her more charming than ever, and a few days afterwards he married her. Cinderella, who was as kind as she was beautiful, gave her sister apartments in the palace, and married them the very
"Sarah Poole." Such is the moral of this little story Beauties, that charm, become you more than dress, And win a heart with far greater facility. In short, in all things to ensure success, The real Fairy Gift is amiability! Talent, courage, wit, and worth, Are rare gifts to win on earth; But if you want to thrive at Court So, at least, the wise report You will find you need some others, Such as godfathers or mothers. CINDERELLA by Charles Perrault. Once upon a time there was a nobleman, who took for a second wife the haughtiest and proudest woman that h
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