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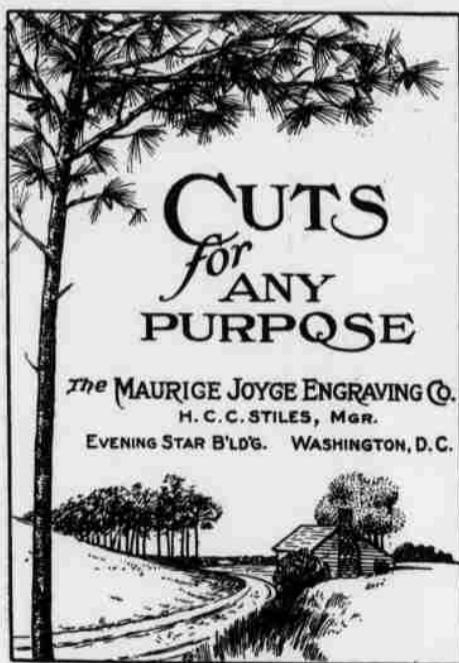
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FOR THE YOUNG FOLKS

The Strange Story of the Wishes of Wilma and Hilda



NO TWO little girls were more unlike than Wilma and Hilda. Wilma was ever cheerful and happy, while her sister was always fretting, always discontented.

They were sitting by the edge of the canal one day (the sort of canal that you see everywhere in Holland, where the little girls lived), when Hilda exclaimed, petulantly:

"I do wish I could have everything I want; I'm tired of longing so much for what will never be mine."

Wilma was so accustomed to her sister's complaints that she merely smiled quietly to herself. "Suppose you had a wish, Hilda; what would you ask for?"

"You, too, shall have a wish—anything you desire."

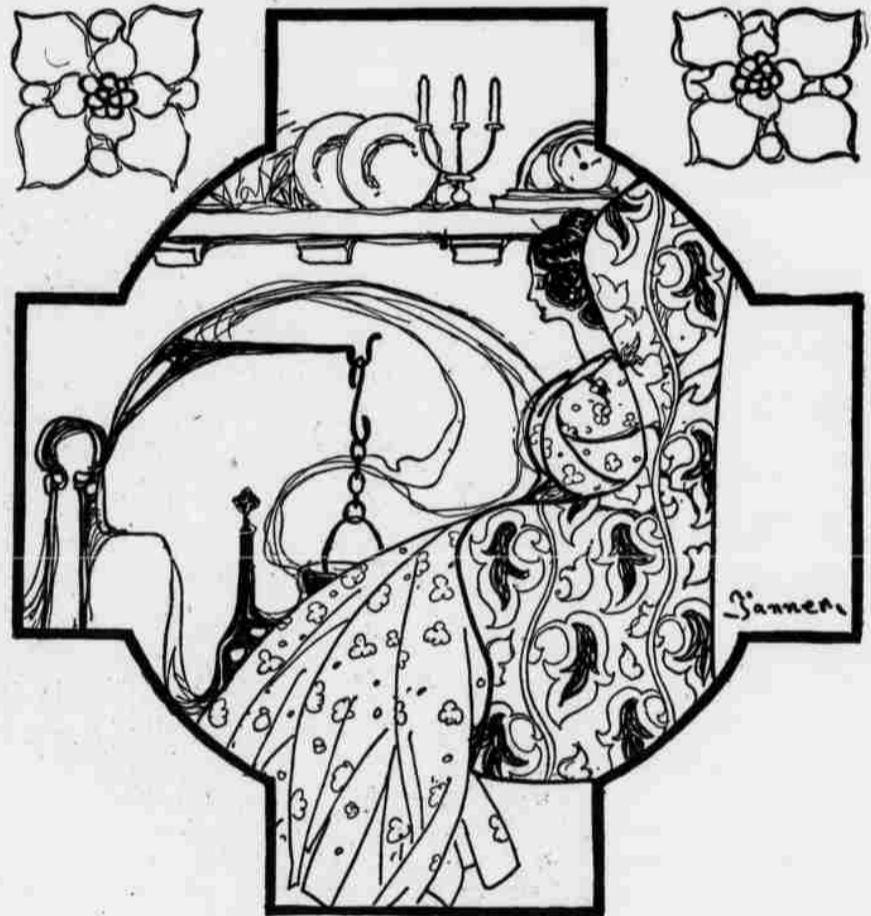
Thereupon the fairy vanished, leaving the sisters in speechless bewilderment.

You may be sure that Hilda was not long in testing the magic qualities of her wonderful wand. Soon the fame of it reached the King's ears.

"Here," said he to himself, "is the right sort of lass for my son's wife, for she will soon make my kingdom the richest in the world—and I shall be the wealthiest monarch."

So Hilda was engaged to marry the prince. No girl was prouder than she. By this time, of course, she had used the wand to such advantage that she possessed untold wealth.

But the prince was not fond of the conceited girl, who now thought herself superior to every other girl in the world, and many a quarrel had the two. At



FOR WHOM DOES THE LADY WAIT?

"First of all, I'd wish for lots of money, you goose; then I could get everything else with it."

"And I'm about to give you the chance to have all the gold you desire," said some one sweetly.

The little girls turned quickly. Now, this was long after the time when fairies and elves were on the earth. But, surely, this could be none other than a fairy, for she was beautifully dressed in the long, filmy, silken robes that only fairies wear. Besides, she was daintily poised in the air, and, of course, no mortal could accomplish that feat. Yes, it was a real fairy.

As soon as she had finished speaking the fairy handed a wand to Hilda.

"This," said she, "is a magic wand, whatever you touch with it will turn to gold."

Then she turned to Wilma with the words:

last a funny thing happened. Hilda, in one of her rages, threw the wand with all her might on the floor and vowed she would not marry the prince. The wand broke in two, and all its power departed. But that wasn't the worst of it. All the land in the kingdom turned to gold, and everything that had been grown on it! This may not at first sound so bad. The people themselves were everywhere joyful. But when they found that all their food—even the fowls had become massive, yellow metal—their rejoicing became complaining.

Things were in this condition for three whole days. Wilma was looking dolefully over the fields, from which arose the wailing of a starving people.

"So Hilda's wish has brought her nothing but misfortune," she murmured sadly.

Just then she happened to find in her apron a little grain of wheat. She absent-