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A BALL IN FAIRYLAND.

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YEARS, WILMINGTON, N. C.

One beautiful summer evening, when the sun had set far below the western horizon, the moon rose calm and beautiful, with the majesty of a new-born queen, sending shafts of light over land and sea. But it lingered long and most lovingly in a dell beside a fairy lake, which was the home of the fair Florina.

There was quite an excitement in Fairyland that night, as Queen Florina was going to give a ball; and let me tell you, a ball in Fairyland is enchantment itself.

Florina lived in a grand and stately magnolia tree, which, in Fairyland, was called Magnolia Castle. This castle contained many lovely rooms: that my little readers may better understand, I will tell them that every flower that bloomed on the tree was considered in Fairyland a room. Near the top of the tree, where the sunbeams lingered, there was a cluster of six beautiful blossoms. This suite of rooms was occupied by the fair Florina, and it was here that the nightingale sang all night and the bobolink sang all day. Almost any day the chariot of Florina was seen, drawn by seventeen butterflies. Couriers were constantly arriving from other portions of Fairyland on dragon flies and bumble bees, and the attendants of Florina were kept busy in receiving and giving orders to be sent to foreign courts. Florina had sent a special message to Prince Charming by her faithful herald, Robin Red Breast.

I must not forget to tell my little readers this message was written on a white rose leaf, with the quill of a humming bird's wing.

The message read thus:

"To His Royal Highness, Prince Charming, Cloud Castle, Kingdom of Boreas.

"MOST NOBLE PRINCE:—Your company and the noble Lords and Ladies of your Court are especially invited to attend our annual ball, which takes place on May 1.

"On this auspicious occasion, it is our royal will to celebrate the nuptials of my two favorites—the beautiful Lady Rose, and the Earl of Moss. This Knight has done much to contribute to the beauty of the Floral Kingdom.

"There will be many other attractions; in fact, too numerous to mention. I will not tire your Majesty with a long letter, but will only add, knowing your love for music, the orchestra will be led by Captain Mocking Bird,

"With much love,

"Your cousin,

"FLORINA,  
"Queen of Fairyland,  
"Magnolia Castle,  
"Kingdom of Flowers."

There was a tinkle of a thousand bells summoning up the maids to come and dress the fair queen for the coming ball.

Now if my little readers will accompany me to the dainty dressing-room, we will see how a fairy makes her toilet. In the center of the magnolia blossom reclined the young queen just awakened from a refreshing sleep. She reached out the daintiest lily-white hand, too tiny to describe, and touched a golden bell, and immediately Dewdrop appeared to give the queen her bath. Early in the day her silken tresses had been arranged by the skillful hand of Sunbeam, so there was nothing for Zephyr to do but to fan them out till they fell out in a golden mass over her pearly shoulders down to her dainty feet. "Now hasten, Dewdrop and bring my dress. Has the

weavers finished it yet? Yes, your Majesty, hours ago, and they await in the court below.

Just at that moment her page Aerial came, bringing her gossamer robe. Perhaps you would like to know who spun this gossamer robe. For many days and nights hundreds of brown spinners known as spiders had been spinning and weaving in the most artistic designs of Mother Nature, the robe that was to deck the fair Florina.

It would be impossible for the pen of mortal to describe the wonder and glowing Florina, as she fluttered her gossamer wings, throwing out lights of the rainbow. Of course you would like to know where this grand court reception took place. It was to be held in the chosen banquet halls of Mother Nature, under a wide spreading Oak-Tree, and the Brownies and the Pixes had been busy decorating this lovely spot for their fair queen. There were millions of fire flies with their lamps that were artistically arranged on bough and branch. On the swaying green branches there were hundreds of birds, blue-birds, larks, thrushes, canaries, bobolinks and nightingales, that made the air sound with enchanting music under the direction of Captain Mocking Bird.

As Florina ascended the throne (made of moonbeams), the fairy trumpets from every quivering vine and branch sounded with such a blast of martial music that it woke up the flowers that had been taking beauty naps in Fairyland.

Soon they all came tripping and fluttering in so fast that it was quite impossible for Robin to announce them in court style.

I must not forget to tell you that the Brownies came from all parts of Fairyland, on grasshoppers, katydids, dragon flies, bumble bees and honey bees.

Of course, Prince Charming stood by the side of Florina, ready to give the blushing bride away, when, just at that moment, Robin announced that the Earl of Moss had arrived, bringing with him Jack-in-the-Pulpit and his beautiful cousin, Lady Maiden Hair Fern. It had been long whispered that the Earl of Moss would some day wed his fair cousin. But, contrary to expectation, his choice had fallen on Lady Rose, and old Madame Spear Grass whispered to Mrs. Cuckle Burr, "It was not at all likely that Lady Maiden Hair would ever marry, as her fickle cousin had given her such a disappointment, that she would not be surprised if she did not go into a decline." And, really, there did seem some cause for such a report, she looked so lovely and fragile in her shimmering dress of green.

The pages, Aerial and Zephyr, were kept busy distributing fans among the gay company. There was the usual small talk, mingled with flirtations, that may generally be seen or heard among such gay assemblies, for such affairs are conducted in Fairyland very much like those among mortals.

All was now ready for the wedding. Jack looked both quaint and pretty in his surplice of green and violet stole. The bride was preceded by twelve bridesmaids. At that moment there came a most triumphant crash of music from the orchestra, as the Lily sisters, Calla and Easter, accompanied by Sir Woodbine and Sir Ivy. Then came Lady Tulip and the Hon. Miss Hollyhock, escorted by Lord Staghorn Fern

and gallant Prince Feather. Then four little flower fairies, Pansy, Violet Daisy and Snowdrop. After these followed the stately Japonica, sister of the bride, as the maid of honor.

I shall not attempt to describe their dresses, as it would be impossible. I will, however, say that, in the land of mortal no bride ever wore such beautiful jewels, or such gossamer lace. They gracefully grouped around the little priest, as he, with his little prayer-book made from the fern seed, read the service.

I have no doubt that the service was both beautiful and impressive, as all the flowers kept quite still, and even the nervous Miss Thistle forgot to move about, and stood quite still to listen. Then the Rose bowed her head, and Jack pronounced a blessing, and she became a Moss rose, when I knew the ceremony was over. And oh! what music, as they all joined hands and gracefully danced around the old oak-tree

While the flowers were all dancing, Prince Charming and Queen Florina made use of the opportunity then offered to settle some business of state, and to decide where the annual ball should take place next spring. For you know fairies never grow old, but have been living for thousand of years and will continue to do so, and always be young and beautiful.

The merriment grew madder and merrier, as the dancers hurled and swirled on the green sward. The Harlequin and LaBelle Thistle entertained the company by performing some wonderful fetes of the Fairy Ballot. No one seemed tired except the bobolink, for I heard him say to Robin Red Breast, "Arn't you tired?" "By no means," chirped Robin, as he piped a bouquet on his scarlet breast.

"I would do twice as much for our lovely queen, Florina; and, you must remember, I am her herald, and I think it would be very ungrateful if we, her subjects, could not sit up one night celebrating the return of the beautiful season, that means so much to us." Just then attention was called by hearing Prince Charming giving an order to Will-o'-the-Wisp, his coachman, and soon the message was conveyed to Shooting Star, and, magically, there appeared in the west a beautiful chariot of rose and amethyst and sapphire. Then Florina gave orders that the dancing cease and draw near, so they might hear her royal command. In groups of grace and beauty they stood around her, as she arose and stood: "My faithful subjects, I trust you have spent a merry and pleasant evening, and I feel it is my duty as well as pleasure to remind you that you have a mission that I expect you to faithfully fill, as the flowers of my kingdom. Some of you I will give power to heal the sick, some to comfort the sorrowing in the realms of mortals. Others shall make the home of the peasant as well as the prince glow with beauty. My little golden-hearted daisy, it is your special duty to make the little children happy; and you, my fair Rose, the queen continued, smiling, shall be love's messenger. Go, fair child, and make others as happy and beautiful as yourself. Come hither, my little Violet; you, with your modesty, shall teach mortals meekness and humility, and shall be loved by all. And you, my little Heart's-ease, the maiden that wears you on her breast

shall have her heart's desire. And thou, my graceful Columbine, Robin tells me that in the land of mortals a great honor will soon be bestowed on you. It is said that thou will soon be chosen as the queen flower of the great continent—America—for 'tis known that the dress of the Columbine, which is red, white and blue, reminds them of their much loved country. Go, fair child—North, South, East and West—thou shall blossom in grace and beauty, and I think it is a glorious destiny that awaits thee." And the queen paused and her face grew sad, as she glanced at Golden Rod, who stooped to caress little Zephyr, as he twined his tiny fingers in her golden hair, and whispered, "Don't grieve, sweet Golden Rod, for I am quite sure every one loves you more than the little rustic with her gay dress of many colors; and Robin Red Breast don't quite know everything, and it may be that the coronet shall rest on your fair brow after all; I am sure I hope so. Then the queen beckoned to the Lily; and, in her snowy robes, knelt at the queen's feet. "My spotless child, emblem of purity, your mission is a sad but holy one. The mother will place thee in the waxen hands of her baby, as she robes it for its last sleep, and thou shall whisper to her of a fairer land than our own beautiful Fairyland."

Then the queen arose, and dismissed her court in the midst of a crash of music, where every bird seemed to split his tiny throat. Queen Florina rode away, in her chariot drawn by golden and crimson butterflies. Away went the brownies on mosquito-hawks, dragon-flies, and bees, and the last I saw of the fairy vision, was the fluttering banners of pink and azure as prince Charming, soared away to cloudland. I will say in conclusion, that if my little readers are interested in Fairyland, I will promise to tell them of my next trip when I shall again visit this most wonderful land, and when it is finally decided who is to be chosen as queen flower of America, it is my wish to be at the Coronation, and it will be my pleasure to tell all I see and hear on this wonderful occasion.

[Written for THE HARBINGER.]  
LONDON'S POVERTY.

BY A. F. L.

England is yielding first place industrially to the United States, and one of the principal reasons therefor is the drinkid habits of its artisans and laborers. This not only keeps its victims down, but is undermining the prosperity of the nation. Both personal and patriotic reasons appeal to the British workingmen to cut off at least a part of the drink supply, if they are to be true to themselves and their country, and London being the greatest offender, should lead the way. If the metropolis shall do this the next monarch crowned at Westminster Abbey would not have half so many to feed as King Edward did a few days ago. It is said that he fed 500,000 human beings who make up poverty's army in the greatest city in the world. One in every twelve, it is said, of London's population, is not sure of his food for a day, and has a wretched place in which to sleep, which is wholly unfit for habitation. The contemplation of such a vast destitute population in one city awakens painful conclusions. Here are as many

people struggling for morsels of food from day to day—365 days in the year—as would make a city as large as Baltimore. The great American cities have their share of misery, but they do not begin to compare with it in anything like the degree notable British cities do. The extravagance, intemperance and wastefulness of London is responsible for this state of affairs. A festive day in London fills its chief thoroughfares with more men, women and children, betraying desperate poverty than can be found in all the larger cities of the United States combined.

In conspicuous contrast to its poverty is the wealth of London. That is enormous, too—greater than ever centered in any other city. There is enough riches there to place every person and family in the city above want without seriously depleting the purses of the rich and well-to-do. But the poor are always present everywhere. London is, without doubt, the one place on place on earth where there are more treasures laid up, and also has more poor and hungry. In other words, and to the point, where you find the greatest wealth you will also find poverty in its last stages. The two go together. They seem to be inseparable. It goes to show that when great fortunes are amassed some are robbed—or what they of right ought to have—passes into the hands of the capitalists. Thousands upon thousands are the victims, unconsciously, perhaps, until it is too late, and they enter the great army of paupers.

### PUBLIC DEMAND.

It is no easy matter for public service to give popular satisfaction. Abuses that were formerly submitted to without protest are now vigorously condemned and pronounced unbearable.

While public opinion is in this critical and exacting condition, it behooves all corporations to exert themselves to avoid all cause for dissatisfaction. They should not limit their efforts to the requirements of their franchise. The service should be made as perfect as it can be made, and the management should rely upon the character of its service for public favor—by no other standard will it be measured.

These remarks are intended for our street car service.

The present transfer system is, to put it mildly, unsatisfactory.

In company with a party, the writer boarded a car for church in East Durham last Sunday night. At Corcoran street we were detained on the siding ten minutes, waiting for the west-bound car to pass. Returning, we remained standing on the street at Five Points 25 minutes waiting for a Chapel Hill car. Thus 35 minutes were, what looks to us, unreasonably consumed in waiting. If there is to be no improvement in this transfer arrangement, we shall advocate the building of a waiting room at Five Points, provided with all the luxurious comforts furnished by the Southern Railway Company for its much-abused patrons.

The day has passed when corporations under municipal franchises can with impunity disregard their duties or otherwise violate their franchise obligations. And it were well for them to remember that a franchise comes from the people and the same people have the power to crush it.

To remedy the evil complained of, it may necessitate an increase of running expenses, but it is the only satisfactory plan—and it will prove the cheaper one in the long run.—Durham Thrift.