

OTHER GRIM FAIRY TALES

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ENTLEFLIES,” said the Chairfly, “the time has come when we must protest against the misuse by humankind of the word ‘filth’. It is perhaps unfortunate that the word was ever coined, but it was thought at first that it might remove the odium conjured up by the word ‘pollution’. The malicious campaign launched by ill-disposed and ill-informed people with their usual retinue of priests and professors, is not aimed at the

removal of disease among the human race but is a personal vendetta against flykind, their homes and their traditions.”

A general buzz of indignation was followed by a suggestion from a learned member that perhaps flies might be healthier if they found somewhere else to bring up their young. This preposterous idea was rightly hooted down with scorn, and its author was roughly flyhandled before order was restored.

“You see, gentleflies, that this infamous propaganda for cleanliness has infected even our own squadrons. I might indeed ask, with the poet,

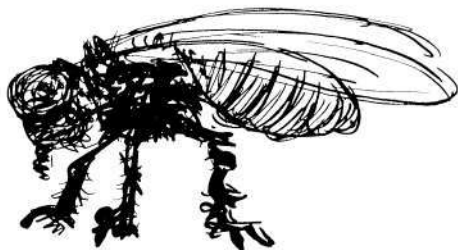
‘Breathes there a fly with soul so dead

Who never to himself hath said,

This is my own, my native slime?’

but I should have to answer regretfully, ‘Yes, there is such a fly.’”

However, upon the Chairfly making a final rallying call for all who were in support of the True Patriotism to raise their probosces, the meeting was found to be behind him to a fly.





LONG ago in the heyday of the kings, when monarchs were rash enough to ask for advice and sometimes to follow it, there was a king in the State of Neuras-thenia who sought the aid of his philosophers and soothsayers to counsel him as to the government of his realm.

He summoned to the Presence the first of these worthy men and put the problem before him, as to how it would be possible to govern a nation of whom some members were left-handed and some right-, without there being endless quarrelling. The answer to this tremendous poser immediately appeared quite plain, for this noble courtier produced from beneath his cloak a document he had drawn up with great care. With close logic it was pointed out that right-handed people were in an overwhelming majority, and as a compensation therefore to the left-handed ones, the land should be divided up so that 80 per cent of the land, 95 per cent of the mineral wealth and 100 per cent of the armaments were in the hands of the left-handed. Thus would the balance be maintained, and the ideal of "Separate but Equal" would be achieved to the lasting benefit of all concerned. With a triumphant flourish, the author drew off his left glove and put his name to the document.

The king, much impressed, hardly thought it worth while to call any of the other advisers, but being a kindly man he relented and called for the next man. With great eloquence this honest fellow discoursed to his liege about Justice. Equality such as his predecessor had advocated was all very well, but where was equality after all, if there were no justice? And yet it had to be admitted that some people were unfortunate enough to be right-handed and that the left-handed were in a minority; if each individual were to have the same rights, then the right-handed group would have many more rights than the other. How to resolve the difficulty then? Rights must be evened out so that there was justice for all. "Discrimination with Justice, Your Majesty; that is the only solution for our unique problem."

To the king this sounded rather similar to the plan of the previous savant, so the second man laboured a while longer to drive home the subtle differences which made his plan far superior. Shaking his head a little, for he was a trifle dim, the monarch waved the man from the room. He was rather sorry now that he had decided to go further than the first man who had made everything so clear, but in a moment of absent-mindedness

he signalled for the third man to enter.

The king was now still more sorry, for the third man led off about liberty, equality and fraternity. "Damn it," said the king, a trifle exasperated, "I mustn't split the vote." And he didn't.



THOSE who are uninstructed might suppose that when games are put away in the toy-cupboard, they lie there quietly until the next evening. But those who know, could tell you a lot about what happens when the clock strikes twelve . . .

It was the double-blank among the dominoes which started the argument. "Here we are all together in a box," he said affably, "and we're all almost wholly black." "Nonsense", said the double-six, "There is room in the box for black dominoes like you and for white dominoes like me."

The other dominoes seemed a trifle puzzled by this, but perhaps dominoes aren't very intelligent.



IN days of yore there lived a little girl called Schismarella, and although she was the prettiest damsel that ever you did see, she was also the unhappiest. Now this was a very strange thing for she had always three square meals a day, even if dog biscuits did get somewhat monotonous after a while. In addition to that she lived in complete security, as there was never the slightest fear of unemployment—her two ugly sisters saw to that, for although they appeared to be ugly yet they had hearts of gold. Knowing that their younger sister would be terribly disappointed if ever she saw how other folk lived, they guarded her carefully from such pain.

One day, however, their benevolence was frustrated when a Fairy Godmother arrived one evening—an evening too, when they had gone out of their way to spare Schismarella the heart-ache of catching a glance of the Prince's Ball. The Fairy Godmother appeared in dazzling glory wonderful to behold, and poor Schismarella was swept off her feet. So deeply was she affected by this beautiful apparition that she lost her reason and all sense of gratitude, accepting the fairy's offer to send her to the Ball.

A wave of the wand and four white mice, a pumpkin and two rats were transformed into a coach-and-four and two footmen in shining liveries; another wave of the wand and Schismarella was clothed in the rarest satins and crystal slippers. A final warning from her new guardian that she must be back before midnight, and off trotted the magnificent steeds with their precious burden.

Schismarella never dreamed she could be so happy and never thought for one moment that she was being cruelly deceived. The Prince actually asked her to dance with him and she nearly swooned in his arms for sheer joy. Then a glance at the clock filled her with horror, and remembering the warning she had received, she fled as one possessed. Even as she reached the door the clock began to strike, and in her haste one of her crystal slippers fell off. She did not wait to retrieve it, but fled clothed now only in her rags and tatters.

The next day the sisters were furious, as they had every right to be, for they had learned of the night's happenings from one of the rats that they kept about the place for just such a purpose

for Schismarella's good, of course. Quivering with indignation at the girl's ingratitude, they pointed out the wickedness of the Fairy Godmother.

Schismarella saw the wisdom of what they said; and when the Prince arrived later, trying to trace the owner of the slipper, she very properly refused his offer of marriage, saying that her sisters were going to give her a little house all of her own, and in about 80 years time even give her the title-deeds. There she would be free from interfering Fairy Godmothers and Princes, and would be queen of all she surveyed.

