

Behind which desert belt
A thousand leagues to the South.
He can foresay: 'She will rise.'
He knows what far snows melt;
Along what mountain wall
A thousand leagues to the North.
He snuffs the coming drouth
As he snuffs the coming rain,
He knows what each will bring forth
And turns it to his gain.

A Prince without a Sword,
A Ruler without a Throne;
Israel follows his quest:—
In every land a guest.
Of many lands the lord.
In no land King is he.
But the Fifth Great River keeps
The secret of her deeps
For Israel alone,
As it was ordered to be.

Now it was the third week in November, and the woods rang with the noise of pheasant-shooting. No one hunted that steep, cramped country except the village beagles, who, as often as not, escaped from their kennels and made a day of their own. Dan and Una found a couple of them towling round the kitchen-garden after the laundry cat. The little brutes were only too pleased to go rabbiting, so the children ran them all along the brook pastures and into Little Lindens farm-yard, where the old sow vanquished them—and up to the quarry-hole, where they started a fox. He headed for Far Wood, and there they frightened out all the pheasants who were sheltering from a big beat across the valley. Then the cruel guns began again, and they grabbed the beagles lest they should stray and get hurt.

‘I wouldn’t be a pheasant—in November—for a lot,’ Dan panted, as he caught Folly by the neck. ‘Why did you laugh that horrid way?’

‘I didn’t,’ said Una, sitting on Flora, the fat lady-dog. ‘Oh, look! The silly birds are going back to their own woods instead of ours, where they would be safe.’

‘Safe till it pleased you to kill them.’ An old man, so tall he was almost a giant, stepped from behind the clump of hollies by ‘Volaterrae.’ The children jumped, and the dogs dropped like setters. He wore a sweeping

gown of dark thick stuff, lined and edged with yellowish fur, and he bowed a bent-down bow that made them feel both proud and ashamed. Then he looked at them steadily, and they stared back without doubt or fear.

'You are not afraid?' he said, running his hands through his splendid grey beard. 'Not afraid that those men yonder'—he jerked his head towards the incessant pop-pop of the guns from the lower woods—'will do you hurt?'

'We-ell'—Dan liked to be accurate, especially when he was shy—'old Hobd—a friend of mine told me that one of the beaters got peppered last week—hit in the leg, I mean. You see, Mr. Meyer will fire at rabbits. But he gave Waxy Garnett a quid—sovereign, I mean—and Waxy told Hobden he'd have stood both barrels for half the money.'

'He doesn't understand,' Una cried, watching the pale, troubled face. 'Oh, I wish——'

She had scarcely said it when Puck rustled out of the hollies and spoke to the man quickly in foreign words. Puck wore a long cloak too—the afternoon was just frosting down—and it changed his appearance altogether.

'Nay, nay!' he said at last. 'You did not understand the boy. A freeman was a little hurt, by pure mischance, at the hunting.'

'I know that mischance! What did his Lord do? Laugh and ride over him?'

the old man sneered.

'It was one of your own people did the hurt, Kadmiel.' Puck's eyes twinkled maliciously. 'So he gave the freeman a piece of gold, and no more was said.'

'A Jew drew blood from a Christian and no more was said?' Kadmiel cried. 'Never! When did they torture him?'

'No man may be bound, or fined, or slain till he has been judged by his peers,' Puck insisted. 'There is but one Law in Old England for Jew or Christian—the Law that was signed at Runnymede.'

'Why, that's Magna Charta!' Dan whispered. It was one of the few history dates that he could remember. Kadmiel turned on him with a sweep and a whirr of his spicy-scented gown.

'Dost thou know of that, babe?' he cried, and lifted his hands in wonder.

'Yes,' said Dan, firmly.

'Magna Charta was signed by John,
That Henry the Third put his heel upon.

And old Hobden says that if it hadn't been for her (he calls everything

“her,” you know), the keepers would have him clapped in Lewes Gaol all the year round.’

Again Puck translated to Kadmiel in the strange, solemn-sounding language, and at last Kadmiel laughed.

‘Out of the mouths of babes do we learn,’ said he. ‘But tell me now, and I will not call you a babe but a Rabbi, why did the King sign the roll of the New Law at Runnymede? For he was a King.’

Dan looked sideways at his sister. It was her turn.

‘Because he jolly well had to,’ said Una, softly. ‘The Barons made him.’

‘Nay,’ Kadmiel answered, shaking his head. ‘You Christians always forget that gold does more than the sword. Our good King signed because he could not borrow more money from us bad Jews.’ He curved his shoulders as he spoke. ‘A King without gold is a snake with a broken back, and’—his nose sneered up and his eyebrows frowned down—‘it is a good deed to break a snake’s back. That was my work,’ he cried, triumphantly, to Puck.

‘Spirit of Earth, bear witness that that was my work!’ He shot up to his full towering height, and his words rang like a trumpet. He had a voice that changed its tone almost as an opal changes colour—sometimes deep and thundery, sometimes thin and waily, but always it made you listen.

‘Many people can bear witness to that,’ Puck answered. ‘Tell these babes

how it was done. Remember, Master, they do not know Doubt or Fear.’

‘So I saw in their faces when we met,’ said Kadmiel. ‘Yet surely, surely they are taught to spit upon Jews?’

‘Are they?’ said Dan, much interested. ‘Where at?’

Puck fell back a pace, laughing. ‘Kadmiel is thinking of King John’s reign,’ he explained. ‘His people were badly treated then.’

‘Oh, we know that,’ they answered, and (it was very rude of them, but they could not help it) they stared straight at Kadmiel’s mouth to see if his teeth were all there. It stuck in their lesson-memory that King John used to pull out Jews’ teeth to make them lend him money.

Kadmiel understood the look and smiled bitterly.

‘No. Your King never drew my teeth: I think, perhaps, I drew his. Listen! I was not born among Christians, but among Moors—in Spain—in a little white town under the mountains. Yes, the Moors are cruel, but at least their learned men dare to think. It was prophesied of me at my birth that I should be a Lawgiver to a People of a strange speech and a hard language. We Jews are always looking for the Prince and the Lawgiver to come. Why not? My people in the town (we were very few) set me apart as a child of the prophecy—the Chosen of the Chosen. We Jews dream so many dreams. You would never guess it to see us slink about the rubbish-heaps

in our quarter; but at the day's end—doors shut, candles lit—aha! then we become the Chosen again.'

He paced back and forth through the wood as he talked. The rattle of the shot-guns never ceased, and the dogs whimpered a little and lay flat on the leaves.

'I was a Prince. Yes! Think of a little Prince who had never known rough words in his own house handed over to shouting, bearded Rabbis, who pulled his ears and filliped his nose, all that he might learn—learn—learn to be King when his time came. Hé! Such a little Prince it was! One eye he kept on the stone-throwing Moorish boys, and the other it roved about the streets looking for his Kingdom. Yes, and he learned to cry softly when he was hunted up and down those streets. He learned to do all things without noise. He played beneath his father's table when the Great Candle was lit, and he listened as children listen to the talk of his father's friends above the table. They came across the mountains, from out of all the world; for my Prince's father was their councillor. They came from behind the armies of Sala-ud-Din: from Rome: from Venice: from England. They stole down our alley, they tapped secretly at our door, they took off their rags, they arrayed themselves, and they talked to my father at the wine. All over the world the heathen fought each other. They brought news of these wars, and while he played beneath the table, my Prince heard these meanly-dressed ones decide between themselves how, and when, and for how long King should draw sword against King, and People rise up against People. Why not? There can be no war without gold, and we Jews

know how the earth's gold moves with the seasons, and the crops, and the winds; circling and looping and rising and sinking away like a river—a wonderful underground river. How should the foolish Kings know that while they fight and steal and kill?’

The children's faces showed that they knew nothing at all as, with open eyes, they trotted and turned beside the long-striding old man. He twitched his gown over his shoulders, and a square plate of gold, studded with jewels, gleamed for an instant through the fur, like a star through flying snow.

‘No matter,’ he said. ‘But, credit me, my Prince saw peace or war decided not once, but many times, by the fall of a coin spun between a Jew from Bury and a Jewess from Alexandria, in his father's house, when the Great Candle was lit. Such power had we Jews among the Gentiles. Ah, my little Prince! Do you wonder that he learned quickly? Why not?’ He muttered to himself and went on:—

‘My trade was that of a physician. When I had learned it in Spain I went to the East to find my Kingdom. Why not? A Jew is as free as a sparrow—or a dog. He goes where he is hunted. In the East I found libraries where men dared to think—schools of medicine where they dared to learn. I was diligent in my business. Therefore I stood before Kings. I have been a brother to Princes and a companion to beggars, and I have walked between the living and the dead. There was no profit in it. I did not find my Kingdom. So, in the tenth year of my travels, when I had reached the

Uttermost Eastern Sea, I returned to my father's house. God had wonderfully preserved my people. None had been slain, none even wounded, and only a few scourged. I became once more a son in my father's house. Again the Great Candle was lit; again the meanly-apparelled ones tapped on our door after dusk; and again I heard them weigh out peace and war, as they weighed out the gold on the table. But I was not rich—not very rich. Therefore, when those that had power and knowledge and wealth talked together, I sat in the shadow. Why not?

'Yet all my wanderings had shown me one sure thing, which is, that a King without money is like a spear without a head. He cannot do much harm. I said, therefore, to Elias of Bury, a great one among our people: "Why do our people lend any more to the Kings that oppress us?" "Because," said Elias, "if we refuse they stir up their people against us, and the People are tenfold more cruel than Kings. If thou doubttest, come with me to Bury in England and live as I live."

'I saw my mother's face across the candle-flame, and I said, "I will come with thee to Bury. Maybe my Kingdom shall be there."

'So I sailed with Elias to the darkness and the cruelty of Bury in England, where there are no learned men. How can a man be wise if he hate?

At Bury I kept his accounts for Elias, and I saw men kill Jews there by the tower. No—none laid hands on Elias. He lent money to the King, and the King's favour was about him. A King will not take the life so long as

there is any gold. This King—yes, John—oppressed his people bitterly because they would not give him money. Yet his land was a good land. If he had only given it rest he might have cropped it as a Christian crops his beard. But even that little he did not know; for God had deprived him of all understanding, and had multiplied pestilence, and famine, and despair upon the people. Therefore his people turned against us Jews, who are all people's dogs. Why not? Lastly the Barons and the people rose together against the King because of his cruelties. Nay—nay—the Barons did not love the people, but they saw that if the King eat up and destroyed the common people, he would presently destroy the Barons. They joined then, as cats and pigs will join to slay a snake. I kept the accounts, and I watched all these things, for I remembered the Prophecy.

'A great gathering of Barons (to most of whom we had lent money) came to Bury, and there, after much talk and a thousand runnings-about, they made a roll of the New Laws that they would force on the King. If he swore to keep those Laws, they would allow him a little money. That was the King's God—Money—to waste. They showed us the roll of the New Laws. Why not? We had lent them money. We knew all their counsels—we Jews shivering behind our doors in Bury.' He threw out his hands suddenly. 'We did not seek to be paid all in money. We sought Power—Power—Power! That is our God in our captivity. Power to use!

I said to Elias: "These New Laws are good. Lend no more money to the King: so long as he has money he will lie and slay the people."

“Nay,” said Elias. “I know this people. They are madly cruel. Better one King than a thousand butchers. I have lent a little money to the Barons, or they would torture us, but my most I will lend to the King. He hath promised me a place near him at Court, where my wife and I shall be safe.”

“But if the King be made to keep these New Laws,” I said, “the land will have peace, and our trade will grow. If we lend he will fight again.”

“Who made thee a Lawgiver in England?” said Elias. “I know this people. Let the dogs tear one another! I will lend the King ten thousand pieces of gold, and he can fight the Barons at his pleasure.”

“There are not two thousand pieces of gold in all England this summer,” I said, for I kept the accounts, and I knew how the earth’s gold moved—that wonderful underground river! Elias barred home the windows, and, his hands about his mouth, he told me how, when he was trading with small wares in a French ship, he had come to the Castle of Pevensey.’

‘Oh!’ said Dan. ‘Pevensey again!’ and looked at Una, who nodded and skipped.

There, after they had scattered his pack up and down the Great Hall, some young knights carried him to an upper room, and dropped him into a well in a wall, that rose and fell with the tide. They called him Joseph, and

threw torches at his wet head. Why not?’

‘Why, of course,’ cried Dan. ‘Didn’t you know it was——’ Puck held up his hand to stop him, and Kadmiel, who never noticed, went on.

‘When the tide dropped he thought he stood on old armour, but feeling with his toes, he raked up bar on bar of soft gold. Some wicked treasure of the old days put away, and the secret cut off by the sword. I have heard the like before.’

‘So have we,’ Una whispered. ‘But it wasn’t wicked a bit.’

‘Elias took a morsel of the stuff with him, and thrice yearly he would return to Pevensey as a chapman, selling at no price or profit, till they suffered him to sleep in the empty room, where he would plumb and grope, and steal away a few bars. The great store of it still remained, and by long brooding he had come to look on it as his own. Yet when we thought how we should lift and convey it, we saw no way. This was before the Word of the Lord had come to me. A walled fortress possessed by Normans; in the midst a forty-foot tide-well out of which to remove secretly many horse-loads of gold! Hopeless! So Elias wept. Adah, his wife, wept too. She had hoped to stand beside the Queen’s Christian tiring-maids at Court, when the King should give them that place at Court which he had promised. Why not? She was born in England—an odious woman.

‘The present evil to us was that Elias, out of his strong folly, had, as

it were, promised the King that he would arm him with more gold. Wherefore the King in his camp stopped his ears against the Barons and the people. Wherefore men died daily. Adah so desired her place at Court, she besought Elias to tell the King where the treasure lay, that the King might take it by force, and—they would trust in his gratitude. Why not? This Elias refused to do, for he looked on the gold as his own. They quarrelled, and they wept at the evening meal, and late in the night came one Langton—a priest, almost learned—to borrow more money for the Barons. Elias and Adah went to their chamber.’

Kadmiel laughed scornfully in his beard. The shots across the valley stopped as the shooting-party changed their ground for the last beat.

‘So it was I, not Elias,’ he went on, quietly, ‘that made terms with Langton touching the fortieth of the New Laws.’

‘What terms?’ said Puck, quickly. ‘The Fortieth of the Great Charter say: “To none will we sell, refuse, or deny right or justice.”’

‘True, but the Barons had written first: To no free man. It cost me two hundred broad pieces of gold to change those narrow words. Langton, the priest, understood. “Jew though thou art,” said he, “the change is just, and if ever Christian and Jew come to be equal in England thy people may thank thee.” Then he went out stealthily, as men do who deal with Israel by night. I think he spent my gift upon his altar. Why not? I have spoken with Langton. He was such a man as I might have been if—if we Jews had

been a people. But yet, in many things, a child.

I heard Elias and Adah abovestairs quarrel, and, knowing the woman was the stronger, I saw that Elias would tell the King of the gold and that the King would continue in his stubbornness. Therefore I saw that the gold must be put away from the reach of any man. Of a sudden, the Word of the Lord came to me saying, "The Morning is come, O thou that dwellest in the land."

Kadmiel halted, all black against the pale green sky beyond the wood—a huge robed figure, like the Moses in the picture-Bible.

I rose. I went out, and as I shut the door on that House of Foolishness, the woman looked from the window and whispered, "I have prevailed on my husband to tell the King!" I answered, "There is no need. The Lord is with me."

In that hour the Lord gave me full understanding of all that I must do; and His Hand covered me in my ways. First I went to London, to a physician of our people, who sold me certain drugs that I needed. You shall see why. Thence I went swiftly to Pevensey. Men fought all around me, for there were neither rulers nor judges in the abominable land. Yet when I walked by them they cried out that I was one Ahasuerus, a Jew, condemned, as they believe, to live for ever, and they fled from me everyways. Thus the Lord saved me for my work, and at Pevensey I bought me a little boat and moored it on the mud beneath the Marsh-gate of the Castle. That also God showed

me.'

He was as calm as though he were speaking of some stranger, and his voice filled the little bare wood with rolling music.

'I cast'—his hand went to his breast, and again the strange jewel gleamed—I cast the drugs which I had prepared into the common well of the Castle. Nay, I did no harm. The more we physicians know, the less do we do. Only the fool says: "I dare." I caused a blotched and itching rash to break out upon their skins, but I knew it would fade in fifteen days. I did not stretch out my hand against their life. They in the Castle thought it was the Plague, and they ran forth, taking with them their very dogs.

'A Christian physician, seeing that I was a Jew and a stranger, vowed that I had brought the sickness from London. This is the one time I have ever heard a Christian leech speak truth of any disease. Thereupon the people beat me, but a merciful woman said: "Do not kill him now. Push him into our Castle with his plague, and if, as he says, it will abate on the fifteenth day, we can kill him then." Why not? They drove me across the drawbridge of the Castle, and fled back to their booths. Thus I came to be alone with the treasure.'

'But did you know this was all going to happen just right?' said Una.

'My Prophecy was that I should be a Lawgiver to a People of a strange land and a hard speech. I knew I should not die. I washed my cuts. I found the

tide-well in the wall, and from Sabbath to Sabbath I dove and dug there in that empty, Christian-smelling fortress. Hé! I spoiled the Egyptians! Hé! If they had only known! I drew up many good loads of gold, which I loaded by night into my boat. There had been gold-dust too, but that had been washed away by the tides.'

'Didn't you ever wonder who had put it there?' said Dan, stealing a glance at Puck's calm, dark face under the hood of his gown. Puck shook his head and pursed his lips.

'Often; for the gold was new to me,' Kadmiel replied. 'I know the Golds. I can judge them in the dark; but this was heavier and redder than any we deal in. Perhaps it was the very gold of Parvaim. Eh, why not? It went to my heart to heave it on to the mud, but I saw well that if the evil thing remained, or if even the hope of finding it remained, the King would not sign the New Laws, and the land would perish.'

'Oh, Marvell!' said Puck, beneath his breath, rustling in the dead leaves.

'When the boat was loaded I washed my hands seven times, and pared beneath my nails, for I would not keep one grain. I went out by the little gate where the Castle's refuse is thrown. I dared not hoist sail lest men should see me; but the Lord commanded the tide to bear me carefully, and I was far from land before the morning.'

'Weren't you afraid?' said Una.

‘Why? There were no Christians in the boat. At sunrise I made my prayer, and cast the gold—all—all that gold into the deep sea! A King’s ransom—no, the ransom of a People! When I had loosed hold of the last bars, the Lord commanded the tide to return me to a haven at the mouth of a river, and thence I walked across a wilderness to Lewes, where I have brethren. They opened the door to me, and they say—I had not eaten for two days—they say that I fell across the threshold, crying, “I have sunk an army with horsemen in the sea!”’

‘But you hadn’t,’ said Una. ‘Oh, yes! I see! You meant that King John might have spent it on that?’

‘Even so,’ said Kadmiel.

The firing broke out again close behind them. The pheasants poured over the top of a belt of tall firs. They could see young Mr. Meyer, in his new yellow gaiters, very busy and excited at the end of the line, and they could hear the thud of the falling birds.

‘But what did Elias of Bury do?’ Puck demanded. ‘He had promised money to the King.’

Kadmiel smiled grimly. ‘I sent him word from London that the Lord was on my side. When he heard that the Plague had broken out in Pevensey, and that a Jew had been thrust into the Castle to cure it, he understood my

word was true. He and Adah hurried to Lewes and asked me for an accounting. He still looked on the gold as his own. I told them where I had laid it, and I gave them full leave to pick it up.... Eh, well! The curses of a fool and the dust of a journey are two things no wise man can escape.... But I pitied Elias! The King was wroth at him because he could not lend; the Barons were wroth at him because they heard that he would have lent to the King; and Adah was wroth at him because she was an odious woman. They took ship from Lewes to Spain. That was wise!

‘And you? Did you see the signing of the Law at Runnymede?’ said Puck, as Kadmiel laughed noiselessly.

‘Nay. Who am I to meddle with things too high for me? I returned to Bury, and lent money on the autumn crops. Why not?’

There was a crackle overhead. A cock-pheasant that had sheered aside after being hit spattered down almost on top of them, driving up the dry leaves like a shell. Flora and Folly threw themselves at it; the children rushed forward, and when they had beaten them off and smoothed down the plumage Kadmiel had disappeared.

‘Well,’ said Puck, calmly, ‘what did you think of it? Weland gave the Sword. The Sword gave the Treasure, and the Treasure gave the Law. It’s as natural as an oak growing.’

‘I don’t understand. Didn’t he know it was Sir Richard’s old treasure?’

said Dan. 'And why did Sir Richard and Brother Hugh leave it lying about? And—and——'

'Never mind,' said Una, politely. 'He'll let us come and go, and look, and know another time. Won't you, Puck?'

'Another time maybe,' Puck answered. 'Brr! It's cold—and late. I'll race you towards home!'

They hurried down into the sheltered valley. The sun had almost sunk behind Cherry Clack, the trodden ground by the cattle-gates was freezing at the edges, and the new-waked north wind blew the night on them from over the hills. They picked up their feet and flew across the browned pastures, and when they halted, panting in the steam of their own breath, the dead leaves whirled up behind them. There was Oak and Ash and Thorn enough in that year-end shower to magic away a thousand memories.

So they trotted to the brook at the bottom of the lawn, wondering why Flora and Folly had missed the quarry-hole fox.

Old Hobden was just finishing some hedge-work. They saw his white smock glimmer in the twilight where he faggoted the rubbish.

'Winter, he's come, I rackon, Mus' Dan,' he called. 'Hard times now till Heffle Cuckoo Fair. Yes, we'll all be glad to see the Old Woman let the Cuckoo out o' the basket for to start lawful Spring in England.' They

heard a crash, and a stamp and a splash of water as though a heavy old cow were crossing almost under their noses.

Hobden ran forward angrily to the ford.

‘Gleason’s bull again, playin’ Robin all over the Farm! Oh, look, Mus’
Dan—his great footmark as big as a trencher. No bounds to his impidence!
He might count himself to be a man—or Somebody.’

A voice the other side of the brook boomed:

‘I marvel who his cloak would turn
When Puck had led him round
Or where those walking fires would burn——’

Then the children went in singing “Farewell Rewards and Fairies” at the tops of their voices. They had forgotten that they had not even said good-night to Puck.