

A colorful illustration of four children in a forest. On the left, a girl in a green dress and blue hat stands by a tree, reading. In the center, a boy in a blue tunic and a girl in a green dress with a straw hat walk together, both holding and reading books. On the right, a boy in a white shirt and blue pants stands reading. The background features rolling green hills, more trees, and a blue sky with a single cloud. The ground is a mix of brown dirt paths and green grass.

CLASSICS TO GO

FAIRY TALES

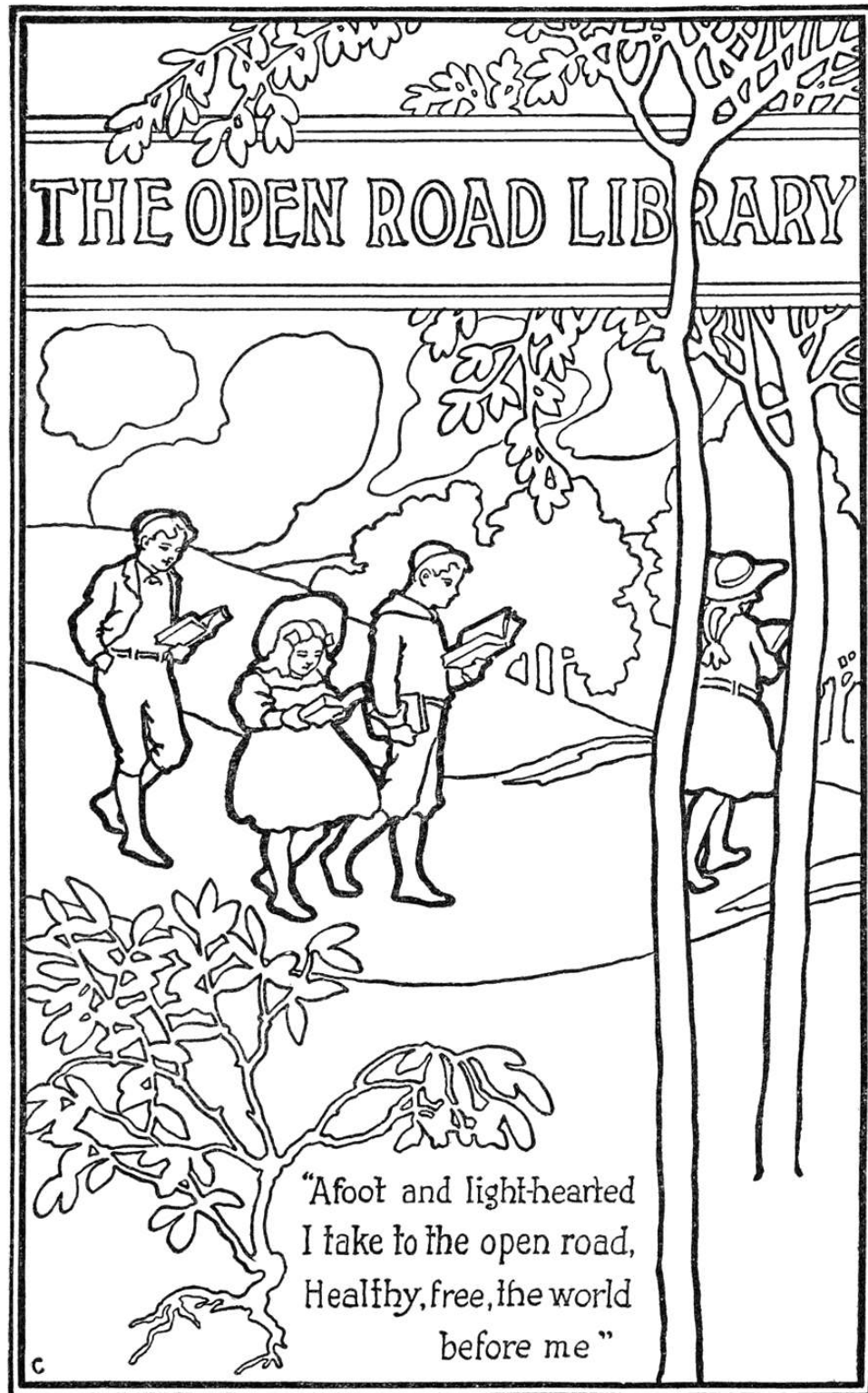
VOLUME 1

MARION FLORENCE LANSING

Fairy Tales

Volume I

Marion Florence Lansing



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"Afoot and light-hearted I take to the open road, Healthy, free, the world before me."

PREFACE

Fairy Tales, of which this is the first volume, follows without break an earlier book, *Rhymes and Stories*, and is made up chiefly of Märchen, or nursery tales, with a few drolls, or comic anecdotes. The term "fairy tale" has been used in its popular sense as including "tales in which occurs something 'fairy,' something extraordinary,—giants, fairies, dwarfs, speaking animals. It must also be taken to cover tales in which what is extraordinary is the stupidity of the actors."

The tales are usually romantic, with a definite plot, but without emphasis on the point of their being fact or fiction. They do not locate the hero in history or require a definite time or place, but begin with "Once upon a time, in a certain town or village," or with some equally indefinite introduction. They deal with the supernatural, and always end well for the hero or heroine. They have usually been retold from their original traditional form by some skilled story-teller. Very few are distinctly English, though those from other lands have been adopted by English-speaking peoples.

Sagas, of which "Jack the Giant Killer" is an example, differ from the other classes in having definite localities and dates assigned to them. They have been reserved for *Tales of Old England*, which immediately follows in the series. We have been compelled to omit from these volumes many tales which are worthy favorites, but with at least as many fairy stories as are here collected every child should be familiar. The aim has been to give a proportionate representation to each of the great story-tellers, and to

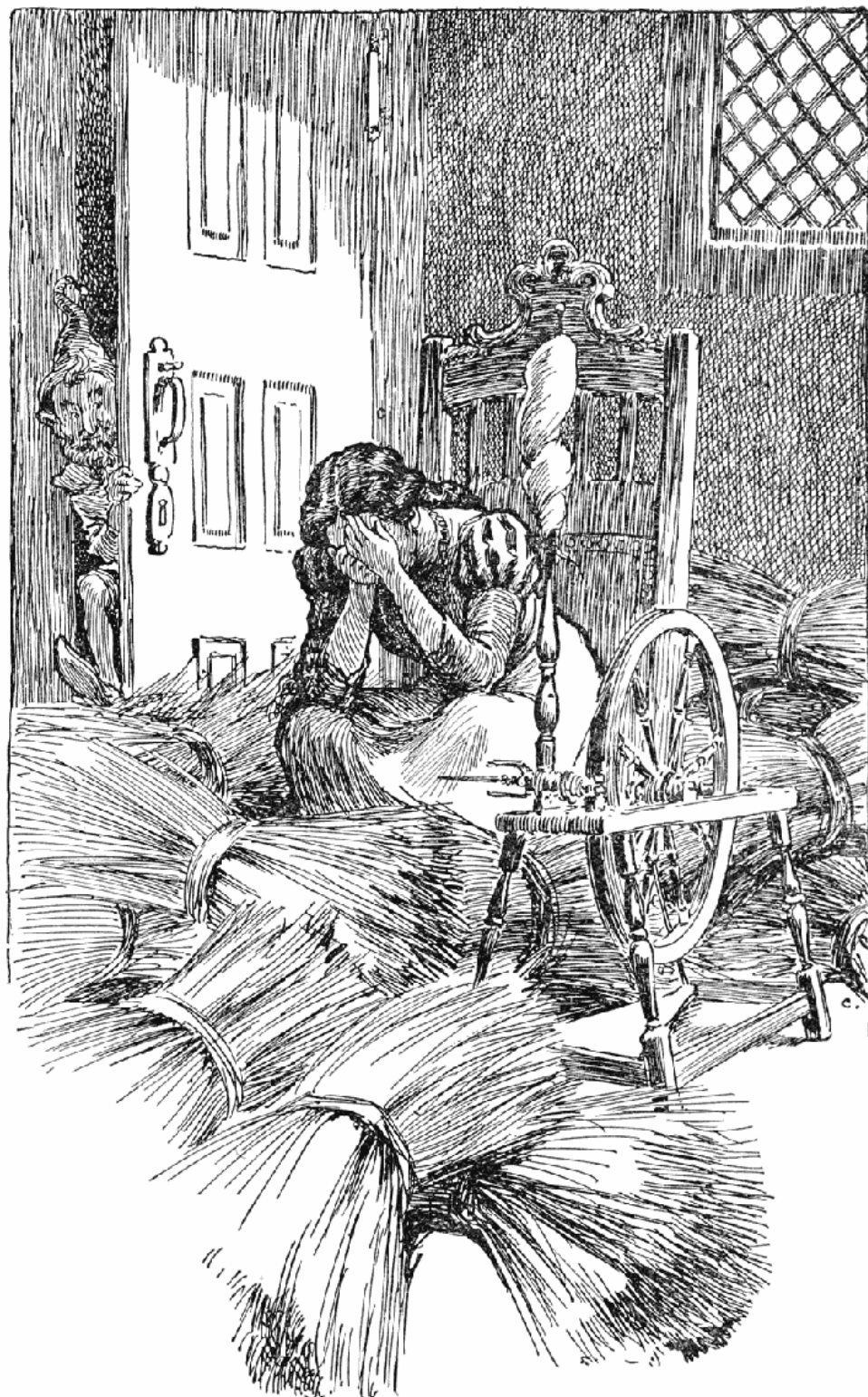
each kind of story, and to introduce the best examples of the leading motifs of folklore. The original sources have been sought out in every case,—in English chapbooks, in collections of 1696 and 1795, in German and Old French,—and these versions have been carefully and minutely compared with the best versions of later times and of the present. Besides the scholarly interest attaching to such research, the practical effect has been to simplify the stories by dropping off the fanciful additions made by successive editors and returning to the beautiful simplicity and the clear, forceful language of these wonderful products of the story-teller's art.

M. F. LANSING

CAMBRIDGE, MASSACHUSETTS

CONTENTS

	PAGE
RUMPELSTILTSKIN	1
DOLL-IN-THE-GRASS	9
HOW TO TELL A REAL PRINCESS	14
THE FROG PRINCE	17
CINDERELLA	26
HANS IN LUCK	42
DIAMONDS AND TOADS	56
PUSS IN BOOTS	62
RAPUNZEL	75
BEAUTY AND THE BEAST	86
THE STEADFAST TIN SOLDIER	108
HOP-O'-MY-THUMB	118
"AINSEL"	139
PERONELLA	141
FAIR GOLDBLOCKS	149



RUMPELSTILTSKIN

There was once a miller who was very poor, but he had a beautiful daughter. Now it happened that he had occasion to speak with the King, and in order to appear a person of some consequence he told him that he had a daughter who could spin straw into gold.

“Now that is an art worth having,” said the King to the miller; “if your daughter is as skillful as you say, bring her to-morrow to my palace and I will put her to the test.”

When the girl was brought to him he led her into a room which was full of straw, and giving her a spinning wheel and spindle he said, “Now set to work, and if by to-morrow morning early you have not spun this straw into gold, you shall die.”

Then he locked the door himself, and left her alone in the room.

The poor miller’s daughter sat there, and for the life of her could not think what to do. She had not the least idea how to turn straw into gold, and she became more and more unhappy, till at last she began to cry. Then all at once the door opened, and in came a tiny little man and said to her, “Good evening, Mistress Miller; why are you crying so bitterly?”

“Alas!” answered the girl, “I have to spin straw into gold, and I do not know how to do it.”

“What will you give me,” said the little man, “if I spin it for you?”

“My necklace,” said the girl.

The little man took the necklace, seated himself before the spinning wheel, and whirr, whirr, whirr, the wheel went round three times, and the reel was full of gold. Then he put on more straw, and whirr, whirr, whirr, the wheel went round three turns, and the reel was full a second time. And so it went on till morning, when all the straw was spun and the reels were full of gold.



At sunrise the King came to the room, and when he saw the gold he was astonished and delighted, but his heart was only greedy for more. He had the miller's daughter taken into a still larger room full of straw, and commanded her to spin that, too, in one night, if she valued her life. The girl did not know what to do, and began to cry; then the door opened as before, and the little man appeared and said, "What will you give me if I spin the straw into gold for you?"

"I will give you the ring from my finger," answered the girl.

The little man took the ring, began to turn the wheel round with a whirr again, and by morning had spun all the straw into glittering gold.

The King was pleased beyond measure at the sight, but still he had not gold enough. He had the miller's daughter taken into a still larger room filled with straw, and said, "You must spin this, too, in the course of the night; but if all this straw is spun into gold by morning, you shall be my wife."

"Even though she is only a miller's daughter," he thought to himself, "I could not find a richer wife anywhere in the whole world."

When the girl was alone the little man came for the third time, and said, "What will you give me if I spin the straw for you this once more?"

"I have nothing more that I can give," answered the girl.

"Then promise me when you are queen to give me your first child."

"Who knows what may happen before that?" thought the miller's daughter; and, besides, she knew no way to help

herself out of this difficulty. So she promised the little man what he asked, and for that he soon spun the straw into gold once more.

When the King came in the morning and found everything as he had wished, he took her in marriage, and the miller's beautiful daughter became a queen.

A year later she had a beautiful child, and she never gave a thought to the little man; but all of a sudden one day he walked into her room and said, "Now give me what you promised."

The Queen was terrified, and offered the little man all the treasures of the kingdom if he would only leave her her child.

But the little man said, "No, something living is dearer to me than all the treasures in the world."

Then the Queen began to mourn and weep so bitterly that the little man was sorry for her, and said, "I will give you three days, and if in that time you can guess my name, you shall keep your child."

Then the Queen lay awake till morning, thinking over all the names she had ever heard of, and she sent a messenger over the country to inquire far and near any other names there might be. When the little man came the next day she began with Caspar, Melchior, Balthazar, and repeated all the names she knew; but at each one the little man said, "No, that's not my name."

The next day she sent to inquire the names of all the people in the neighborhood, and had a long list of the most uncommon and extraordinary names for the little man when he came.

“Is your name Shortribs, perhaps, or Sheepshanks, or Spindleleg?”

But he always replied, “No, that is not my name.”

The third day the messenger returned and reported: “I have not been able to find any more new names, but on my way home, as I came to a high mountain on the edge of the forest, I saw there a little house, and before the house a fire was burning, and round the fire a ridiculous little man was hopping and dancing on one leg and crying:

“‘To-day I brew, to-morrow I bake,
Next morning I shall the Queen’s child take;
How glad I am that no one can dream
That Rumpelstiltskin is my name!’”



You can imagine how delighted the Queen was when she heard the name. And when the little man came in a little later and asked, "Now, Lady Queen, what is my name?" she asked first, "Is your name Conrad?"

"No."

"Is your name Henry?"

"No."

"Is your name, perhaps, Rumpelstiltskin?"