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The Fairy's New Year Gift

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Two little boys were at play one day when a fairy suddenly appeared to them and said: "I have been sent to give you a New Year present."

She handed to each child a package, and, at the same instant, was gone.

Carl and Philip opened the packages and found the same thing in each — a beautiful book with white pages, as pure, white, and beautiful as the snow when it first falls.



After a long time, the fairy came again to the boys. "I have brought you each a new book," she said, "and will take back the others to Father Time, who sent them to you."

"May I not keep mine a little longer?" said Philip; "I have hardly thought about it lately. I'd like to paint something on the last page that lies open."

"No," said the fairy, "I must take it just as it is."

"I wish I could look through mine just once!" said Carl. "I have only seen one page at a time ; for when a leaf turns over, it sticks fast, and I never can open the book at more than one place."

"You shall look over your book," said the fairy, "and Philip his." And she lit for each of them a little silver lamp, by the light of which they saw the pages as she turned them.

The boys looked in wonder. Could it be that this was the same fair book she had given them a year ago? Where were the pure white pages, as pure, white and beautiful as the snow when it first falls? Here was a page with ugly black blots and scratches upon it ; while the very next page had a lovely little picture. Some pages were decorated with gold and silver and gorgeous colors, others with beautiful flowers, and others still with a rain- bow of softest, most delicate brightness. Yet even on the most beautiful of the pages there were those ugly blots and scratches.

Carl and Philip looked up at the fairy at last.

"Who did this?" they asked. "Every page was white and fair as we opened to it;

yet now there is not a single. blank space in the whole book !"

"Shall I explain some of the pictures to you?" said the fairy, smiling at the two little boys. "See, Philip, the spray of roses blossomed on this page when you let the baby have your playthings ; and this pretty bird which looks so cunning and as if it were singing with all its might, would never have been on this page if you had not tried to be kind and pleasant the other day instead of quarreling."

"But what makes this blot?" asked Philip.



"That," said the fairy sadly, "that came when you told an untruth one day; and this when you did not mind mamma. All these blots and scratches, that look so ugly both on your book and on Carl's, were made when you were naughty in any way and did not obey your mamma or papa or your teacher. Each pretty thing in your books came on the page when you were good, and each blot when you were naughty." "Oh ! if we could only have the books again!" said Carl and Philip.

"That cannot be," said the fairy. "See ! they are marked for this year and they must now go back into Father Time's bookcase ; but I have brought you each a new one. Perhaps you can make these more beautiful than the others."

So saying, she vanished, and the boys were left alone; but each held in his hand a new book open at the first page.

And on the back of this book was written in beautiful letters, "For the New Year!"

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