

LITTLE STORIES FOR LITTLE PEOPLE**THE GREEDY HERON**

By ALEJANDRO GABORNI *

ONCE upon a time a Heron invited his friend, the Frog, to a dinner. But the Heron did not have much to eat: only a few flies and mosquitoes which he had brought from a pond. The Frog, who was very polite, ate some of the food, and thanked the Heron.

Then the Frog's turn came. She prepared a fine dinner consisting of a bowl of fish, roasted lizards, and plenty of fat earthworms. Then she got a platter of nice insects for herself.

The Heron arrived and seated himself at one end of the table without waiting for the Frog. He ate everything he could find on the table. When he had finished eating the last fat worm, he said:

"What a very poor dinner! It is too light. Have you anything more to eat in the house?"

"Nothing more, kind sir," said the Frog, "unless you would want to eat me."

Of course the Frog was only joking, but the Heron opened his sharp bill and swallowed the Frog.

The Heron went out of the house and down the field, swinging his long bill gaily and still looking for something to eat.

On the way he met an old Mudfish looking out for a fine dinner of fresh tadpoles. He saw what the Heron had done with the Frog.

"You greedy Heron," said the Mudfish, "why did you eat your friend the Frog?"



"Greedy, indeed!" said the Heron, "I am thinking of eating you, too."

The Heron opened his sharp bill and down his throat went the old Mudfish. Then on through the watery field up and down he slowly stalked feeling finer than ever.

As he went he met an old Snake who was hunting for a dinner of toads and frogs.

"Go away, Heron," said the old Snake, "or I will bite you."

"Bite me, indeed!" said the Heron. "I have eaten my friend the Frog; I have eaten an old Mudfish. What is to stop me from eating you?"

He opened his bill wide, and down his throat went the old Snake.

Then the Greedy Heron started again, but more slowly. As he travelled he met a clumsy crab.

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GREEDY HERON

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"Get out of my way, you!" ordered the Crab.

"No, sir," said the Heron proudly. "I have eaten the Frog; I have eaten the old Mudfish, and I have eaten the old Snake. What is to stop me from eating you?"

But before the Heron could finish what he was saying, the Crab raised up his two mighty pinchers and pinched the Heron's neck.

SOME QUESTIONS

1. Do you think the Heron was polite?
2. What did the Heron do to the Frog?

MOUSIE

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(They bury the treasure again; cover it with soil and run toward a clump of trees nearby. They climb a tall one).

MOUSIE: *(Excitedly)* Look, dad! They've changed their course. They aren't coming here.

MOUSIE'S DAD: Sure enough, son. I thought they would land and make us prisoners once more—with the treasure we found.

MOUSIE: Let's get down. It's safe now. Then we can get the treasure again and sail for home.

CURTAIN

PIED PIPER

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and the children went on their way to the mountain is called the "Street of the Children." In this street there is set up a large stone. On its side is cut the date, "June 26, A.D. 1284." That is the day on which the Piper is said to have lead the boys and girls away. Up the street a little farther there is a statue of the Piper.

Every year, when the twenty-sixth of June comes around, all the people who live in Hamelin have a great holiday in memory of the children who followed the Piper.

On that day, the whole town is full of rats again. But these are not live rats. Instead, they are little cakes and cookies made into the shape of a rat. And all the stores in town have for sale little flutes, like the one the Piper played.

The boys and girls of Hamelin still love music, and they sing and play it all the year round. But no one is ever allowed to sing or play any music on the street through which the children followed the Piper, so long ago. That is to be a silent street forever.

JERUSALEM

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One of the famous places of Jerusalem is known as the Wailing Place of the Jews. This is a wall of very ancient stones, once supposed to have been a part of the temple erected by Solomon but now known to belong to later times. Every Friday Jews gather at this wall, kiss the ancient stones, mourn the loss of Jerusalem, and pray. There are Hebrew carvings on these stones; these are the prayers of pilgrims.

Except for its memories of the past, Jerusalem is not an attractive city today. The streets are narrow and dirty, shut in by the high gloomy walls of the buildings, and often overarched, so that they seem almost like passages through caves. The houses are square and flat-topped, with few outside courts. The streets are crowded with traders, beggars, and pilgrims and travelers from all over the world.

Old Jerusalem is buried deep in the ground; modern Jerusalem is partly an old Crusaders' town with Mohammedan additions, and partly a uninteresting travel resort, but to the followers of two faiths Jerusalem will ever be a sacred city.