

**THE KING OF THE GOLDEN  
RIVER: OR,  
THE BLACK BROTHERS;  
A LEGEND OF STÍRÍA**

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The King of the Golden River: Or, The Black Brothers; a Legend of Stíría by John Ruskin & John C. Johansen

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**JOHN RUSKIN & JOHN C. JOHANSEN**

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## **The Canterbury Classics**

A Series of Supplementary Readers  
edited under the general supervision of

**KATHARINE LEE BATES**

*Professor of English Literature in  
Wellesley College, Wellesley, Mass.*

*The text of this edition of "The King of the Golden River" agrees with that of the standard English edition, which is the fifth London edition, as corrected by the author, and issued by the original publishers of the story, Smith, Elder & Company, London, 1863*

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The  
**King of the Golden River**  
OR  
**The Black Brothers**

A Legend of Stria

By  
**John Ruskin**

Edited by  
**KATHARINE LEE BATES**  
*Professor of English Literature in Wellesley College*

Illustrated by  
**JOHN C. JOHANSEN**



**Rand, McNally & Company**

Chicago

New York

London



## INTRODUCTION TO THE SERIES

THE series of Canterbury Classics aims to bear its share in acquainting school children with literature suited to their years. The culture of the imagination is no less important than the culture of memory and the reasoning power. That childhood is poor which has not for friends many of the goodly company represented by Hector, Achilles, Roland, Sigurd, My Cid, Don Quixote, Lancelot, Robin Hood, Percy, the Douglas, Gulliver, Puck, Rip Van Winkle, and Alice in Wonderland. College class-rooms, where Dante and Spenser, Goethe and Coleridge are taught, speedily feel the difference between minds nourished, from babyhood up, on myths of Olympus and myths of Asgard, Hans Christian Andersen, old ballads, the "Pilgrim's Progress," the "Arabian Nights," the "Alhambra," and minds which are still strangers to fairyland and hero-land and all the dreamlands of the world's inheritance. Minds of this latter description come almost as barbarians to the study of poetry, deaf to its music and blind to its visions. They are in a foreign clime. In the larger college of life, no less, is felt the lack of an early initiation into literature. A practical people in a practical age, we need the grace of fable to balance our fact, the joy of poetry to leaven our prose. Something of the sort we are bound to have, and if familiarity in childhood with the classic tone has not armed us against the cheap, the flimsy, the corrupt in fiction, we fall easy victims to the trash of the hour. We become the sport of those mocking elves who give dry leaves for gold.

This series must needs conform somewhat, in its choice of books, to the present demands of the schools. It will furnish all good reading that is desired, but it aims also to help in arousing a desire for the more imaginative and inspiring legends



of the Aryan race. In the case of every volume issued the text of the authoritative edition will be faithfully reproduced.

These texts will be furnished with a modest amount of apparatus hidden away at the end of the book. It is the classic that is of importance. Often it may be best to disregard the notes. The series is addressed to children and aims to stimulate imagination, broaden sympathy, and awaken a love for literature. The editors strive to keep these aims in view and to avoid breaking the charm of the story by irrelevant and burdensome information. What is told is meant to be what a child would naturally like to know about the book that pleases him and the writer of the book. The biographical sketches emphasize, whenever it is appropriate, the childhood of the authors treated, and try throughout to give, by concrete illustration, impressions of personality and character. Special subjects sometimes call for special sketches, but, in general, the editorial work aims at quality rather than quantity. Knowledge which seems essential to intelligent reading, and which dictionary and teacher cannot reasonably be counted on to supply, has its place in notes, yet it is not forgotten that the notes exist for the sake of the literature, not the literature for the sake of the notes. Parents and librarians will appreciate the reading lists of books attractive to children, either by the author of the classic in hand or along the same lines of interest. Certain teachers, crowded and wearied with a variety of tasks, will welcome the section of suggestions.

We have ventured to associate this series with the memory of the sweetest and most childlike spirit in English song, hoping that little pilgrims of to-day, journeying by April ways, may find as much cheer in gentle stories as did the poet of the *Canterbury Tales*.

KATHARINE LEE BATES.

*Wellesley College.*

## ADVERTISEMENT

*(Taken from the first edition, 1850)*

**T**HE Publishers think it due to the Author of this Fairy Tale to state the circumstances under which it appears.

**T**HE King of the Golden River was written in 1841, at the request of a very young lady, and solely for her amusement, without any idea of publication. It has since remained in the possession of a friend, to whose suggestion, and the passive assent of the Author, the Publishers are indebted for the opportunity of printing it.

