THE CHILDREN'S BLUE BIRD

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649159321

The children's Blue bird by Georgette Leblanc

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GEORGETTE LEBLANC

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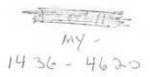
By Georgette Leblanc

Translated by
Alexander Teixeira De Mattos

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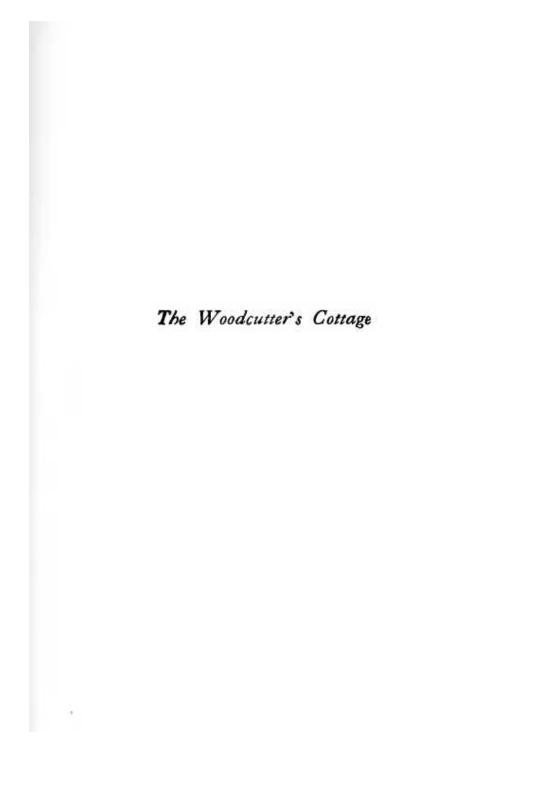
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CHAPTER I

THE WOODCUTTER'S COTTAGE

ONCE upon a time, a woodcutter and his wife lived in their cottage on the edge of a large and ancient forest. They had two dear little children who met with a most wonderful adventure.

But, before telling you all about it, I must describe the children to you and let you know something of their character; for, if they had not been so sweet and brave and plucky, the curious story which you are about to hear would never have happened at all.

Tyltyl—that was our hero's name—was ten years old; and Mytyl, his little sister, was only six.

Tyltyl was a fine, tall little fellow, stout and well-setup, with curly black hair which was often in a tangle, for he was fond of a romp. He was a great favourite because of his smiling and good-tempered face and the bright look in his eyes; but, best of all, he had the ways of a bold and fearless little man, which showed the noble qualities of his heart. When, early in the morning, he trotted along the forest-road by the side of his daddy, Tyl the woodcutter, for all his shabby clothes he looked so proud and gallant that every beautiful thing on the earth and in the sky seemed to lie in wait for him to smile upon him as he passed.

His little sister was very different, but looked ever so sweet and pretty in her long frock, which Mummy Tyl kept neatly patched for her. She was as fair as her brother was dark; and her large timid eyes were blue as the forget-me-nots in the fields. Anything was enough to frighten her and she would cry at the least thing; but her little child's soul already held the highest womanly qualities: she was loving and gentle and so fondly devoted to her brother that, rather than abandon him, she did not hesitate to undertake a long and dangerous journey in his company.

What happened and how our little hero and heroine went off into the world one night in search of happiness: that is the subject of my story.

Daddy Tyl's cottage was the poorest of the countryside; and it seemed even more wretched because it stood opposite a splendid hall in which rich children lived. From the windows of the cottage you could see what went on inside the Hall when the dining-room and drawing-