

**AMONG THE
WOBLINS: A CHILD'S
ROMANCE; PP. 2-157**

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Among the Wobblins: A Child's Romance; pp. 2-157 by Sydney Hodges & Horace Petherick

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SYDNEY HODGES & HORACE PETHERICK

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AMONG THE WOBLINS

A Child's Romance

BY

SYDNEY HODGES

AUTHOR OF "AMONG THE GIBJIGS," ETC.

WITH NUMEROUS ILLUSTRATIONS

BY

HORACE PETHERICK



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BY PERMISSION.

TO

HER SERENE HIGHNESS

The Princess Victoria Mary of Teck

THIS FAIRY STORY IS DEDICATED,

WITH THE SINCERE RESPECT AND REGARD

OF ONE WHO KNEW HER

IN EARLY CHILDHOOD.

did not knock myself all to bits. But how ever am I to get up again, and what will become of poor dear little Tumpy?"

Chuffy was a plucky little fellow, but this last thought made his eyes fill with tears; and, while still gazing up the mountain side, he sat down on a stone to think.

"She's all right," said a voice close to his ear.

Chuffy almost jumped out of his skin. He turned round, and, there, close beside him, was a creature so ugly and so wonderful that it was enough to frighten him out of his wits. It had the head and beak of a bird, the legs and arms of a man, and claws like a cat or tiger.

To say that Chuffy was not startled would not be true, but for all the creature's ugliness he was not very much frightened. It seemed to have such a very silly expression that Chuffy rather pitied it.

All of a sudden the creature began opening its eyes very wide, and throwing up its claws in a threatening manner, and making a sort of feint of darting at Chuffy, but it took care not to come any nearer.

Chuffy naturally felt it rather a difficult matter to keep cool, but he tried hard not to exhibit any symptoms of terror, and said, in as calm a voice as he could command, "What in the world are you doing that for?"

"Ain't you frightened?" said the creature, looking a little disappointed.

Chuffy hardly knew what to say. He was frightened, but he did not intend to admit it; so he merely answered, "Well, it makes you look very horrid."

The creature burst out into a laugh, or at least what was intended for a laugh, but having only a beak, it sounded more like a croak. His voice also was like a rook's caw.

"He does not seem half a bad fellow," thought Chuffy, who was somewhat reassured by the laugh; but still he thought it better to keep at a safe distance, and he noticed that the creature still avoided coming very near him.

"I never saw anything like you before," he said, after a pause.

"No, I suppose not," said the creature, "because you have never been in Ogdedom before. But there are many worse than I am. In fact, I am generally considered good looking."

"What on earth can the others be like then!" thought Chuff.

"Do you mind my asking what you are called?" he said.

"No, not a bit. I'm a Woblin," said the creature.

"And what's a Woblin?" asked Chuff.

"Why, *I'm* a Woblin, I tell you," said the creature.

"But what are you *for*? I mean," continued Chuff, "Why have you got a bird's head, and claws like a cat?"

"What have you got a boy's head for?" answered the Woblin, "and miserable little nails to your hands and feet? How are you going to climb up mountains like that? How do you peck out your enemies' eyes, I should like to know? How do you climb trees, scratch holes to sleep in, or do anything, in fact?"

"I don't want to peck out my enemies' eyes," answered Chuffy. "In the first place, I have no enemies, and if I had, I certainly should not be so cruel as to peck out their eyes, and I can climb trees fast enough. Can't you do anything more useful?"

He was feeling rather shuddery again at the idea of the creature pecking out eyes, but at this moment his thoughts were diverted by the extraordinary actions of the Woblin. The creature began running round and round in a large circle at a most tremendous pace, leaping over huge rocks, tumbling heels over head, and making himself utterly ridiculous. At last he stopped, quite out of breath, and croaked out, "That's what I can do."



"You certainly are amazingly active," said Chuff.

"Don't use such long words" said the Woblin; "we never do here."

Chuff recalled poor little Tumpy's rebuke of the day before about the word "occasionally," and this brought his thoughts back to her.

"You said Tumpy was all right. Do you know what she is doing?" he asked.

"Yes; she's in Sunnyrealm, and I wish I was there, too," said the Woblin.

"Why, I left her at the top of the hill," said Chuff. "How can she be in Sunnyrealm? What is Sunnyrealm?"

"Oh, come, I say!" answered the Woblin, leering at Chuffy with a sort of twinkle in his eye. "You know as well as I do that Sunnyrealm is where the Guikwaress lives, and where the Gibgigs are."

"I don't know anything about it, and you are talking nonsense," answered Chuffy, who began to feel exceedingly plucky as he noticed the increasing silliness of the Woblin's expression.

"Boo-o-o-o-o-o-o-whoosh!" said the Woblin, pretending to make another dart at him. Then seeing that Chuffy did not exhibit any fear, he grinned again and said, "Ain't you frightened now?"

"No, I'm not" said Chuffy. "You won't do me any harm. You couldn't if you would, and you wouldn't if you could, I'm perfectly convinced."

"I say, you know," said the Woblin, in a remonstrative tone.

"What's the matter now?" said Chuff.

"Don't, for goodness' sake, use such long words. I can't tell you how they confuse me. What were those last two?"

Chuffy thought a moment, and then repeated, "perfectly convinced."

The Woblin sat down on a stone, and put his hands on each side of his head, as if he were holding his brains together.

"Oh, don't, for pity's sake," he said; "I can't tell you the fearful effect they have on me."

He seemed utterly to collapse. A sudden idea rushed through