

THE STAR OF THE FAIRIES

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The Star of the Fairies by Mrs. C.-W. Elphinstone Hope & John Laurent

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MRS. C.-W. ELPHINSTONE HOPE & JOHN LAURENT

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It happened that one of the little Princesses, Sybil, was an invalid, recovering from measles, which prevented her accompanying the party, and she was very unhappy at being the only one left at home.

THE STAR
OF THE FAIRIES

BY

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ILLUSTRATED

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THE STAR OF THE FAIRIES

Once upon a time, in one of the stars of heaven there was a world called Luminarium, which like our earth contained many countries. Among these Freeland had been one of the most powerful and flourishing, but at the time my story opens, its power had begun to decline and its name to lose its prestige, for Ponymus, the King, was prematurely old and feeble, and left his kingdom entirely in the charge of his ministers, who cared more for their own popularity and aggrandizement, than for the honour of their country. Ponymus had married late in life, and had several children, of whom his favourite was the Princess Blanche, his eldest daughter, then about twelve years of age, who most resembled her mother, Queen Lucinda. This young Princess had great abilities, and was particularly fond of reading, but though delighting in tales of noble deeds, it never occurred to her to try

and emulate them. Satisfied with being born a great Princess, with having everything that she desired, she never troubled herself about her fellow-creatures, nor cared to think whether she might be able to alleviate some of the misery in the world, and thus be noble also. No, she never gave a thought to any one but herself. Fairy Egoiste was her constant companion, and spoilt what might, under different tutelage, have been a distinguished character.

Blanche was tall and graceful, and her face would have been beautiful had its expression been sweeter, but the perfectly formed features were cold and haughty, taking away all charm from her otherwise lovely countenance. Being a Princess, of course she was surrounded by flatterers, who made her believe that she could do nothing wrong. Her haughty, imperious manner was termed royal, her insolence was designated wit, and her headstrong self-will was called character.

In the large wood adjoining her father's park there was a lovely glade, where she could indulge her passion for reading undisturbed. One day she had betaken herself to her favourite nook, and reclining on a mossy couch, was engrossed in the contents of her book, when suddenly she felt some one touch her arm, and looking up, beheld a very shabbily-dressed old woman, who seemed blind. Disliking every thing ugly and poor, the Princess sprang from her