

THE GETTING OF WISDOM

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The getting of wisdom by Henry Handel Richardson

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Black
The
Getting of Wisdom

By
Henry Handel Richardson
Author of "Maurice Guest"



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William Heinemann
1910

TO MY
UNNAMED
LITTLE COLLABORATOR

761857

Wisdom is the principal thing; therefore
get wisdom: and with all thy getting get
understanding.

Proverbs iv. 7

THE four children were lying on the grass.

"... and the Prince went further and further into the forest," said the elder girl, "till he came to a beautiful glade—a glade, you know, is a place in the forest that is open and green and lovely. And there he saw a lady, a beautiful lady, in a long white dress, that hung down to her ankles, with a golden belt and a golden crown. She was lying on the sward—a sward, you know, is grass as smooth as velvet, just like green velvet—and the Prince saw the marks of travel on her garments. The bottom of the lovely silk dress was all dirty——"

"Wondrous Fair, if you don't mind, you'll make that sheet dirty, too," said Pin.

"Shut up, will you!" answered her sister, who, carried away by her narrative, had approached her boots to some linen that was bleaching.

"Yes, but you know Sarah'll be awfully cross if she has to wash it again," said Pin, who was practical.

"You'll put me out altogether," cried Laura angrily.—"Well, as I said, the edge of her robe was all muddy—no, I don't think I will say that; it sounds prettier if it's clean. So it hung in long, straight, beautiful folds to her ankles, and the Prince saw two little feet in golden sandals peeping out from under the hem of the silken gown, and——"

"But what about the marks of travel?" asked Leppie.

"Donkey! haven't I said they weren't there? If I say they weren't, then they weren't. She hadn't travelled at all."

"Oh, parrakeets!" cried little Frank.

Four pairs of eyes went up to the bright green flock that was passing over the garden.

"Now you've all interrupted, and I shan't tell any more," said Laura, in a proud voice.

"Oh, yes, please do, Wondrous Fair! Tell what happened next," begged Pin and Leppie.

"No, not another word. You can only think of sheets and parrakeets."

"Pease, Wondous Fair," begged little Frank.

"No, I can't now.—Another thing: I don't mind if you call me Laura, to-day, as it's the last day."

She lay back on the grass, her hands clasped under her head. A voice was heard, loud, imperative.

"Laura, I want you. Come here."

"That's mother calling," said Pin.

Laura kicked her heels. The two little boys laughed approval.

"Go on, Laura," coaxed Pin. "Mother'll be angry. I'll come, too."

Laura raised herself with a grumble. "It's to try on that horrid dress."

In very fact, Mother was standing, already somewhat impatient, with the dress in her hand. Laura wriggled out of the one she had on, and stood stiffly and ungraciously, with her arms held like pokers from her sides, while Mother, on her knees, arranged the length.

"Don't put on a face like that, miss!" she said sharply, on seeing Laura's air. "Do you think I'm