

NOLL AND THE FAIRIES

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Noll and the fairies by Hervey White

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HERVEY WHITE

**NOLL AND
THE FAIRIES**

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"ON SHE FLEW INTO THE BARN-YARD."

Noll *and the* Fairies

BY

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Noll *and the* Fairies

I

ONCE upon a time, long ago, in a wide, green, far-away country, where all the raindrops are pearls and the dewdrops most beautiful diamonds, there was born in the end of a rainbow a tiny little brown baby, blinking his big eyes like a bat and screaming at the top of his voice.

The nurse, who pretended to know

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everything, said he cried because he was cold, and straightway she put him into warm water and made ready with flannels and bandages. The doctor, who knew so much that he never said anything whatever, walked away with the father to take a drink. And the mother, who knew nothing at all, but just smiled and smiled, she was so happy, lay looking out of the window wondering why the world was so rosy, for she didn't even know of the rainbow, though its light was in her eyes and on her mouth. The schoolmaster, who was not there, but who knew more than anyone for all that, said he knew the reason the baby was crying, but he wouldn't tell for six years, and then only to the baby himself. It was wonderful how the schoolmaster could keep talking and never tell anything

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at all, but that is one of the secrets of learning and doesn't concern you or me.

Well, the baby grew and grew, and was called Noll; that was because his head was so round. His nose stuck out like a hazelnut, and what little hair there was on him was a sort of hazelnut brown. He stared with his big bubble eyes and screwed up his face and grunted, and what he liked best of all was to feed at his mother's breast. And what he liked next best, I guess, was to sleep, and be let alone, and not have the nurse bundling at him, and children poking him with fingers, and screaming "peek" in his face. Well, so he grew and grew, just a little all the time, till the day of his christening came, and all the people were rejoicing. Now it was at the supper after the

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christening that the schoolmaster got to drinking more than usual—he was always drinking more than usual—and it was while he was drinking more than usual that he up and told the father his secret that he wasn't to tell for six years. The father listened attentively, as one should when the schoolmaster talks, and though the secret wasn't really true, not at all what actually happened, it makes little difference to us, for it brings us to the beginning of our story.

You see the fairies, at the birth, were quarreling over the baby, partly because fairies are always quarreling—the good ones quarreling with the bad—and partly because this baby was born in the end of a rainbow, which doesn't happen very often, and is a matter of great importance when it