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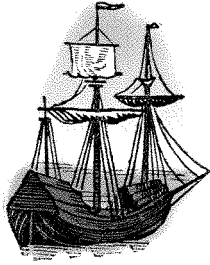
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This was a busy day at Scrooby Inn

From Old Homes to New



At Scrooby Inn

In the little village of Scrooby in England, four hundred years ago, stood a beautiful old house. It was the largest one in the village, and its moss-covered roof and large red chimneys rose high above the cottages around it.

The house stood close to the street, but behind it was a large garden where many bright flowers bloomed, and a row of tall trees cast their pleasant shade. On one side of the garden were three round ponds. For a hundred years these ponds had never failed to supply fish for the Friday dinner.

A great rosebush clung to the walls of the house. For years it had climbed and climbed, until now some of its clustering red blossoms peeped into one of the upper windows. The whole room was sweet with their fragrance. This old house had once been a fine palace, but now it was used as an inn where travelers might stay for the night.

In the stables beyond the garden there were some horses that belonged to the king. When his messengers carried his letters to the North Country, they always stopped here to change horses and rest for an hour.

Only a few miles from Scrooby was a famous old forest. Every child in the village knew the story of Robin Hood and his merry men who had once lived in this forest. They often played "Robin Hood"; it was the game they liked best of all.

Once a party of the king's friends, who were going to the forest to hunt, had stayed all night at the inn. This was a time always remembered by the children of the family. They seemed never to tire of talking about the packs of hounds, the beautiful horses, and the riders in their colorful hunting dress. Then there was the dinner in the great dining hall, and best of all, the long evening when they all sat around the fireplace and listened to the stories the hunters told.

The **landlord**, William Brewster, had not been pleased to have his children hear so much about life at the king's court, so they had been sent to bed much earlier than they wished. The next morning when they awoke, the noisy hunting party had gone. Had they really been there at all? Was it not all a bright dream?

One June morning Jonathan Brewster brought into the garden the new boat he had just finished. He was going to sail it upon the fish pond. His little sisters stood near watching the tiny boat make its first trip across the pond. Fear Brewster held in her arms a small wooden doll, very plain, but very dear to the



little mother. Jonathan wanted the doll for a passenger, but Fear would not trust her baby to the boat until she was sure it would not tip over.

The little ship had hardly touched the other side when a distant sound made the children spring to their feet and listen. Again they heard the long, clear sound of the bugle.

“It is the king’s messenger! Run and tell Henry to get out a fresh horse!” cried Patience. But Jonathan was already far down the path, calling the stable boy as he ran.

Patience drew the forgotten ship out of the water and ran into the house to tell her father.

There was a high stone wall around the house and garden, and, just outside the wall, a ditch filled with water. The bridge over the ditch might be drawn up so none could cross, but this was not often done.

When Master Brewster came out to unlock the great iron gate, Patience and little Fear were close at his side. They always felt afraid of the tall messenger who looked so stern and said so little, but they loved to hear the clatter of swift hoofs, and to see horse and rider dash through the gate into the yard.

They had not long to wait. Again the sound of the bugle was heard, very near this time. Another minute, and into the village street galloped the beautiful black horse bearing the king's messenger.

The stable boy ran to meet him at the gate and held the horse's head while the man sprang to the ground.

"I have a message for you, Master Brewster," the messenger said. "Queen Anne, with her knights and ladies, journeys from her home in the North. They will rest for the night in your house."

Patience waited to hear no more, but flew into the house to tell her mother this wonderful news.

"Mother! Oh, Mother!" she called. "Where is Mother?"

From room to room she ran until she found her quiet, sweet-faced mother at her spinning wheel.

"Oh, Mother, the queen is coming here to stay all night! She has ever so many knights, and ladies, and servants with her. May I help get the best bedroom

ready for the queen? The messenger has come, and he is telling father all about it.”

“What are you talking about? You are excited, Patience.”

“The child is right,” said her father, who had just come into the room. “The queen is on her way to her new home in England you know, and the party will spend the night here.”

“There is little time to prepare for royal guests, but we will make them welcome,” said Mistress Brewster quietly.

VOCABULARY WORDS

fragrance—pleasant smell

landlord—a person who owns a building

bugle—a musical instrument, like a trumpet, used for military calls

COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS

1. What had this beautiful old house been before it was used as an inn for travelers?
2. Why were some of the king’s horses kept in the stables?
3. What did the children enjoy most of all about the hunting party that stayed at the inn?
4. What news did the messenger bring at the end of the story?
5. How does Patience respond to this news?