

## SYNOPSIS

Tom was a boy and a chimney-sweep who worked for Mr. Grimes. He was black in appearance because he never washed himself, the same with Mr. Grimes, who washed himself sometimes only for coolness instead of for cleanliness. One day they went to Sir John's place because its chimneys wanted sweeping. On the way there, they came up with an Irishwoman who warned them, before she turned away, that those who wish to be clean, clean they will be, and those that wish to be foul, foul they will be.

Arriving at the place, Tom was astonished to see such a big house with its large and crooked chimneys. He was lost in the chimney, came down the wrong one, and found himself standing on the hearthrug in a lady's room. The room was all dressed in white. But what surprised Tom most was the sleeping beautiful lady whose cheeks were almost as white as the pillow. Then he saw a little ugly, black, ragged figure standing close to him. Tom was so surprised to realize at last, that it was himself, reflected in a great mirror. He burst into tears with shame and anger that the little white lady jumped up and seeing Tom, screamed with all she might. Then, Tom was under a great chase, until he could get out of the place and came to a moor. There he saw pretty sights of beautiful creatures who were all busy with their own family life.

Tom ran and walked further till he wished it was all over since he was getting terribly tired and all the while he did not realize the Irishwoman coming down behind him.

At last, he stumbled away, down over a low wall, and into a narrow road, and up to a cottage-door. He was most clemmed with hunger and drought that the first word he said was 'water'. The kind-hearted old dame helped him with milk and bread and bade him sleep off his walk. But Tom did not fall asleep. Instead he went, between his sleep and awake, into the stream, and cooled himself in it. Tom never knew that the Irishwoman had also stepped down into the water. It turned out that she was the Queen of the fairies who swam around the stream, and warned them all to keep Tom from being harmed, and not to play nor speak to him. Meanwhile the old dame, Sir John, and Grimes thought Tom had drowned and died. But Tom was quite alive and clean, for the fairies had washed him up.

Tom was then amphibious and very happy in the water, for he had been sadly overworked in the land-world. There Tom met new pretty creatures and very naughty he was, for he was fond of tormenting those creatures for mere sport, till he had no friends at all.

Tom thus behaved nice so that he could befriend a dragonfly, and a sweet chat they made between them later on, until Tom saw

beautiful otters rolling over down the stream. From them Tom knew about salmon and the broad sea, so as he longed to go there.

Suddenly a very heavy rain fell which was the right time for all inhabitants of the stream to go down to the sea. And so Tom rushed down, and could not stop, until he found himself out in the salmon river. All his fancy at that time was, to get down to the wide sea.

On a crack of the rock, Tom waited for someone to tell him where he shall go, until sculled up a salmon past him. He told Tom of the other water babies in the sea, that he was eager to meet them. Then Tom went to search one, without feeling the fairies' company. Afterwards, on a little point rock where Tom rested, he saw Mr. Grimes fell over the river, after some struggles with the keepers out of his poaching salmon there. Tom did not know that the fairies had taken Mr. Grimes away to his proper place.

One day over the rock, Tom and Mr. Lobster was having a nice chat when suddenly there walked there the little white lady with a professor, one of her father's acquaintance. Poor Tom was caught under the professor's net, and he dropped the baby again into the water. Ellie was so upset that she sprang down, and slipped, and fell, and lay quite still. She kept calling out the water baby within her sleep and awake, until the fairies gave her wings to fly over the sea.

Another day, Tom succeeded in helping Mr. Lobster out of a cage trap. And at last, only within five minutes afterwards, he saw a wonderful sight, the water babies. They led the way to St. Brandan, their home, where lived Mrs. Bedonebyasyoudid, whose task is to punish the deserved one, and Mrs. Doasyouwouldbedoneby, whose task is to teach and cuddle the babies.

But still Tom was a naughty boy, as his body grew prickly after stealing candies. So then Ellie was sent by Mrs. Bedonebyasyoudid to teach him to be good. Shortly after, Tom curiously wanted to know about the place where Ellie always went on Sunday, the very beautiful place where only certain people might enter. And to go there, Tom must learn to like going where he did not like, and helping someone that he did not like, as Ellie has.

And so Tom made up his mind to go out and see the world, to help Mr. Grimes. Passing so many obstacles, Tom at last came into chimney no. 345, where his master was kept prisoner. Out of the top of it, Mr. Grimes's head and shoulders just showing, so sooty, and bleared, and ugly. Tom forgave him at last, and Grimes lamented his own impudent deeds to his mother, the old dame who ever helped Tom.

And as for Tom, he was sent back into the real land-world, and grew up into a tall handsome man, and met Ellie, who also grew up into a beautiful lady. So Tom went home with Ellie on Sundays, and he was then a great man of science.

## **THE AUTHOR'S LIFE AND WORKS**

Charles Kingsley was born in Holme, Devonshire in 1819 and was educated at Helston Grammar School; King's College, London; and Magdalene College, Cambridge. His university career was rumoured to have been a fairly dissolute one, but nevertheless he was ordained in 1842, following in the footsteps of his father. He went on from being curate to rector of the parish of Eversley, Hampshire. Whilst engaged to Frances Grenfell, whom he married in 1844, he began work on a version of the life of St Elizabeth of Hungary, which finally appeared in 1848 as the blank verse drama *The Saint's Tragedy*. At this time he was much influenced by the writings of Maurice and Carlyle, and he revealed a deep interest in social reform.

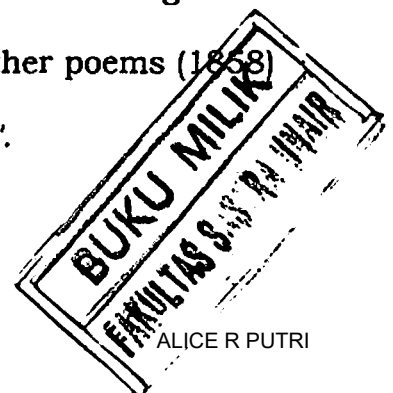
Under the pseudonym of 'Parson Lot' he contributed to *Politics for the People* in 1848 and to its successor, *The Christian Socialist*, in 1850-51. His debut novel, *Yeast*, was at first serialized in *Fraser's Magazine*, and was published in book form in 1850, to coincide with his second novel, *Alton Locke*. Both works deal with the need of poor people and expose the social injustice suffered by agricultural labourers and workers in clothing trade (Britannica, 1978 : 112).

His first historical novel, *Hypatia, or New Foes with Old Faces*, set in fifth-century Alexandria, was inspired by a trip to Germany in 1851. It was published in book form two years later to a mixed reception. Many regarded its imagery as too extreme in violence and saw it as unfairly hostile in its depiction of the Early Church.

His next novel, *Westward Ho!* (1855), was greeted with far more enthusiasm, although some readers balked at its vicious anti-Catholicism and bloodthirsty narrative. Set in Elizabethan times, yet inspired by Kingsley's burst of patriotism at the onset of the Crimean War, its hero wages war against both the Armada and his Spanish rival in love.

*Two Years Ago* (1857) returns to the theme of Christian Socialism and *Hereward the Wake* (1866) continues in the vein of historical romances, for which he was particularly popular.

In 1856 Kingsley temporarily moved away from adult literature and wrote *The Heroes*, relating the stories of Perseus, Theseus and the Argonauts for young readers. Seven years later he was to publish *The Water Babies*, his famous and best-loved fairy tale for children. Kingsley also wrote a multitude of songs and ballads, and the small volume *Andromeda and Other poems* (1858) contain his most famous poem, '*The Sands of Dee*'.



Kingsley was professor of Modern History at Cambridge from 1860 until 1869, and further honour was bestowed upon him when he became canon of Chester in 1866 and of Westminster in 1873. Despite this public approval, however, he remained a fascinating figure of controversy, which is particularly displayed in his celebrated confrontation with Cardinal Newman. This was initiated by Kingsley's review of Froude's *History of England* in *Macmillan's Magazine*, January 1864, when he misinterpreted Newman's sermon on Wisdom and Innocence. The crushing rejoinder formed the famous *Apologia pro vita sua*, and so in the public's eyes the Catholic was the victor. However, Charles Kingsley remained a popular if somewhat mercurial character up to his death in 1875.