

The SMART SET

Edited by

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BURLESQUES, EPIGRAMS, POEMS, SHORT SATIRES, ETC.

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HOW PLASH-GOO CAME TO THE LAND OF NONE'S DESIRE

By Lord Dunsany

IN a thatched cottage of enormous size—so vast that we might consider it a palace—but only a cottage in the style of its building, its timbers and the nature of its interior—there lived Plash-Goo.

Plash-Goo was of the children of the giants, whose sire was Uph. And the lineage of Uph had dwindled in bulk for the last five hundred years till the giants were now no more than fifteen foot high; but Uph ate elephants, which he caught with his hands.

Now on the tops of the mountains above the house of Plash-Goo, for Plash-Goo lived in the plains, there dwelt the dwarf whose name was Lrippity-Kang.

And the dwarf used to walk at evening on the edge of the tops of the mountains, and would walk up and down along it, and was squat and ugly and hairy, and was plainly seen of Plash-Goo.

And for many weeks the giant had suffered the sight of him, but at length grew irked at the sight (as men are by little things), and could not sleep of a night and lost his taste for pigs. And at last there came the day, as anyone might have known, when Plash-Goo shouldered his club and went up to look for the dwarf.

And the dwarf, though briefly squat, was broader than may be dreamed, beyond all breadth of man, and stronger than men may know: strength in its very essence dwelt in that little frame as a spark in the heart of a flint: but to Plash-Goo he was no more than misshapen, bearded and squat, a thing that

dared to defy all natural laws by being more broad than long.

When Plash-Goo came to the mountain he cast his chimahalk down (for so he named the club of his heart's desire), lest the dwarf should defy him with nimbleness; and stepped toward Lrippity-Kang with gripping hands, who stopped in his mountainous walk without a word and swung round his hideous breadth to confront Plash-Goo.

Already then Plash-Goo in the deeps of his mind had seen himself seize the dwarf in one large hand and hurl him with his beard and his hated breadth sheer down the precipice that dropped away from that very place to the Land of None's Desire. Yet it was otherwise that Fate would have it. For the dwarf parried with his little arms the grip of those monstrous hands, and gradually working along the enormous limbs came at length to the giant's body, where by dwarfish cunning he obtained a grip. And turning Plash-Goo about, as a spider does some great fly, till his little grip was suitable to his purpose, he suddenly lifted the giant over his head. Slowly at first, by the edge of that precipice whose base sheer distance hid, he swung his giant victim round his head, but soon faster and faster; and at last, when Plash-Goo was streaming round the hated breadth of the dwarf, and the no less hated beard was flapping in the wind, Lrippity-Kang let go. Plash-Goo shot over the edge and for some way farther, out toward Space, like a stone. Then he began to fall. It

was long before he believed and truly knew that this was really he that fell from this mountain, for we do not associate such dooms with ourselves. But when he had fallen for some while through the evening and saw below him where there had been nothing to see, or *began* to see, the glimmer of tiny fields, then his optimism departed; till later on when the fields were greener and larger he saw that this was in-

deed (and growing how terribly nearer) that very land to which he had destined the dwarf.

At last he saw it unmistakable, close, with its grim houses and its dreadful ways, and its green fields shining in the light of the evening. His cloak was streaming from him in whistling shreds.

So Plash-Goo came to the Land of None's Desire.

