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## Andrew Lang

(31 March 1844 – 20 July 1912)

Jan Susina  
Illinois State University

See also the Lang entry in *DLB 98: Modern British Essayists, First Series*.

**BOOKS:** *Ballads and Lyrics of Old France* (London: Longmans, Green, 1872; Portland, Maine: Mosher, 1896);

*Oxford: Brief Historical and Descriptive Notes* (London: Seely, Jackson & Halliday, 1879; London: Seeley / New York: Macmillan, 1890);

*XXII Ballades in Blue China* (London: Kegan Paul, 1880);

*The Library* (London: Macmillan, 1881);

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*Helen of Troy* (London: Bell, 1882; New York: Scribners, 1882);

*Custom and Myth* (London: Longmans, Green, 1884; New York: Harper, 1885);

*Much Darker Days*, as A. Hugh Longway (London: Longmans, Green, 1884);

*Ballades and Verses Vain* (New York: Scribners, 1884);

*The Princess Nobody: A Tale of Fairy Land after the Drawings by Richard Doyle* (London: Longmans, Green, 1884);

*Rhymes à la Mode* (London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Trübner, 1885; London & New York: Longmans, Green, 1907);

*That Very Mab*, by Lang and May Kendall (London: Longmans, Green, 1885);

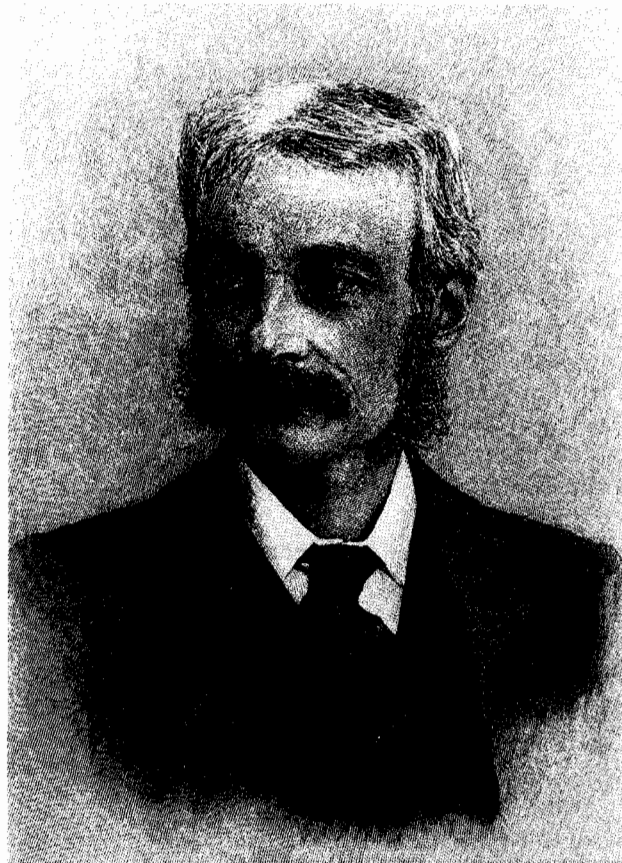
*Books and Bookmen* (London: Longmans, Green, 1886; New York: Coombes, 1886);

*In the Wrong Paradise and Other Stories* (London: Kegan Paul, Trench, 1886; New York: Harper, 1886);

*Letters to Dead Authors* (London: Longmans, Green, 1886; New York: Scribners, 1886);

*The Mark of Cain* (Bristol: Arrowsmith, 1886; New York: Scribners, 1886);

*The Politics of Aristotle, Introductory Essays* (London: Longmans, Green, 1886);



Sincerely yours  
A Lang.

*He*, by Lang and Walter Herries Pollock as the "Author of 'It' . . ." (London: Longmans, Green, 1887; New York: Munro, 1887);

*King Solomon's Wives; or, The Phantom Mines*, as Hyder Ragged (London: Vizetelly, 1887; New York: Munro, 1887);

- Myth, Ritual, and Religion*, 2 volumes (London: Longmans, Green, 1887; London & New York: Longmans, Green, 1889);
- The Gold of Fairmile* (Bristol: Arrowsmith, 1888; New York: Longmans, Green, 1888);
- Grass of Parnassus: Rhymes Old and New* (London & New York: Longmans, Green, 1888);
- Pictures at Play; or, Dialogues of the Galleries by Two Art Critics*, by Lang and William Ernest Henley (London: Longmans, Green, 1888);
- Letters on Literature* (London & New York: Longmans, Green, 1889);
- Lost Leaders* (London: Kegan Paul, Trench, 1889; New York: Longmans, Green, 1889);
- Prince Prigio* (Bristol: Arrowsmith / London: Simpkin, Marshall, 1889; New York: Crowell, 1901);
- How to Fail in Literature: A Lecture* (London: Field & Tuer, 1890);
- Life, Letters, and Diaries of Sir Stafford Northcote, First Earl of Iddesleigh*, 2 volumes (Edinburgh & London: Blackwood, 1890);
- Old Friends: Essays in Epistolary Parody* (London & New York: Longmans, Green, 1890);
- The World's Desire*, by Lang and H. Rider Haggard (London: Longmans, Green, 1890; New York: Harper, 1890);
- Angling Sketches* (London & New York: Longmans, Green, 1891);
- Essays in Little* (London: Henry, 1891; New York: Scribners, 1891);
- Homer and the Epic* (London & New York: Longmans, Green, 1893);
- Prince Ricardo of Pantouflia* (Bristol: Arrowsmith, 1893; Bristol: Arrowsmith / New York: Longmans, Green, 1893);
- St. Andrews* (London & New York: Longmans, Green, 1893);
- Ban and Arrière Ban: A Rally of Fugitive Rhymes* (London & New York: Longmans, Green, 1894);
- Cock Lane and Common-Sense* (London & New York: Longmans, Green, 1894);
- A Monk of Fife: A Romance of the Days of Jeanne d'Arc* (London & New York: Longmans, Green, 1895);
- My Own Fairy Book* (Bristol: Arrowsmith, 1895; New York: Longmans, Green, 1895);
- The Book of Dreams and Ghosts* (London, New York & Bombay: Longmans, Green, 1897);
- The Life and Letters of John Gibson Lockhart*, 2 volumes (London: Nimmo, 1897; London: Nimmo / New York: Scribners, 1897);
- Modern Mythology* (London, New York & Bombay: Longmans, Green, 1897);
- Pickle the Spy; or, The Incognito of Prince Charles* (London, New York & Bombay: Longmans, Green, 1897);
- The Companions of Pickle* (London & New York: Longmans, Green, 1898);
- The Making of Religion* (London & New York: Longmans, Green, 1898);
- Parson Kelly*, by Lang and Alfred Edward Woodley Mason (London & New York: Longmans, Green, 1899);
- A History of Scotland from the Roman Occupation to the Suppressing of the Last Jacobite Rising*, 4 volumes (Edinburgh & London: Blackwood, 1900–1907; New York: Dodd, Mead / Edinburgh & London: Blackwood, 1901–1907);
- Prince Charles Edward* (Paris & New York: Goupil/Manzi, Joyant, 1900; London: Goupil, 1900);
- Alfred Tennyson* (Edinburgh & London: Blackwood, 1901; New York: Dodd, Mead, 1901);
- The Disentanglers* (London & New York: Longmans, Green, 1901);
- Magic and Religion* (London, New York & Bombay: Longmans, Green, 1901);
- The Mystery of Mary Stuart* (London, New York & Bombay: Longmans, Green, 1901);
- James VI and the Gowrie Mystery* (London & New York: Longmans, Green, 1902);
- Social Origins* (London, New York & Bombay: Longmans, Green, 1903);
- The Story of the Golden Fleece* (London: Kelly, 1903; Philadelphia: Altemus, 1903);
- The Valet's Tragedy and Other Studies* (London & New York: Longmans, Green, 1903);
- Historical Mysteries* (London: Smith, Elder, 1904);
- Adventures Among Books* (London, New York & Bombay: Longmans, Green, 1905);
- The Clyde Mystery: A Study in Forgery and Folklore* (Glasgow: MacLehose, 1905);
- John Knox and the Reformation* (London, New York & Bombay: Longmans, Green, 1905);
- New Collected Rhymes* (London & New York: Longmans, Green, 1905);
- The Puzzle of Dickens's Last Plot* (London: Chapman & Hall, 1905);
- The Secret of the Totem* (London, New York & Bombay: Longmans, Green, 1905);
- Tales of a Fairy Court* (London: Collins, 1906);
- Homer and His Age* (London & New York: Longmans, Green, 1906);
- Portraits and Jewels of Mary Stuart* (Glasgow: MacLehose, 1906);
- Sir Walter Scott* (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1906; New York: Scribners, 1906);



A merry chase.



Two of Richard Doyle's illustrations for his *In Fairyland: A Series of Pictures from the Elf-World* (1869). Lang rearranged the pictures and wrote an accompanying text to create *The Princess Nobody*.

- The Story of Joan of Arc* (London: T. C. & E. C. Jack, 1906; London: T. C. & E. C. Jack / New York: Dutton, 1906);
- The King Over the Water*, by Lang and Alice Shield (London, New York, Bombay & Calcutta: Longmans, Green, 1907);
- Tales of Troy and Greece* (London & New York: Longmans, Green, 1907);
- The Maid of France: Being the Story of the Life and Death of Jeanne d'Arc* (London & New York: Longmans, Green, 1908);
- La Jeanne d'Arc de M. Anatole France* (Paris: Perrin, 1909);
- Sir George Mackenzie, King's Advocate of Rosehaugh: His Life and Times 1636(?)–1691* (London & New York: Longmans, Green, 1909);
- Sir Walter Scott and the Border Minstrelsy* (London & New York: Longmans, Green, 1910);
- The World of Homer* (London & New York: Longmans, Green, 1910);
- Method in the Study of Totemism* (Glasgow: MacLehose, 1911);
- A Short History of Scotland* (Edinburgh & London: Blackwood, 1911; New York: Dodd, Mead, 1911);
- History of English Literature from "Beowulf" to Swinburne* (London: Longmans, Green, 1912; New York: Longmans, Green, 1912);
- Shakespeare, Bacon, and the Great Unknown* (London & New York: Longmans, Green, 1912);
- Highways and Byways in the Border*, by Lang and John Lang (London: Macmillan, 1913).

- OTHER: Wilhelm and Jacob Grimm, *Grimm's Fairy Tales*, translated by Margaret Hunt, with an introduction by Lang (London: Bell, 1884);
- Charles Lamb, *Beauty and the Beast*, introduction by Lang (London: Field & Tuer, 1887; New York: Scribners, 1887);
- Apuleius Madaurensis, *The Most Pleasant and Delectable Tale of the Marriage of Cupid and Psyche*, translated by William Adlington, with an introduction by Lang (London: Nutt, 1887);
- Charles Perrault, *Perrault's Popular Tales*, edited, with an introductory essay, by Lang (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1888);
- The Blue Fairy Book*, edited, with a preface, by Lang (London & New York: Longmans, Green, 1889); republished in part as *Prince Darling and Other Stories Based on the Tales in the Blue Fairy Book* (London: Longmans, Green, 1893; New York: Longmans, Green, 1908); republished in part again as *Princess on the Glass Hill and Other Stories* (New York: Longmans, Green, 1899; London: Longmans, Green, 1901); republished in part again as *The History of Jack the Giant-Killer and Other Stories Based on the Blue Fairy Book* (London: Longmans, Green, 1902; New York: Longmans, Green, 1908); republished in part again as *Cinderella, or the Little Glass Slipper, and Other Stories from the Blue Fairy Book* (London & New York: Longmans, Green, 1902); republished in part again as *Dick Whittington and Other Stories Based on Tales in the Blue Fairy Book* (New York: Longmans, Green, 1905);

- The Red Fairy Book*, edited, with a preface, by Lang (London & New York: Longmans, Green, 1890);
- The Blue Poetry Book*, edited, with an introductory essay, by Lang (London & New York: Longmans, Green, 1891);
- The Green Fairy Book*, edited, with a preface, by Lang (London & New York: Longmans, Green, 1892);
- Marian Roalfe Cox, *Cinderella: Three Hundred and Forty-Five Variants*, introduction by Lang (London: Publications of the Folk-Lore Society, 1892);
- The True Story Book*, edited, with a preface, by Lang (London: Longmans, Green, 1893; New York: Longmans, Green, 1894); revised as *The Blue True Story Book* (New York: Longmans, Green, 1896; London: Longmans, Green, 1909);
- The Yellow Fairy Book*, edited, with a preface, by Lang (London & New York: Longmans, Green, 1894);
- The Red True Story Book*, edited, with an introductory essay, by Lang (London & New York: Longmans, Green, 1895);
- Frederick van Eeden, *Little Johannes*, translated by Clara Bell (London: Heinemann, 1895) – includes "Literary Fairy Tales" by Lang;
- The Animal Story Book*, edited, with a preface, by Lang (London & New York: Longmans, Green, 1896; revised, 1901);
- The Pink Fairy Book*, edited, with a preface, by Lang (London & New York: Longmans, Green, 1897);
- The Nursery Rhyme Book*, edited, with a preface, by Lang (London & New York: Warne, 1897);
- Arabian Nights Entertainments*, edited, with a preface, by Lang (London & New York: Longmans, Green, 1898);
- The Red Book of Animal Stories*, edited, with a preface, by Lang (London & New York: Longmans, Green, 1899);
- The Grey Fairy Book*, edited, with a preface, by Lang (London & New York: Longmans, Green, 1900);
- The Violet Fairy Book*, edited, with a preface, by Lang (London & New York: Longmans, Green, 1901);
- The Book of Romance*, edited, with a preface, by Lang (London & New York: Longmans, Green, 1902); revised as *Tales of Romance* (London & New York: Longmans, Green, 1907); revised again as *Tales of King Arthur and the Round Table* (London & New York: Longmans, Green, 1909);
- The Crimson Fairy Book*, edited, with a preface, by Lang (London & New York: Longmans, Green, 1903); republished in part as *Little Wildrose and Other Stories From the Crimson Fairy Book* (London & New York: Longmans, Green, 1906);
- The Brown Fairy Book*, edited, with a preface, by Lang (London & New York: Longmans, Green, 1904);
- The Red Romance Book*, edited, with a preface, by Lang (London & New York: Longmans, Green, 1905);
- Irene Maude, *The Plain Princess and Other Stories*, preface by Lang (London: Longmans, Green, 1905);
- The Orange Fairy Book*, edited, with a preface, by Lang (London & New York: Longmans, Green, 1906);
- The Olive Fairy Book*, edited, with a preface, by Lang (London & New York: Longmans, Green, 1907);
- The Book of Princes and Princesses*, edited, with a preface, by Lang (London & New York: Longmans, Green, 1908);
- The Red Book of Heroes*, edited, with a preface, by Lang (London & New York: Longmans, Green, 1909);
- The Lilac Fairy Book*, edited, with a preface, by Lang (London & New York: Longmans, Green, 1910);
- All Sorts of Stories Book*, edited, with a preface, by Lang (London & New York: Longmans, Green, 1911);
- The Book of Saints and Heroes*, edited, with a preface, by Lang (London & New York: Longmans, Green, 1912);
- The Strange Story Book*, edited by Lang, with a preface by Leonora Blanche (London & New York: Longmans, Green, 1913).
- TRANSLATIONS: Homer, *The Odyssey*, translated by Lang and Samuel Henry Butcher (London: Macmillan, 1879; New York: Macmillan, 1883);
- Theocritus, Bion, and Moschus* (London: Macmillan, 1880; New York: Macmillan, 1889);
- Homer, *The Iliad*, translated by Lang, Walter Leaf, and Ernest Myers (London: Macmillan, 1883; New York: Alden, 1883);
- Aucassin and Nicolette* (London: Nutt, 1887; New Rochelle, N.Y.: Clarke Conwell, 1902);
- Charles Deulin, *Johnny Nut and the Golden Goose* (London: Longmans, Green, 1887);

*The Dead Leman and Other Tales from the French*, translated by Lang and Paul Sylvester (London: Swan, Sonnenschein, 1889; New York: Scribner & Welford, 1889);

*The Miracles of Madame Saint Katherine of Fierbois* (Chicago: Way & Williams, 1897);

Homer, *The Homeric Hymns* (New York: Longmans, Green, 1899; London: Allen, 1899);

Victor Hugo, *Notre-Dame of Paris* (London: Heinemann, 1902).

More than any other British writer of the second half of the nineteenth century, Andrew Lang successfully championed the fairy tale as appropriate reading material for children. This astonishingly productive man of letters influenced children's literature in two ways: as the editor of the immensely popular twelve-volume color fairy book series begun with the publication of the *Blue Fairy Book* (1889), and as the author of five literary fairy tales for children.

Despite Lang's repeated assertions in prefaces to the color fairy books that he was merely the editor and did not invent the stories, his readers frequently incorrectly credited him as their author. While Lang selected the tales, assigned the translations, and wrote the prefaces to the color fairy books, his wife, Leonora Blanche Lang, did much of the other work of the series. In the preface to *The Lilac Fairy Book* (1910), the final volume in the series, Lang acknowledges that "the fairy books have been almost wholly the work of Mrs. Lang" and suggests that his part in their creation was that of "Adam, according to Mark Twain, in the Garden of Eden. Eve worked, Adam superintended." So to think of Lang as the sole or even the primary editor of the color fairy books is a mistake. This does not, however, diminish Lang's important role in the series. He was clearly a well-established author and editor whose name lent the volumes credence and respectability.

A prolific writer, Lang produced 120 books and pamphlets, edited or appeared as a contributor in another 150 volumes, and penned more than 5,000 essays, articles, and reviews. He was a folklorist, classical scholar, poet, novelist, journalist, and editor who lived by his pen, capable of producing something worth saying on nearly any topic that caught his fancy, which earned him the reputation, coined by William Ernest Henley, of "the divine amateur of letters."

Born in Selkirk, Scotland, on 31 March 1844, Andrew Lang recalls in his *Adventures Among Books* (1905) that "When I was a little boy, it is to be sup-

posed that I was a little muff: for I read every fairy tale that I could lay my hands on." A bookish child, Lang seemed more at home in fairyland than in his own period. His deep love of the Scottish border country, with its folktales and legends, was to become a consistent theme in his writing.

Lang attended Edinburgh Academy in 1854 and entered the University of Saint Andrews in 1861, where he lived at Saint Leonard's Hall. There he and friends began *St. Leonard's Magazine*, with Lang as the editor and chief contributor. He transferred to the University of Glasgow in 1864 to qualify for the Snell exhibition, a major scholarship that would enable him to attend Balliol College, Oxford. Entering Balliol in 1868 with the distinguished classical scholar Benjamin Jowett as his tutor, Lang was later elected to the Open Fellowship to Merton College that he held for seven years. Ill health caused him to end his academic career, and Lang left Oxford in 1872 for the French riviera to recover from his bout with consumption.

On 17 April 1875 Lang married Leonora Blanche Alleyne, the youngest daughter of Charles Thomas Alleyne of Clifton, whose family had been planters in Barbados for generations. Leonora Lang, particularly proficient at languages, worked closely with the production of the twenty-five children's collections Lang edited for Longmans, providing many of the French, German, and Italian translations for the color fairy books. Especially concerned with the readability of the texts, Leonora attempted to limit the vocabulary and sentence structure so that the collections were accessible to children with average reading abilities. Her influence in this regard is apparent in the many adaptations of the original color fairy books produced by Longmans as school editions or versions for younger readers.

After Lang resigned his Merton fellowship, he and his wife moved to Kensington, where he began his career as a London journalist, contributing articles and reviews to a large variety of journals and newspapers. Of Lang's prodigious journalistic output, Richard Le Gallienne has said, "His 'leaders' in the *Daily News* read like fairy tales written by an erudite Puck." His work quickly attracted the attention of publisher Charles Longman of Longmans, Green, and Company, and Lang soon became the chief literary adviser to the well-established firm that was to publish many of his books. From 1882 to 1905 Lang's column, "At the Sign of the Ship," appeared in *Longmans Magazine*; Lang dealt with a wide range of subjects, including fairy tales, mythology, folklore, cultural anthropology, psychic phe-



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PRINCE RICARDO OF  
PANTOUFLIA  
BEING THE ADVENTURES OF PRINCE  
PRIGIO'S SON, BY ANDREW LANG  
AUTHOR OF PRINCE PRIGIO

ILLUSTRATED BY  
GORDON BROWNE

PUBLISHED AT BRISTOL BY J. W. ARROWSMITH,  
QUAY STREET, AND AT LONDON BY SIMPKIN,  
MARSHALL, HAMILTON, KENT & COMPANY LIMITED

1893

*Title page for Lang's 1893 literary fairy tale (courtesy of the Lilly Library)*

nomena, and superstition. Longman gave Lang a sixty-volume *Cabinet des Fees* (1786), the massive collection of French literary fairy tales produced during the period of Louis XIV. In a 1913 article Joseph Jacobs notes that, with the editing of the color fairy books, Lang was creating a Victorian version of *Cabinet des Fees* for British children.

While at Oxford Lang had earned a first-class rank in the Greek and Latin classics and was influenced by Edward B. Tylor's pioneering work in anthropology. Using Tylor's concepts of cultural evolution and folklore as "survivals," Lang became the best-known and most-vigorous spokesperson for the anthropological school of folklore. Using his knowledge in mythology and folktales from around the world, Lang expanded Tylor's limited concept of folklore as an European peasant tradition and incorporated a more comparative methodology. Lang established himself as a leading Victorian folklorist with the publication in the *Fortnightly Review* (May

1873) of his article "Mythology and Fairy Tales," which successfully refuted the claims of Max Müller, who had argued that philologically all myths could be reduced to one great myth of a common Aryan ancestry and that the variations were the result of the "disease of language." Lang countered that instead of being derived from the same source, fairy tales evolved in various cultures as the result of societies undergoing the same cultural evolution. Throughout his career, including comic asides found in his literary fairy tales *Prince Prigio* (1889) and *Prince Ricardo of Pantouflia* (1893), Lang continued to ridicule Müller's theory that all myths are linked to solar mythology and that all myths trace their origins to India. Lang elaborated these points in *Custom and Myth* (1884) and in *Myth, Ritual, and Religion* (1887). By the time Lang contributed his entry on tales to the eleventh edition of the *Encyclopaedia Britannica* (1910) he had modified his position to take into account the cultural diffusion of fairy tales.

Lang's first literary fairy tale for children was completed at the request of Longman, his friend and publisher, who asked if he would write a story around some illustrations of fairies by Richard Doyle that had originally appeared in a book titled *In Fairyland: A Series of Pictures from the Elf-World* (1869). The forty fanciful paintings of elves and fairies are Doyle's masterwork, surpassing his long-running cover for *Punch* and his illustrations of John Ruskin's *The King of the Golden River* (1851); they are certainly the most famous and elaborate example of Victorian fairy painting. Lang reorganized the illustrations, omitted five, cut up several, and reproduced some without color. Drawing on his knowledge of fairy lore, he created *The Princess Nobody* (1884), an amusing tale in the French fairy-court tradition of the romantic misadventures of the Princess Niente and Prince Comical.

In Lang's fairy tale a king has unwittingly promised his daughter in marriage to a dwarf. Princess Niente, known to her to subjects as Princess Nobody, is saved from this unpleasant marriage by the Queen of the Water Fairies, who makes the girl invisible and spirits her away to Fairy Land. Her father promises Niente to the prince who can locate and return his invisible daughter. The kindhearted Prince Comical locates Niente and is eventually transformed into a handsome Prince Charming. Lang's tale is an ingenuous attempt to sequence Doyle's random illustrations into a cohesive plot, but since Doyle rarely repeated characters, Lang was forced to have his protagonists undergo multiple magical transformations. While Lang's story is vastly supe-

rior to the poem by William Allingham that originally accompanied the pictures, the chief attraction of *Princess Nobody* remains Doyle's illustrations.

Lang's second fairy tale, *The Gold of Fairnilee* (1888), is a haunting story told in the Scottish-border-ballad tradition using the folk beliefs in fairies and set in the locale of his childhood. This dramatic switch from the charming winged fairies of *Princess Nobody* is considered by critics to be the most successful of his five children's books. Drawing inspiration from the folk ballads "Tam Lin" and "Thomas Rymer," Lang's moody tale deals with the disappearance of the young Randal Ker of Fairnilee. Inspired by his nurse's tales of fairy treasure, Randal sets out with his companion Jean to discover the fairy gold. On Midsummer Eve Randal is lured away by the Fairy Queen at the Wishing Well into the Fairy Land. Seven years later, Jean uses magic water to bring Randal back from the fairies, whereupon he uncovers the gold of Fairnilee, a cache of long-buried Roman coins.

Lang returns to the fairy-court tradition in *Prince Prigio*, which owes a debt to William Makepeace Thackeray's *The Rose and the Ring* (1855), the literary fairy tale that Lang recommends in his preface to *The Yellow Fairy Book* (1894) as "quite indispensable in every child's library"; it also reflects the Christmas pantomime tradition. In the preface to *The Lilac Fairy Book*, Lang complains that authors think writing a new fairy tale is easy, but he notes: "They are mistaken: the thing is impossible. Nobody can write a *new* fairy tale; you can only mix up and dress up the old, old stories, and put the characters in new dresses." This is clearly the case in *Prince Prigio*, which borrows freely from both the folktale and literary fairy-tale conventions.

Fairies are not invited to the christening of Prigio, since the skeptical Queen of Pantouflia does not believe in the supernatural. Nevertheless, the fairies arrive and present Prigio with the traditional magic gifts, which include a sword of sharpness, seven-league boots, the purse of Fortunatus, a flying carpet, and a cap of darkness. As punishment the young prince is cursed with the burden of being "too clever." The Queen discards the gifts in the attic, and Prigio develops into such a clever and rational fellow that he is generally despised by everyone in the kingdom except his mother. When the Firedrake causes destruction in Pantouflia, King Grogno encourages his son to battle the beast. Prigio, who has been educated to reject the supernatural, refuses to believe in the existence of such a fabulous beast and observes that according to fairy-tale logic, it would be useless to send him, the first son, to

fight the Firedrake, as it is always the youngest sibling who succeeds in such tasks. When Prigio's less intelligent but far more popular younger brothers, Alphonso and Enrico, fail to return from their attempts to defeat the Firedrake, the entire court abandons Prigio in disgust. Alone in the castle, Prigio uncovers his magical christening gifts, and he sets out to kill the Firedrake for his love, Lady Rosalind. The clever Prigio manages to have the Firedrake battle Remora, the Ice-Beast, and the two monsters are destroyed. Prigio brings his brothers back to life, marries Rosalind, and becomes beloved by his subjects when he wishes to "*SEEM NO CLEVERER THAN OTHER PEOPLE.*"

Lang continues his gentle burlesquing of the fairy-court tradition in a sequel, *Prince Ricardo of Pantouflia*; the two texts were subsequently published collectively under the name "The Chronicles of Pantouflia" in *My Own Fairy Book* (1895). While Lang's literary fairy tales were popular, they never achieved the popularity of the color fairy books. J. R. R. Tolkien, in "On Fairy-stories" (1964), finds "The Chronicles of Pantouflia" to be flawed in that, like Prigio, Lang delights in being too clever, having "an eye on the faces of other clever people over the heads of his child-audience."

In 1889, along with the publication of *Prince Prigio*, Lang edited *The Blue Fairy Book*, which his biographer Roger Lancelyn Green claims renewed the public's interest in fairy tales. Louise Frances Field's *The Child and His Book* (1891), a pioneering study of children's literature, announces, "At the present moment the fairy-tale seems to have given way entirely in popularity to the child's story of real life." With the enormous impact of *The Blue Fairy Book*, Field obligingly added, "Since the above was written eighteen months ago, the tide of popularity seems to have set strongly in the direction of old fairy tales."

Initially published in an edition of six thousand, *The Blue Fairy Book* and the second volume in the series, *The Red Fairy Book* (1890), were published simultaneously in trade and limited editions for book collectors, with the latter intended to help defray the cost of the general edition. Lang did not plan to create a fairy-tale series, and in the preface to *The Red Fairy Book* he suggests that he had already selected the best tales. Despite Lang's well-known status, *The Blue Fairy Book* was a publishing risk for Longmans in that the appeal for fairy tales for children seemed to have peaked. Instead, it was the first of a popular twelve-volume series of color fairy books and the first of twenty-five annual children's collections Lang produced for the publisher from 1889 to 1913.

*The Blue Fairy Book*, a wide-ranging assortment of thirty-seven tales, includes both traditional folktales and literary fairy tales compiled from various printed sources. Lang announced in his introduction to the limited edition of *The Blue Fairy Book* that the volume was intended "for the pleasure of children without scientific purpose." Illustrated by H. J. Ford and G. P. Jacob Hood, the first color fairy book contains seven tales from Charles Perrault, seven from the Brothers Grimm, three from the *Arabian Nights*, as well as literary fairy tales from the French tradition by Jeanne-Marie de Beaumont and Marie-Catherine d'Aulnoy and those from the Norwegian folk tradition collected by Peter Asjærnsen and Jørgen Moe. Lang's initial selection favors well-known European folktales including "Little Red Riding Hood," "Sleeping Beauty," "Cinderella," "Hansel and Gretel," "Blue Beard," and "Beauty and the Beast." Lang was well served by Ford's richly detailed black-and-white illustrations; Ford would be the illustrator for all the color fairy books and many of Lang's other children's collections. *The Blue Fairy Book* also contains selections that are clearly not fairy tales, including an abridgment of the voyage to Lilliput from Jonathan Swift's *Gulliver's Travels* (1726) and Lang's adaption of the Greek myth of Perseus and the Medusa entitled "The Terrible Head," in which he omits the local and personal names so it will better resemble a folktale.

*The Red Fairy Book*, quickly published to follow on the success of *The Blue Fairy Book*, was issued by Longmans with an initial edition of fifteen thousand copies and reissued in an edition of five thousand the following year. Longmans quickly began to repackage and simplify material from the existing color fairy books into volumes to be marketed as school readers and versions for younger readers. *The Red Fairy Book*, like its predecessor, contained thirty-seven selections but had fewer French fairy tales. Lang expanded the range to include Russian, Norwegian, Finnish, and Romanian tales as well as a version of the story of Sigurd and Brynhild adapted from William Morris's translation *Sigurd the Volsung* (1876).

*The Blue Poetry Book* (1891) is a collection of poems selected by Lang and intended for children. The volume had an initial printing of three thousand copies and was not as popular as the fairy-tale series. In making his choices Lang recalled those poems that had pleased him in his childhood and had developed his love of poetry. The selections show a marked preference for narrative verse, and while not written specifically for children, they are poems which Lang felt could be accessible to chil-

dren. He warns in his preface that it is a mistake when authors "write down" to children or when adults tell children that they should not read a poem because they will not understand it, arguing instead that children understand far more than adults assume. He adds that nothing crushes the love of poetry more swiftly than the use of poems in schoolbooks, but that warning did not prevent Longmans from quickly producing a school edition of the volume.

In the preface to *The Green Fairy Book* (1892) Lang suggests it would be "probably the last, of the Fairy Books of many colours." Fairy tales from the French tradition dominate this collection, although the most familiar stories in this collection are those from the English tradition: "Three Little Pigs" and Robert Southey's "The Story of the Three Bears." While Lang made minor editorial changes to the folktales in his collections, the literary fairy tales, particularly those from the French fairy-court tradition by d'Aulnoy and de Beaumont, were substantially reduced in length, and in the case of Perrault, the rhymed morals were dropped. In his preface Lang discusses the function of fairy tales, arguing that they are the oldest stories in the world and were created "not only to amuse, but to teach goodness." He defends the reading of fairy tales by children, suggesting that young readers are capable of distinguishing between real and make-believe.

The preface concludes, "If we have a book for you next year, it shall not be a fairy book," and the following year Longmans published *The True Story Book* (1893), which included various retellings of lives of historical figures composed by writers including H. Rider Haggard, Florence Sellar, and Lang's own version of the life of Joan of Arc. Later collections including *The Red True Story Book* (1895), *The Book of Princes and Princesses* (1908), *The Red Book of Heroes* (1909), and *The Book of Saints and Heroes* (1912) would expand the true-story series, Lang reminds his readers that although such stories might be considered less thrilling than fairy tales, facts can sometimes be "curious and interesting."

The publication of *The True Story Book* was overshadowed by the publication in the same year of *Prince Ricardo of Pantouflia*, the continuation of Lang's fairy court cycle. Unlike Prigio, who had been skeptical in his belief in fairies, Ricardo was raised on a steady diet of fairy tales and, according to his bewildered father, "is always after a giant, or a dragon or a magician." In order to teach his son independence, Prigio replaces Ricardo's magic weapons with fakes, and, consequently, Ricardo fails in his attempt to restore Bonnie Prince Charlie



THE  
BLUE FAIRY BOOK

EDITED BY  
ANDREW LANG

WITH NUMEROUS ILLUSTRATIONS BY H. J. FORD  
AND G. P. JACOMB HOOD



LONDON  
LONGMANS, GREEN, AND CO.  
AND NEW YORK: 15 EAST 16<sup>th</sup> STREET  
1889

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*Title page for the first volume of the popular series edited by Lang. The illustration by H. J. Ford includes what might be a caricature of Lang at left (courtesy of the Lilly Library).*

to the English throne. Ricardo is rescued by the resourceful Princess Jacqueline, who is in love with him. Ricardo continues his adventures by slaying the horrible Yellow Dwarf, the famous and triumphant villain of d'Aulnoy's fairy tale, in a fair fight and ultimately defeating the Giant-who-does-not-Know-when-he-has-had-Enough by dropping on him the heaviest material in existence: stupidity. Much of *Prince Ricardo* is a sly commentary of the Lang-Müller debate over solar mythology. More episodic in form than *Prince Prigio*, the sequel is less satisfying, and its humor is a bit more forced. Regrettably, Lang often took good ideas and expanded them into a series of books with the later volumes suffering from his flagging enthusiasm; such was the case with "The Chronicles of Pantouflia."

The following year *The Yellow Fairy Book*, the fourth volume of the series, was published; Lang

used his preface to respond to the attacks directed at previous volumes by George Laurence Gomme, president of the Folk-Lore Society. As a folklorist, Gomme objected to Lang's non-scholarly approach to his fairy-tale collections and in particular to Lang's practice of adapting and editing traditional tales and of mixing literary tales with folktales in the volumes. As the president of the Folk-Lore Society before Gomme, Lang had published scholarly work on folklore in addition to the color fairy books for children. Lang's preface responds to Gomme with the assertion, "If children are pleased, and they are so kind to say that they *are* pleased, the Editor does not care very much for what other people have to say." His criteria for selection of the tales for the series were based on whether the tales were pleasant to read and not that they conformed to any academic definition of a fairy tale. *The Yellow Fairy Book*



PRINCE DARLING TRANSFORMED INTO THE MONSTER. See p. 284.

Frontispiece by H. J. Ford for *The Blue Fairy Book* (courtesy of the Lilly Library)

continues the mix of traditional folktales from Russia, Germany, and Iceland, with literary fairy tales by d'Aulnoy and Hans Christian Andersen.

In the preface to *The Red True Story Book*, Lang had promised his readers that the next collection would be "something quite as true as History, and quite as entertaining as Fairies!" That volume was *The Animal Story Book* (1896), a compilation of stories dealing with "the friends of children and of fairies — the beasts." Lang continued the animal series with *The Red Book of Animal Stories* (1899), a collection which deals with ordinary and fabulous creatures such as griffins, unicorns, and dragons.

In *The Pink Fairy Book* (1897) Lang observes that "all people in the world tell nursery tales to their children," and with this collection he further expands his international scope of fairy tales to include Japanese and Catalonian tales as well as ex-

amples from Sweden, Sicily, and Africa. Despite their different geographic origins, Lang suggests the tales have a universal moral in that "Courage, youth, beauty, kindness have many trials, but they always win the battle."

Lang returns to his love of poetry in *The Nursery Rhyme Book* (1897), a collection aimed at younger children. He groups the rhymes into such categories as proverbs, songs, riddles, charms, and lullabies. In his preface Lang admits that while nursery rhymes do not provide useful information, they will be remembered long after children have forgotten history and geography. L. Leslie Brooke brilliantly illustrated the collection with more than one hundred lively drawings; the volume was his first major success as a children's book illustrator.

Lang's *Arabian Nights Entertainments* (1898), an adaptation for children of twenty-six tales from An-

toine Galland's *Arabian Nights* (1704–1717), includes "Aladdin and the Wonderful Lamp," which Lang recycles from *The Blue Fairy Book*, but with new illustrations by Ford. In his preface Lang recalls reading *The Arabian Nights* as a child but observes that these "fairy tales of the East" were not originally intended for children and reassures any concerned parent that his edition omits "pieces only suitable for Arabs and old gentlemen."

In *The Grey Fairy Book* (1900), *The Violet Fairy Book* (1901), *The Crimson Fairy Book* (1903), *The Brown Fairy Book* (1904), and *The Orange Fairy Book* (1906) Lang dutifully continues to widen his international scope of fairy tales. Sensitive to the problem that readers of the expanding series were faced with variations on the same theme in many of the tales, he notes that, like the bits of colored glass that go into the making of a kaleidoscope, the possible combinations of fairy-tale incidents are limited. Observing that he had frequently been asked how he has managed to invent so many more stories than William Shakespeare, Alexandre Dumas, and Charles Dickens combined, Lang felt compelled by a "sense of literary honesty" to insist repeatedly in the prefaces to these various volumes that he was simply the editor and not the author of the collected fairy tales. He acknowledges that his versions are not literal translations and that he has altered them in various ways to make them "suitable for children," adding that fairy tales that include cruel incidents had been "softened down" as much as possible. His progressively more crotchety prefaces to the fairy color books suggest that Lang had become trapped by his own success and had grown weary of the project.

Lang's *Tales of Troy and Greece* (1907) splendidly retells Homer's *Odyssey* and *Iliad*, with the addition of the stories of Theseus and Perseus from Greek mythology. Lang was a considerable Homeric scholar, having published *Homer and the Epic* (1893), *Homer and His Age* (1906), and *The World of Homer* (1910) as well as translating with Samuel Henry Butcher *The Odyssey* (1879), which became a standard nineteenth-century edition of the poem, and, with Walter Leaf and Ernest Myers, *The Iliad* (1883). Lang relied on his knowledge and recently discovered artifacts excavated by Heinrich Schliemann at Troy and Arthur Evans at Myceane to add authenticity to his narrative. His retelling of the Greek tales as a boy's adventure story was well received by reviewers and is considered by critics to be one of his best children's books: it ranks alongside Charles Kingsley's *The Heroes* (1856) as an outstanding children's adaptation of the Greek myths.

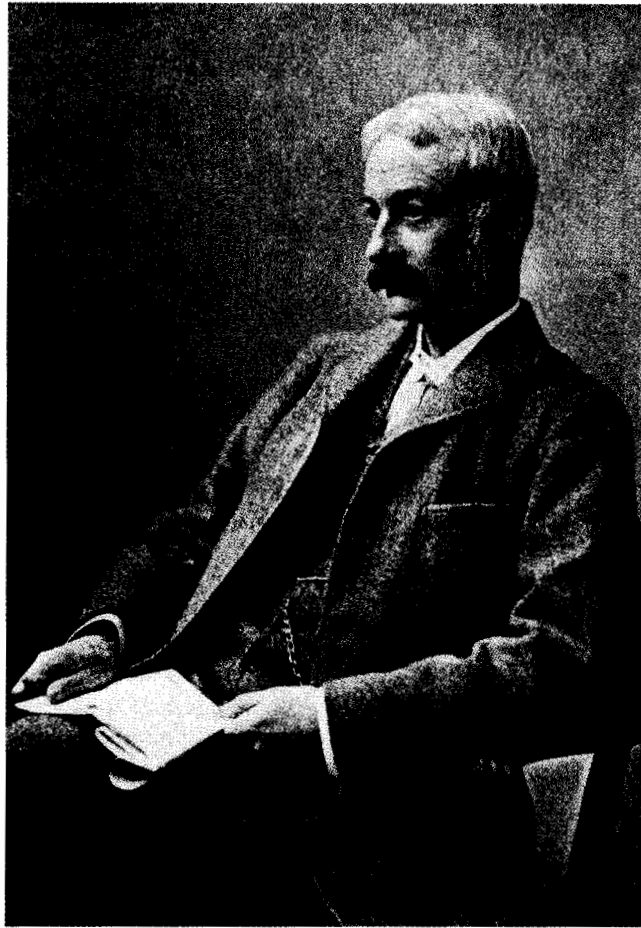
The final installment of Lang's chronicle of Pantouflia appeared in *Tales of a Fairy Court* (1906), a series of short tales that explore events after Prince Prigio has matured but before his marriage to Lady Rosalind. Prigio discovers among his magical gifts a fairy timepiece that allows him to travel in time, and he visits first the twentieth century, where he is troubled by the vast number of automobiles, and then the court of James VI of Scotland, where he plays a match of golf with the prince and is accused of practicing witchcraft. The most amusing story involves Prigio arranging a marriage between his brother and a giant's daughter.

In the preface to *The Green Fairy Book* Lang muses that few people can write good fairy tales because they do not believe enough in their stories and because the authors try to be wittier than they actually are. Yet Lang was frequently insecure about his abilities and once complained to Edith Nesbit that his fairy tales were "like everything of mine, utterly unpopular." While *Tales of a Fairy Court*, illustrated by Arthur Dixon, provides some history of Pantouflia and the major characters of *Prince Prigio* and *Prince Ricardo*, by the third volume of the Pantouflia series Lang seems culpable of the same errors that he observed in other literary fairy tales.

Alternating with the publication of the color fairy books were *The Book of Romance* (1902) and *The Red Romance Book* (1905), collections of tales that Lang called "fairy tales grown up." Lang's most imaginative romance was written for adults rather than children: *The World's Desire* (1890), cowritten with his friend Haggard, continues the *Odyssey*, with Odysseus's seeking out Helen in Egypt.

*The Lilac Fairy Book* is the final volume in the series, and Lang's exasperation is apparent in his preface. It is his last attempt to reiterate that he is not the author of the color fairy books: an undeserved reputation whose weight "is killing me." He takes the opportunity to recommend to the reader *Prince Prigio*, *Prince Ricardo*, and *Tales of a Fairy Court* – tales that, he admits, may be "poor things, but my own." As he had previously noted in his introduction to Fredrich Van Eeden's *Little Johannes* (1895) and his preface to Irene Maude's *The Plain Princess and Other Stories* (1905), Lang points out the difficulties, if not sheer impossibility, in composing a completely new and satisfying fairy tale. As the literary adviser for Longmans, he laments the "dreadful kind of sham fairy tale," done in imitation of Lewis Carroll's *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* (1865), constantly submitted for publication.

*The All Sorts of Stories Book* (1911) and *The Strange Story Book* (1913) come the closest in content



Lang, circa 1902

to Lang's "The Grey True Ghost-Story Book" – a proposed volume of "the deadliest, creepiest ghost-stories he could find or invent" that was shelved in deference to the concern of anxious mothers and aunts.

Lang died of angina pectoris on 20 July 1912 and, following his request that no official biography or collection of letters should appear, Leonora dutifully destroyed his personal papers. It is reported that she complained that her wrists ached for weeks after tearing up the massive collection. *The Strange Story Book* was published after Lang's death and includes a brief reminiscence of Lang by Leonora, who describes her husband as "the man who loved fairies." Despite their never having children, Leonora recalls that Lang quickly adapted himself to the company of children, no matter where he was.

Fellow folklorist Jacobs wrote the most fitting tribute to Lang for the *Journal of American Folk-Lore* (1913). After recounting Lang's many accomplishments that had helped to establish the emerging discipline of folklore, Jacobs singles out the publication

of *The Blue Fairy Book* and its subsequent multicolored offspring for having "revived the vogue of the folk-tale among English-speaking children." Jacobs predicts that "Lang's name will be added to those of Perrault, Grimm, and Andersen, as one of the chief delights of the nursery library."

Green's *Andrew Lang: A Critical Biography* (1946), the standard study of the man and his work, firmly established Lang's reputation as the English historian of fairy tales for children. It is unfortunate that the success of the color fairy books has overshadowed Lang's own literary fairy tales. While not quite so memorable as Carroll's Alice books or the mystical fairy tales written by George MacDonald, they certainly are as clever and as crafted as Thackeray's *The Rose and the Ring* or those written by Oscar Wilde or Nesbit.

One measure of Lang's continued popularity and importance is that the color-fairy-tale collections have remained constantly in print and have even inspired several imitations, including Jacobs's five-volume collection of the fairy tales of many na-

tions (1890–1916); Edwin Sidney Hartland's *English Fairy and Other Folk Tales* (1890); and the anonymous *The Golden Fairy Book* (1895). Besides the reprinting of the original color fairy books, two revised editions were published under the general editorships of Mary Gould Davis, beginning with *The Blue Fairy Book* (1948), and Brian Alderson, beginning with *The Blue Fairy Book* (1975). While both of these series add background material, Alderson's notes are far more extensive in identifying Lang's literary sources and editorial changes. Unfortunately, both series introduce new illustrations and rearrange and, in some cases, omit tales. Several one-volume compilations of the color fairy books have been produced, including Green's *The Rainbow Fairy Book* (1977), Cary Willkins's *The Andrew Lang Fairy Tale Treasury* (1979), and Michael Patrick Hearn's *The Andrew Lang Fairy Tale Book* (1986).

Despite his wide-ranging interests and his astonishing productivity, Lang was a modest and self-effacing writer. Perhaps his brief evaluation of his career most accurately sums up his literary accomplishments: "I confess that I still have a child-like love of a fairy-story for its own sake; and I have done my best to circulate Fairy Books among children."

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# L. T. Meade

(5 June 1844 – 26 October 1914)

Mavis Reimer  
University of Winnipeg

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L. T. Meade

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