

Clara Dillingham Pierson
Nature Reader
Part II

NATURE SERIES

CLARA DILLINGHAM PIERSON

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Clara Dillingham Pierson Nature Reader: Part II
Nature Series

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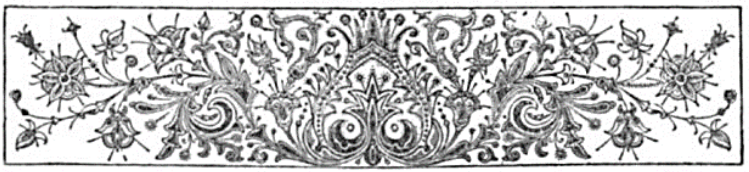
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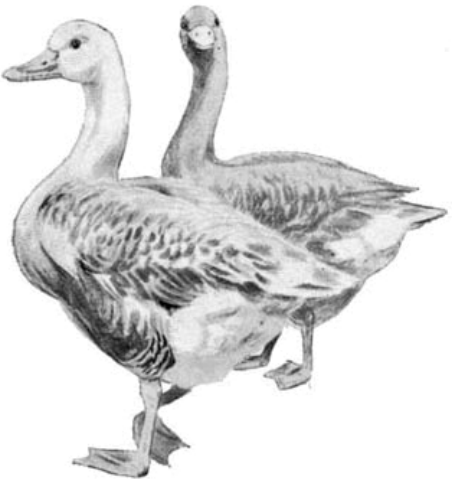
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Among the Farmyard People

By Clara Dillingham Pierson
Illustrated by F. C. Gordon





To the Children

Dear Little Friends:

I want to introduce the farmyard people to you, and to have you call upon them and become better acquainted as soon as you can. Some of them are working for us, and we surely should know them. Perhaps, too, some of us are working for them, since that is the way in this delightful world of ours, and one of the happiest parts of life is helping and being helped.

It is so in the farmyard, and although there is not much work that the people there can do for each other, there are many kind things to be said, and even the Lame Duckling found that he could make the Blind Horse happy when he tried. It is there as it is everywhere else, and I sometimes think that although the farmyard people do not look like us or talk like us, they are not so very different after all. If you had seen the little Chicken who wouldn't eat gravel when his mother was reproving him, you could not have helped knowing his thoughts even if you did not understand a word of the Chicken language. He was thinking, "I don't care! I don't care a bit! So now!" That was long since, for he was a Chicken when I was a little girl, and both of us grew up some time ago.

I think I have always been more sorry for him because when he was learning to eat gravel I was learning to eat some things which I did not like; and so, you see, I knew exactly how he felt. But it was not until afterwards that I found out how his mother felt.

That is one of the stories which I have been keeping a long time for you, and the Chicken was a particular friend of mine. I knew him better than I did some of his neighbors; yet they were all pleasant acquaintances, and if I did not see some of these things happen with my own eyes, it is just because I was not in the farmyard at the right time. There are many other tales I should like to tell you about them, but one mustn't make the book too fat and heavy for your hands to hold, so I will send you these and keep the rest.

Many stories might be told about our neighbors who live out-of-doors, and they are stories that ought to be told, too, for there are still boys and girls who do not know that animals think and talk and work, and love their babies, and help each other when in trouble. I knew one boy who really thought it was not wrong to steal newly built birds' nests, and I have seen girls—quite large ones, too—who were afraid of Mice! It was only last winter that a Quail came to my front door, during the very cold weather, and snuggled down into the warmest corner he could find. I fed him, and he stayed there for several days, and I know, and you know, perfectly well that although he did not say it in so many words, he came to remind me that I had not yet told you a Quail story. And two of my little neighbors brought ten Polliwogs to spend the day with me, so I promised then and there that the next book should be about pond people and have a Polliwog story in it.

And now, good-bye! Perhaps some of you will write me about your visits to the farmyard. I hope you will enjoy them

very much, but be sure you don't wear red dresses or caps when you call on the Turkey Gobbler.

Your friend,
Clara Dillingham Pierson.

Stanton, Michigan,
March 28, 1899.





The Story That the Swallow Didn't Tell

"Listen!" said the Nigh Ox, "don't you hear some friends coming?"

The Off Ox raised his head from the grass and stopped to brush away a Fly, for you never could hurry either of the brothers. "I don't hear any footfalls," said he.

"You should listen for wings, not feet," said the Nigh Ox, "and for voices, too."

Even as he spoke there floated down from the clear air overhead a soft "tittle-ittle-ittle-ee," as though some bird were laughing for happiness. There was not a cloud in the sky, and the meadow was covered with thousands and thousands of green grass blades, each so small and tender, and yet together making a most beautiful carpet for the feet of the farmyard people, and offering them sweet and juicy food after their winter fare of hay and grain. Truly it was a day to make one laugh aloud for joy. The alder tassels fluttered and danced in the spring breeze, while the smallest and shyest of the willow pussies crept from their little brown houses on the branches to grow in the sunshine.

"Tittle-ittle-ittle-ee! Tittle-ittle-ittle-ee!" And this time it was louder and clearer than before.

"The Swallows!" cried the Oxen to each other. Then they straightened their strong necks and bellowed to the Horses, who were drawing the plow in the field beyond, "The



The Swallows Are Coming

Swallows are coming!"

As soon as the Horses reached the end of the furrow and could rest a minute, they tossed their heads and whinnied with delight. Then they looked around at the farmer, and wished that he knew enough of the farmyard language to understand what they wanted to tell him. They knew he would be glad to hear of their friends' return, for had they not seen him pick up a young Swallow one day and put him in a safer place?

"Tittle-ittle-ittle-ee!" and there was a sudden darkening of the sky above their heads, a whirr of many wings, a chattering and laughing of soft voices, and the Swallows had come. Perched on the ridge-pole of the big barn, they rested and visited and heard all the news.

The Doves were there, walking up and down the sloping sides of the roof and cooing to each other about the simple things of every-day life. You know the Doves stay at home all winter, and so it makes a great change when their neighbors, the Swallows, return. They are firm friends in spite of their very different ways of living. There was never a Dove who would be a Swallow if he could, yet the plump, quiet, gray and white Doves dearly love the dashing Swallows, and happy is the Squab who can get a Swallow to tell him stories of the great world.

"Isn't it good to be home, home, home!" sang one Swallow. "I never set my claws on another ridge-pole as comfortable as this."

"I'm going to look at my old nest," said a young Swallow, as she suddenly flew down to the eaves.

"I think I'll go, too," said another young Swallow, springing away from his perch. He was a handsome fellow, with a glistening dark blue head and back, a long forked tail which

showed a white stripe on the under side, a rich buff vest, and a deep blue collar, all of the finest feathers. He loved the young Swallow whom he was following, and he wanted to tell her so.

"There is the nest where I was hatched," she said. "Would you think I was ever crowded in there with five brothers and sisters? It was a comfortable nest, too, before the winter winds and snow wore it away. I wonder how it would seem to be a fledgling again?" She snuggled down in the old nest until he could see only her forked tail and her dainty head over the edge. Her vest was quite hidden, and the only light feathers that showed were the reddish-buff ones on throat and face; these were not so bright as his, but still she was beautiful to him. He loved every feather on her body.

"I don't want you to be a fledgling again," he cried. "I want you to help me make a home under the eaves, a lovely little nest of mud and straw, where you can rest as you are now doing, while I bring food to you. Will you?"

"Yes," she cried. "Tittle-ittle-ittle-ee! Oh, tittle-ittle-ittle-ee!" And she flew far up into the blue sky, while he followed her, twittering and singing.

"Where are those young people going?" said an older Swallow. "I should think they had flown far enough for to-day without circling around for the fun of it."

"Don't you remember the days when you were young?" said the Swallow next to him.

"When I was young?" he answered. "My dear, I am young now. I shall always be young in the springtime. I shall never be old except when I am moulting."

Just then a family of Doves came pattering over the roof, swaying their heads at every step. "We are so glad to see you back," said the father. "We had a long, cold winter, and we

thought often of you."

"A very cold winter," cooed his plump little wife.

"Tell me a story," said a young Dove, their son.

"Hush, hush," said the Father Dove. "This is our son," he added, "and this is his sister. We think them quite a pair. Our last brood, you know."

"Tell us a story," said the young Dove again.

"Hush, dear. You mustn't tease the Swallow," said his mother. "They are so fond of stories," she cooed, "and they have heard that your family are great travellers."

"But I want him to tell us a story," said the young Dove. "I think he might."

This made the Swallow feel very uncomfortable, for he could see that the children had been badly brought up, and he did not want to tell a story just then.

"Perhaps you would like to hear about our journey south," said he. "Last fall, when the maples began to show red and yellow leaves among the green, we felt like flying away. It was quite warm weather, and the forest birds were still here, but when we feel like flying south we always begin to get ready."

"I never feel like flying south," said the young Dove. "I don't see why you should."

"That is because I am a Swallow and you are a farmyard Dove. We talked about it to each other, and one day we were ready to start. We all had on our new feathers and felt strong and well. We started out together, but the young birds and their mothers could not keep up with the rest, so we went on ahead."

"Ahead of whom?" said the young Dove, who had been preening his feathers when he should have been listening.

"Ahead of the mothers and their fledglings. We flew over farms where there were Doves like you; over rivers where the

Wild Ducks were feeding by the shore; and over towns where crowds of boys and girls were going into large buildings, while on top of these buildings were large bells singing, 'Ding dong, ding dong, ding dong.'"

"I don't think that was a very pretty song," said the young Dove.

"Hush," said his mother, "you mustn't interrupt the Swallow."

"And at last we came to a great lake," said the Swallow. "It was so great that when we had flown over it for a little while we could not see land at all, and our eyes would not tell us which way to go. We just went on as birds must in such places, flying as we felt we ought, and not stopping to ask why or to wonder if we were right. Of course we Swallows never stop to eat, for we catch our food as we fly, but we did sometimes stop to rest. Just after we had crossed this great lake we alighted. It was then that a very queer thing happened, and this is really the story that I started to tell."

"Oh!" said the young Dove and his sister. "How very exciting. But wait just a minute while we peep over the edge of the roof and see what the farmer is doing." And before anybody could say a word they had pattered away to look.

The birds who were there say that the Swallow seemed quite disgusted, and surely nobody could blame him if he did.

"You must excuse them," cooed their mother. "They are really hardly more than Squabs yet, and I can't bear to speak severely to them. I'm sure they didn't mean to be rude."

"Certainly, certainly," said the Swallow. "I will excuse them and you must excuse me. I wish to see a few of my old friends before the sun goes down. Good afternoon!" And he darted away.

The young Doves came pattering back, swaying their

heads as they walked. "Why, where is the Swallow?" they cried. "What made him go away? Right at the best part of the story, too. We don't see why folks are so disagreeable. People never are as nice to us as they are to the other young Doves."

"Hush," said their mother. "You mustn't talk in that way. Fly off for something to eat, and never mind about the rest of the story."

When they were gone, she said to her husband, "I wonder if they did hurt the Swallow's feelings? But then, they are so young, hardly more than Squabs."

She forgot that even Squabs should be thoughtful of others, and that no Dove ever amounts to anything unless he begins in the right way as a Squab.





The Lamb with the Longest Tail

The Sheep are a simple and kind-hearted family, and of all the people on the farm there are none who are more loved than they. All summer they wander in the fields, nibbling the fresh, sweet grass, and resting at noon in the shadow of the trees, but when the cold weather comes they are brought up to the farmyard and make their home in the long low Sheep-shed.

That is always a happy time. The Horses breathe deeply and toss their heads for joy, the Cows say to each other, "Glad to have the Sheep come up," and even the Oxen shift their cuds and look long over their shoulders at the woolly new-comers. And this is not because the Sheep can do anything for their neighbors to make them warm or to feed them. It is only because they are a gentle folk and pleasant in all they say; and you know when people are always kind, it makes others happy just to see them and have them near.

Then, when the cold March winds are blowing, the good farmer brings more yellow straw into the Sheep-shed, and sees that it is warm and snug. If there are any boards broken and letting the wind in, he mends them and shuts out the cold. At this time, too, the Horses and Cattle stop often in their eating to listen. Even the Pigs, who do not think much about their neighbors, root in the corners nearest the Sheep-shed and prick up their ears.

The Lamb with the Longest Tail



Some bleak morning they hear a faint bleating and know that the first Lamb is there. And then from day to day they hear more of the soft voices as the new Lambs come to live with the flock. Such queer little creatures as the Lambs are when they first come—so weak and awkward! They can hardly stand alone, and stagger and wobble around the little rooms or pens where they are with their mothers. You can just imagine how hard it must be to learn to manage four legs all at once!

There is one thing which they do learn very quickly, and that is, to eat. They are hungry little people, and well they may be, for they have much growing to do, and all of the food that is to be made into good stout bodies and fine long wool has to go into their mouths and down their throats to their stomachs. It is very wonderful to think that a Cow eats grass and it is turned into hair to keep her warm, a Goose eats grass and grows feathers, and a Sheep eats grass and grows wool. Still, it is so, and nobody in the world can tell why. It is just one of the things that are, and if you should ask "Why?" nobody could tell you the reason. There are many such things which we cannot understand, but there are many more which we can, so it would be very foolish for us to mind when there is no answer to our "Why?"

Yes, Sheep eat grass, and because they have such tiny mouths they have to take small mouthfuls. The Lambs have different food for a while—warm milk from their mothers' bodies. When a mother has a Lamb to feed, she eats a great deal, hay, grass, and chopped turnips, and then part of the food that goes into her stomach is turned into milk and stored in two warm bags for the Lamb to take when he is hungry. And how the Lambs do like this milk! It tastes so good that they can hardly stand still while they drink it down, and they

give funny little jerks and wave their woolly tails in the air.

There was one Lamb who had a longer tail than any of the rest, and, sad to say, it made him rather vain. When he first came, he was too busy drinking milk and learning to walk, to think about tails, but as he grew older and stronger he began to know that he had the longest one. Because he was a very young Lamb he was so foolish as to tease the others and call out, "Baa! your tails are snippy ones!"

Then the others would call back, "Baa! Don't care if they are!"

After a while, his mother, who was a sensible Sheep and had seen much of life, said to him: "You must not brag about your tail. It is very rude of you, and very silly too, for you have exactly such a tail as was given to you, and the other Lambs have exactly such tails as were given to them, and when you are older you will know that it did not matter in the least what kind of tail you wore when you were little." She might have told him something else, but she didn't.

The Lamb didn't dare to boast of his tail after this, but when he passed the others, he would look at his mother, and if he thought she wouldn't see, he would wiggle it at them. Of course that was just as bad as talking about it, and the other Lambs knew perfectly well what he meant; still, they pretended not to understand.

One morning, when his mother's back was turned, he was surprised to see that she had only a short and stumpy tail. He had been thinking so much of his own that he had not noticed hers. "Mother," he cried, "why didn't you have a long tail too?"

"I did have once," she answered with a sheepish smile.

"Did it get broken?" he asked in a faint little voice. He was thinking how dreadful it would be if he should break his.

"Not exactly," said his mother. "I will tell you all about it. All little Lambs have long tails——"

"Not so long as mine, though," said he, interrupting.

"No, not so long as yours," she replied, "but so long that if they were left that way always they would make a great deal of trouble. As the wool grows on them, they would catch burrs and sharp, prickly things, which would pull the wool and sting the skin. The farmer knows this, so when the little Lambs are about as old as you are now, he and his men make their tails shorter."

"Oh!" cried the Lamb, curling his tail in as far between his legs as he could, "do you mean that they will shorten my tail, my beautiful long tail?"

"That is just what I mean," said his mother, "and you should be very glad of it. When that is done, you will be ready to go out into the field with me. A lot of trouble we should have if the men did not look after such things for us; but that is what men are for, they say—to look after us Sheep."

"But won't they laugh at me when my tail is shorter?" asked her son.

"They would laugh at you if you wore it long. No Lamb who pretends to be anybody would be seen in the pasture with a dangling tail. Only wild Sheep wear them long, poor things!"

Now the little Lamb wished that he had not boasted so much. Now, when the others passed him, he did not put on airs. Now he wondered why they couldn't have short tails in the beginning. He asked his uncle, an old Wether Sheep, why this was and his uncle laughed. "Why, what would you have done all these days if things happened in that way? What would you have had to think about? What could you have talked about?" The little Lamb hung his head and asked no

more questions.

"What do you think?" he called to a group of Lambs near by. "I'm going to have one of the men shorten my tail. It is such a bother unless one does have it done, and mine is so very long!"





The Wonderful Shiny Egg

"Cut-cut-ca-dah-cut! Cut-cut-cut-ca-dah-cut!" called the Dorking Hen, as she strutted around the poultry-yard. She held her head very high, and paused every few minutes to look around in her jerky way and see whether the other fowls were listening. Once she even stood on her left foot right in the pathway of the Shanghai Cock, and cackled into his very ears.

Everybody pretended not to hear her. The people in the poultry-yard did not like the Dorking Hen very well. They said that she put on airs. Perhaps she did. She certainly talked a great deal of the place from which she and the Dorking Cock came. They had come in a small cage from a large poultry farm, and the Dorking Hen never tired of telling about the wonderful, noisy ride that they took in a dark car drawn by a great, black, snorting creature. She said that this creature's feet grew on to his sides and whirled around as he ran, and that he breathed out of the top of his head. When the fowls first heard of this, they were much interested, but after a while they used to walk away from her, or make believe that they saw Grasshoppers whom they wanted to chase.

When she found that people were not listening to her, she cackled louder than ever, "Cut-cut-ca-dah-cut! Look at the egg—the egg—the egg—the egg that I have laid."

"Is there any particular reason why we should look at the egg—the egg—the egg—the egg that you have laid?" asked

the Shanghai Cock, who was the grumpiest fowl in the yard.

Now, usually if the Dorking Hen had been spoken to in this way, she would have ruffled up her head feathers and walked away, but this time she had news to tell and so she kept her temper. "Reason?" she cackled. "Yes indeed! It is the finest egg that was ever laid in this poultry-yard."

"Hear her talk!" said a Bantam Hen. "I think it is in very poor taste to lay such large eggs as most of the Hens do here. Small ones are much more genteel."

"She must forget an egg that I laid a while ago with two yolks," said a Shanghai Hen. "That was the largest egg ever laid here, and I have always wished that I had hatched it. A pair of twin chickens would have been so interesting."

"Well," said the Dorking Hen, who could not keep still any longer, "small eggs may be genteel and large ones may be interesting, but my last one is bee-autiful."

"Perhaps you'd just as soon tell us about it as to brag without telling?" grumbled the Shanghai Cock. "I suppose it is grass color, or sky color, or hay color, or speckled, like a sparrow's egg."

"No," answered the Dorking Hen, "it is white, but it is shiny."

"Shiny!" they exclaimed. "Who ever heard of a shiny egg?"

"Nobody," she replied, "and that is why it is so wonderful."

"Don't believe it," said the Shanghai Cock, as he turned away and began scratching the ground.

Now the Dorking Hen did get angry. "Come to see it, if you don't believe me," she said, as she led the others into the Hen-house.

She flew up to the row of boxes where the Hens had their

nests, and picked her way along daintily until she reached the farthest one. "Now look," said she.

One by one the fowls peeped into the box, and sure enough, there it lay, a fine, shiny, white egg. The little Bantam, who was really a jolly, kind-hearted creature, said, "Well, it is a beauty. I should be proud of it myself."

"It is whiter than I fancy," said the Shanghai Cock, "but it certainly does shine."

"I shall hatch it," said the Dorking Hen, very decidedly. "I shall hatch it and have a beautiful Chicken with shining feathers. I shall not hatch all the eggs in the nest, but roll this one away and sit on it."

"Perhaps," said one of her friends, "somebody else may have laid it after all, and not noticed. You know it is not the only one in the nest."

"Pooh!" said the Dorking Hen. "I guess I know! I am sure it was not there when I went to the nest and it was there when I left. I must have laid it."

The fowls went away, and she tried to roll the shiny one away from the other eggs, but it was slippery and very light and would not stay where she put it. Then she got out of patience and rolled all the others out of the nest. Two of them fell to the floor and broke, but she did not care. "They are nothing but common ones, anyway," she said.

When the farmer's wife came to gather the eggs she pecked at her and was very cross. Every day she did this, and at last the woman let her alone. Every day she told the other fowls what a wonderful Chicken she expected to have. "Of course he will be of my color," said she, "but his feathers will shine brightly. He will be a great flyer, too. I am sure that is what it means when the egg is light." She came off the nest each day just long enough to stroll around and chat with her

friends, telling them what wonderful things she expected, and never letting them forget that it was she who had laid the shiny egg. She pecked airily at the food, and seemed to think that a Hen who was hatching such a wonderful Chicken should have the best of everything. Each day she told some new beauty that was to belong to her child, until the Shanghai Cock fairly flapped his wings with impatience.

Day after day passed, and the garden beyond the barn showed rows of sturdy green plants, where before there had been only straight ridges of fine brown earth. The Swallows who were building under the eaves of the great barn, twittered and chattered of the wild flowers in the forest, and four other Hens came off their nests with fine broods of downy Chickens. And still the Dorking Hen sat on her shiny egg and told what a wonderful Chicken she expected to hatch. This was not the only egg in the nest now, but it was the only one of which she spoke.

At last a downy Chicken peeped out of one of the common eggs, and wriggled and twisted to free himself from the shell. His mother did not hurry him or help him. She knew that he must not slip out of it until all the blood from the shell-lining had run into his tender little body. If she had pushed the shell off before he had all of this fine red blood, he would not have been a strong Chicken, and she wanted her children to be strong.

The Dorking Cock walked into the Hen-house and stood around on one foot. He came to see if the shiny egg had hatched, but he wouldn't ask. He thought himself too dignified to show any interest in newly hatched Chickens before a Hen. Still, he saw no harm in standing around on one foot and letting the Dorking Hen talk to him if she wanted to. When she told him it was one of the common eggs that had

hatched, he was quite disgusted, and stalked out of doors without a word.

The truth was that he had been rather bragging to the other Cocks, and only a few minutes later he spoke with pride of the time when "our" shiny egg should hatch. "For," he said, "Mrs. Dorking and I have been quite alone here as far as our own people are concerned. It is not strange that we should feel a great pride in the wonderful egg and the Chicken to be hatched from it. A Dorking is a Dorking after all, my friends." And he flapped his wings, stretched his neck, and crowed as loudly as he could.

"Yes," said the Black Spanish Cock afterward, "a Dorking certainly is a Dorking, although I never could see the sense of making such a fuss about it. They are fat and they have an extra toe on each foot. Why should a fowl want extra toes? I have four on each foot, and I can scratch up all the food I want with them."

"Well," said the grumpy old Shanghai Cock, "I am sick and tired of this fuss. Common eggs are good enough for Shanghais and Black Spanish and Bantams, and I should think—"

Just at this minute they heard a loud fluttering and squawking in the Hen-house and the Dorking Hen crying, "Weasel! Weasel!" The Cocks ran to drive the Weasel away, and the Hens followed to see it done. All was noise and hurry, and they saw nothing of the Weasel except the tip of his bushy tail as he drew his slender body through an opening in the fence.

The Dorking Hen was on one of the long perches where the fowls roost at night, the newly hatched Chicken lay shivering in the nest, and on the floor were the pieces of the wonderful shiny egg. The Dorking Hen had knocked it from

the nest in her flight.

The Dorking Cock looked very cross. He was not afraid of a Weasel, and he did not see why she should be. "Just like a Hen!" he said.

The Black Spanish Hen turned to him before he could say another word. "Just like a Cock!" she exclaimed. "I never raise Chickens myself. It is not the custom among the Black Spanish Hens. We lay the eggs and somebody else hatches them. But if I had been on the nest as long as Mrs. Dorking has, do you suppose I'd let any fowl speak to me as you spoke to her? I'd—I'd—" and she was so angry that she couldn't say another word, but just strutted up and down and cackled.

A motherly old Shanghai Hen flew up beside Mrs. Dorking. "We are very sorry for you," she said. "I know how I should have felt if I had broken my two-yolked egg just as it was ready to hatch."

The Bantam Hen picked her way to the nest. "What a dear little Chicken!" she cried, in her most comforting tone. "He is so plump and so bright for his age. But, my dear, he is chilly, and I think you should cuddle him under your wings until his down is dry."

The Dorking Hen flew down. "He is a dear," she said, "and yet when he was hatched I didn't care much for him, because I had thought so long about the shiny egg. It serves me right to lose that one, because I have been so foolish. Still, I do not know how I could stand it if it were not for my good neighbors."

While Mrs. Dorking was talking with the Bantam by her nest, the Black Spanish Hen scratched a hole in the earth under the perches, poked the pieces of the shiny egg into it, and covered them up. "I never raise Chickens myself," she said, "but if I did—"

The Shanghai Cock walked away with the Dorking Cock. "I'm sorry for you," he said, "and I am more sorry for Mrs. Dorking. She is too fine a Hen to be spoken to as you spoke to her this morning, and I don't want to hear any more of your fault-finding. Do you understand?" And he ruffled his neck feathers and stuck his face close to that of the Dorking Cock. They stared into each other's eyes for a minute; then the Dorking Cock, who was not so big and strong as the Shanghai, shook his head and answered sweetly, "It was rude of me. I won't do it again."

From that day to this, nobody in the poultry yard has ever spoken of the shiny egg, and the Dorkings are much liked by the other fowls. Yet if it had not been for her trouble, Mrs. Dorking and her neighbors would never have become such good friends. The little Dorkings are fine, fat-breasted Chicks, with the extra toe on each foot of which all that family are so proud.





The Duckling Who Didn't Know What to Do

"Quack! Quack!" called the Duck who had been sitting on her nest so long. "My first egg is cracked, and I can see the broad yellow bill of my eldest child. Ah! Now I can see his downy white head." The Drake heard her and quacked the news to every one around, and flapped his wings, and preened his feathers, for was not this the first Duckling ever hatched on the farm?

The Drake had not been there long himself. It was only a few days before the Duck began sitting that she and her five sisters had come with him to this place. It had not taken them long to become acquainted with the other farmyard people, and all had been kind to them. The Geese had rather put on airs, at first, because they were bigger and had longer legs, but the Ducks and Drake were too wise to notice this in any way, and before long the Geese were as friendly as possible. They would have shown the Ducks the way to the water if it had been necessary, but it was not, for Ducks always know without being told just where to find it. They know, and they do not know why they know. It is one of the things that are.

Now that the first Duckling had chipped the shell, everybody wanted to see him, and there was soon a crowd of fowls around the nest watching him free himself from it. The Drake stood by, as proud as a Peacock. "I think he looks much like

his mother," said he.

"Yes, yes," cackled all the Hens. "The same broad yellow bill, the same short yellow legs, and the same webbed feet."

The mother Duck smiled. "He looks more like me now than he will by and by," she said, "for when his feathers grow and cover the down, he will have a stiff little one curled up on his back like the Drake's. And really, except for the curled feather, his father and I look very much alike."

"That is so," said the Black Spanish Cock. "You do look alike; the same white feathers, the same broad breast, the same strong wings, the same pointed tail, the same long neck, the same sweet expression around the bill!" That was just like the Black Spanish Cock. He always said something pleasant about people when he could, and it was much better than saying unpleasant things. Indeed, he was the most polite fowl in the poultry-yard, and the Black Spanish Hen thought his manners quite perfect.

Then the Duckling's five aunts pushed their way through the crowd to the nest under the edge of the strawstack. "Have you noticed what fine large feet he has?" said one of them. "That is like his mother's people. See what a strong web is between the three long toes on each foot! He will be a good swimmer. The one toe that points backward is small, to be sure, but he does not need that in swimming. That is only to make waddling easier."

"Yes, yes," "A fine web," and "Very large feet," cried the fowls around the nest, but most of them didn't care so much about the size of his feet as the Ducks did. Large feet are always useful, you know, yet nobody needs them so badly as Geese and Ducks. The Geese were off swimming, and so could not see the Duckling when first he came out of the shell.

"Tap-tap, tap-tap," sounded inside another shell, and they knew that there would soon be a second damp little Duckling beside the first. The visitors could not stay to see this one come out, and they went away for a time. The eldest Duckling had supposed that this was life, to have people around saying, "How bright he is!" "What fine legs!" or "He has a beautiful bill!" And now that they all walked away and his mother was looking after the Duckling who was just breaking her shell, he didn't like it—he didn't like it at all.

Still, it was much better so. If he had had no brothers and sisters, he would have been a lonely little fellow; besides, he would have had his own way nearly all the time, and that is likely to make any Duckling selfish. Then, too, if all the other fowls had petted him and given him the best of everything, he would have become vain. Truly, it was a good thing for him not to be the only child, and he soon learned to think so.

After there were two Ducklings, a third one came, and a fourth, and a fifth, and so on until, when the broken shells were cleared away and the mother had counted bills, she could call to the Drake and her sisters, "Nine Ducklings hatched, and there were only nine eggs in the nest."

"Then come to the brook," said the Drake, "and let the children have a bath. I have been swimming a great many times to-day, and they have not even set foot in water yet. Why, our eldest son was out of his shell before the Horses were harnessed this morning, and here it is nearly time for their supper."

"I couldn't help it," said the mother Duck. "I couldn't leave the nest to take him swimming until the rest were ready to go. I am doing the best I can."

"I didn't mean to find fault," said the Drake, "and I suppose you couldn't get away, but we know that Ducklings

should be taught to bathe often, and there is nothing like beginning in time."

"I might have taken some of them to the brook," said one of the aunts. The mother straightened her neck and held her head very high, while she answered, "You? You are very kind, but what do you know about bringing up Ducklings?"

Now the aunt might have said, "I know just as much as you do," for it was the young mother's first brood, yet she kept still. She thought, "I may hatch Ducklings of my own some day, and then I suppose I shall want to care for them myself."

"Wait," said the Drake, as they reached the brook. "Let us wait and see what the children will do." The words were hardly out of his bill when—flutter—splash—splash!—there were nine yellow-white Ducklings floating on the brook and murmuring happily to each other as though they had never done anything else.

The Dorking Cock stood on the bank. "Who taught them to swim?" said he.

"Nobody," answered their mother proudly. "They knew without being told. That is the way a Duck takes to water." And she gave a dainty lurch and was among her brood.

"Well!" exclaimed the Dorking Cock. "I thought the little Dorkings were as bright as children could be, but they didn't know as much as that. I must tell them." He stalked off, talking under his breath.

"They know more than that," said the Drake. "Did you see how they ran ahead of us when we stopped to talk? They knew where to find water as soon as they were out of the shell. Still, the Cock might not have believed that if I had told him."

They had a good swim, and then all stood on the bank and dried themselves. This they did by squeezing the water out of their down with their bills. The Drake, the mother

Duck, the five aunts, and the nine Ducklings all stood as tall and straight as they could, and turned and twisted their long necks, and flapped their wings, and squeezed their down, and murmured to each other. And their father didn't tell the little ones how, and their mother didn't tell them how, and their five aunts didn't tell them how, but they knew without being told.

The Ducklings grew fast, and made friends of all the farmyard people. Early every morning they went to the brook. They learned to follow the brook to the river, and here were wonderful things to be seen. There was plenty to eat, too, in the soft mud under the water, and it was easy enough to dive to it, or to reach down their long necks while only their pointed tails and part of their body could be seen above the water. Not that they ate the mud. They kept only the food that they found in it, and then let the mud slip out between the rough edges of their bills. They swam and ate all day, and slept all night, and were dutiful Ducklings who minded their mother, so it was not strange that they were plump and happy.

At last there came a morning when the eldest Duckling could not go to the brook with the others. A Weasel had bitten him in the night, and if it had not been for his mother and the Drake, would have carried him away. The rest had to go in swimming, and his lame leg would not let him waddle as far as the brook, or swim after he got there.

"I don't know what to do," he said to his mother. "I can't swim and I can't waddle far, and I've eaten so much already that I can't eat anything more for a long, long time."

"You might play with the little Shanghais," said his mother.

"They run around too much," he replied. "I can't keep up with them."



They Had a Good Swim

"Then why not lie near the corn crib and visit with the Mice?"

"Oh, they don't like the things that I like, and it isn't any fun."

"How would it suit you to watch the Peacock for a while?"

"I'm tired of watching the Peacock."

"Then," said the mother, "you must help somebody else. You are old enough to think of such things now, and you must remember this wise saying: 'When you don't know what to do, help somebody.'"

"Whom can I help?" said the lame Duckling. "People can all do things for themselves."

"There is the Blind Horse," answered his mother. "He is alone to-day, and I'm sure he would like somebody to visit him."

"Quack!" said the Duckling. "I will go to see him." He waddled slowly away, stopping now and then to rest, and shaking his little pointed tail from side to side as Ducks do. The Blind Horse was grazing in the pasture alone.

"I've come to see you, sir," said the Duckling. "Shall I be in your way?"

The Blind Horse looked much pleased. "I think from your voice that you must be one of the young Ducks," said he. "I shall be very glad to have you visit me, only you must be careful to keep away from my feet, for I can't see, and I might step on you."

"I'll be careful," said the Duckling. "I can't waddle much anyway this morning, because my leg hurts me so."

"Why, I'm sorry you are lame," said the Horse. "What is the matter?"

"A Weasel bit me in the night, sir. But it doesn't hurt so much as it did before I came to see you. Perhaps the pasture

is a better place for lame legs than the farmyard." He didn't know that it was because he was trying to make somebody else happy that he felt so much better, yet that was the reason.

The Blind Horse and the Duckling became very fond of each other and had a fine time. The Horse told stories of his Colthood, and of the things he had seen in his travels before he became blind. And the Duckling told him what the other farmyard people were doing, and about the soft, fleecy clouds that drifted across the blue sky. When the mother Duck came to look for him, the little fellow was much surprised. "Didn't you go to the brook?" he asked.

"Yes," said his mother, with a smile. "We have been there all the morning. Don't you see how high the sun is?"

"Why-ee!" said the Duckling. "I didn't think I had been here long at all. We've been having the nicest time. And I'm coming again, am I not?" He asked this question of the Blind Horse.

"I wish you would come often," answered the Blind Horse. "You have given me a very pleasant morning. Good-bye!"

The mother Duck and her son waddled off together. "How is your leg?" said she.

"I forgot all about it until I began to walk," answered the Duckling. "Isn't that queer?"

"Not at all," said his mother. "It was because you were making somebody else happy. 'When you don't know what to do, help somebody.'"



The Fussy Queen Bee

In a sheltered corner of the farmyard, where the hedge kept off the cold winds and the trees shaded from hot summer sunshine, there were many hives of Bees. One could not say much for the Drones, but the others were the busiest of all the farmyard people, and they had so much to do that they did not often stop to visit with their neighbors.

In each hive, or home, there were many thousand Bees, and each had his own work. First of all, there was the Queen. You might think that being a Queen meant playing all the time, but that is not so, for to be a really good Queen, even in a Beehive, one must know a great deal and keep at work all the time. The Queen Bee is the mother of all the Bee Babies, and she spends her days in laying eggs. She is so very precious and important a person that the first duty of the rest is to take care of her.

The Drones are the stoutest and finest-looking of all the Bees, but they are lazy, very, very lazy. There are never many of them in a hive, and like most lazy people, they spend much of their time in telling the others how to work. They do not make wax or store honey, and as the Worker Bees do not wish them to eat what has been put away for winter, they do not live very long.

Most of the Bees are Workers. They are smaller than either the Queen Mother or the Drones, and they gather all

the honey, make all the wax, build the comb, and feed the babies. They keep the hive clean, and when the weather is very warm, some of them fan the air with their wings to cool it. They guard the doorway of the hive, too, and turn away the robbers who sometimes come to steal their honey.

In these busy homes, nobody can live long just for himself. Everybody helps somebody else, and that makes life pleasant. The Queen Mother often lays as many as two thousand eggs in a day. Most of these are Worker eggs, and are laid in the small cells of the brood comb, which is the nursery of the hive. A few are Drone eggs and are laid in large cells. She never lays any Queen eggs, for she does not want more Queens growing up. It is a law among the Bees that there can be only one grown Queen living in each home.

The Workers, however, know that something might happen to their old Queen Mother, so, after she has gone away, they sometimes go into a cell where she has laid a Worker egg, and take down the waxen walls between it and the ones on either side to make a very large royal cell. They bite away the wax with their strong jaws and press the rough edges into shape with their feet. When this egg hatches, they do not feed the baby, or Larva, with tasteless bread made of flower-dust, honey, and water, as they would if they intended it to grow up a Worker or a Drone. Instead, they make what is called royal jelly, which is quite sour, and tuck this all around the Larva, who now looks like a little white worm.

The royal jelly makes her grow fast, and in five days she is so large as to nearly fill the cell. Then she stops eating, spins a cocoon, and lies in it for about two and a half days more. When she comes out of this, she is called a Pupa. Sixteen days after the laying of the egg, the young Queen is ready to come out of her cell. It takes twenty-one days for a Worker to

become fully grown and twenty-five for a Drone.

In the hive by the cedar tree, the Queen Mother was growing restless and fussy. She knew that the Workers were raising some young Queens, and she tried to get to the royal cells. She knew that if she could only do that, the young Queens would never live to come out. The Workers knew this, too, and whenever she came near there, they made her go away.

The Queen Larvæ and Pupæ were of different ages, and one of them was now ready to leave her cell. They could hear her crying to be let out, but they knew that if she and the Queen Mother should meet now, one of them would die. So instead of letting her out, they built a thick wall of wax over the door and left only an opening through which they could feed her. When she was hungry she ran her tongue out and they put honey on it.

She wondered why the Workers did not let her out, when she wanted so much to be free. She did not yet know that Queen Mothers do not get along well with young Queens.

The Workers talked it over by themselves. One of them was very tender-hearted. "It does seem too bad," said she, "to keep the poor young Queen shut up in her cell. I don't see how you can stand it to hear her piping so pitifully all the time. I am sure she must be beautiful. I never saw a finer tongue than the one she runs out for honey."

"Humph!" said a sensible old Worker, who had seen many Queens hatched and many swarms fly away, "you'd be a good deal more sorry if we did let her out now. It would not do at all."

The tender-hearted Worker did not answer this, but she talked it over with the Drones. "I declare," said she, wiping her eyes with her forefeet, "I can hardly gather a mouthful of

honey for thinking of her."

"Suppose you hang yourself up and make wax then," said one Drone. "It is a rather sunshiny day, but you ought to be doing something, and if you cannot gather honey you might do that." This was just like a Drone. He never gathered honey or made wax, yet he could not bear to see a Worker lose any time.

The Worker did not hang herself up and make wax, however. She never did that except on cloudy days, and she was one of those Bees who seem to think that nothing will come out right unless they stop working to see about it. There was plenty waiting to be done, but she was too sad and anxious to do it. She might have known that since her friends were only minding the law, it was right to keep the new Queen in her cell.

The Queen Mother was restless and fussy. She could not think of her work, and half the time she did not know whether she was laying a Drone egg or a Worker egg. In spite of that, she did not make any mistake, or put one into the wrong kind of cell. "I cannot stay here with a young Queen," said she. "I will not stay here. I will take my friends with me and fly away."

Whenever she met a Worker, she struck her feelers on those of her friend, and then this friend knew exactly how she felt about it. In this way the news was passed around, and soon many of the Workers were as restless as their Queen Mother. They were so excited over it at times that the air of the hive grew very hot. After a while they would become quiet and gather honey once more. They whispered often to each other. "Do you know where we are going?" one said.

"Sh!" was the answer. "The guides are looking for a good place now."

"I wish the Queen Mother knew where we are going," said

the first.

"How could she?" replied the second. "You know very well that she has not left the hive since she began to lay eggs. Here she comes now."

"Oh dear!" exclaimed the Queen Mother. "I can never stand this. I certainly cannot. To think I am not allowed to rule in my own hive! The Workers who are guarding the royal cells drive me away whenever I go near them. I will not stay any longer."

"Then," said a Drone, as though he had thought of it for the first time, "why don't you go away?"

"I shall," said she. "Will you go with me?"

"No," said the Drone. "I hate moving and furnishing a new house. Besides, somebody must stay here to take care of the Workers and the young Queen."

The Queen Mother walked away. "When we were both young," she said to herself, "he would have gone anywhere with me."

And the Drone said to himself, "Now, isn't that just like a Queen Mother! She has known all the time that there would be young Queens coming on, and that she would have to leave, yet here she is, making the biggest kind of fuss about it. She ought to remember that it is the law."

Indeed she should have remembered that it was the law, for everything is done by law in the hive, and no one person should find fault. The law looks after them all, and will not let any one have more than his rightful share.

That same afternoon there was a sudden quiet in their home. The Workers who had been outside returned and visited with the rest. While they were waiting, a few who were to be their guides came to the door of the hive, struck their wings together, and gave the signal for starting. Then all who

were going with the Queen Mother hurried out of the door and flew with her in circles overhead. "Good-bye!" they called. "Raise all the young Queens you wish. We shall never come back. We are going far, far away, and we shall not tell you where. It is a lovely place, a very lovely place."

"Let them go," said the Drones who stayed behind. "Now, isn't it time to let out the young Queen?"

"Not yet," answered a Worker, who stood near the door. "Not one feeler shall she put outside her cell until that swarm is out of sight."

The tender-hearted Worker came up wiping her eyes. "Oh, that poor Queen Mother!" said she. "I am so sorry for her. I positively cannot gather honey to-day, I feel so badly about her going."

"Better keep on working," said her friend. "It's the best thing in the world for that sad feeling. Besides, you should try to keep strong."

"Oh, I will try to eat something from the comb," was the answer, "but I don't feel like working."

"Zzzt!" said the other Worker. "I think if you can eat, you can hunt your food outside, and not take honey we have laid up for winter or food that will be needed for the children."

The Drones chuckled. It was all right for them to be lazy, they thought, but they never could bear to see a Worker waste time. "Ah," cried one of them suddenly, "what is the new swarm doing now?"

The words were hardly out of his mouth when the Queen Mother crawled into the hive again. "Such dreadful luck!" said she. "A cloud passed over the sun just as we were alighting on a tree to rest."

"I wouldn't have come back for that," said a Drone.

"No," said she, in her airiest way, "I dare say you wouldn't,

but I would. I dare not go to a new home after a cloud has passed over the sun. I think it is a sign of bad luck. I should never expect a single egg to hatch if I went on. We shall try it again to-morrow."

All the others came back with her, and the hive was once more crowded and hot. "Oh dear!" said the tender-hearted Worker, "isn't it too bad to think they couldn't go?"

The next morning they started again and were quite as excited over it as before. The Queen Mother had fussed and fidgeted all the time, although she had laid nine hundred and seventy-three eggs while waiting, and that in spite of interruptions. "Being busy keeps me from thinking," said she, "and I must do something." This time the Queen Mother lighted on an apple-tree branch, and the others clung to her until all who had left the hive were in a great mass on the branch—a mass as large as a small cabbage. They meant to rest a little while and then fly away to the new home chosen by their guides.

While they were hanging here, the farmer came under the tree, carrying a long pole with a wire basket fastened to the upper end. He shook the clustered Bees gently into it, and then changed them into an empty hive that stood beside their old home.

"Now," said the Workers who had stayed in the old hive, "we will let out the new Queen, for the Queen Mother will never return."

It did not take long to bite away the waxen wall and let her out. Then they gathered around and caressed her, and touched their feelers to her and waited upon her, and explained why they could not let her out sooner. She was still a soft gray color, like all young Bees when they first come from the cell, but this soon changed to the black worn by her

people.

The Workers flew in and out, and brought news from the hive next door. They could not go there, for the law does not allow a Bee who lives in one home to visit in another, but they met their old friends in the air or when they were sipping honey. They found that the Queen Mother had quite given up the idea of living elsewhere and was as busy as ever. The farmer had put a piece of comb into the new hive so that she could begin housekeeping at once.

The new Queen was petted and kept at home until she was strong and used to moving about. That was not long. Then she said she wanted to see the world outside. "We will go with you," said the Drones, who were always glad of an excuse for flying away in pleasant weather. They said there was so much noise and hurrying around in the hive that they could never get any real rest there during the daytime.

So the young Queen flew far away and saw the beautiful world for the first time. Such a blue sky! Such green grass! Such fine trees covered with sweet-smelling blossoms! She loved it all as soon as she saw it. "Ah," she cried, "what a wonderful thing it is to live and see all this! I am so glad that I was hatched. But now I must hurry home, for there is so much to be done."

She was a fine young Queen, and the Bees were all proud of her. They let her do anything she wished as long as she kept away from the royal cells. She soon began to work as the old Queen Mother had done, and was very happy in her own way. She would have liked to open the royal cells and prevent more Queens from hatching, and when they told her it was the law which made them keep her away, she still wanted to bite into them.

"That poor young Queen Mother!" sighed the tender-

hearted Worker. "I am so sorry for her when she is kept away from the royal cells. This is a sad, sad world!" But this isn't a sad world by any means. It is a beautiful, sunshiny, happy world, and neither Queen Bees nor anybody else should think it hard if they cannot do every single thing they wish. The law looks after great and small, and there is no use in pouting because we cannot do one certain thing, when there is any amount of delightful work and play awaiting us. And the young Queen Mother knew this.





The Bay Colt Learns to Mind

The span of Bays were talking together in their stalls, and the other Horses were listening. That was one trouble with living in the barn, you could not say anything to your next-door neighbor without somebody else hearing. The farmer had solid walls between the stalls, with openings so far back that no Horse could get his head to them without breaking his halter. This had been done to keep them from biting each other, and as nobody but the Dappled Gray ever thought of doing such a thing, it was rather hard on the rest. It made it difficult for the mothers to bring up their children properly, for after a Colt was old enough to have a stall to himself, his mother had to call out her advice and warnings so loudly that everybody could hear, and you know it is not well to reprove a child before company if it can be helped. Indeed, it was this very question that was troubling the span of Bays now. Each of them had a two-year-old Colt, and they knew that it was nearly time for the farmer to put these Colts to work. The span of Bays were sisters, so of course their children were cousins, and they were all very fond of each other and of the Blind Horse, who was the uncle of the Bays and the great-uncle of the Bay Colt and the Gray Colt.

"I am worried about the Bay Colt," said his mother. "Since he was brought into the barn last fall and had a stall away from me, he has gotten into bad ways. I have told him again

and again that he must not nibble the edge of the manger, yet the first thing I heard this morning was the grating of his teeth on the wood."

"Well," said his aunt, "you know he is teething, and that may be the reason."

"That is no excuse," said his mother sternly. "He has been teething ever since he was five days old, and he will not cut his last tooth for three years yet. I don't call it goodness to keep from cribbing when you don't want to crib, and the time to stop is now. Besides, if he waits until he has all his teeth, he won't be able to break himself of the habit when he does try."

"That is so," said his aunt, "and he will ruin his teeth, too."

"Pooh!" exclaimed the Bay Colt, who had heard what they were saying. "I can stop whenever I want to, and they're my own teeth, anyway. It isn't anybody else's business if I do ruin them."

"There!" said his mother to his aunt, "you see what I mean. That is just the way he talks all the time. Now what would you do?"

"Let him alone," snorted the Dappled Gray. "Let him alone, and he will get some Horse sense after he has been broken. He'll have a hard time of it, but he'll come out all right."

The Bay Colt kicked against the side of the stall, he was so vexed. "I'll thank you to let me alone," said he. "I don't see why everybody tells me what I ought to do. Guess I know a thing or two."

"I'll tell you why," said the Dappled Gray, in a voice that sounded as though he were trying very hard not to lose his temper. "It is because you are young and we like you, and we

can save you trouble if you mind what we tell you. I had lost the black pits in my front teeth before you were born, and when a Horse has lived long enough to lose the black pits from his front teeth, he knows a good deal. You don't know a curb-bit from a snaffle now, but you will learn many things when you are broken—a very great many things."

The Bay Colt tossed his head and did not answer. When he was led out to drink, the Dappled Gray spoke quickly to his friends. "We will let him alone," said he, "as he wishes. We will not advise him until he asks us to do so." They were all whinnying "Yes" when the Bay Colt came back. Then it became so still that you could have heard a stem of hay drop.

For a few days after this, the Bay Colt had a very good time. Nobody gave him any advice, and even when he gnawed at the edge of the manger, his mother did not seem to notice it. After he found that she didn't say anything, he didn't gnaw, or crib, so much. He was such a foolish and contrary young fellow that when people told him not to do a thing, he always wanted to do that thing worse than anything else in the world. His cousin, the Gray Colt, was not at all like him. She was a gentle little two-year-old whom everybody loved. She was full of fun and was the gayest possible companion in the meadow, yet when the older Horses gave her advice, she always listened and obeyed.

The Bay Colt was very fond of his cousin, but he did like to tease her, and once in the fall, before they came to stay in the barn, he called her a "goody-goody" because she wouldn't jump the fence and run away with him. He said she wouldn't do such things because she didn't know what fun was. Then she did show that she had a temper, for her brown eyes snapped and her soft lips were raised until she showed all her biting teeth. "I'm not a 'goody-goody,'" she cried, stamping

the ground with her pretty little hoofs, "and I just ache to go. I feel as though there were ropes that I couldn't see, pulling me toward that fence every time I think of it, but I won't go! I won't go! My mother says that she jumped a fence and ran away when she was a Colt, and that she felt as mean as could be afterward."

"I don't care," said her cousin, "I'm going anyway, and you can stay at home if you want to. Good-bye!" He ran and leaped over the fence, and trotted down the road with his head well up and his tail in the air. And then how the Gray Colt did want to follow! "I won't!" she said again. "I won't do it. I'll look the other way and try to forget it, but I wish he knew how hard it is to be good sometimes."

The next morning the Bay Colt was in the pasture again. The farmer and his man had found him far away and led him back. "I had a fine time," he said to his cousin, "and I don't feel a bit mean. I'm going again to-day, but don't you tell." When his mother scolded him as he deserved, he just switched his tail and thought about something else until she stopped talking. Then he ran away again.

The next morning when the Gray Colt saw him, he had a queer wooden thing around his neck, and fastened to this was a pole that stuck out ahead of him. It tired his neck and bothered him when he wanted to run. If he had tried to jump the fence, it would have thrown him down. When the Gray Colt came toward him, he pretended not to see her. He might just as well have looked squarely at her as soon as she came, because, you know, he had to look at her sometime, but he had a mean, slinking, afraid feeling, such as people always have when they have done something wrong and have had time to think about it. Besides, he had changed his mind since the wooden poke had been put on him, and somehow his

running away seemed very foolish now. He wondered how he could ever have thought it any fun, and he was so disgusted that he couldn't keep his ears still, but moved them restlessly when he remembered his own silliness.

The Gray Colt was too polite to say anything about his wearing the poke, and she talked about the grass, the sky, the trees, and everything else she could think of. Once she was about to speak of the fence, and then she remembered and stopped short. The Bay Colt noticed this. "You might just as well go on," said he. "You are very kind, but I know how foolish I have been, and there's no use in keeping still. You were right, and it doesn't pay to jump fences for a few minutes of what you think will be fun. I feel sick all over when I think about it."

"It's too bad," whinnied the Gray Colt. "I'm very sorry for you."

"And what do you think?" said the Bay Colt. "I heard the Dappled Gray say this morning that I was like a Pig! Imagine a Colt being like a Pig! He said that it didn't make any difference on which side of a fence Pigs were, they always wanted to be on the other side, and that I was just as stupid."

This was all in the fall, before the cold weather had sent them to live in the barn, and while the Bay Colt was wearing the poke he could not well forget the lesson he had learned about jumping and running away. His mother grew quite proud of him, and the Dappled Gray had been heard to say that he might amount to something yet. That was a great deal for the Dappled Gray to say, for although he had a very kind heart, he did not often praise people, and hardly ever said such things about two-year-olds. That made it all the harder for him when the Bay Colt became cross over being told to stop cribbing.

You know there are some Colts who learn obedience easily, and there are others who have one hard struggle to stop jumping, and another to stop cribbing, and another to stop kicking, and so on, all through their Colthood. The older Horses are sorry for them and try to help them, for they know that neither Colt nor Horse can really enjoy life until he is trying to do right. To be sure, people sometimes do wrong even then, but if they will take advice and keep on trying they are certain to turn out well.

And now, when the Bay Colt seemed to have forgotten the lesson he had in the fall, and after he had told the other Horses to let him alone, very strange things began to happen. The farmer took him from his stall and made him open his mouth. Then a piece of iron was slipped into it, which lay on top of his tongue and fitted into the place on each side of his jaw where there were no teeth. Long lines were fastened to this iron on either side, and when he tossed his head and sidled around, these lines were gently pulled by the farmer and the iron bit pressed down his tongue.

The farmer was very kind, but the Bay Colt did not want the bit in his mouth, so he acted as ugly as he knew how, and kicked, and snapped with his jaws open, and tried to run. The farmer did not grow angry or cross, yet whenever the Bay Colt showed his temper, the bit would press down his tongue and stretch the corners of his mouth until he had to stop. Once in a while the farmer would try to pat him and show him that it was all right, but the Bay Colt would not have this, and he was a very cross and sweaty two-year-old when he was taken back to his stall.

He missed the Gray Colt from her usual place, but soon she came in with one of the farmer's men. She had been driven for the first time also.

"Hallo!" said he. "Have you had a bit in your mouth too? Wasn't it dreadful? I am so angry that my hoofs fairly tingle to hit that farmer."

"It was hard," said the Gray Colt, "but the man who drove me was very kind and let me rest often. He patted me, too, and that helped me to be brave. My mother says we won't mind the bit at all after we are used to it."

"Well," said the Bay Colt, "I'm never going to be used to it. I won't stand it, and that's all there is about it." He stamped his hoofs and looked very important. Two-year-olds often look quite as important as ten-year-olds, and they feel much more so. The Bay Colt was rather proud of his feet, and thought it much nicer to have solid hoofs than to have them split, like those of the Cows, the Hogs, and the Sheep.

When he said that he would not stand it to be driven, a queer little sound ran through the stalls. It was like the wind passing over a wheatfield, and was caused by the older Horses taking a long breath and whispering to themselves. The Bay Colt's mother was saying, "Poor child! What hard work he does make of life!"

The next day both Colts were driven again, and the next day, and the next, and the next. By this time the Gray Colt was quite used to it. She said she rather enjoyed knowing what the man was thinking, and that she could tell his thoughts by the feeling of the lines, much as she used to understand her mother by rubbing noses when she was a tiny Colt. Her cousin had a sore mouth from jerking on the lines, and he could not enjoy eating at all. That made it even harder for him, because he got very hungry, and it is not so easy to be sensible when one is hungry.

When the Gray Colt learned to walk steadily and turn as her driver wished, she was allowed to draw a light log through

the furrows of a field. This tired her, but it made her very proud, and she arched her neck and took the daintiest of steps. It was not necessary that the log should be drawn over the field; still, she did not know this, and thought it was real work, when it was done only to teach her to pull. The man who was driving her patted her neck and held her nose in his hand. When he stopped to eat an apple, he gave her the core, and she thought she had never tasted anything so good. As she went back to her stall, she called to the Horses near, "I have been working. I have drawn a log all around a field."

The Blind Horse spoke softly to her. "You will have a happy life, my dear, because you are a willing worker."

Although the Bay Colt didn't say anything, he thought a great deal, and about many things. While he was thinking he began to crib, but the noise of his biting teeth on the wood startled him, and he shook his head and whispered to himself, "I will never crib again." When he ate his supper, his sore mouth hurt him, but he didn't whimper. "You deserve it," he said to himself. "It wouldn't have been sore if you had been steady like your cousin." The Bay Colt was growing sensible very fast.

The Dappled Gray had noticed how suddenly he stopped cribbing, and so watched him for a few days. He saw that the Bay Colt was in earnest, that he drew the log up and down without making any fuss, and was soon hitched with his mother to a plow. The Dappled Gray and the Blind Horse were also plowing that day, and they called across from their field. "Fine day for plowing," they said.

"Perfect," answered the Bay Colt. "Did you notice the last furrow we turned? Can you do any better than that? If I had jumped, it would have been crooked instead of straight; and if I had stopped, it would not be done yet."



Had a Sore Mouth from Jerking on the Lines

"Good furrow! Wonderful furrow!" answered the Dappled Gray. "Always knew you'd be a good worker when you got down to it. You are one of us now, one of the working Horses. Glad of it. Good-bye!" And he turned away to start his plow across the field again.

"Do you like being grown up?" said the Bay Colt's mother to him.

"Like it?" he answered with a laugh. "I'm so proud that I don't know what to do. I wouldn't go back to the old life of all play for anything in the world. And my little cousin made me see my mistakes. Was there ever another Colt as foolish as I?"

"A great many of them," said his mother. "More than you would guess. They kick and bite and try to run because they cannot always have their own way; and then, when they have tried the farmer's way, and begin to pay for his care of them, they find it very much better than the life of all play. Colts will be Colts."





The Twin Lambs

There was a Lamb, a bright, frisky young fellow, who had a twin sister. Their mother loved them both and was as kind to one as to the other, but the brother wanted to have the best of everything, and sometimes he even bunted his sister with his hard little forehead. His mother had to speak to him many times about this, for he was one of those trying children who will not mind when first spoken to.

He did not really mean to be naughty—he was only strong and frisky and thoughtless. Sometimes he was even rude to his mother. She felt very sad when this was so, yet she loved him dearly and found many excuses for him in her own heart.

There were three other pairs of twins in the flock that year, and as their mothers were not strong enough to care for two Lambs apiece, the farmer had taken one twin from each pair to a little pen near the house. Here they stayed, playing happily together, and drinking milk from a bottle which the farmer's wife brought to them. They were hungry very often, like all young children, and when their stomachs began to feel empty, or even to feel as if they might feel empty, they crowded against the side of the pen, pushed their pinkish-white noses through the openings between the boards, and bleated and bleated and bleated to the farmer's wife.

Soon she would come from the kitchen door and in her hand would bring the big bottle full of milk for them. There

was a soft rubber top to this bottle, through which the Lambs could draw the milk into their mouths. Of course they all wanted to drink at once, though there was only a chance for one, and the others always became impatient while they were waiting. The farmer's wife was patient, even when the Lambs, in their hurry to get the milk, took her fingers into their mouths and bit them instead of the top of the bottle.

Our twin Lamb wanted to have his sister taken into the pen with the other three, and he spoke about it to his mother. "I know how you can manage," said he. "Whenever she comes near you, just walk away from her, and then the farmer will take her up to the pen."

"You selfish fellow!" answered his mother. "Do you want your dear little twin sister to leave us?"

He hung his head for a minute, but replied, "She'd have just as good a time. They have all they can eat up there, and they have lots of fun."

"If you think it is so pleasant in the pen," said his mother, "suppose I begin to walk away from you, and let the farmer take you away. I think your sister would rather stay with me."

"Oh, no!" cried her son. "I don't want to leave my own dear woolly mother! I want to cuddle up to you every night and have you tell me stories about the stars."

"Do you think you love me very much?" said she. "You don't know how to really love yet, for you are selfish, and there is not room in a selfish heart for the best kind of love."

That made the Lamb feel very badly. "I do love her dearly," he cried, as he stood alone. "I believe I love her ever so much more than my sister does."

That was where the little fellow was mistaken, for although his sister did not talk so much about it, she showed her love in many other ways. If she had been taken from her



Feeding the Lambs

mother for even a few days, they could never again have had such sweet and happy days together. Sheep look much alike, and they cannot remember each other's faces very long. If a Lamb is taken away from his mother for even a short time, they do not know each other when they meet afterward. Perhaps this is one reason why they keep together so much, for it would be sad indeed not to know one's mother or one's child.

His sister never knew that he had wanted her taken away. She thought he acted queerly sometimes, but she was so loving and unselfish herself that she did not dream of his selfishness. Instead of putting the idea out of his woolly little head, as he could have done by thinking more of other things, the brother let himself think of it more and more. That made him impatient with even his mother, and he often answered her quite crossly. Sometimes, when she spoke to him, he did not answer at all, and that was just as bad.

His mother would sigh and say to herself, "My child is not a comfort to me after all, yet when I looked for the first time into his dear little face, I thought that as long as I had him beside me I should always be happy."

One night, when the weather was fair and warm, the farmer drove all the Sheep and Lambs into the Sheep-shed. They had been lying out under the beautiful blue sky at night, and they did not like this nearly so well. They did not understand it either, so they were frightened and bewildered, and bleated often to each other, "What is this for? What is this for?"

The Lambs did not mind it so much, for they were not warmly dressed, but the Sheep, whose wool had been growing for a year and was long and heavy, found it very close and uncomfortable. They did not know that the farmer had a

reason for keeping them dry that night while the heavy dew was falling outside. The same thing was done every year, but they could not remember so long as that, and having a poor memory is always hard.

"Stay close to me, children," said the mother of the twins. "I may forget how you look if you are away long."

"It seems to me," said the brother, "that we always have to stay close to you. I never have a bit of fun!"

When they had cuddled down for the night, the twin Lambs slept soundly. Their mother lay awake for a long, long time in the dark, and she was not happy. A few careless words from a selfish little Lamb had made her heart ache. They were not true words either, for during the daytime her children ran with their playmates and had fine frolics. Still, we know that when people are out of patience they often say things that are not really so.

In the morning, men came into the barn, which opened off the Sheep-shed. They had on coarse, old clothing, and carried queer-looking shears in their hands. The Sheep could see them now and then when the door was open. Once the farmer stood in the doorway and seemed to be counting them. This made them huddle together more closely than ever. They could see the men carrying clean yellow straw into the barn and spreading it on the floor. On top of this was stretched a great sheet of clean cloth.

Then the men began to come into the shed and catch the Sheep and carry them into the barn. They were frightened and bleated a good deal, but when one was caught and carried away, although he might struggle hard to free himself, he did not open his mouth. The old Wether Sheep was the first to be taken, and then the young ones who had been Lambs the year before. For a long time not one of the mothers was

chosen. Still, nobody knew what would happen next, and so, the fewer Sheep there were left, the more closely they huddled together.

At last, when the young Sheep had all been taken, one of the men caught the mother of the twins and carried her away. She turned her face toward her children, but the door swung shut after her, and they were left with the other Lambs and their mothers. From the barn came the sound of snip-snip-snipping and the murmur of men's voices. Once the twins thought they saw their mother lying on the floor and a man kneeling beside her, holding her head and forelegs under his arm, yet they were not sure of this.

The brother ran to the corner of the shed and put his head against the boards. He suddenly felt very young and helpless. "My dear woolly mother!" he said to himself, over and over, and he wondered if he would ever see her again. He remembered what he had said to her the night before. It seemed to him that he could even now hear his own voice saying crossly, "Seems to me we always have to stay close to you. I never have a bit of fun!" He wished he had not said it. He knew she was a dear mother, and he would have given anything in the world for a chance to stay close to her again.

His sister felt as lonely and frightened as he, but she did not act in the same way. She stood close to a younger Lamb whose mother had just been taken away, and tried to comfort her. One by one the mothers were taken until only the Lambs remained. They were very hungry now, and bleated pitifully. Still the twin brother stood with his head in the corner. He had closed his eyes, but now he opened them, and through a crack in the wall of the shed, he saw some very slender and white-looking Sheep turned into the meadow. At first they acted dizzy, and staggered instead of walking straight; then

they stopped staggering and began to frisk. "Can it be?" said he. "It surely is!" For, although he had never in his short life seen a newly shorn Sheep, he began to understand what had happened.

He knew that the men had only been clipping the long wool from the Sheep, and that they were now ready for warm weather. No wonder they frisked when their heavy burdens of wool were carefully taken off.

Now the farmer opened the door into the barn again, and let the Lambs walk through it to the gate of the meadow. They had never before been inside this barn, and the twin brother looked quickly around as he scampered across the floor. He saw some great ragged bundles of wool, and a man was just rolling up the last fleece. He wondered if that had been taken from his mother and was the very one against which he had cuddled when he was cold or frightened.

When they first reached the pasture, the Lambs could not tell which were their mothers. Shearing off their long and dingy fleeces had made such a difference in their looks! The twin brother knew his mother by her way of walking and by her voice, but he could see that his sister did not know her at all. He saw his mother wandering around as though she did not know where to find her children, and a naughty plan came into his head. If he could keep his sister from finding their mother for even a short time, he knew that the farmer would take her up to the pen. He thought he knew just how to do it, and he started to run to her. Then he stopped and remembered how sad and lonely he had been without his mother only a little while before, and he began to pity the Lambs in the pen.

Now his selfishness and his goodness were fighting hard in him. One said, "Send your sister away," and the other,

"Take her to your mother." At last he ran as fast as he could toward his sister. "I am good now," he said to himself, "but it may not last long. I will tell her before I am naughty again."

"Oh sister!" cried he. "Come with me to our mother. She doesn't know where to find us."

He saw a happy look on his sister's sad little face, and he was glad that he had done the right thing. They skipped away together, kicking up their heels as they went, and it seemed to the brother that he had never been so happy in his life. He was soon to be happier, though, for when they reached his "new, white mother," as he called her, and his sister told her how he had shown her the way, his mother said, "Now you are a comfort to me. You will be a happier Lamb, too, for you know that a mother's heart is large enough for all her children, and that the more one loves, the better he loves."

"Why, of course," said the twin sister. "What do you mean?"

But the mother never told her, and the brother never told her, and it is hoped that you will keep the secret.





The Very Short Story of the Foolish Little Mouse

The Mice who lived in the barn and around the granaries had many cousins living on the farm who were pleasant people to know. Any one could tell by looking at them that they were related, yet there were differences in size, in the coloring of their fur, in their voices, and most of all in their ways of living. Some of these cousins would come to visit at the barn in winter, when there was little to eat in the fields. The Meadow Mice never did this. They were friendly with the people who came from the farmyard to graze in the meadow, yet when they were asked to return the call, they said, "No, thank you. We are an out-of-door family, and we never enter houses. We do not often go to the farmyard, but we are always glad to see you here. Come again."

When the Cows are in the meadow, they watch for these tiny people, and stop short if they hear their voices from the grass near by. Of course the Horses are careful, for Horses will never step on any person, large or small, if they can help it. They are very particular about this.

All through the meadow you can see, if you look sharply, shallow winding paths among the grasses, and these paths are worn by the running to and fro of the Meadow Mice. Their homes are in stumps of trees or in the higher ground near the ditches. In these homes the baby Meadow Mice stay until they are large enough to go out into the great world and eat roots,

grasses, and seeds with their fathers and mothers. Sometimes they do go out a little way with their mother before this, and they go in a very funny fashion. Of course, when they are babies, they drink warm milk from her body as the children of most four-legged people do. Sometimes a young Meadow Mouse does not want to stop drinking his milk when it is time for his mother to leave the nest, so he just hangs on to her with his tiny, toothless mouth, and when she goes she drags him along on the ground beside her. The ground is rather rough for such soft little babies, and they do not go far in this way, but are glad enough to snuggle down again with their brothers and sisters.

There is no danger of their being lonely, even when their mother is away, for the Meadow Mice have large families, and where there are ten babies of the same age, or even only six, which is thought a small family among their people, it is not possible for one to feel alone.

There were two fine Meadow Mice who built their nest in the bank of a ditch and were much liked by all their relatives. They had raised many children to full-grown Mousehood, and were kind and wise parents. When their children were married and had homes of their own, they still liked to come back to visit. The father and mother were gentle and kindly, as all Mice are, and were almost as handsome as when they first began to gnaw. Nobody could say that he ever saw a bit of dust on either of them.

The brown fur of the upper part of their bodies and the grayish-white fur underneath always lay sleek and tidy, and from their long whiskers to the tips of their hairless tails, they were as dainty as possible. That was one reason why they were so fine-looking, for you know it makes no difference how beautiful one may be in the first place, if he does not try to

keep clean, he is not pleasant to look at, while many quite plain people are charming because they look well and happy and clean.

Now this pair of Mice had eight Mouse babies in their nest. The babies were no larger than Bumble Bees at first and very pink. This was not because their fur was pink, but only because it was so very short that through it and their thin skin one saw the glow of the red blood in their veins.

"Did you ever see such beautiful babies?" said their mother proudly to her neighbors. "They are certainly the finest I ever had." Her friends smiled, for she always said the same thing whenever she had little ones. Yet they understood, for they had children of their own, and knew that although mothers love all alike, there is always a time when the youngest seems the most promising. That is before they are old enough to be naughty.

The days passed, and the eight baby Meadow Mice ate and slept and pushed each other around, and talked in their sweet, squeaky little voices. They were less pink every day and more the color of their father and mother. They grew, too, so fast that the nest was hardly large enough for them, and the teeth were showing in their tiny pink mouths. Their mother saw that they would soon be ready to go out into the world, and she began to teach them the things they needed to know. She took them outside the nest each pleasant day and gave them lessons in running and gnawing, and showed them how to crouch down on the brown earth and lie still until danger was past. After she had told them many things, she would ask them short questions to make sure that they remembered.

"How many great dangers are there?" she said.

"Five," answered the little Mice.

"What are they?"

"Hawks, Owls, Weasels, Cats, and men."

"Tell me about Hawks."

"Hawks are big birds who seem to float in the air. They have very sharp eyes, and when they see a Mouse they drop suddenly down and catch him. They fly in the daytime."

"Tell me about Owls."

"They are big birds who fly by night without making any noise. They can see from far away, and they catch Mice."

"Tell me about Weasels."

"They are slender little animals, nearly twice as long as a Mouse. They have small heads, four short legs, and sharp claws; have brown fur on their backs and white underneath, and sometimes, when the weather is very cold, they turn white all over."

"Tell me about Cats."

"Cats are very much bigger than Weasels, and are of many colors. They have long tails and whiskers, and dreadful great eyes. They walk on four legs, but make no noise because they have cushions on their feet."

"Tell me about men."

"Men are very big, two-legged people, and when they are fully grown are taller than Cows. They make noise in walking, and they can neither smell nor see us from afar."

"And what are you to do when you see these dangers coming?"

"We are to run away as fast as we can from Hawks, Weasels, Owls, and Cats. If a man comes near us, we are to lie perfectly still and watch him, and are not to move unless we are sure that he sees us or is likely to step on us. Men do not know so much about Mice as the other dangers do."

"And what if you are not sure that some creature is a Hawk, an Owl, a Weasel, or a Cat?"

"If we even think it may be, we are to run."

"When are you to run?"

"At once."

"Say that again."

"We are to run at once."

"Very good. That is all for to-day."

You can see how well the Meadow Mouse mother brought up her children, and how carefully she taught them about life. If they had been wise and always minded her, they would have saved themselves much trouble.

Seven of them were dutiful and obedient, but the largest of the eight, and the finest-looking, liked to decide things for himself, and often laughed at his brothers and sisters for being afraid. Because he was so big and handsome, and spoke in such a dashing way, they sometimes wondered if he didn't know as much as their mother.

One sunshiny day, when all the eight children were playing and feeding together in the short grass, one of them saw a great black bird in the air. "Oh, look!" she cried. "That may be a Hawk. We'd better run."

"Pooh!" said the biggest little Meadow Mouse. "Who's afraid?"

"Mother said to run," they squeaked, and seven long bare tails whisked out of sight under a stump.

"Ho-ho!" said the biggest little Meadow Mouse. "Before I'd be so scared! I dare you to come back! I dare you to—"

Just then the Hawk swooped down. And that is the end of the story, for after that, there was no foolish little Meadow Mouse to tell about.



The Lonely Little Pig

One day the Brown Hog called to her twelve young Pigs and their ten older brothers and sisters, "Look! look! What is in that cage?"

The twenty-two stubby snouts that were thrust through the opening of the rail-fence were quivering with eagerness and impatience. Their owners wished to know all that was happening, and the old mother's eyes were not so sharp as they had once been, so if the Pigs wanted to know the news, they must stop their rooting to find it out. Bits of the soft brown earth clung to their snouts and trembled as they breathed.

"It looks like a Pig," they said, "only it is white."

"It is a Pig then," grunted their mother, as she lay in the shade of an oak tree. "There are white Pigs, although I never fancied the color. It looks too cold and clean. Brown is more to my taste, brown or black. Your poor father was brown and black, and a finer looking Hog I never saw. Ugh! Ugh!" And she buried her eyes in the loose earth. The Pigs looked at her and then at each other. They did not often speak of their father. Indeed the younger ones did not remember him at all. One of the Cows said he had such a bad temper that the farmer sent him away, and it is certain that none of them had seen him since the day he was driven down the lane.

While they were thinking of this and feeling rather sad,

the wagon turned into their lane and they could plainly see the Pig inside. She was white and quite beautiful in her piggish way. Her ears stood up stiffly, her snout was as stubby as though it had been broken off, her eyes were very small, and her tail had the right curl. When she squealed they could see her sharp teeth, and when she put her feet up on the wooden bars of her rough cage, they noticed the fine hoofs on the two big toes of each foot and the two little toes high on the back of her legs, each with its tiny hoof. She was riding in great style, and it is no wonder that the twenty-two Brown Pigs with black spots and black feet opened their eyes very wide. They did not know that the farmer brought her in this way because he was in a hurry, and Pigs will not make haste when farmers want them to. The Hogs are a queer family, and the Off Ox spoke truly when he said that the only way to make one hurry ahead is to tie a rope to his leg and pull back, they are so sure to be contrary.

"She's coming here!" the Brown Pigs cried. "Oh, Mother, she's coming here! We're going to see the men take her out of her cage."

The old Hog grunted and staggered to her feet to go with them, but she was fat and slow of motion, so that by the time she was fairly standing, they were far down the field and running helter-skelter by the side of the fence. As she stared dully after them she could see the twenty-two curly tails bobbing along, and she heard the soft patter of eighty-eight sharp little double hoofs on the earth.

"Ugh!" she grunted. "Ugh! Ugh! I am too late to go. Never mind! They will tell me all about it, and I can take a nap. I haven't slept half the time to-day, and I need rest."

Just as the Mother Hog lay down again, the men lifted the White Pig from the wagon, cage and all, so she began to

squeal, and she squealed and squealed and squealed and squealed until she was set free in the field with the Brown Pigs. Nobody had touched her and nobody had hurt her, but it was all so strange and new that she thought it would make her feel better to squeal. When she was out of her cage and in the field, she planted her hoofs firmly in the ground, looked squarely at the Brown Pigs, and grunted a pleasant, good-natured grunt. The Brown Pigs planted their hoofs in the ground and grunted and stared. They didn't ask her to go rooting with them, and not one of the ten big Pigs or the twelve little Pigs said, "We are glad to see you."

There is no telling how long they would have stood there if the Horses had not turned the wagon just then. The minute the wheels began to grate on the side of the box, every Brown Pig whirled around and ran off.

The poor little White Pig did not know what to make of it. She knew that she had not done anything wrong. She wondered if they didn't mean to speak to her.

At first she thought she would run after them and ask to root with them, but then she remembered something her mother had told her when she was so young that she was pink. It was this: "When you don't know what to do, go to sleep." So she lay down and took a nap.

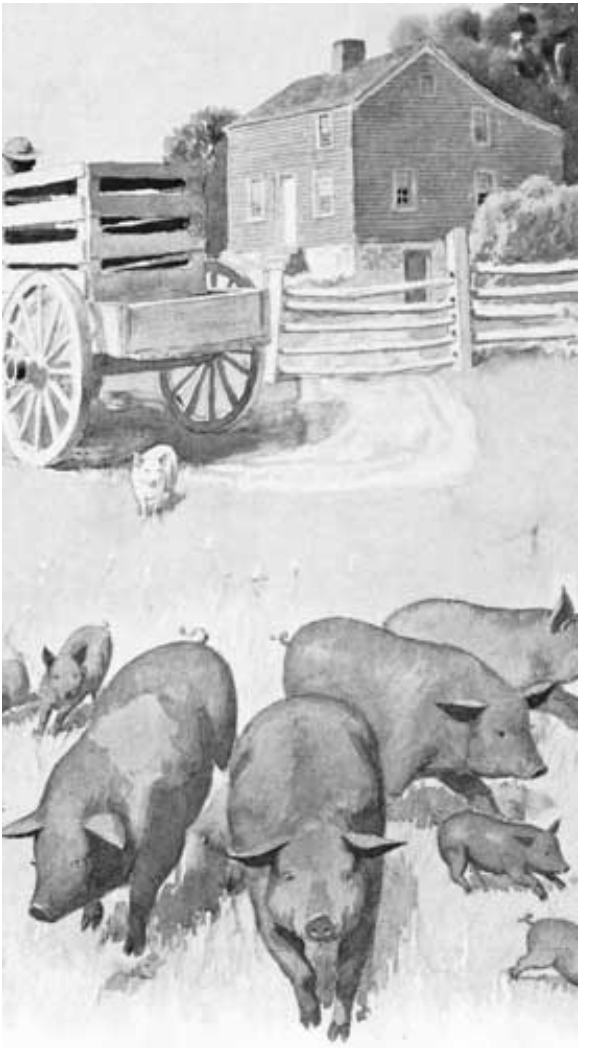
The Brown Pigs did not awaken their mother, and when they stopped in the fence-corner one of them said to their big sister, "What made you run?"

"Oh, nothing," said she.

"And why did you run?" the little Pigs asked their big brother.

"Because," he answered.

After a while somebody said, "Let's go back to where the White Pig is."



Every Brown Pig Ran Away

"Oh, no," said somebody else, "don't let's! She can come over here if she wants to, and it isn't nearly so nice there."

You see, they were very rude Pigs and not at all well brought up. Their mother should have taught them to think of others and be kind, which is really all there is to politeness. But then, she had very little time left from sleeping, and it took her all of that for eating, so her children had no manners at all.

At last the White Pig opened her round eyes and saw all the Brown Pigs at the farther end of the field. "Ugh!" said she to herself, "Ugh! I must decide what to do before they see that I am awake." She lay there and tried to think what her mother, who came of a very fine family, had told her before she left. "If you have nobody to play with," her mother had said, "don't stop to think about it, and don't act as though you cared. Have a good time by yourself and you will soon have company. If you cannot enjoy yourself, you must not expect others to enjoy you."

"That is what I will do," exclaimed the White Pig. "My mother always gives her children good advice when they go out into the world, and she is right when she says that Pigs of fine family should have fine manners. I will never forget that I am a Yorkshire. I'm glad I didn't say anything mean."

So the White Pig rooted in the sunshine and wallowed in the warm brown earth that she had stirred up with her pink snout. Once in a while she would run to the fence to watch somebody in the lane, and before she knew it she was grunting contentedly to herself. "Really," she said, "I am almost having a good time. I will keep on making believe that I would rather do this than anything else."

The big sister of the Brown Pigs looked over to the White Pig and said, "She's having lots of fun all by herself, it seems

to me."

Big brother raised his head. "Let's call her over here," he answered.

"Oh, do!" cried the twelve little Pigs, wriggling their tails. "She looks so full of fun."

"Call her yourself," said the big sister to the big brother.

"Ugh!" called he. "Ugh! Ugh! Don't you want to come over with us, White Pig?"

You can imagine how the White Pig felt when she heard this; how her small eyes twinkled and the corners of her mouth turned up more than ever. She was just about to scamper over and root with them, when she remembered something else that her mother had told her: "Never run after other Pigs. Let them run after you. Then they will think more of you."

She called back, "I'm having too good a time here to leave my rooting-ground. Won't you come over here?"

"Come on," cried all the little Pigs to each other. "Beat you there!"

They ate and talked and slept together all afternoon, and when the Brown Hog called her children home, they and the White Pig were the best of friends. "Just think," they said to their mother, "the White Pig let us visit her, and she is just as nice as she can be."

The White Pig in her corner of the pen heard this and smiled to herself. "My mother was right," she said; "'Have a good time alone, and everybody will want to come.'"



The Kitten Who Lost Herself

"I think," said the Blind Horse, "that something is the matter with my ears." He and the Dappled Gray had been doing field-work all the morning, and were now eating a hearty dinner in their stalls. They were the only people on the first floor of the barn. Even the stray Doves who had wandered in the open door were out in the sunshine once more. Once in a while the whirr of wings told that some Swallow darted through the window into the loft above and flew to her nest under the roof. There was a deep and restful quiet in the sun-warmed air, and yet the Blind Horse had seemed to be listening to something which the other did not hear.

The Dappled Gray stopped eating at once. "Your ears?" said he. "What is wrong with them? I thought your hearing was very good."

"It always has been," was the answer, "and finer than ever since I lost my sight. You know it is always so with us blind people. We learn to hear better than we could before losing our sight. But ever since we came in from the field I have had a queer sound in my ears, and I think there is something the matter with them."

The Dappled Gray stopped eating and stood perfectly still to listen. He did not even switch his tail, although at that minute there were three Flies on his left side and one on his neck. He was trying as hard as he could to hear the queer

sound also, for if he did, it would prove that the noise was real and that the Blind Horse's hearing was all right.

He could not hear a thing. "What is it like?" he asked.

"Like the loud purring of a Cat," was the answer, "but everybody knows that the Cat is not purring anywhere around here."

"She might be," said the Dappled Gray. "Where does the sound seem to be?"

"Above my head," said the Blind Horse; "and she certainly would not be purring up there at this time. She would either be sound asleep, or off hunting, or else out in the sunshine, where she loves to sit."

The Dappled Gray felt that this was so, and he could not say a word. He was very sorry for his friend. He thought how dreadful it would seem to be both blind and deaf, and he choked on the oats he was swallowing.

"Now don't worry," said the Blind Horse; "if I should be deaf, I could still feel the soft touch of the breeze on my skin, and could taste my good food, and rub noses with my friends. I wouldn't have spoken of it, only I hoped that you could hear the noise also, and then I would know that it was real." That was just like him. He was always patient and sweet-tempered. In all the years he had been blind, he had never once complained of it, and many times when the other Horses were about to say or do some ill-natured thing, they thought of him and stopped. They were ashamed to be impatient when they were so much better off than he.

The Horses kept on eating their oats and resting from their hard work. In the hay-loft above their heads, the Cat lay and purred and purred and purred, never dreaming that her doing so made trouble for her friends downstairs.

She had been hunting all the night before, creeping softly

through the barn and hiding behind bags and boxes to watch for careless Mice and young Rats. They were night-runners as well as she, and many things happened in the barn and farmyard while the larger four-legged people were sound asleep and the fowls were dreaming with their heads tucked under their wings. Sometimes there were not so many Mice in the morning as there had been the evening before, and when this was so, the Cat would walk slowly through the barn and look for a comfortable resting-place. When she found it, she would turn around three times, as her great-great-great-great-great-great-grandmother used to do to trample a bed in the jungle, and then lie down for a long nap. She said she always slept better when her stomach was full, and that was the habit of all Cats.

Sometimes she hunted in the fields, and many a morning at sunrise the Cows had seen her walking toward the barn on the top of the fences. She did not like to wet her feet on the dewy grass when it could be helped; so, as soon as she was through hunting, she jumped on to the nearest fence and went home in that way.

Yes, last night she had been hunting, yet she was not thinking of it now. Neither was she asleep. A Rat gnawed at the boards near her, and she hardly turned her head. A Mouse ran across the floor in plain sight, and she watched him without moving. What did she care about them now? Her first Kittens lay on the hay beside her, and she would not leave them on this first day of their lives unless she really had to.

Of course she had seen little Kittens before—Kittens that belonged to other Cats—but she was certain that none of them had looked at all like her three charming babies. She could not decide which one of them was the most beautiful. She was a Tortoise-shell Cat herself, and her fur was spotted

with white, black, and yellow. The babies had the same colors on their soft coats, but not in just the same way as hers.

At first she thought her largest daughter was the beauty of the family; she was such a clear yellow, with not a hair of any other color on her. "I always did like yellow Cats," said the young mother, "and they are said to be very strong."

Then she looked at her smaller daughter, who was white with tiny yellow and black spots on neck and head. "Such a clean-looking baby," she exclaimed, "and I am sure that when her eyes are open I shall find them blue like my own."

Just at this moment, the warm, dark little bunch of fur between her forepaws moved, and she looked lovingly down upon him, her only son. "He is certainly a very remarkable one," she said. "I never before saw such a fine mixture of yellow and black, first a hair of one and then a hair of the other, so that, unless one is very close to him it looks like a rich brown. And then his feet!" She gave him a loving little poke with one forefoot and turned him onto his back. This made him wave his tiny paws in the air. The thick cushions of skin on each were as black as black could be, and that is very uncommon. They are usually pink, like those of his sisters.

The little fellow lay there, wriggling very feebly, until his mother gave him another poke that turned him over. Then he stretched and crawled toward her, reaching his head first one way and then another. He was so weak that he could not raise his body from the hay, but dragged it along by taking short and uncertain steps with his four shaking legs. It was only a short time since he found that he had legs, and he hadn't any idea how to use them. He just moved whichever one seemed most in his way.

He didn't know where he was going, or what he was going

for, but his little stomach was empty and he was cold. Something, he didn't know what, made him drag himself toward the big, warm creature near by. When his black nose touched the fur of her body, he stopped pushing ahead and began to feel from side to side. He did not know now for what he was feeling, yet when he found something his tiny mouth closed around it and a stream of sweet warm milk began to flow down his throat and into his empty stomach. He did not know that it was milk. He did not know anything except that it was good, and then he fell asleep. His sisters did in the same way, and soon the happy mother could look down and see her three babies in a row beside her, all sound asleep. Their pointed little tails lay straight out behind them, and their soft ears were bent forward close to their heads.

"I wonder," said she, "if I was ever as small as they are, and if my mother loved me as I love them." She stretched out one of her forepaws and looked at it. It was so much larger, so very much larger, than the paws of the Kittens. Such a soft and dainty paw as it was, and so perfectly clean. She stretched it even more, and saw five long, curved, sharp claws slide out of their sheaths or cases. She quickly slid them back into their sheaths, for fear that in some way they might happen to touch and hurt her babies.

A Swallow flew down from his nest and passed over her head, then out of the open window. "Kittens!" said he. "Kittens!" He flew over the fields and saw two Horses standing by the fence while the farmer was oiling his machine. "We have new neighbors in the barn," said he, "and the Cat is purring louder than ever."

"Who are the neighbors?" asked the Dappled Gray.

"Kittens!" sang the Swallow. "Oh, tittle-ittle-ittle-ee."

The Blind Horse drew a long breath. "Then I did hear her

purr," said he; "I am so glad." He never made a fuss about his troubles, for he was brave and unselfish, yet the Dappled Gray knew without being told how much lighter his heart was since he heard that the Cat had really been purring above his head.

The days passed by, and the Kittens grew finely. They got their eyes open, first in narrow cracks, and then wider and wider, until they were round and staring. The White Kitten had blue ones, the others brown. In the daytime, they had long, narrow black spots in the middle of their eyes, and as the bright light faded, these black spots spread out sideways until they were quite round. When it was very dark, these spots glowed like great Fireflies in the night. Then the Mice, who often scampered through the loft when the Cat was away, would see three pairs of eyes glowing in the hay, and they would squeak to each other: "See! The Kittens are watching us."

And the Kittens, who were not yet old enough to go hunting, and who were afraid of everything that stirred, would crowd up against each other, arch their little backs, raise their pointed tails, stand their fur on end, and say, "Pst! Ha-a-ah!"

Sometimes they did this when there was not a person in sight and what frightened them was nothing but a wisp of hay, blown down by the wind. Afterward, when anything moved, they sprang at it, held it down with their sharp little claws, and chewed on it with their pointed white teeth. When they were tired of this game, they played hide-and-seek, and when they were tired of that they chased their tails. It was so nice always to have playthings with them. Sometimes, too, they chased each other's tails, and caught them and bit them hard, until the Kitten who owned the tail cried, "Mieow!" and tumbled the biter over.

They were allowed to play all through the loft except over

the mangers. Their mother was afraid that if they went there they would fall through the holes which had been left in the floor. During the winter, the farmer used to throw hay down through these to the hungry Horses. When the Cat saw her children going toward these places, she called them back and scolded them. Sometimes she struck them lightly on the ears with her forepaw. "I don't like to," said she, "but they must learn to keep away. It is not safe for them to go there."

One morning when she was away, they were playing hide-and-seek, and the White Kitten was hunting for a good hiding-place. "I'll hide near one of these holes," she said, "and they won't dare come there to look. Then, after they have hunted a long, long time, I'll get another place and let them find me." She did hide there, and after a long, long time, when her brother and sister were in the farther end of the loft, she tried to run over to another dark corner. Instead of that, the hay began to slip and slide under her and she went down, down, down, through a long dark box, and hit with a hard thud at the bottom.

She was so scared that she couldn't have told how many toes she had on her forefeet. Of course, she had five on each, like all Kittens, and four on each hind-foot, but if anybody had asked her then, she would have been quite likely to say "three."

She was sore, too, and when she felt a warm breath on her and opened her eyes, she saw that some great creature had thrust his nose through a hole in the side of the dark box. "It must be a Horse," she thought, "and my mother says that they are kind to Cats. I think I'd better tell him who I am. I don't want him to take me for a Pig, because he may not like Pigs." You see, she forgot that Horses had been living in the great world and could tell to what family a person belonged the very

first time they saw him. The only people she had ever seen were Swallows and Mice.

"If—if you please, sir," she said, "I am the White Kitten, and I just tumbled down from the hay-loft, but I didn't mean to."

"I am the Blind Horse," answered a strong and gentle voice outside, "and I hope you are not hurt."

"Not very much," answered the Kitten. "I just feel ache-y in my back and scared all over."

"Come out into the manger, White Kitten," said the Blind Horse, "and perhaps you won't be so scared. I won't touch you, although I should like to. You know I am blind, and so, unless I can touch people I don't know how they look."

The White Kitten crawled out and saw him, and then she wasn't afraid at all. She was so sorry for him that she couldn't be afraid. She remembered the time before her eyes opened when she had to feel for everything she wanted. It was not so hard then, because she did not know anything different, but now she could not bear to think of not being able to see all that was around her. "If you will put your nose down in the other end of the manger," she said, "I will rub up against it, and you will know more how I look."

The Blind Horse did this, and who can tell how happy it made him when her warm and furry back rubbed up against his nose? "Thank you," he whinnied; "you are very good."

"Would you know I was a Kitten if I hadn't told you?" she said.

"Indeed I would," he answered.

"And you wouldn't have thought me a Pig?" she asked.

"Never!" said he; "I wouldn't even have believed you if you had told me that you were one."

The Blind Horse and the White Kitten became firm

friends, and when she tried to wash off the dirt that got into her fur she sat in the very middle of the manger and told him all about it.

"My mother always has washed me," she said, "but my tongue is getting big enough to wash with now. It is getting rougher, too, and that is a good thing. My mother says that the reason why all the prickles on Cats' tongues point backward is because then we can lick all the meat off from bones with them. I'm 'most old enough to eat meat now. I can't wash the top of my head though. You have to wet your paw and scrub it with that. Can you wash the top of your head?"

Then the Blind Horse told her how the men kept him clean; and while he was telling this the Cat came into his stall, crying and looking for her child.

"Oh, mother," cried the White Kitten, "I tumbled down, but I didn't mean to, and I'm sorry I didn't mind you, and the Blind Horse can't wash the top of his head, and he knew that I wasn't a Pig."

The Cat was so glad to find the White Kitten that she didn't scold at all, but jumped into the manger and washed her clean, and then caught the loose skin of the Kitten's neck between her teeth and carried her through the stalls, across the barn-floor, and up the stairs to their home. That made the Kitten much ashamed, for she thought that she was old enough to go alone.

For two whole days after this the White Kitten was so lame from her fall that she could only lie still on the hay, and she could see that her mother did not treat her as before. "I won't ever go near those places again," she said. "I never will."

"You promised me before that you would stay away," said her mother, "and you broke your promise." She did not punish



"I Am the White Kitten"

the White Kitten, but she felt very sad and she could not help showing it. There was a dreadful ache in her child's little Kitten-heart that was a great deal worse than the lameness in her back or in her neck or in her legs.

At last there came a day when the whole family walked downstairs, and the Cat showed her three children to the farmyard people and spoke a few words about each. "The yellow Kitten, my big daughter," said she, "promises to be the best hunter: she is a wonderful jumper, and her claws are already nearly as long as mine. My son, the brown one, has a remarkable voice. And this White Kitten, my little daughter, is the most obedient of all. She has never disobeyed me since the day she fell into the manger, and I can trust her perfectly."

Then the White Kitten knew that she was quite forgiven, and she was the happiest person on the farm.





The Chicken Who Wouldn't Eat Gravel

It was some time after the Dorking Hen had come off the nest with her little brood, that the mother of the Shanghai Chickens began to have so much trouble.

She had twelve as fine Chickens as you could find anywhere: tall, wide-awake youngsters with long and shapely legs and thick down and feathers. She was very proud of them, as any Hen mother might well be, and often said to the Shanghai Cock, "Did you ever see so fine a family? Look at those twenty-four legs, all so long and straight, and not a feather on one of them." His eyes would shine and he would stretch his neck with pride, but all he ever said to her was, "They will do very well if they only behave as well as they look." He did not believe in praising children to their faces, and he thought their mother spoiled them.

Perhaps he was right, for the little Shanghais soon found out that they were good-looking, and they wanted everybody in the poultry-yard to notice their legs. It was very foolish, of course, to be proud of such things, but when the other fowls said, "We should think you would be cold without feathers on your legs," they answered, "Oh, we are Shanghais, and our family never wear feathers there!" And that was true, just as it is true that the Dorkings have extra toes, and that the Black Spanish fowls have white ears.

The Shanghai mother was now roaming the fields with

her brood, and there was rich picking in the wheat-stubble. All the fowls were out of the yard now, and would not be shut up until cold weather. Early in the morning they would start out in parties of from six to a dozen, with a Cock at the head of each. He chose the way in which they should go; he watched the sky for Hawks, and if he saw one, gave a warning cry that made the Hens hurry to him. The Cocks are the lords of the poultry-yard and say how things shall be there; but when you see them leading the way in the fields—ah, then you know why all the fowls obey them.

The farmyard people still tell of the day when a Hawk swooped down on one of the young Dorkings and would have carried him off if the Black Spanish Cock had not jumped out, and pecked him and struck at him with his spurs, and fought, until the Hawk was glad to hurry away. The Cocks are not only brave—they are polite, too, and when they find food they will not eat it until they have called the Hens to come and share with them.

You can imagine what good times the Chickens had in the stubble-fields. They were so old now that their down was all covered with feathers, and some of them wondered if they couldn't feel their spurs growing. Still, that was all nonsense, as a Bantam told them, because spurs do not start until the fowl is a year old. They had long been too large to cuddle under their mother's feathers at night, and had taken their first lessons in roosting before they went to the stubble-fields. They had learned to break up their own food, too, and that was a great help to their mother. Fowls, you know, have no teeth, and no matter how big a mouthful one takes he has to swallow it whole. The only way they can help themselves is to break the pieces apart with their feet or peck them apart with their bills before eating them.

The yellow grains of wheat that lay everywhere in the field were fine food, and should have made the little Shanghais as fat as the Grouse who sometimes stole out from the edge of the forest. Eleven of the brood were quite plump, but one Chicken was still thin and lank. His mother was very much worried about him and could not think what was the matter. She spoke of it to the Black Spanish Hen one day, but the Black Spanish Hen had never raised a brood, and said she really didn't know any more about the care of Chickens than if she were a Dove. Then the anxious mother went to the Shanghai Cock about it. He listened to all she said and looked very knowing.

"I don't think there is anything the matter," said he. "The Chick is growing fast, that is all. I remember how it was with me before I got my long tail-feathers. I was very thin, yet see what a fine-looking fellow I am now." He was really a sight worth seeing as he towered above the other fowls, flapping his strong wings in the sunshine and crowing. His feathers were beautiful, and the bright red of his comb and wattles showed that he was well. "Ah," thought the Shanghai Hen, "if my Chicken could only become such a fine-looking Cock!" And she didn't worry any more all day.

That night she and her brood roosted in the old apple-tree in the corner of the orchard nearest the poultry-yard. She flew up with the older fowls and fluttered and lurched and squawked and pushed on first one branch and then another, while the Chickens were walking up a slanting board that the farmer had placed against one of the lower branches. It always takes fowls a long time to settle themselves for the night. They change places and push each other, and sometimes one sleepy Hen leans over too far and falls to the ground, and then has to begin all over again.

At first the Chickens had feared that they would tumble off as soon as they were asleep, but they soon learned that their feet and the feet of all other birds are made in such a way that they hang on tightly even during sleep. The weight of the bird's body above hooks the toes around the branch, and there they stay until the bird wishes to unhook them.

After a long time, all the fowls were asleep with their heads under their wings. The Sheep, Pigs, and Cows were dreaming, and even the Horses were quiet in their stalls. There was not a light to be seen in the big white farmhouse, when the Dorking Cock crowed in his sleep. That awakened him and all the other fowls as well. Then the other Cocks crowed because he did and he crowed again because they did, and they crowed again because he had crowed again, and the Chickens asked if it were not almost morning, and their mothers told them not to talk but to go to sleep at once and make morning come more quickly.

All of this took quite a while, and the Shanghai mother could not sleep again. She could see her brood quite plainly in the moonlight, and one of them was not plump like the rest. She roosted there and worried about him until suddenly (she could never tell how it happened) she seemed to know just what was the matter.

She flew down beside him and poked him under his wing. "Wake up," she said. "I want to ask you something. Do you eat gravel?"

"No," he answered sleepily, "I don't like gravel."

"Didn't I bring you up to eat it?" she asked sternly.

"Yes, but I don't like it, and now that I am old enough to roost in a tree I don't mean to eat any more. So!"

Just imagine a Chicken talking to his mother in that way! His mother, who had laid the egg from which he was hatched;

who had sat upon the nest through all the weary days and nights while he was growing inside his shell; who had cuddled him under her soft feathers; who had taught him all he knew, and would have fought any hawk to save him! She had begun to love him before he even knew that he was, and had lived for him and his brother and sisters ever since.

The mother said nothing more to him then. She spent the rest of the night watching the stars and the moon and the first rosy flush of the eastern sky which told that morning was near. Then she said to her naughty Chicken, as he began to stir and cheep, "I shall never try to make you eat gravel if you think you are too big to mind your mother. I shall just tell you this, that you will never be strong unless you do. I have not told you why, because you never asked, and I supposed you would do as you ought without knowing the reason. You have no teeth, and you cannot chew the grain you eat before it is swallowed. You have a strong stomach, and if you eat gravel this stomach or gizzard will rub and press the tiny stones against the grain until it is well broken up and ready to make into fat and strength for your body."

"But it doesn't taste good," he replied, "and I'd rather eat other things. I don't believe it matters, and I won't eat it anyway."

The Shanghai Hen flew down from the tree and clucked to her Chickens. She would not waste time talking to him. Whenever he came near her that day, he ate everything but gravel. He had his own way and yet he was not happy. For some reason, nothing seemed to be any fun. Even lying under the bushes on the sunshiny side was not comfortable, and when he wallowed in the dust with his brothers and sisters he didn't enjoy that.

Things went on this way for a good many days, and at last

he saw that his shadow was only a small black spot on the ground, while his brothers and sisters had big fat shadows. He heard the Black Spanish Cock call him a Bantam, and the Shanghai Cock say that he wouldn't live until his spurs grew. One of the Dorking Chickens was talking to her sister, and he heard her say, "Imagine him at the head of a flock!" Then she laughed, a mean, cackling little laugh.

That night, when the rest were asleep in the apple-tree, he walked softly down the slanting board and ate gravel. The next morning he felt better than he had in a long time, so when there was nobody around he ate some more. He didn't want anyone else to know that he had found out his mistake. Every morning he looked at his shadow, and it grew fatter and fatter. Still he was not happy, and he knew it was because he had not told his patient old mother. He wanted to tell her, too. One day he heard her telling his brother to eat more gravel, and the brother said he didn't like the taste of it. That made him speak at last.

"Suppose you don't like it, you can eat it. Queer world it would be if we didn't have to do unpleasant things. I've just made up my mind that the people who won't do hard things, when they ought to, have the hardest times in the end. Wish I'd minded my mother and eaten gravel when she told me to, and I'm not going to let you be as foolish as I was."

Just then he heard somebody say of him, "What a fine-looking fellow he is growing to be! I like him ever so much now."

It was the Dorking Chicken who had laughed at him. He ran after a Grasshopper, and she ran after the same Grasshopper, and they ran against each other and the Grasshopper got away, so of course they had to wander off together to find something to eat, and after that they became great friends.

The Shanghai Hen looked lovingly after him and raised one foot in the air. "Now," she said, "I am perfectly happy."





The Goose Who Wanted Her Own Way

It would be hard to tell which family is the most important among the farmyard people. There is no one animal so wise as Collie, the farmer's dog, and all the rest love him and mind him when he is sent to bring them up from the pasture or to drive them to the water. Still, he does not spend his days in barn or field and only comes with his master or for a visit now and then.

You may remember how the Garter Snake and the old Tree Frog were the leaders in the meadow, and how in the forest all looked up to the Ground Hog. These people were patient and old, and partly because they were old and had had many years in which to think about life, they were very wise. In the farmyard the Oxen were the most patient and the oldest, and it was to them that all the animals went when they were in trouble.

There were also the Horses, fine strong creatures, always helping somebody else and working all day during most of the year. They drew the reaper through the tall grain, and where in the morning had been a field of waving golden wheat, at sunset were bundles or sheaves of gathered grain, and the stubble was ready for the fowls. They were busy people; and sometimes during the winter they liked to remind their neighbors how much they had done.

Then again, there were the Cows, who are the sisters of

the Oxen. They are large and there are many of them, yet they are not so wise, and that is easily understood. All that they have to do on the farm is to give milk for the butter-and cheese-making, and for the farmer's children to drink. No farmer could get along without his Cows, but they do not work like their brothers. They have so easy a time that they do not learn much. You know, when people work, they have to think, and when people think enough useful thoughts it makes them wise. That is one of the many reasons why it is so foolish to be lazy.

Truly, it would be hard to say which farmyard family is the most important, but there is no trouble at all in telling which family think themselves the most so. If you ask any Goose, she will tell you that one of their flock is worth five Horses or a dozen Cows. Nobody else would tell you this, and if you should speak of it to the span of Bays, or the Dappled Gray, or even the youngest Colt in the stable, they would answer you only with a hearty Horse laugh. The Cows would smile and reply, "What a Goose she was to say that!"

There has always been a flock of Geese on the farm, and their neighbors are so used to their queer ways that they only smile when the Geese put on airs, and it is a good-natured smile, too. They even feel rather sorry for them when they lose their feathers, although the Nigh Ox once said that if it were not for being plucked once in a while, the Geese would really be too airy to live with.

Perhaps the Nigh Ox was right in what he said, for certainly after they have worn their feathers all winter, they hold their heads higher than ever, and tell what they think and what they would do, and it is well they should be reminded that they work for a living like all their neighbors. The farmer's wife never plucks the Geese until warm weather comes.

Then she takes all the soft, short feathers that they have worn through the winter, and this leaves them looking very ragged indeed. There was a time, years ago, when Geese had to give up their long tail-and wing-feathers to be whittled into pens, but these Geese didn't know about that, and there was nobody in the farmyard old enough to remember it and tell them, so they thought they had a pretty hard time in even giving up their breast feathers.

"Sssss!" the Gander used to say, "if the farmer's boys must have feather pillows on which to lay their heads, why do they not grow their own feathers?"

"Humph!" said the Nigh Ox once; "If you must have oats to eat, why don't you grow the oats?" But the Gander was already waddling away and pretended not to hear him.

It is in the winter that the Geese put on the most airs. Then, when the Horses are being harnessed, they say to each other, "Dear me! Wouldn't it be dreadful to work in that way for a living?" And sometimes, when the team is hitched to a post by the farmhouse, they waddle past in a single line with the Gander at the head, and say to the Horses: "Hear you have to take a load of wood to town. It's too bad. Hope you won't get very tired. We are going to the river for a nice cold swim. Good-bye." Then they march off with their heads held high, and as soon as their backs are turned, the Horses look at each other and laugh softly. They know that there is nothing in the world better than good, honest, hard work, no matter of what kind it is.

Every winter the Geese forget about having to be plucked, and every spring they are surprised to lose their feathers. They are plucked four times before fall comes, and these four times come so near together that even they can remember from one to another. You would think that then they would not be so

airy, but instead of saying, "Of course we work for our living—why shouldn't we?" they say, "Why, yes, we do let the farmer's wife have some of our feathers when she wants them. We suppose you might call it work to grow feathers for her, still it does not take much of our time, and it is quite different from drawing loads and getting tired as the Horses and Oxen do. Growing feathers is genteel."

They do not remember anything long, and so, when they have made a mistake once, they are likely to make the same mistake over and over again. Then, too, they cannot tell big things from little things, and they are not happy unless they can have their own way all the time. And you know that nobody can be sure of that. It all comes of their not being willing to think hard, and sometimes it makes them a great deal of trouble, as it did on the day when the Gray Goose would not go through the farmyard gate.

This was soon after the Gander and his wife had hatched their brood of seven Goslings, and they were taking them at once to the brook. It was a happy day for all the flock. The Gander and the Mother Goose were glad because their children were safely out of the shell, and because they would no longer have to sit with cramped legs on the nest. Ganders are good fathers, for they cover the eggs half of the time, while the Mother Goose is resting. The other Geese were not only proud of the Goslings, but they were glad to have the Gander and the Mother Goose free to go around with them again. They had missed them very much.

The gate from the farmyard into the meadow stood wide open, and all the Geese except the Gray one followed the Gander through. The Gray Goose tried to go through a small hole in the fence very near the gate. She squeezed her head into it and stretched her neck on the meadow side of the



The Gray Goose Tried to Go Through

fence, but she could not get any farther, although she pushed until she was dizzy.

"Wait for me," she cried. "Wait for me-ee!"

"Hurry, then," said the Gander.

"I am hurrying," she cried, and she pushed with all her strength, but since the hole in the fence was so small, she did not get any farther than before.

"Go through the gateway," said the Nigh Ox, who was grazing near by.

"Sssss!" said the Gray Goose stiffly. "I would rather go through here. I have chosen to go this way."

"Oh!" said the Nigh Ox, "excuse me! Do go through there by all means!"

"We are going on," called the Gander; "we would wait, but the Goslings are in a hurry to take their first bath. Come as soon as you can."

The Gray Goose tried harder than ever to go the way that she had chosen, but it only made her so out of breath that she had to lie down and rest. Once she thought she heard somebody laugh, yet when she looked at the Nigh Ox, who was the only person around, he was lying with closed eyes and solemnly chewing his cud, so she decided that she must have been mistaken.

Down by the brook the rest of the flock were cackling merrily, and she could see the seven Goslings swimming with the Geese and the Gander. "Oh," she cried, "how I wish I were with them! I don't see what is the matter with this hole in the fence. The farmer ought to make it bigger."

She pushed and scolded and fussed until her neck was sore and she was too tired to swim if she had a chance, so she sat down to rest. She did remember what the Nigh Ox had said; still, if she couldn't go as she had planned, she wouldn't

go at all. She walked into the barn to find a cool and shady place, lowering her head as she stepped over the threshold of the high front door.

"What did you do that for?" twittered a Swallow.

"Because I don't want to hit my head on the top of the doorway;" she replied. "I always do so. All of our flock do so."

"Tittle-ittle-ittle-ee," laughed the Swallow, as she darted away and alighted on the fence by the Nigh Ox. "Why isn't the Gray Goose in swimming with the rest?" asked she.

"Because she can't push her fat body through that hole in the fence," said the Nigh Ox, switching his tail toward it as he spoke.

"Why doesn't she go through the gateway, then?" asked the Swallow.

"Because she says she would rather go the other way, and that if she can't go that way, she won't go at all."

"And she is missing all that fun?" said the Swallow.

"All of it," answered the Nigh Ox, "but then, you know, she is such a Goose!"



Why the Sheep Ran Away

It was during the hottest summer weather that the wind-storm came. The farmyard people always spoke of it as "the" wind-storm, because not even the Blind Horse, who had lived on the farm longer than any of his neighbors, could remember anything like it. "I recall one time," he said, "when a sweet-apple tree was blown down in the fall. The Hogs found it and ate all the fruit before the farmer knew that it was down. You should have heard them grunt over it. They were afraid the farmer would drive them away before they had eaten it all. Eh, well! They ate all they wanted, but one of the Pigs told me afterward that it made them sick, and that he never wanted to see another sweet apple as long as he lived. That was a hard storm, but not like this, not like this."

It had come in the night when the farmyard people were asleep, and there was much scampering to shelter. The fowls, who were roosting in the old apple-tree, did not have time to oil their feathers and make them water-proof. They just flew off their perches as fast as they could and ran for the open door of the Hen-house. When they were once inside, they ruffled up their feathers and shook themselves to get rid of the rain-drops. Fowls do not like wet weather, and it vexes them very much to be in the rain. Their neighbors know this so well that it has become their custom to say of an angry person that he is "as mad as a wet Hen."

The Cows were in their part of the barn with their necks between the stanchions, so there was nothing for them to do but to keep still and think of those who were out of doors. The Horses were in their comfortable stalls. They had been working hard all day and the farmer had gotten a good supper of oats ready for them in their mangers, so that they could eat quickly and go to sleep, instead of staying awake and walking around to get their own suppers in the pasture.

Out in the meadow the Sheep huddled close together under a low-branching tree, and stood still until the storm passed. They had been so warm that the cool rain made them comfortable, but the wind pushed them and swayed the branches of the trees. The loud thunder made the Lambs jump. They liked the lightning and made a game out of it, each one telling what he had seen by the last flash. The clouds, too, were beautiful, and flew across the sky like great dark birds with downy breasts, dropping now and then shining worms from their beaks.

At last the air became cool and clear, and the clouds flew far away toward the east. Next, the stars peeped out, first one, then two, then six, then twenty, and then so many that you could not have counted them—more than the leaves on a maple-tree, more than the grass-blades of the meadow. The Sheep ran around a little to shake off the rain-drops and warm themselves, then they huddled down again to sleep.

When the sun arose in the eastern sky, his warm beams fell upon the Sheep and awakened them. "How cool and beautiful a day," they said. "What a morning for a run!"

"I can beat you to the tall grass!" called one little Lamb to the rest, and they all scampered around the field, throwing up their heels for joy. They had been away from their mothers for awhile, and had learned to eat grass instead of milk. They

were quite proud of the way in which they broke it off, with quick upward jerks of their heads, and their teeth were growing finely. They did not expect any upper front teeth, for in place of them the Sheep have only a hard pad of flesh.

Soon they came running back to the flock. "There is a Dog over there," they cried, "a strange Dog. He doesn't look like Collie. He is coming this way, and we are afraid."

Their uncle, the Bell-Wether, looked over to where the strange Dog was, then turned quickly and began to run. The bell around his neck clinked at every step. When the other Sheep heard the bell they raised their heads and ran after him, and the Lambs ran after them. The strange Dog did not follow or even bark at them, yet on they went, shaking the shining rain-drops from the grass as they trod upon it. Not one of them was thinking for himself what he really ought to do. The Bell-Wether thought, "I feel like running away from the Dog, and so I will run."

The other Sheep said to themselves, "The Bell-Wether is running and so we will run."

And the Lambs said, "If they are all running we will run."

Along the fence they went, the bell clinking, their hoofs pattering, and not one of them thinking for himself, until they reached a place where the fence was blown over. It was not blown 'way down, but leaned so that it could be jumped. If a single one of the flock, even the youngest Lamb, had said, "Don't jump!" they would have stayed in the pasture; but nobody said it. The Bell-Wether felt like jumping over, so he jumped. Then the Sheep did as the Bell-Wether had done, and the Lambs did as the Sheep had done.

Now they were in the road and the Bell-Wether turned away from the farmhouse and ran on, with the Sheep and the Lambs following. Even now, if anybody had said, "Stop!" they

would have stopped, for they knew that they were doing wrong; but nobody said it.

After a while a heavy wagon came rumbling down the road behind them, and the Bell-Wether jumped over a ditch and ran into a hilly field with woodland beyond. Because he went the Sheep did, and because the Sheep went the Lambs did, and nobody said "Stop!" You see, by this time they were very badly frightened, and no wonder. When they saw the strange Dog they were a little scared, for they thought he might chase them. If they had made themselves stay there and act brave they would soon have felt brave. Even if the Dog had been a cruel one, they could have kept him from hurting them, for Sheep have been given very strong, hard foreheads with which to strike, and the Bell-Wether had also long, curled horns with three ridges on the side of each. But it is with Sheep as it is with other people—if they let themselves be frightened they grow more and more fearful, even when there is no real danger and now all of their trouble came from their not stopping to think what they ought to do.

They hurried up to the highest ground in the field, and when they were there and could go no farther, they stopped and looked at each other. One Lamb said to his mother, "Why did we come here? It isn't nearly so nice as our own meadow."

"Why, I came because the Bell-Wether did," she answered. Then she turned to the Bell-Wether and said, "Why did you bring us here?"

"I didn't bring you here," he replied. "I felt like coming, and I came. I didn't make you follow."

"N-no," answered the Sheep; "but you might have known that if you came the Sheep would come."

"Well," said the Bell-Wether, "you might have known

that if you Sheep came the Lambs would, so you'd better not say anything."

"Baa!" cried the Lambs. "We are hot and thirsty and there isn't any water here to drink. We want to go back."

Everybody was out of patience with somebody else, and nobody was comfortable. They did not dare try to go home again, for fear they would have more trouble, so they huddled together on the top of the hill and were very miserable and unhappy. They hadn't any good reason for coming, and they could not even have told why they ran to the hilltop instead of staying in the pleasant hollow below.

There was a reason for their running up, however, although they didn't know it. It was because their great-great-great-great-great-great-grandfather and-grandmother were wild Sheep in the mountains, and when frightened ran up among the rocks where there was nobody to hurt them. They got into the habit of running uphill when scared, and their children did the same, and their children's children did the same, and now even the farmyard Sheep do so, although they long ago forgot the reason why.

"Bow-wow-wow!" rang out on the still morning air.

"There's Collie!" cried the Lambs joyfully. "He's coming to take us home. Let's bleat to help him find us more quickly." All the Lambs said, "Baa! Baaa!" in their high, soft voices, and their mothers said "Baa! Baaa!" more loudly; and the Bell-Wether added his "Baa! Baaa!" which was so deep and strong that it sounded like a little, very little, clap of thunder. Collie came frisking along with his tail waving and his eyes gleaming. He started the flock home, and scolded them and made fun of them all the way, but they were now so happy that they didn't care what he said. When they were safely in the home meadow again and the farmer had mended the

fence, Collie left them. As he turned to go, he called back one last piece of advice.

"I'm a Shepherd Dog," he said, "and it's my work to take care of Sheep when they can't take care of themselves, but I'd just like to be a Bell-Wether for a little while. You wouldn't catch me doing every foolish thing I felt like doing and getting all the flock into trouble by following me! Nobody can do anything without somebody else doing it too, and I wouldn't lead people into trouble and then say I didn't think. Bow-wow-wow-wow!"

The Bell-Wether grumbled to himself, "Well, the rest needn't tag along unless they want to. Pity if I can't jump a fence without everybody following." But down in his heart he felt mean, for he knew that one who leads should do right things.





Collie and the Bell-Wether



The Fine Young Rat and the Trap

The Mice were having a great frolic in the corn-crib. The farmer's man had carelessly left a board leaning up against it in such a way that they could walk right up and through one of the big cracks in the side. It was the first time that some of them had ever been here. When the farmer built the crib, he had put a tin pan, open side down, on top of each of the wooden posts, and had then nailed the floor beams of the crib through these pans. That had kept the hungry Mice from getting into the corn.

This was a great day for them, and their gnawing-teeth would certainly be worn down enough without giving them any extra wear. That, you know, is one thing about which all Rats and Mice have to be very careful, for their front teeth are growing all the time, and they have to gnaw hard things every day to keep them from becoming too long.

There was only one thing that ever really troubled these Mice, and that was the Cat. They did not feel afraid of Hawks and Owls because they lived indoors. Weasels did not often come up to the barn, and men made so much noise when they were around that any wide-awake Mouse could easily keep out of their way. With the Cat it was different. She was always prowling around in the night-time, just when they had their finest parties; and many a young Mouse had been scared away from a midnight supper by seeing her eyes glowing like balls

of fire in the darkness. By daylight it was not so bad, for they could see her coming, and besides, she slept much of the time then.

They were talking about her when in the corn-crib. "Have any of you seen the Cat to-day?" asked the Oldest Mouse.

Nobody answered. Then one young fellow, who was always worrying, said: "Supposing she should come out of the barn now! Supposing she should come right toward this corn-crib! Supposing she should stand right under the floor! Supposing she should catch us as we jumped down! Supposing—"

But here the other young Mice all squeaked to him to stop, and one of them declared that it made her fur stand on end to think of it. The Oldest Mouse spoke quite sharply. "Supposing," said he to the first young Mouse, "you should eat more and talk less. There are enough pleasant things to speak about without scaring all your friends in this way."

The young Mouse who said that her fur stood on end couldn't eat anything more, she was so frightened. "What could we do," she said, "if the Cat should come?"

"Stay right where we are," answered her mother. "She couldn't reach us with the door closed. Now go on with your eating and don't be foolish."

A Rat ran up the board. "Good-morning," said he. "Have you heard the news?"

"No, no!" cried the Mice, hurrying to that side of the corn-crib, and peeping through the crack.

"The Yellow Kitten has been hunting with her mother, and they say that her brother is going to-night."

"Well," said a mother Mouse, "I knew we would have to expect it, but I did hope they would wait a while. Now, children," she added, "do be careful! I know that when you are looking for food you have to go into dangerous places, but

don't stop there to talk or to clean your fur. Find safe corners for that, or I shall worry about you all the time."

"We will," squeaked all the little Mice together. "We will be very, very careful."

"Thank you for the news," said the Oldest Mouse to the Rat. "We will try to send you word of new dangers when we hear of them."

The Rat, who was a fine young fellow, ran down the board and away. They could not ask him in to lunch, because he was too large and stout to squeeze through the cracks, but he understood how it was, and knew that he could find food elsewhere. Now he ran to the Pig-pen to snatch a share of the breakfast which the farmer had just left there. He often did this as soon as the farmer went away, and the Pigs never troubled him. Perhaps that was because they knew that if they drove him away when he came alone, he would bring all his sisters and his cousins and his aunts, and his brothers and his uncles too, the next time, and would eat every bit of food they had.

After he had taken a hearty breakfast, he ran under the edge of the barn to clean himself. He was always very particular about this. His mother had taught him when very small that he must keep his fur well brushed and his face washed, and he did it just as a Cat would, by wetting his paws and scrubbing his face and the top of his head. He brushed his fur coat with his paws also.

While he was here, one of his cousins came from the barn above. She ran down the inside of the wall, head foremost, and her hind feet were turned around until they pointed backward. That let her hold on with her long, sharp claws, quite as a Squirrel does, and kept her from tumbling. She was much out of breath when she reached the ground, but it was

not from running.

"What do you think that farmer has done now?" she cried. "It was bad enough for him to nail tin over the holes we gnawed into his grain-bins, but this is worse still. It needn't make us so much trouble, but it hurts my feelings."

"What is it?" asked her cousin.

"A trap!" said she. "A horrible, shining trap. The Rat from the other farm told me about it. It lies open and flat on the floor of a grain-bin—the very one you and I gnawed into last night—and there is a lovely piece of cheese in the middle of it. The Rat who told me about it says that as soon as one touches the cheese, the trap springs shut on him."

"Bah!" exclaimed the young Rat who had just eaten breakfast in the Pig-pen. "Let it stay there! We don't have to touch it, although I do mean to look at it some time. I believe in knowing about things."

"I wish you wouldn't look at it," said his cousin, who was very fond of him. "The Rat from the other farm says it is very dangerous to even look at traps, especially if your stomach is empty."

"Then the Rat from the other farm might better keep away," said this young fellow, as he put one paw up to see that his whiskers were all right. "I don't think very much of him anyway. He thinks he knows everything because he has travelled. I wish you would have nothing to do with him. I dare say you were in the grain-bin with him when you saw the trap."

"Yes," said she, "I was."

"Well," said he, "you both got away safely, and I shall too. I may not be very clever, but I think I do know enough to keep out of a trap." Then he turned into his hole and went to sleep. He had been running around all night, and was very

tired. He was cross, too. This was the second time that his cousin had told him what the Rat from the other farm had said, and he thought she liked him altogether too well.

When he awakened, it was night again and he was aroused by the stamping of the Dappled Gray on the floor above his head. For a minute he could hardly think where he was. Then it all came to him. He was in his own cozy little hole under the barn, and it was night. He remembered something about the Yellow Kitten. What was it? Oh yes, she had begun hunting. Well, he was not afraid of her yet. But there was something else—the trap! He wondered if his cousin were in that bin again. As like as not her friend, the Rat from the other farm, was showing her the trap now. He would go up there himself, and at once, too.

He ran up the wall, through an opening, and across the barn floor to the grain-bin. It was a moonlight night and the barn was not very dark. The cover of the bin was raised. Perhaps the farmer's man had forgotten to close it. Perhaps there was so little grain left in it that the man didn't care to. At any rate, he could now see the trap quite plainly. There was nobody else in the bin, and he went close to it.

"I would not touch it for anything," said he, as he entered the bin, "but it will not hurt me to look at it."

When he went nearer, he was very careful to see that his tail did not even brush against the chain which held the trap down. "So that is the terrible, dangerous trap?" said he. "It doesn't look particularly dreadful. That is fine-smelling cheese though." He sniffed two or three times. "I have tasted cheese only once in my whole life," said he, "and I am almost starved now. I wouldn't mind a nibble at that." He looked at it and thought about it until it seemed to him he could not go away and leave that cheese there.

Then he thought, "If I am very careful to step over these shining steel things and rest my feet only on the floor, it cannot spring the trap. Then I will snatch the cheese and jump…. I am pretty sure I can do it…. Why, yes, I know I can." So the Rat who had come just to look at the trap, began to lift first one foot and then another over the shining curved bars, and got all ready to catch up the cheese and run.

"Now!" he cried. "One, two, three!" He did snatch it and jump, but the trap jumped, too, in its own trappy way, and the Rat who got the cheese left the three tip rings of his tail to pay for it. "Ouch!" he cried. "My tail! My tail! My beautiful, long, bony tail, all covered with scales and short hair!" He did not care at all for the cheese now. He did not want to see it, for he would rather have had the point on his tail again than to eat a whole binful of cheese.

"How it will look!" said he. "So stumpy and blunt. And it has been so very useful always. I could wind it around a stick to hold myself up when my paws were full, and many a time I have rolled eggs across the floor by curling it around them." Then he heard Rat voices and scampered out and down to his own hole.

His cousin and the Rat from the other farm came into the bin. "Don't look at the trap," he was saying, "but just eat your grain from the farther corner."

"I won't," she answered, and she half closed her eyes to keep from seeing it. He was beside her and they stumbled over the cheese, which now lay on the floor away from the trap. "How does this happen?" said he. "We will eat it first and then find out." By this advice he showed that he was a Rat of excellent sense.

When they had eaten it, they began to look toward the trap. As there was no longer any cheese in it to tempt them,

they felt perfectly safe in doing so. They found that it had been sprung, and there lay the last three rings of some Rat's tail.

"How dreadful!" she exclaimed. "I hope that was not lost by any of our friends."

"Hum-hum!" said the Rat from the other farm. "Now, whom have I seen wearing that? I have certainly seen that tail before—it was your cousin!"

"Poor fellow!" said she. "I must go to see him."

"Oh, don't go now," cried the Rat from the other farm. "I think he might want to be alone for a while. Besides," he added coaxingly, "you haven't tasted of the grain yet, and it is very good."

"W-well," answered she, "perhaps my cousin would just as soon not have me come now." So she waited, and the Rat from the other farm told her wonderful stories of his travels, and they had a very fine supper.

When her cousin began to run around again, he was a much sadder and wiser Rat. Sometimes the younger Rats would ask him how he lost the tip of his tail. "By not turning it toward a tempting danger," he would answer, very solemnly. Then, after he had told them the story, he always added, "The time to turn your tail toward a tempting danger is the minute you see it, for if you wait and look and long for something you ought not to take, there is sure to be trouble, and many a Rat has lost more than the tip of his tail in just that way."



The Quick-Tempered Turkey Gobbler

There was only one Gobbler on the farm, and he was so used to having his own way that he never tried to make the best of it when he couldn't, and sometimes he became exceedingly cross. He was bigger than the Cocks, the Hens, the Geese, and the Ducks, so when they were in his way and he gobbled a gruff "Move along," they murmured "Oh, certainly," and scampered away as fast as their legs would carry them. The Peacock was larger than the Turkey Gobbler, it is true, but as long as he could sit on a fence in the sunshine and have somebody admiring his train, he did not care anything about the Gobbler, and they did not get in each other's way.

There were seven Hen Turkeys, timid, sweet-tempered people, who were fond of walking. They had never been known to answer back when the Gobbler scolded them, although at times he was very unreasonable. This was polite of them, but it made the Gobbler more careless than ever of the way in which he spoke. The Black Spanish Hen said it made her wattles tingle to hear him find fault with them. She wouldn't have stood it—no, indeed!

When the Black Spanish Cock heard her say so, he shook his feathers and smiled a queer little smile, and said, "I certainly know that she would not." The other fowls looked at each other, and the Shanghai Cock winked his round little eyes at the Dorking Hen, and she had to oil a feather on the

under side of her wing just then, so, of course, nobody saw her laugh—if she did laugh.

The Black Spanish fowls were kind-hearted and honest, and had fine manners, but they would not stand it to be spoken to hastily by any one who was not very much bigger than they, and it was said that the Cock had once—only once—but then, perhaps it would be just as well not to tell what the other fowls had heard about their family quarrel, for, after all, it did not come very straight, the Pigs having told the Geese, and the Geese telling the Ducks, and the Ducks just mentioning it to the Peacock, and the Peacock having spoken of it to the Dorking Hen.

It was now late in the fall, and all the Turkeys went walking together again. One would think that, after being separated from the rest all summer and part of the spring, the Gobbler would have been very polite when he joined them, but no; he was more quick-tempered than ever. He was not fond of young Turkeys, and their constant chattering annoyed him. "Can't you find some way to keep those children quiet?" he would say, and made such a fuss that the Hen Turkeys called them aside and tried to amuse them for a while.

Hen Turkeys are most loving mothers, and in the early spring first one and then another had stolen away to lay and hatch her eggs. If a Hen Turkey wanted a chance to lay an egg at this season, she watched the Gobbler and left the flock when his back was turned. As she came near her nest, she would stop and look around to make sure he did not see where it was. She knew that the Gobbler did not like to have her raise young Turkeys, and that if he could find the nest, he would break every egg in it. After she had laid her egg, she would wander back in a careless way, quite as though she had

only been to the watering-trough for a drink.

Once the Hen Turkeys had talked about this when the Gobbler could not hear. "It doesn't seem right not to tell him," the youngest had said.

"Well, my dear," said another, "it is the only way we can do, if we want to save our eggs and raise our children. Gobblers always act in that way."

"Are you sure?" said the young Hen Turkey.

"Sure!" was the answer. "You wouldn't be here to-day if your mother hadn't done as we do."

So the youngest Hen Turkey had changed her mind and hidden her eggs like the rest, for, in spite of aching legs and all that is hard in hatching eggs, Hen Turkeys always want to raise broods in the springtime. When one of them had laid as many eggs as she wanted to hatch, she began sitting on them, and would not walk with the flock at all. One by one the Hen Turkeys had done this until the Gobbler was left quite alone. He did not like it at all, and wanted more than ever to find and break the eggs. When the Turkey Chicks were hatched, their mothers kept them out of the Gobbler's way, because, you know, he did not like small children and it was better that they should not meet.

The Hen Turkeys were very sorry for him, and often wished that he might watch with them the growth of their piping darlings, to see the tiny feathers push their way through the down and broaden and lengthen until there was no down to be seen—only feathers. It was too bad; yet that was the way in all Turkey families, and the Gobblers couldn't help disliking the children any more than the Hen Turkeys could help wanting to sit in the springtime.

By another year the Gobbler would love the young Turkeys dearly. Even now he did not try to strike them, as he

might have done a while before. They were afraid of him, yet down in their hearts the brothers all thought that when they were grown up they wanted to be just like him and strut around with their wings trailing, their tails spread, their necks drawn back, and their feathers ruffled. Then, they thought, when other people came near them, they would puff and gobble and cry, "Get out of my way!" They tried it once in a while to see how it would seem, but they were still slender and their voices were not yet deep enough. The sisters laughed at them when they did this, and that made them feel very uncomfortable. The long, limp red wattles that grew out between their eyes became redder and redder as they swung to and fro under their short, thick bills.

"Just wait," said one young fellow to another. "Just you wait until I am really grown up and strut before your sister next spring. I don't think she will laugh at me then." And he comforted himself by eating fully twice as much grain as he should have done.

The farmer's little girl came into the farmyard, and all the fowls stopped eating to look at her. She was so young that she had never before been out there alone. Her father had brought her in his arms, and she had laughed with delight and clapped her little hands when the farmyard people passed by her. Now she had slipped out of the house and stood in the sunshine smiling at every one. She came without a cap, and the wind blew her soft yellow curls around her rosy face. It fluttered her red dress, too, and the Gobbler saw it and became exceedingly angry.

"Red-red-red!" he cried. "Why in the world did she wear red? I hate it!" He stalked toward her in his most disagreeable way, and you could tell by the stiff brushing of his wing-tips on the ground that he was very angry. "Get away from here!"

he cried. "This is my home and little girls can't wear red dresses when they visit me. Pffff! Get away!"

The little girl turned to run as the big Gobbler came puffing toward her. In her fright she stumbled and fell, and he hurried forward to strike her. The Black Spanish Cock began to ruffle his neck feathers and stretch his head forward. He did not mean to have their visitor treated so. He ran between the Gobbler's feet and they tumbled over together. The little girl picked herself up and hurried into the house.

If the Gobbler was angry before, he was much more so after his fall. "What do you mean, sir," he said, "by tripping me?"

"And what do you mean," said the Black Spanish Cock, "by knocking me over?"

"Pffff! You were under my feet."

"Erruuuu! You were over my head."

Now nobody had dared to disagree with the Gobbler in so long that he did not know what to make of it, and when the Shanghai Cock strolled over to help his friend, the Gobbler was fairly sputtering with rage. "Ah, Gobbler," said the Shanghai, "wonder what has become of the little girl? It was nice of her to come out here, and I wish she had stayed longer."

"I told her to get away," was the answer. "She had on a red dress. I chased her. I always have chased anybody who wore red, and I always shall. It's my way."

"Is it your way, too, to be cross whenever you feel like it?"

"Of course. I wouldn't be cross when I didn't feel like it," answered the Gobbler.

"Some of us are not cross when we do feel like it," said the Dorking Cock. "I am always happier for keeping my temper when I can."

"Pffff!" said the Gobbler. "That is not my way. I say right out what I think, and then I am all right again and forget all about it."

"Humph!" said the Bantam Hen. "I wonder if the other people forget as soon? It would do him more good to remember it and feel sorry. He needs a lesson." Then she stalked up to him, looking as brave as you please, although she was really quite frightened. "I never noticed it before," she cackled, "but the tuft of hairy feathers on your breast is dreadfully ragged. And what very ugly looking feet you have! If I were going to have any webs between my toes I should want good big ones like those of the Ducks and Geese, not snippy little halfway webs like yours. I hope you don't mind my speaking of it. I always say what I think. It's just my way, and I never remember it afterward." She gave a graceful flutter and a queer little squawk, and was off before the Gobbler got over his surprise.

Fowls do enjoy a joke, and now the Dorking Cock took his turn. "I've always wanted to know how you spread your tail in that fashion. It's a good time to see." He walked up beside the Gobbler and pecked and pulled until three feathers lay on the ground. "Ah," said the Dorking Cock, "I see I loosened some of your tail feathers. I hope you don't mind. It is just my way, when I want to know about anything, to find out as soon as I can."

And so one fowl after another teased and troubled the Gobbler, and explained afterward that "it was just their way." Then they laughed at him and ran off.

It would be nice if one could say that the Gobbler never again lost his temper, but he did, a great many times, for he should have begun to master it when he was a Chick. But one can tell truly that he never again excused his crossness by saying that "it was only his way." The youngest Duckling in the



The Big Gobbler Came Puffing Toward Her

poultry-yard had always known that this was no excuse at all, and that if people have disagreeable habits which make others unhappy, it is something of which they should be much ashamed.





The Bragging Peacock

The farmyard people will never forget the coming of the Peacock; or rather they will never forget the first day that he spent with them. He came in the evening after all the fowls had gone to roost, and their four-legged friends were dozing comfortably in meadow and pasture corners, so nobody saw him until the next morning.

You can imagine how surprised they were when a beautiful great fowl of greenish-blue strutted across the yard, holding his head well in the air and dragging his splendid train behind him. The fowls were just starting out for their daily walks, and they stopped and held one foot in the air, and stared and stared and stared. They did not mean to be rude, but they were so very much surprised that they did not think what they were doing. Most of them thought they were asleep and dreaming, and the dream was such a beautiful one that they did not want to move and break it off. They had never seen a Peacock and did not even know that there was such a fowl.

A Lamb by the pasture fence called to his mother. "Ba-baa!" cried he. "One of the cloud-birds is walking in the farmyard." He was thinking of the night of the storm, when all the Sheep and Lambs huddled together in the meadow and watched the clouds, and thought that they were birds and dropped shining worms from their beaks.

Then the Peacock, who understood the Sheep language perfectly, said, "Paon! I am no cloud-bird. I am a Peacock." He said this in a very haughty way, as though to be a Peacock were the grandest thing in the world, far better than having one's home in the sky and bringing showers to refresh the thirsty earth-people.

The Turkey Gobbler never could stand it to have others speak in that way when he was around, so he thought he would show the newcomer how important he was. He drew up his neck and puffed out his chest; he pulled his skin muscles by thinking about them, and that made his feathers stand on end; next he dropped his wings until their tips touched the ground; then he slowly spread his tail. "Pffff!" said he. "I am no Peacock. I am a Turkey Gobbler."

The Hen Turkeys looked at each other with much pride. They were a little afraid of him themselves, but they liked to have him show the newcomer that Turkeys are important people. Their children looked at each other and murmured, "Isn't the Gobbler fine though? Guess the Peacock will wish now that he hadn't put on airs."

But the Peacock did not seem to feel at all sorry. He stood and looked at them all without saying a word, and they all wondered what he was thinking. Then a Duckling who stood near him exclaimed, "Look at his train! Oh, look at his train!" Everybody looked and saw all those beautiful long feathers rising into the air. Up and up they went, and spreading as they rose, until there was a wonderful great circle of them back of his body and reaching far above his head. The Gobbler's spread tail looked as small beside this as a Dove's egg would beside that of a Goose.

"Paon!" said the Peacock. "I am no Turkey Gobbler. I am a Peacock."

"Pffff!" said the Gobbler. Then he turned to the Hen Turkeys. "My dears," he said, "I think it is time that we walked along. The children should not be allowed to see and speak with any stray fowl that comes along. We cannot be too particular about that." Then he stalked off, with the meek Hen Turkeys following and the children lagging behind. They did so want to stay and see the Peacock, and they thought the Ducklings and Goslings were much luckier than they.

The Geese were delighted with the newcomer, and hoped he would be quite friendly with them. They wished he were a swimmer, but of course they could tell with one look that he was not. He did not have the trim, boat-shaped body that swimmers have, and then, his feet were not webbed. The Gander noticed that they were remarkably homely feet. He thought he would remember this and speak of it to the Geese some time when they were praising the Peacock's train.

The Drake was the first to speak politely to the Peacock. "We are glad to meet you, sir," he said. "Will you be with us long?"

"Thank you," answered the Peacock. "I have come to stay."

"We hope you will like it here. I'm sorry to see you do not swim. We should be very glad of your company if you did. You will excuse us if we go on to the brook. We are late already." He and all of his family waddled away to the water. "A fine-looking fellow," said he heartily. "Even my cousins, the Mallard Ducks, have not such a beautiful sheen on their neck feathers." The Drake was a kind, warm-hearted fellow, and it never troubled him to know that other people were handsomer than he.

The Geese were eager to reach the water, too, but they could not leave without asking one question. First they told

the Gander to ask it, but he replied that if they wanted to know, they should ask it for themselves. Then they hung back and said to each other, "You ask him. I can't." At last the Gray Goose stepped forward, saying, "Excuse us, sir. You said that you were to stay with us, and we wish to know if you work for your living."

"I work!" cried he. "Paon! Never. The farmer invited me here to be beautiful, that is all."

"We are so glad," cackled the Geese, and the Gander joined with them. "So many of the people here work. They are very good, but not at all genteel, you understand."

"And don't you do anything?" asked the Peacock. "I thought Geese grew feathers for beds and pillows. It seems to me you look rather ragged. Haven't you been plucked?"

This was very embarrassing to the Geese. "Why, yes," they said, "we do let the farmer's wife have some feathers once in a while, when the weather is warm, but that is very different from really working, you know."

"Perhaps," said the Peacock. "If they want any of my feathers, they can wait until I moult. Then you will see how much they think of me, for whenever they find one of my train feathers (not tail, if you please; every bird has a tail, but I have a train) they carry it carefully into the house to be made into a duster for the parlor. I never give away any but my cast-off plumage. I am so very, very beautiful that I do not have to work."

This impressed the Geese very much. "We are glad to know you. Quite honored, we assure you!"

The Peacock bowed his crested head, and they bowed their uncrested and very silly ones, and then they went to the river. The Peacock thought them most agreeable, because they admired him, and they thought him the best sort of

acquaintance, because he didn't work. It was all very foolish, but there are always foolish people in the world, you know, and it is much better to be amused by it and a little sorry for them, than for us to lose our tempers and become cross about it. That was the way the Shanghais, Black Spanish, Dorking, and Bantam fowls felt. They were polite enough to the newcomer, but they did not run after him. The Chickens used to laugh when the Peacock uttered his cry of "Paon! Paon!" His voice was harsh and disagreeable, and it did seem so funny to hear such dreadful sounds coming from such a lovely throat.

The Black Spanish Cock reproved the Chickens sharply for this. "It is very rude," said he, "to laugh at people for things they cannot help. How would you like to have a Lamb follow you around and bleat, 'Look at that Chicken! He has only two legs! Hello, little two-legs; how can you walk?' It is just as bad for you to laugh at his harsh voice, because he cannot help it. If he should say foolish and silly things, you might laugh, because he could help that if he tried. Don't ever again let me hear you laughing when he is just saying 'Paon.'"

The Chickens minded the Black Spanish Cock, for they knew he was right and that he did not do rude things himself. They remembered everything he said, too.

One day the Peacock was standing on the fence alone. He did this most of the time. He usually stood with his back to the farmyard, so that people who passed could see his train but not his feet. A party of young fowls of all families came along. Their mothers had let them go off by themselves, and they stopped to look at the Peacock.

"I do think you have the most beautiful tail, sir," said a Duckling, giving her own little pointed one a sideways shake as she spoke.

"Please call it my train," said the Peacock. "It is beautiful

and I am very proud of it. Not every fowl can grow such a train as that."

"Oh, dear, no!" giggled a jolly little Bantam Chicken. "I'd grow one in a minute if I could."

This made all the other young fowls laugh, for they thought how funny the little brown Bantam would look dragging around a great mass of feathers like that.

The Peacock did not even smile. He never understood a joke anyway. He was always so busy thinking about himself that he couldn't see the point. Now he cleared his throat and spoke to the Bantam Chicken.

"I hope you don't think that I grew my train in a minute," said he. "It took me a long, long time, although I kept all the feathers going at once."

"Look at his crest!" exclaimed one young Turkey in his piping voice.

The Peacock turned his head so that they could see it more plainly. "That is a crest to be proud of," he said. "I have never seen a finer one myself. Have you noticed the beauty of my neck?"

"Charming!" "Wonderful!" "Beautiful!" exclaimed the young fowls. Just then one of the spoiled Dove children flew down from the barn roof and sat beside the Peacock.

"What homely feet you have!" this Squab exclaimed. "Are you not dreadfully ashamed of them?"

The young fowls thought this rude. Not one of them would have said it. The Peacock became very angry. "I know my feet are not so handsome as they might be," he said, "but that is no reason why I should be ashamed of them. I couldn't help having that kind of feet. They run in my family. I don't feel ashamed of things I can't help."

The young fowls felt so uncomfortable after this that they



The Peacock Was Standing on the Fence

walked away, and the Squab flew back to the Dove-cote. For a time nobody spoke. Then a Gosling, who had heard her mother talk about the Peacock, said, "I should think he would be proud of his train, and his crest, and his neck, and—and everything!"

"Everything except his feet," giggled the Bantam Chicken, "and you know he couldn't help having them."

"I wonder if he could help having his train, and his crest, and his neck, and—and everything?" said a young Turkey.

They all stopped where they were. "We never thought of that!" they cried. "We never thought of that!"

"Let's go and ask the Blind Horse," said a Duckling. "He is a good friend of mine, and he knows almost everything."

They stalked and waddled over to the Blind Horse, and the Duckling told him what was puzzling them. The Blind Horse laughed very heartily. "So the Peacock is proud of having grown such a fine train and crest, but he isn't ashamed of his homely feet, because he couldn't help having those! There is no reason for either pride or shame with the Peacock. He has just such a body as was given him, and he couldn't make one feather grow differently if he tried."

"I don't see what anybody can be proud of, then," said a Gosling sadly; for, you see, she wanted to be proud of something.

"Be proud of what you have done yourself," said the Blind Horse gently. "Be proud of keeping clean, or of telling the truth, or of speaking pleasantly when things go wrong. There are plenty of chances to be proud in a good way, if one must be proud."



The Discontented Guinea Hen

"Well," said the Gobbler, "I should like to know what next! Last spring it was the White Pig, when we had never had any but black and brown ones on the place. Next it was Ducks, because one of the farmer's boys wanted them. Then it was the Peacock, to please the farmer's wife. Now it is Guinea Fowls for the farmer's other son. Society isn't what it used to be here, and while some of the new people may be very pleasant, I must say that I preferred the good old quiet days."

"I think it is lovely," cackled the cheerful little Bantam Hen. "One hears so much of the world outside, and for people like myself, who stay at home, that is a good thing. Everybody loved the White Pig before she had been here two days, and my children are very fond of the Ducklings. I like to have them together, too, for after I had told them positively that my Chickens could not go in swimming, they stopped teasing and became most delightful playmates."

"What would you say about the Peacock?" asked the Shanghai Cock, who had never been friendly with him, although, to tell the truth, the Shanghai Cock was not so grumpy as he used to be.

"Er—er—well," said the Bantam Hen, who tried not to say unpleasant things about people unless she really had to, "he—he is certainly beautiful, although I can't say that I am

fond of hearing him sing."

This made all the fowls laugh, even the Gobbler looking a little smiling around the beak on the side where his hanging wattle did not hide his face. When the Hen Turkeys on the smiling side saw that he was pleased, they began to smile too; and then the Hen Turkeys on the other side, who hadn't been sure that it was safe for them to do so, smiled also. And it did them all a great deal of good.

"I didn't see the Guinea Fowls," said one of the Geese. "We were swimming when they came. How do they look? Are they handsomely dressed? We shall not call upon them unless they are our kind of people." It was some time since their last plucking for the season, and the Geese were growing more airy every day now.

"They are really very peculiar," said the Black Spanish Hen, "and not at all common-looking. I should call them decidedly genteel." Here the Geese looked at each other and nodded. They were always talking about being genteel, although if you had asked them, they might not have been able to tell what they meant by the word. "They are shaped quite like small Hen Turkeys," added the Black Spanish Hen "and their feathers are a dark bluish-gray with round white spots all over them. They do not wear any feathers on top of their heads. When I saw the first one, I thought she must have lost hers in an accident, but after the others came up, I knew it must be the custom in their family."

"And they are shaped like us?" asked the Hen Turkeys all together. They were thinking that perhaps the Black Spanish Hen would call them genteel-looking also, but she didn't.

"Very much like you," she replied. "In fact, I think they said something about being related to your family, although I am not sure. Do you remember, dear?" she said, turning to

the Black Spanish Cock.

"Certainly," he answered. "The Guinea Hen with the orange-colored legs said that their family was related to both the Turkeys and the Peacocks, and that they were pleased to see members of those families here."

"Gobble-gobble-gobble," called the Gobbler to the Hen Turkeys. "You must call upon our relatives as soon as you can. I will go later. I always wait to find out more about strangers before calling. It is my way." He didn't stop to think that if everybody waited as long as he did, the strangers would be very lonely.

After this, they scattered to feed, and the Hen Turkeys and their children looked for the Guinea Fowls. "Listen," said one, "and we may hear them talking to each other." They stood still, with their heads well up and turned a little to one side. They heard a harsh voice saying, "Ca-mac! Ca-mac!" and as none of their old friends ever said "Ca-mac!" they knew at once that it was one of the newcomers. They walked around the corner of the Sheep-shed, and there found them, a Guinea Cock and two Guinea Hens. One of the Guinea Hens had orange-colored legs, while the others had dark grayish-brown ones.

"Good-morning," said the Hen Turkeys. "Are you the Guinea Fowls?"

"We are," said the one with the bright-colored legs, "and you are the Turkeys, are you not?"

"We are the Hen Turkeys," said they, "and these are our children. The Gobbler didn't feel that he could come with us this morning, but he will come later. He got very tired in Grasshopper season and is hardly over it yet."

"That is too bad," said the Guinea Cock politely. "We hope he will soon be better. It is a hard time for all Turkeys—

so much running to and fro, besides the stretching of the neck whenever a Grasshopper comes near."

"Perhaps he overate somewhat," said one of the Hen Turkeys. "We were quite worried about him for a time. He slept so poorly and dreamed that he was being chased. He always has a good appetite, and you know how it is when there is so much food around. One cannot let it alone."

So they chatted on about one thing and another, and walked as they visited. The Guinea Fowls were more fussy and restless than the Turkeys, and even when they were speaking would run after some dainty bit of food that had just caught their eyes. Of course the Hen Turkeys said how glad they were to have the Guinea Fowls come there to live, and hoped that they would enjoy their new home. All of the farmyard people thought it a most delightful place.

"Oh, yes," cried the Guinea Hen with the bright-colored legs, "it is very pleasant, of course, but I wish you could see the farm we left."

"Why! Was it better than this?" asked the Turkey Chicks, crowding around her. They were so surprised that they forgot their mothers' telling them that if they came they must be very quiet, and making them all repeat together, "Little Turkeys should be seen and not heard."

"Better? My dears, it was not to be spoken of in the same breath. I understand that when one has always lived here, this may seem very nice, but when one has known better things, it is hard to be contented."

"Still, we shall be very happy here, I am sure," said the other Guinea Hen, the one with the brown legs. "People all seem so bright and pleasant. I like it very much indeed."

"We are glad of that," said the Turkeys all together. "We really must be going. We fear we have stayed too long already.

The Gobbler will wonder if we are never coming back. Good-morning."

As they walked off to look for him, one Hen Turkey said to another, "It must be hard to come here after living on that farm."

"Yes," was the answer, "I suppose that we don't really know what comfort is here."

When the Gobbler asked them about the Guinea Fowls, and how they were enjoying their new home, the Hen Turkeys sighed and answered, "Oh, as well as they can enjoy this farm, we suppose." The Gobbler was a little surprised by this reply, but he said nothing, and as he pecked at the corn which had just been spilled from the load the Oxen were drawing, he thought, "I wish we could have better corn to eat. This does not taste quite as it should."

When the Geese met the Guinea Fowls, they began to speak of the pleasure of living on such a fine farm. "Ah," said the Guinea Hen with the bright-colored legs, "how I wish you might see the one we left when we came here. It was so different."

The other Guinea Fowls looked uncomfortable when she spoke in this way, and stood first on one foot and then on the other. Then the Cock said something about the sunshiny fall weather, and the good neighbors, and—and—

The Gander spoke again of the farm. "It is not all that we could wish," said he; "still there are some good things about it. There are several swimming places which are fine and cold in winter."

"If it were only better cared for," said the Gray Goose. "I had a dreadful time a while ago, when I tried to get through a hole in the fence. I don't remember what was the matter with the hole, and perhaps I never knew, but the farmer should

have such things fixed. My neck was lame for days afterward, and he was wholly to blame."

After this, the Geese found fault with almost everything, and when there was no one thing to grumble about, they sighed because, "It was so different from what it might be." It was not long before even the spring Chickens, the Goslings, and the Ducklings were speaking in the same way, and the poultry-yard was a most doleful place. The Bantam Hen was the only really cheerful fowl there, and she got so tired of hearing the rest sigh and grumble, that she often slipped between the pickets of the fence and went to have a comfortable chat with the Oxen.

One day she fluttered toward them in a most excited manner. "Do I look nearly crazy?" said she. "I feel so. Ever since our last storm, the Guinea Fowls have been shut in with us, and I would give half of my tail-feathers if they had never come here. That one with the orange-colored legs can't see good in anything, and all of our steady, sensible fowls have heard it until they begin to believe that this farm is a wretched place."

"What do they do?" asked the Nigh Ox, who always enjoyed hearing the Bantam Hen talk.

"Do?" said she, shaking her dainty little head. "They don't do much of anything. That is what is the matter, and the young fowls are the worst of all. You know how it used to be at feeding time? We all fluttered and squabbled for the first chance at the food. Some Hen got the biggest piece, and then the rest would chase her from one corner to another, and not give her a chance to break and swallow any of it until she would share with them. It was great fun, and we never left a scrap uneaten. Now, what do you think?"

"Can't imagine," exclaimed the Oxen in one breath.

"Well, they all stand around on one foot for a while, and I am the only one eating. Then somebody says, 'I wonder if this is any better than the last we had.' Another will groan, 'Oh, is it time to eat again?' or, 'Suppose I must eat something to keep up my strength.' Then I hear the bright-legged Guinea Hen say, 'Ca-mac! Ca-mac! This is all so different, so very different from what I have been used to.' The Cock and the other Hen of that family are nice enough if you only get them away from her."

"What nonsense!" exclaimed the Oxen together, and they spoke quite sharply for them.

"I wish," said the Bantam Hen very slowly, and as though she meant every word—"I wish the bright-legged one were back where it was 'so different.' Perhaps then my friends would begin to act like themselves."

"Where did she come from?" asked the Off Ox. "It seems to me that I saw a bright-legged Guinea Hen somewhere not long ago." He thought very hard, so hard that he swallowed his cud without knowing he did so.

"Wasn't it at the place where we took that load of stone the other day?" asked the Nigh Ox, trying to help his brother. He knew how disagreeable it is not to be able to recall anything of that sort.

"It was," cried the Off Ox; "and a very poor farm it is. It was the same Hen too. Talk about its being different! I should say it was different from this place, but there are a good many ways of being different. Um-hum! I think I will talk with the discontented Guinea Hen before long, and I want you to see that the other fowls are listening when I do."

Although he would say nothing more, the Bantam Hen saw from the look in his eyes that he meant to stop the Guinea Hen's complaining, so she went away feeling happier. Then

the Off Ox unswallowed his cud and began to chew it as though nothing had happened. His brother heard him chuckle once in a while, and say, "Different!" under his breath.

When the Off Ox awakened from time to time during that night and heard the Guinea Hens talking in the dark, he chuckled again to himself. The Guinea Cock was a sound sleeper, but the Hens always talked a great deal between sunset and sunrise, and especially if it were about to rain. Other people thought that they might talk more in the daytime and then keep quiet when their neighbors wanted to sleep. They declared that they always remembered so many things to say as soon as they went to roost, and that if they waited until morning they might forget more than half.

The very next day, the Off Ox had the chance he wanted. He and his brother were yoked to the stone-boat and left standing by the poultry-yard. "Good-afternoon," said he. "Is the bright-legged Guinea Hen here?"

"I am," she answered, coming close to the pickets.

"We are just going over to your old home," said he, "with this load of stone. Have you any messages to send to your friends?"

The Guinea Hen looked rather uncomfortable, and stood first on one foot and then the other. "Tell them I am well," said she.

"I will," said the Off Ox, in his hearty way. "I will try to tell them all. I think I can, too, for there did not seem to be many people in that farmyard. I didn't see Ducks or Geese at all. Are there any living there?"

"No," said the Guinea Hen. She did not seem to think of anything else to say, although nobody spoke for a long time.

"Of course not!" exclaimed the Off Ox. "How stupid of

me to ask. There is no brook or river on that farm."

Still the Guinea Hen said nothing.

"We are dragging stone for their new barn," said the Off Ox. "Or perhaps I should say for their barn. One could hardly say that they have any yet, although I suppose they use those loosely built sheds for barns. I wonder people can spend a winter where there are such drafts; still, home is always home, and people love it for that reason. We are glad to have your family with us, not only to keep away the Crows (which was part of the Guinea Fowls' work), but because you will be more comfortable. I've never yet in all my travels seen so good a farm as this, and the one you left was so different! Good-bye."

There was not much talking in the poultry-yard the rest of the afternoon, although most of the fowls looked happier than they had for many days. When supper-time came, the Dorking Hen snatched the biggest pieces of food, and the others chased her from corner to corner in quite the old way. Every scrap was eaten, and nobody laughed when the Shanghai Cock said that the fine weather had given him a better appetite. It was really a dark and chilly day, but they had stopped thinking how much better off they would be if they only lived somewhere else. As soon as they stopped thinking that, they could see how well they were cared for at home. And so, although nobody had really looked at the sky or thought about the weather, everybody had a feeling that the sun must have been shining.

Perhaps the Guinea Cock and the other Guinea Hen were the happiest of all, for they had not known what to do or say when the bright-legged one talked about her old home. It all seemed like a joke now, yet she never liked the Off Ox after that day. The other fowls were as nice to her as ever, for they knew it was a sad thing to be so discontented, and they knew,

also, that if they had not been foolish enough to let her, she could never have made them unhappy.





The Oxen Talk with the Calves

It was a clear, cold winter morning, and the Cattle stood in the barnyard where the great yellow straw-stacks were. They had nibbled away at the lower part of these stacks until there was a sheltered place underneath. The Calves liked to stand on the sunshiny side with an over-hanging ledge of straw above their heads. The wind did not strike them here, and they could reach up and pull out wisps to eat when they had nothing else to do. Not that they were so fond of eating straw, but it was fun to pull it out. There was, however, usually something else to be done, for there was always their cud to chew.

Among all the farmyard people, there were none more particular about their food. They might eat in a hurry when time was short, or when the grass was fresh and green, but after they had swallowed it and filled the first of their four stomachs with partly chewed food, they would find some quiet and comfortable place where they could stand or lie easily and finish their eating. To do this, they had to bring the partly chewed food from the first stomach to the mouth again. They called this "unswallowing it," although they should have said "regurgitating."

After the food was back in their mouths again, it was spoken of as their cud, and the stout muscles in the sides of their faces pulled their lower jaws up and down and sideways,

and the food was caught over and over again between the blunt grinding teeth in the back part of their mouths, and was crushed, squeezed, and turned until it was fine, soft, and ready to swallow into the second stomach.

Then the Cattle do not have to think of it again, but while they are doing something quite different, and perhaps forgetting all about it, there are many nerves and muscles and fine red blood-drops as busy as can be, passing it into the third and fourth stomachs, and changing the strength of the food into the strength of the Cattle. The Cows and the Oxen do not know this. They never heard of muscles and nerves, and perhaps you never did before, yet these are wonderful little helpers and good friends if one is kind to them. All that Cattle know about eating is that they must have clean food, that they must eat because they are hungry and not just because it tastes good, and that they must chew it very carefully. And if they do these things as they should, they are quite sure to be well and comfortable.

The Oxen were standing by the barn door, and the Calves were talking about them. They liked their uncles, the Oxen, very much, but like many other Calves the world over, they thought them rather slow and old-fashioned. Now the Colts had been saying the same thing, and so these half-dozen shaggy youngsters, who hadn't a sign of a horn, were telling what they would do if they were Oxen. Sometimes they spoke more loudly than they meant to, and the Oxen heard them, but they did not know this.

"If I were an Ox," said one, "I wouldn't stand still and let the farmer put that heavy yoke on my neck. I'd edge away and kick."

"Tell you what I'd do," said another. "I'd stand right still when he tried to make me go, and I wouldn't stir until I got

ready."

"I wouldn't do that," said a third. "I'd run away and upset the stone in a ditch. I don't think it's fair to always make them pull the heavy loads while the Horses have all the fun of taking the farmer to town and drawing the binder and all the other wonderful machines."

"Isn't it too bad that you are not Oxen?" said a deep voice behind them. The Calves jumped, and there was the Off Ox close to them. He was so near that you could not have set a Chicken coop between him and them, and he had heard every word. The Calves did not know where to look or what to say, for they had not been speaking very politely. The one who had just spoken wanted to act easy and as though he did not care, so he raised one hind hoof to scratch his ear, and gave his brushy tail a toss over one flank. "Oh, I don't know," said he.

"I used to talk in just that way when I was a Calf," said the Off Ox, with a twinkle in his large brown eyes. "All Calves think they'll do wonders when they're grown."

"I know I thought so," said the Nigh Ox, who had followed his brother.

"Well, if you wanted to," asked the Red Calf, "why don't you do those things now?" The others wondered how he dared to ask such a question.

"It doesn't pay," said the Nigh Ox. "Do all your frisking in playtime. I like fun as well as anybody, yet when our yoke is taken from its peg, I say business is business and the closer we stick to it the better. I knew a sitting Hen once who wanted to see everything that happened. She was always running out to see somebody or other, and sometimes she stayed longer than she meant to. I told her she'd better stick to her nest, and she said she didn't believe in working all the time."

"How soon did her Chickens hatch?" asked the Calves all together.

"Never did hatch, of course," chuckled the Nigh Ox. "She fooled herself into thinking she was working, and she made a great fuss about her legs aching and her giving up society, but she couldn't fool that nestful of eggs. They had gotten cold and they knew it, and not one of them would hatch."

"Wasn't she ashamed then?" asked the Calves.

"Didn't act so," snorted the Nigh Ox. "Went around talking about her great disappointment, and said she couldn't see why the other Hens had so much better luck."

The Off Ox chuckled. "He told her that he guessed it might have been something besides bad luck, and that the next time she'd better stay on her nest more. Then she asked him how many broods of Chickens he had hatched. Ho-ho-ho!"

Everybody laughed, and the Calves wondered how the Nigh Ox could think of it without being angry. "It wouldn't pay to be angry," he said. "What's the use of wasting a fine great Ox temper on a poor little Hen rudeness?"

This made them think. They remembered how cross and hot and uncomfortable they often became over very small things that bothered them, and they began to think that perhaps even Calf tempers were worth caring for.

At last the Black Calf, the prettiest one in the yard, said, "Do you like drawing that flat wagon which hasn't any wheels, and scrapes along in the dust?"

"The stone-boat?" asked the Off Ox. "We don't mind it. Never mind doing our kind of work. Wouldn't like to pull the binder with its shining knives and whirling arms, for whoever does that has to walk fast and make sudden turns and stops. Wouldn't like being hitched to the carriage to carry the

farmer's family to town. Wouldn't like to take care of the Sheep, like Collie, or to grow feathers like the Geese—but we can draw stone-boats and all sorts of heavy loads, if we do say it."

The Red Calf, who was always running and kicking up his heels, said, "Oh, it's such slow work! I should think you'd feel that you would never reach the end of your journey."

"We don't think about that," answered the Nigh Ox. "It doesn't pay. We used to, though. I remember the time when I wished myself a Swallow, flying a mile a minute, instead of step-step-stepping my way through life. My mother was a sensible Cow, and wore the bell in our herd. She cured me of that foolishness. She told me that Swallows had to fly one wing-beat at a time, and that dinners had to be eaten one mouthful at a time, and that nothing really worth while could be done in a minute. She said that if we were forever thinking how much work we had to do and how tiresome it was, we'd never enjoy life, and we wouldn't live long either. Lazy Oxen never do. That's another thing which doesn't pay."

The Red Calf and the White Calf spoke together: "We will always be sensible. We will never lose our tempers. We will never be afraid to work. We will be fine and long-lived cattle."

"Might you not better say you will try to be sensible?" asked the Nigh Ox. "You know it is not always easy to do those things, and one has to begin over and over again."

"Oh, no," they answered. "We know what we can do."

"You might be mistaken," said the Oxen gently.

"I am never mistaken," said the Red Calf.

"Neither am I," said the White Calf.

"Well, good-morning," called the Oxen, as they moved off. "We are going to talk with our sisters, the Cows."

After they had gone, the pretty Black Calf spoke in her pleasant way: "It seems to me I shall be an old Cow before I can learn to be good and sensible like them, but I am going to try."

"Pooh!" said the Red Calf. "It is easy enough to be sensible if you want to be—as easy as eating."

"Yes," said the White Calf. "I shall never lose my temper again, now that I am sure it is foolish to do so."

"Dear me!" said the pretty Black Calf. "How strong and good you must be. I can only keep on trying."

"Pooh!" said the Red Calf again. Then he lowered his voice and spoke to her. "Move along," said he, "and let me stand beside you in the cubby while I chew my cud."

"Don't you do it," cried the White Calf. "I want that place myself."

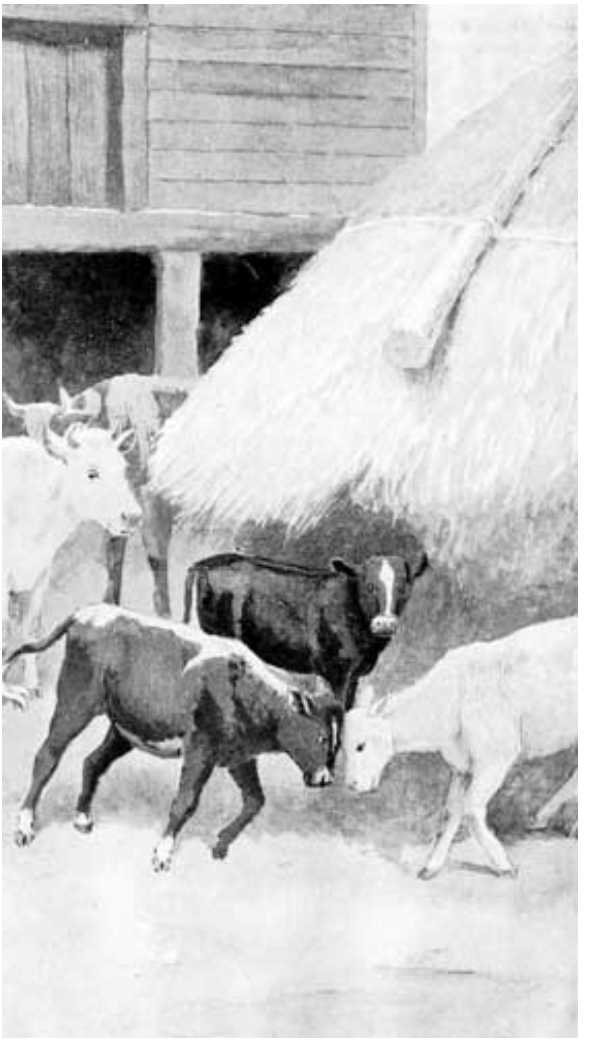
"I guess not!" exclaimed the Red Calf. "I'll bunt you first."

"Bunt away, then," said the White Calf, "but I'll have that place."

"Oh, please don't fight!" exclaimed the Black Calf. "I'll let one of you have my corner."

"Don't you move," cried each of them. "I want to stand by you." Then they lowered their heads and looked into each other's eyes. Next, they put their hard foreheads together, and pushed and pushed and pushed. Sometimes the Red Calf made the White Calf go backward, and sometimes it was the other way. Once in a while they stood still and rested. Then they began pushing again.

While they were quarrelling in this way, getting warmer and more angry all the time, and losing those very tempers which they had said they would always keep, a young Jersey had stepped into the cubby beside the Black Calf, and they were having a pleasant visit. "What are those fellows fighting



The Red Calf and the White Calf

about?" he asked.

The Black Calf smiled a funny little smile. "They are fighting," said she, "to see which one shall stand in the cubby with me and chew his cud."

The Jersey Calf was a shrewd young fellow of very good family. "Perhaps," said he, "I ought to stay and guard the place until it is decided who shall have it."

"I wish you would," said she.

And that was how it happened that the two Calves who lost their tempers had a cross, tiresome, and uncomfortable day, while another had the very corner which they wanted. When night came, they grumbled because the Jersey Calf had come out ahead of them, and they thought it very strange. But it was not strange, for the people who are quiet and good-natured always come out ahead in the end. And the people who are so very sure that it is easy to be good when they really want to, are just the very ones who sometimes do not want to when they should.

The Black Calf was right. The only way to be sensible and happy is to try and try and try, and it does pay.

THE END.

Among the Pond People

By Clara Dillingham Pierson
Illustrated by F. C. Gordon





Introduction

Dear Little Friends:—

When the ten Polliwogs came to spend a day with me, some two years ago, I promised to tell you stories of how they and their neighbors live in the pond. I wanted to tell the stories at once, but this is a busy world and story-telling is only play, so there were many things to be done before I could sit down to my desk and hold my pen while the stories slid out of it onto paper. I wonder where all my ten Polliwogs are now!

One cannot come to know pond people quite so well as those who live in the forest or in the meadow, yet down in the shining water they live and build their homes and learn much that they need to know. And wherever people are living, and working, and playing, there are stories to be found. The pond people cannot be well or happy long away from the water, and you can only come to know them by watching the ponds and brooks. If you do that and are very quiet, the Minnows will swim to where you are, the Mud Turtles will waddle out on the logs in the sunshine, and you may even see a Crayfish walking backward along the sand.

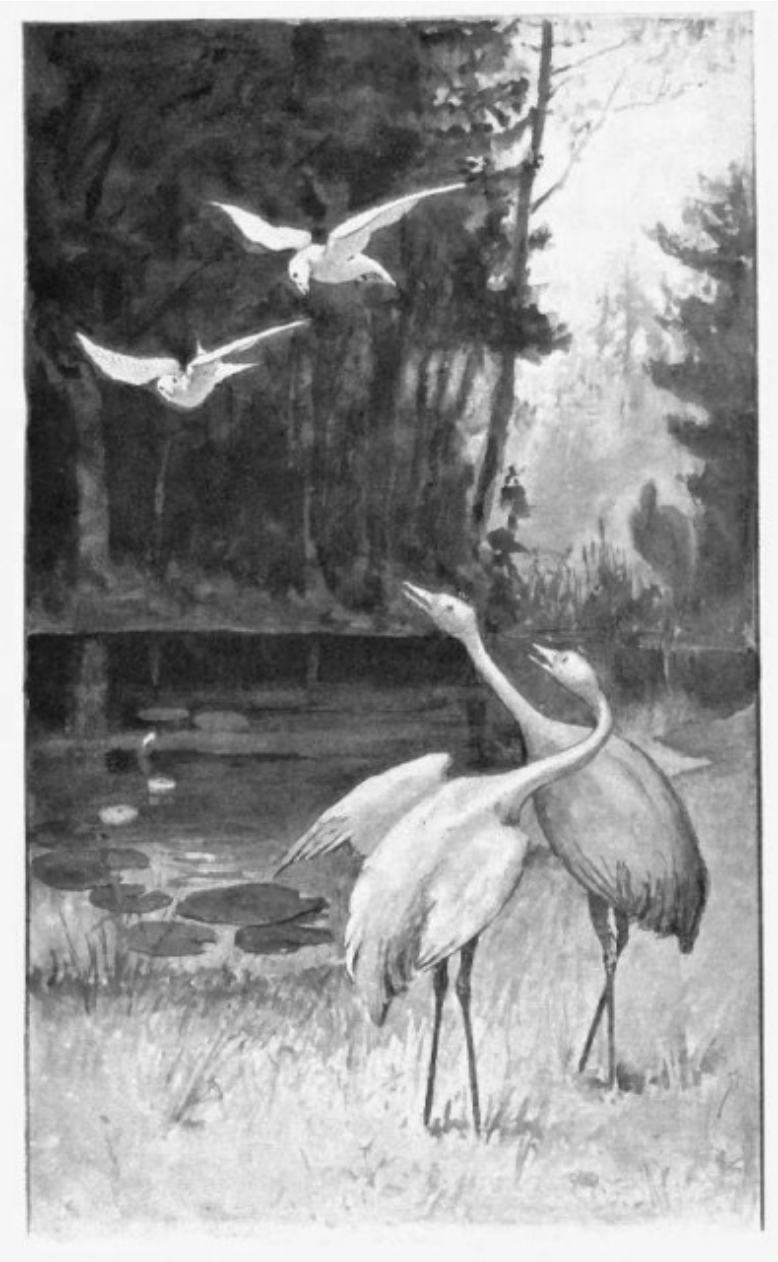
But if you should see a very large, black bug with fore legs which open and shut like jack-knives—then keep away from him, for that is Belostoma. Some time you may see him under the electric lights in the city, for he likes to sprawl around there, and you can look at him on land, but let him alone.

Remember that the Dragon-Flies and many of their friends who seem to do nothing but play in the sunshine, have lived long in the dusky pond, and that this life in the air comes only after a long time of getting ready. Remember that if you pick up a Turtle or catch Minnows in a net, you must not leave the Turtle on his back or keep any water-breathing people, like the Minnows, in the air. Watch them for a little while and then let them go free.

And then remember, be sure to remember, this: that you are not to get acquainted with the pond people by tumbling into the water or by going into it with your shoes and stockings on. If you do that, your mothers will say, "We wish that Mrs. Pierson had never written about the pond people." And if they should say that, just think how I would feel!

Your friend,
Clara Dillingham Pierson.

Stanton, Michigan,
December 22, 1900



"Baddy-Baddy!"



The Biggest Frog Awakens

The Biggest Frog stretched the four toes of his right forefoot. Then he stretched the four toes of his left forefoot. Next he stretched the five toes of his right hindfoot. And last of all he stretched the four toes of his left hindfoot. Then he stretched all seventeen toes at once. He should have had eighteen toes to stretch, like his friends and neighbors, but something had happened to the eighteenth one a great many years before. None of the pond people knew what had happened to it, but something had, and when the Tadpoles teased him to tell them what, he only stared at them with his great eyes and said, "My children, that story is too sad to tell."

After the Biggest Frog had stretched all his toes, he stretched his legs and twitched his lips. He poked his head out of the mud a very, very little way, and saw a Minnow swimming past. "Good day!" said he. "Is it time to get up?"

"Time!" exclaimed the Minnow, looking at him with her mouth open. "I should say it was. Why, the watercress is growing!"

Now every one who lives in a pond knows that when the watercress begins to grow, it is time for all the winter sleepers to awaken. The Biggest Frog crawled out of the mud and poked this way and that all around the spot where he had spent the cold weather. "Wake up!" he said. "Wake up! Wake up!" The water grew dark and cloudy because he kicked up

so much mud, but when it began to clear again he saw the heads of his friends peeping up everywhere out of that part of the pond bottom. Seven of them had huddled close to him all winter. "Come out!" he cried. "The spring is here, and it is no time for Frogs to be asleep."

"Asleep! No indeed!" exclaimed his sister, an elderly and hard-working Frog, as she swam to the shore and crawled out on it. She ate every bit of food that she found on the way, for neither she nor any of the others had taken a mouthful since the fall before.

The younger Frogs followed through the warmer shallow water until they were partly out of it. There is always a Biggest Frog in every pond. All the young Frogs thought how fine it would be to become the Biggest Frog of even a very small puddle, for then they could tell the others what to do. Now they looked at their leader and each said to himself, "Perhaps some day I shall begin the concert."

The Biggest Frog found a comfortable place and sat down. He toed in with his eight front toes, as well-bred frogs do, and all his friends toed in with their eight front toes. He toed out with his nine back toes, and all his friends toed out with their ten back toes. One young Yellow Brown Frog said, "How I wish I did not have that bothersome fifth toe on my left hind-foot! It is so in the way! Besides, there is such a style about having one's hind feet different." He spoke just loud enough for the Biggest Frog to hear. Any one would know from this remark that he was young and foolish, for when people are wise they know that the most beautiful feet and ears and bodies are just the way that they were first made to be.

Now the Biggest Frog swallowed a great deal of air, filled the sacs on each side of his neck with it, opened his big mouth, and sang croakily, "Frogs! Frogs! Frogs! Frogs! Frogs! Frogs!

Frogs! Frogs!" And all the others sang, "Frogs! Frogs! Frogs!" as long as he. The Gulls heard it, and the Muskrats heard it, and all were happy because spring had come.

A beautiful young Green Brown Frog, who had never felt grown-up until now, tried to sing with the others, but she had not a strong voice, and was glad enough to stop and visit with the Biggest Frog's Sister. "Don't you wish we could sing as loudly as they can?" said she.

"No," answered the Biggest Frog's Sister. "I would rather sit on the bank and think about my spring work. Work first, you know, and pleasure afterward!"

"Oh!" said the Green Brown Frog. "Then you don't want to sing until your work is done?"

"You may be very sure I don't want to sing then," answered the older Frog. "I am too tired. Besides, after the eggs are laid, there is no reason for wanting to sing."

"Why not?" asked the Green Brown Frog. "I don't see what difference that makes."

"That," said the older Frog wisely, "is because you are young and have never laid eggs. The great time for singing is before the eggs are laid. There is some singing afterward, but that is only because people expect it of us, and not because we have the same wish to sing." After she had said all this, which was a great deal for a Frog to say at once, she shut her big mouth and slid her eyelids over her eyes.

There was another question which the Green Brown Frog wanted very much to ask, but she had good manners and knew that it was impolite to speak to any Frog whose eyes were not open. So she closed her own eyes and tried to think what the answer would be. When she opened them again, the Biggest Frog's Sister had hopped away, and in her place sat the Yellow Brown Frog, the same handsome young fellow who

had found one of his toes in the way. It quite startled her to find him sitting so close to her and she couldn't think of anything to say, so she just looked at him with her great beautiful eyes and toed in a little more with her front feet. That made him look at them and see how pretty they were, although of course this was not the reason why she had moved them.

The Yellow Brown Frog hopped a little nearer and sang as loudly as he could, "Frogs! Frogs! Frogs! Frogs! Frogs! Frogs! Frogs! Frogs!" Then she knew that he was singing just for her, and she was exceedingly happy. She swallowed air very fast because she seemed to be out of breath from thinking what she should answer. She had wanted to ask the Biggest Frog's Sister what she should say if any one sang to her alone. She knew that if she wanted to get away from him, all she had to do was to give a great jump and splash into the water. She didn't want to go away, yet she made believe that she did, for she hopped a little farther from him.

He knew she was only pretending, though, for she hadn't hopped more than the length of a grass-blade. So he followed her and kept on singing. Because she knew that she must say something, she just opened her mouth and sang the first words that she could think of; and what she sang was, "Eggs! Eggs! Eggs! Eggs! Eggs! Eggs! Eggs! Eggs!" As it happened, this was exactly what she should have sung, so he knew that she liked him. They stayed together for a long, long time, and he sang a great deal and very loudly, and she sang a little and very softly.

After a while she remembered that she was now a fully grown Frog and had spring work to do, and she said to him, "I really must lay some eggs. I am going into the water."

"Then I will go too," said he. And they gave two great leaps and came down with two great splashes.

The Green Brown Frog laid eggs for four days, and the Yellow Brown Frog stayed with her all that time and took care of the eggs after she had laid them. They were covered with a sort of green jelly which made them stick to each other as they floated in little heaps on the water. The Frogs thought that a good thing, for then, when the Tadpoles hatched, each would have playmates near.

One day, after the eggs were all laid and were growing finely (for Frogs' eggs grow until the Tadpoles are ready to eat their way out), the Green Brown Frog sat alone on the bank of the pond and the Biggest Frog's Sister came to her. She had a queer smile around the corners of her mouth. Frogs have excellent mouths for smiling, but it takes a very broad smile to go way across, so when they smile a little it is only at the corners. "How are your eggs growing?" she asked.

"Oh," answered the Green Brown Frog sadly, "I can't tell which ones they are."

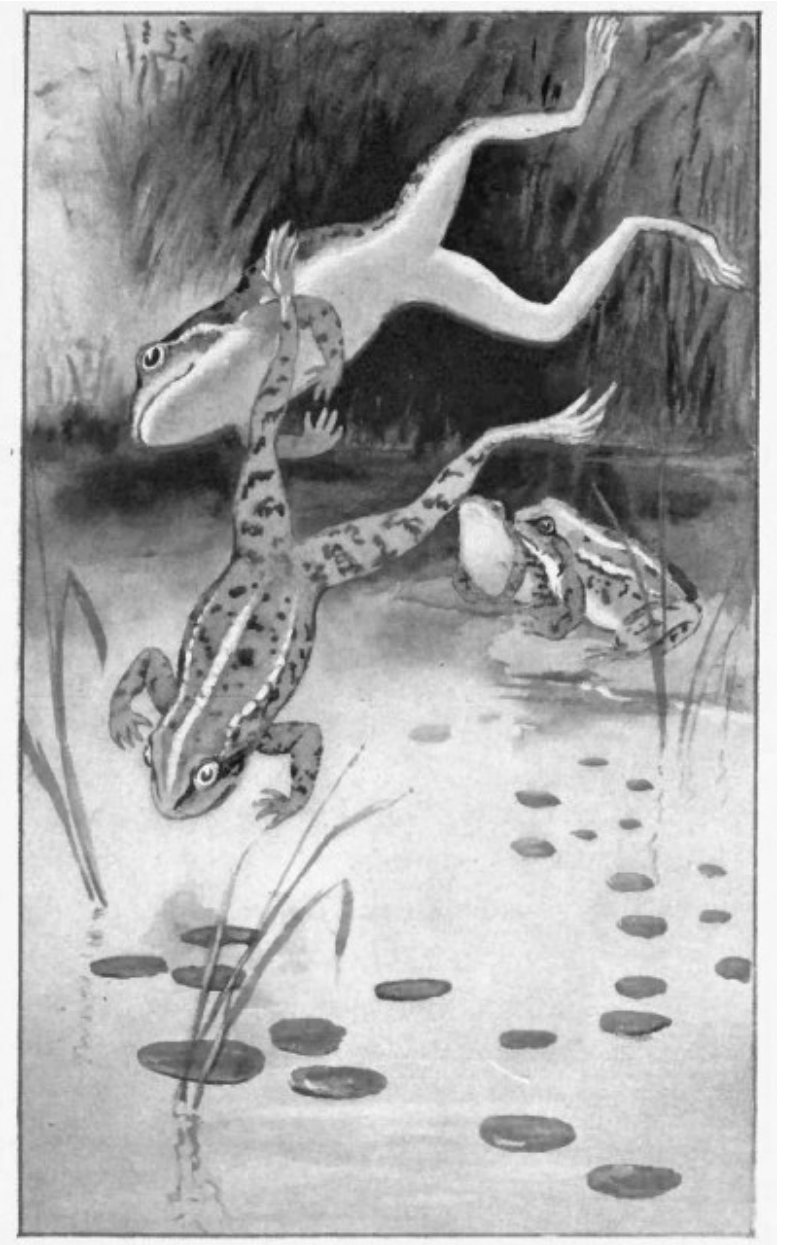
"That's just like a young Frog," said the Biggest Frog's Sister. "Is there any reason why you should know which ones they are? It isn't as though you were a bird and had to keep them warm, or as though you were a Mink and had to feed your children. The sun will hatch them and they will feed themselves all they need."

"I think," said the Green Brown Frog, "that my eggs were a little better than the rest."

"Yes," croaked the Biggest Frog's Sister, "every Frog thinks that."

"And I wanted to have my own Tadpoles to look after," sighed the Green Brown Frog.

"Why?" asked the Biggest Frog's Sister. "Can't you take any comfort with a Tadpole unless you laid the egg from which he was hatched? I never know one of my own eggs a



"Then I Will Go Too," Said He.

day after it is laid. There are such a lot floating around that they are sure to get mixed. But I just make the best of it."

"How?" asked the Green Brown Frog, looking a little more cheerful.

"Oh, I swim around and look at all the eggs, and whenever I see any Tadpoles moving in them I think, 'Those may be mine!' As they are hatched I help any one who needs it. Poor sort of Frog it would be who couldn't like other people's Tadpoles!"

"I believe I'll do that way," said the Green Brown Frog. "And then," she added, "what a comfort it will be if any of them are cross or rude, to think, 'I'm glad I don't know that they are mine.'"

"Yes," said the Biggest Frog's Sister. "I often tell my brother that I pity people who have to bring up their own children. It is much pleasanter to let them grow up as they do and then adopt the best ones. Do you know, I have almost decided that you are my daughter? My brother said this morning that he thought you looked like me."





The Dance of the Sand-Hill Cranes

One fine day in spring, a great flock of Sand-hill Cranes came from the south. They were flying high and quietly because the weather was bright. If it had been stormy, or if they had been flying by night, as they usually did, they would have stayed nearer the ground, and their leader would have trumpeted loudly to let his followers know which way he was going. They would also have trumpeted, but more softly, to tell him that they were coming after.

They were a fine company to look upon, orderly, strong, and dignified. Their long necks were stretched out straight ahead, their long legs straight behind, and they beat the air with slow, regular strokes of the strong wings. As they came near the pond, they flew lower and lower, until all swept down to the earth and alighted, tall and stately, by the edge of the water.

They had eaten nothing for several days, and were soon hunting for food, some on land, and some in the water, for they had stopped to feed and rest. Those who hunted in the water, did so very quietly. A Crane would stand on one leg, with his head against his breast, so quietly that one might think him asleep: but as soon as anything eatable came near, he would bend his body, stretch out his neck, open his long, slender bill, and swallow it at one gulp. Then he would seem to fall asleep again.

While most of the Cranes were still feeding, some of them were stalking through the woods and looking this way and that, flying up to stand on a tree, and then flying down to stand on the ground. They were those who thought of staying there for the summer.

When the flock arose to fly on again, eight Cranes stayed behind. They watched their friends fly away, and stood on the ground with their necks and bills uplifted and mouths open, while they trumpeted or called out, "Good-bye! Stop for us in the fall!" The flying Cranes trumpeted back, "We will! Don't forget us!"

That night they slept near together, as they had done when with the large flock, and one Crane kept awake to watch for danger while the others tucked their heads under their wings. They were fine looking, even when they slept, and some people never look well unless they are awake. They were brownish-gray, with no bright markings at all, and their long legs gave them a very genteel look. The tops of their heads were covered with warty red skin, from which grew short black feathers that looked more like hairs.

One morning, when the Cranes awakened, a fine young fellow began to strut up and down before the rest, bowing low, and leaping high into the air, and every now and then whooping as loudly as he could. The Gulls, who had spent the winter by the pond, screamed to each other, "The Crane dance has begun!" Even the Frogs, who are afraid of Cranes, crept quietly near to look on.

It was not long before another young Crane began to skip and hop and circle around, drooping his wings and whooping as he went. Every Crane danced, brothers, and sisters, and all, and as they did so, they looked lovingly at each other, and admired the fine steps and enjoyed the whooping. This went

on until they were so tired they could hardly stand, and had to stop to eat and rest.

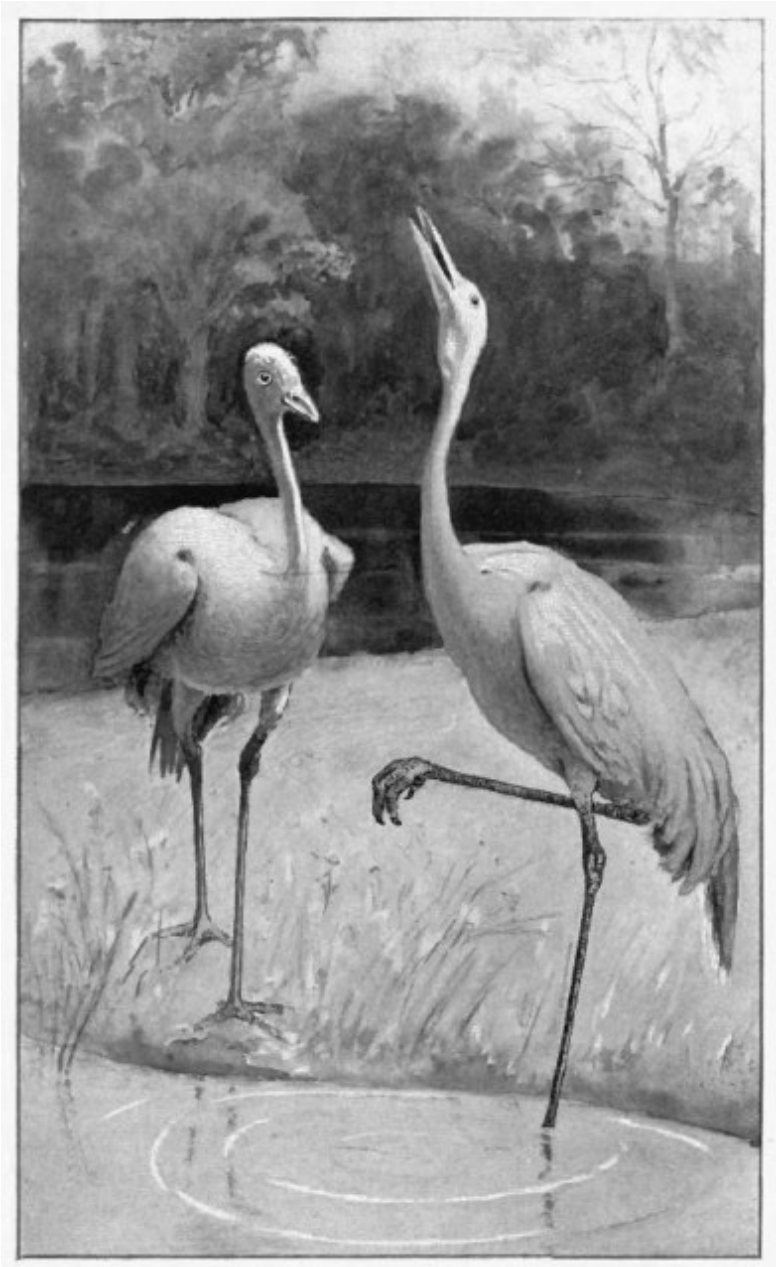
When they were eating, the young fellow who had begun the dance, stalked up to the sister of one of his friends, as she stood in the edge of the pond, gracefully balanced on one leg. She did not turn her head towards him, although, having such a long and slender neck, she could have done so with very little trouble. She stood with her head on her breast and looked at the water. After a while, he trumpeted softly, as though he were just trying his voice. Then she gave a pretty little start, and said, "Oh, are you here? How you did frighten me!"

"I am sorry," he said. "I did not want to frighten you." And he looked at her admiringly.

"It was just for a minute," she answered. "Of course I am not frightened now that I know who it is."

Then they stood and fished for a long time without saying anything. When she flew away, she said, "That is a very pleasant fishing-place." He stood on the other leg for a while, and thought how sweet her voice sounded as she said it. Then he thought that, if she liked the place so well, she might come there again the next day. He wondered why he could not come too, although everybody knows that a Crane catches more if he fishes alone.

The next morning, when the Cranes danced, he bowed to her oftener than to any of the rest, and he thought she noticed it. They danced until they were almost too tired to move, and indeed he had to rest for a while before he went to feed. As she stalked off toward the pond, she passed him, and she said over her shoulder, "I should think you would be hungry. I am almost starved." After she had gone, he wondered why she had said that. If he had been an older Crane, and understood



"What fine, big mouthfuls you can take!"

the ways of the world a little better, he would have known that she meant, "Aren't you coming to that fishing-place? I am going now." Still, although he was such a young Crane and had never danced until this year, he began to think that she liked him and enjoyed having him near. So he flew off to the fishing-place where he had seen her the day before, and he stalked along to where she was, and stood close to her while she fished. Once, when he caught something and swallowed it at one gulp, she looked admiringly at him and said, "What fine, big mouthfuls you can take!"

That pleased him, of course, because Cranes think that big mouthfuls are the best kind, so he tipped his head to one side, and watched his neck as the mouthful slid down to his stomach. He could see it from the outside, a big bunch slowly moving downward. He often did this while he was eating. He thought it very interesting. He pitied short-necked people. Then he said, "Pooh! I can take bigger mouthfuls than that. You ought to see what big mouthfuls I can take."

She changed, and stood on her other leg. "I saw you dancing this morning," she said. Now it was not at all queer that she should have seen him dancing, for all the eight Cranes had danced together, but he thought it very wonderful.

"Did you notice to whom I bowed?" he asked. He was so excited that his knees shook, and he had to stand on both legs at once to keep from falling. When a Crane is as much excited as that, it is pretty serious.

"To my sister?" she asked carelessly, as she drew one of her long tail-feathers through her beak.

"No," said he. "I bowed to her sister." He thought that was a very clever thing to say. But she suddenly raised her head, and said, "There! I have forgotten something," and flew off, as she had done the day before. He wondered what it was.

Long afterward he asked her what she had forgotten and she said she couldn't remember—that she never could remember what she had forgotten.

It made him feel very badly to have her leave him so. He wanted a chance to tell her something, yet, whenever he tried to, it seemed to stick in his bill. He began to fear that she didn't like him; and the next time the Cranes danced he didn't bow to her so much, but he strutted and leaped and whooped even more. And she strutted and leaped and whooped almost as loudly as he. When they were all tired out and had stopped dancing, she said to him, "I am so tired! Let us go off into the woods and rest."

You may be very sure he was glad to go, and as he stalked off with her, he led the way to a charming nesting-place. He didn't know just how to tell what he wanted to, but he had seen another Crane bowing to her, and was afraid she might marry him if he was not quick. Now he pointed with one wing to this nesting-place, and said, "How would you like to build a nest there?"

She looked where he had pointed, "I?" she said. "Why, it is a lovely place, but I could never have a nest alone."

"Let me help you," he said. "I want to marry and have a home."

"Why," said she, as she preened her feathers, "that is a very good plan. When did you think of it?"

So they were married, and Mrs. Sand-Hill Crane often told her friends afterward that Mr. Crane was so much in love with her that she just had to marry him. They were very, very happy, and after a while—but that is another story.



The Young Minnow Who Would Not Eat When He Should

"When I grow up," said one young Minnow, "I am going to be a Bullhead, and scare all the little fishes."

"I'm not," said his sister. "I'm going to be a Sucker, and lie around in the mud."

"Lazy! Lazy!" cried the other young Minnows, wiggling their front fins at her.

"What is the matter?" asked a Father Minnow, swimming in among them with a few graceful sweeps of his tail, and stopping himself by spreading his front fins. He had the beautiful scarlet coloring on the under part of his body which Father Minnows wear in the summer-time. That is, most of them do, but some wear purple. "What is the matter?" he asked again, balancing himself with his top fin and his two hind ones.

Then all the little Minnows spoke at once. "He says that when he grows up he is going to be a Bullhead, and frighten all the small fishes; and she says that she is going to be a Sucker, and lie around in the mud; and we say that Suckers are lazy, and they are lazy, aren't they?"

"I am surprised at you," began the Father Minnow severely, "to think that you should talk such nonsense. You ought to know—"

But just then a Mother Minnow swam up to him. "The Snapping Turtle is looking for you," she said. Father Minnow

hurried away and she turned to the little ones. "I heard what you were saying," she remarked, with a twinkle in her flat, round eyes. "Which of you is going to be a Wild Duck? Won't somebody be a Frog?" She had had more experience in bringing up children than Father Minnow, and she didn't scold so much. She did make fun of them though, sometimes; and you can do almost anything with a young Minnow if you love him a great deal and make fun of him a little.

"Why-ee!" said the young Minnows. "We wouldn't think of being Wild Ducks, and we couldn't be Frogs, you know. Frogs have legs—four of them. A fish couldn't be a Frog if he wanted to!"

"No," said Mother Minnow. "A fish cannot be anything but a fish, and a Minnow cannot be anything but a Minnow. So if you will try to be just as good Minnows as you can, we will let the little Bullheads and Suckers do their own growing up."

She looked at them all again with her flat, round eyes, which saw so much and were always open, because there was nothing to make them shut. She saw one tiny fellow hiding behind his brother. "Have you torn your fin again?" she asked.

"Yes'm, just a little," said he. "A boy caught me when he was in wading, and I tore it when I flopped away from him."

"Dreadful!" said she. "How you do look! If you are so careless, you will soon not have a whole fin to your back—or your front either. Children, you must remember to swim away from boys. When the Cows wade in to drink, you may stay among them, if you wish. They are friendly. We pond people are afraid of boys, although some of them are said not to be dangerous."

"Pooh!" said one young Minnow. "All the pond people are not so afraid! The Bloodsuckers say they like them."

The Mother Minnow looked very severe when he said this, but she only replied, "Very well. When you are a Blood-sucker you may stay near boys. As long as you are a Minnow, you must stay away."

"Now," she added, "swim along, the whole school of you! I am tired and want a nap in the pondweed." So they all swam away, and she wriggled her silvery brown body into the soft green weeds and had a good sleep. She was careful to hide herself, for there were some people in the pond whom she did not want to have find her; and, being a fish, she could not hear very distinctly if they came near. Of course her eyes were open even when she was asleep, because she had no eyelids, but they were not working although they were open. That is an uncomfortable thing about being a fish—one cannot hear much. One cannot taste much either, or feel much, yet when one has always been a fish and is used to it, it is not so hard.

She slept a long time, and then the whole school of young Minnows came to look for her. "We are afraid," they cried. "We feel so very queerly. We don't know how we feel, either, and that is the worst part of it. It might be in our stomachs, or it might be in our fins, and perhaps there is something wrong with our gill-covers. Wake up and tell us what is the matter."

The Mother Minnow awakened and she felt queerly too, but, being older, she knew what was the matter. "That," she said, "is the storm feeling."

"But," said the young Minnows, "there isn't any storm."

"No," she answered wisely. "Not now."

"And there hasn't been any," they said.

"No," she answered again. "The storm you feel is the storm that is going to be."

"And shall we always feel it so?" they asked.

"Always before a storm," she said.

"Why?" asked the young Minnows.

"Because," said she. "There is no answer to that question, but just 'because.' When the storm comes you cannot smell your food and find it, so you must eat all you can before then. Eat everything you can find and be quick." As she spoke she took a great mouthful of pondweed and swallowed it.

All but one of the young Minnows swam quickly away to do as she had told them to. This young Minnow wanted to know just how and why and all about it, so he stayed to ask questions. You know there are some questions which fishes cannot answer, and some which Oxen cannot answer, and some which nobody can answer; and when the Mother Minnow told the young Minnows what she did, she had nothing more to tell. But there are some young Minnows who never will be satisfied, and who tease, and tease, and tease, and tease.

"Hurry along and eat all you can," said the Mother Minnow to him again.

"I want to know," said he, opening his mouth very wide indeed and breathing in a great deal of water as he spoke, "I want to know where I feel queerly."

"I can't tell," said the Mother Minnow, between mouthfuls. "No fish can tell."

"Well, what makes me feel queerly there?"

"The storm," said she.

"How does it make me feel queerly?"

"I don't know," said the Mother Minnow.

"Who does know?" asked the young Minnow.

"Nobody," said she, swallowing some more pondweed of one kind and then beginning on another. "Do eat something or you will be very hungry by and by."

"Well, why does a storm make me feel so?" asked he.

"Because!" said she. She said it very firmly and she was quite right in saying it then, for there was a cause, yet she could not tell what it was. There are only about seven times in one's life when it is right to answer in this way, and what the other six are you must decide for yourself.

Just then there was a peal of thunder which even a Minnow could hear, and the wind blew until the slender forest trees bent far over. The rain came down in great drops which pattered on the water of the pond and started tiny circles around each drop, every circle spreading wider and wider until it touched other circles and broke. Down in the darkened water the fishes lay together on the bottom, and wondered how long it would last, and hoped it would not be a great, great while before they could smell their food again.

One little fellow was more impatient than the others. "Didn't you eat enough to last you?" they said.

"I didn't eat anything," he answered.

"Not anything!" they exclaimed. "Why not?"

"Because!" said he. And that was not right, for he did know the reason. His mother looked at him, and he looked at her, and she had a twinkle in her round, flat eyes. "Poor child!" she thought. "He must be hungry." But she said nothing.



The Stickleback Father

Nobody can truthfully say that the Sticklebacks are not good fathers. There are no other fish fathers who work so hard for their children as the Sticklebacks do. As to the Stickleback Mothers—well, that is different.

This particular Stickleback Father had lived, ever since he had left the nest, with a little company of his friends in a quiet place near the edge of the pond. Sometimes, when they tired of staying quietly at home, they had made short journeys up a brook that emptied into the pond. It was a brook that flowed gently over an even bed, else they would never have gone there, for Sticklebacks like quiet waters. When they swam in this little stream, they met the Brook Trout, who were much larger than they, and who were the most important people there.

Now this Stickleback was a year old and knew much more than he did the summer before. When the alder tassels and pussy willows hung over the edge of the pond in the springtime, he began to think seriously of life. He was no longer really young, and the days were past in which he was contented to just swim and eat and sleep. It was time he should build a home and raise a family if he wanted to ever be a grandfather. He had a few relatives who were great-grandfathers, and one who was a great-great-grandfather. That does not often happen, because to be a Stickleback Great-great-

grandfather, one must be four years old, and few Sticklebacks live to that age.

As he began to think about these things, he left the company of his friends and went to live by himself. He chose a place near the edge of the pond to be his home; and he brushed the pond-bottom there with his tail until he had swept away all the loose sticks and broken shells. He told some Pond Snails, who were there, that they must move away because he wanted the place. At first they didn't want to go, but when they saw how fierce he looked, they thought about it again and decided that perhaps there were other places which would suit them quite as well—indeed, they might find one that they liked even better. Besides, as one of them said to his brother, they had to remember that in ponds it is always right for the weak people to give up to the strong people.

"It will take us quite a while to move," they said to him, "for you know we cannot hurry, but we will begin at once."

All the rest of that day each Snail was lengthening and shortening his one foot, which was his only way of walking. You can see how slow that must be, for a Snail cannot lift his foot from one place and put it down in another, or he would have nothing to stand on while he was lifting it. This was a very hard day for them, yet they were cheerful and made the best of it.

"Well," said one, as he stopped to rest his foot, "I'm glad we don't have to build a home when we do find the right place. How I pity people who have to do that!"

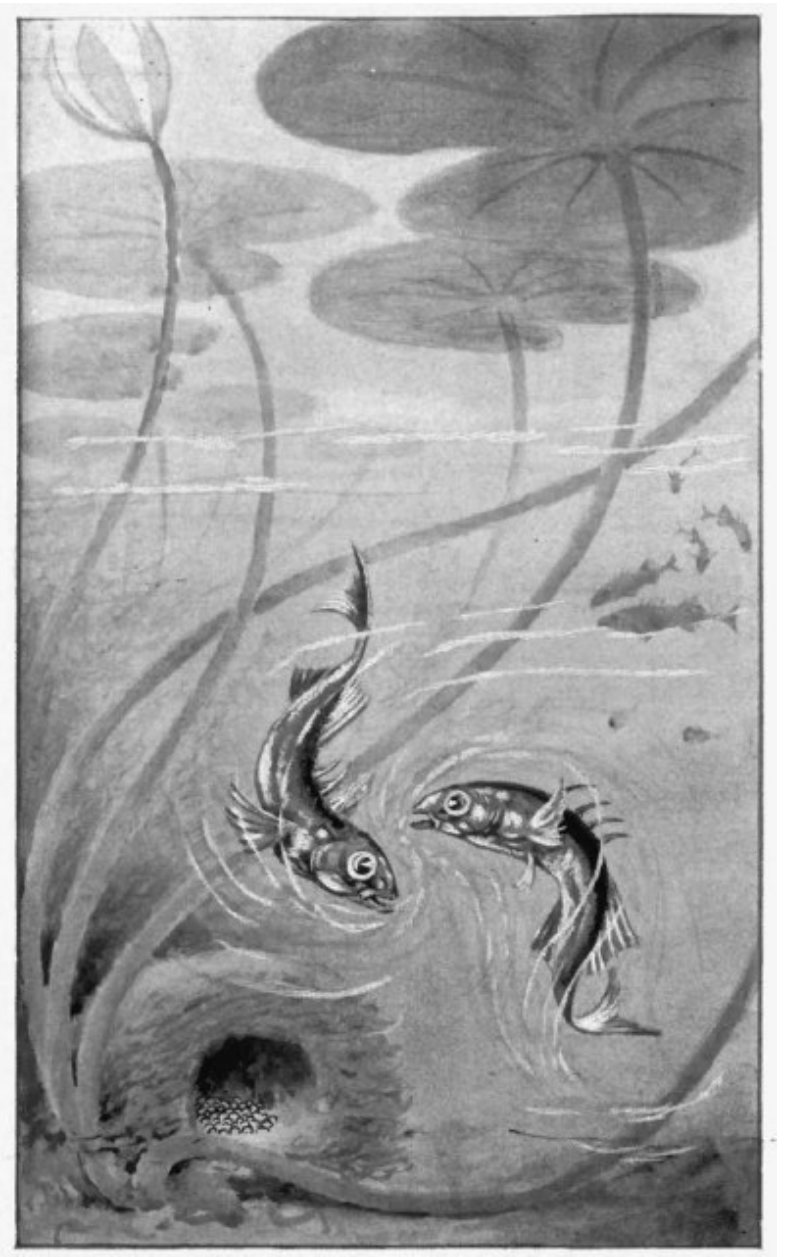
"Yes," said his brother. "There are not many so sure of their homes as we. And what people want of so much room, I can't understand! A Muskrat told me he wanted room to turn around in his house. I don't see what use there is in turning round, do you?"

"No," answered the other Snail, beginning to walk again. "It is just one of his silly ideas. My shell is big enough to let me draw in my whole body, and that is house room enough for any person!"

The Stickleback had not meant to look fierce at the Pond Snails. He had done so because he couldn't help it. All his fins were bristling with sharp points of bone, and he had extra bone-points sticking out of his back, besides wearing a great many of his flat bones on the outside. All his family had these extra bones, and that was why they were called Sticklebacks. They were a brave family and not afraid of many things, although they were so small. There came a time when the Stickleback Father wanted to look fierce, but that was later. Now he went to work to build his nest.

First he made a little hollow in the pond-bottom, and lined it with watergrass and tiny pieces of roots. Next, he made the side-walls of the same things, and last of all, the roof. When it was done, he swam carefully into it and looked around. Under and beside and over him were soft grasses and roots. At each end was an open doorway. "It is a good nest," he said, "a very good nest for my first one. Now I must ask some of my friends to lay eggs in it for me."

Before doing this, he went to look at the homes built by his neighbors. After he left the company in the quiet pool, many others did the same, until the only Sticklebacks left there were the dull-colored ones, the egg-layers. The nest-builders had been dull-colored, too, but in the spring-time there came beautiful red and blue markings on their bodies, until now they were very handsome fellows. It is sad to tell, still it is true, that they also became very cross at this time. Perhaps it was the work and worry of nest-building that made them so, yet, whatever it was, every bright-colored Strickle-



Then They Swam After Each Other

back wanted to fight every other bright-colored Stickleback. That was how it happened that, when this one went to look at the nest of an old friend, with whom he had played ever since he was hatched, this same friend called out, "Don't you come near my nest!"

The visiting Stickleback replied, "I shall if I want to!" Then they swam at each other and flopped and splashed and pushed and jabbed until both were very tired and sore, and each was glad to stay by his own home. This was the time when they wanted to look fierce.

Soon the dull-colored Sticklebacks came swimming past, waving their tails gracefully, and talking to each other. Now this fine fellow, who had sent the Snails away and built his nest, who had fought his old friend and come home again, swam up to a dull-colored Stickleback, and said, "Won't you lay a few eggs in my nest? I'm sure you will find it comfortable."

She answered, "Why, yes! I wouldn't mind laying a few there." And she tried to look as though she had not expected the invitation. While she was carefully laying the eggs in the nest, he stood ready to fight anybody who disturbed her. She came out after a while and swam away. Before she went, she said, "Aren't you ashamed to fight so? We dull-colored ones never fight." She held her fins very stiff as she spoke, because she thought it her duty to scold him. The dull-colored Sticklebacks often did this. They thought that they were a little better than the others; so they swam around together and talked about things, and sometimes forgot how hard it was to be the nest-builder and stay at home and work. Then they called upon the bright-colored Sticklebacks, for they really liked them very much, and told them what they should do. That was why this one said, "We dull-colored ones never fight."

"Have you ever been red and blue?" asked the nest-builder.

"N—no," said she. "But I don't see what difference that makes."

"Well, it does make a difference," said he. "When a fellow is red and blue, he can't help fighting. I'll be as good-natured as any of you after I stop being red and blue."

Of course she could not say anything more after that, so she swam off to her sisters. The bright-colored Stickleback looked at the eggs she had laid. They were sticky, like the eggs of all fishes, so that they stuck to the bottom of the nest. He covered them carefully, and after that he was really a Stickleback Father. It is true that he did not have any Stickleback children to swim around him and open their dear little mouths at him, but he knew that the eggs would hatch soon, and that after he had built a nest and covered the eggs in it, the tiny Sticklebacks were beginning to grow.

However, he wanted more eggs in his nest, so he watched for another dull-colored Stickleback and called her in to help him. He did this until he had almost an hundred eggs there, and all this time he had fought every bright-colored Stickleback who came near him. He became very tired indeed; but he had to fight, you know, because he was red and blue. And he had covered all the eggs and guarded them, else they would never have hatched.

The dull-colored Sticklebacks were also tired. They had been swimming from nest to nest, laying a few eggs in each. Now they went off together to a quiet pool and ate everything they could find to eat, and visited with each other, and said it was a shame that the bright-colored Sticklebacks had fought so, and told how they thought little Sticklebacks should be brought up.

And now the red and blue markings on the Stickleback Father grew paler and paler, until he did not have to fight at all, and could call upon his friends and see how their children were hatching. One fine day, his first child broke the shell, and then another and another, until he had an hundred beautiful Stickleback babies to feed. He worked hard for them, and some nights, when he could stop and rest, his fins ached as though they would drop off. But they never did.

As the Stickleback children grew stronger, they swam off to take care of themselves, and he had less to do. When the last had gone, he left the old nest and went to the pool where the dull-colored Sticklebacks were. They told him he was not looking well, and that he hadn't managed the children right, and that they thought he tried to do too much.

He was too tired to talk about it, so he just said, "Perhaps," and began to eat something. Yet, down in his fatherly heart he knew it was worth doing. He knew, too, that when spring should come once more, he would become red and blue again, and build another nest, and fight and work and love as he had done before. "There is nothing in the world better than working for one's own little Sticklebacks," said he.

The Careless Caddis Worm

When the Caddis Fly felt like laying eggs, she crawled down the stalk of one of the pond plants and laid them there. She covered them with something sticky, so that they were sure to stay where she put them. "There!" she said, as she crawled up to the air again. "My work is done." Soon after this, she lay down for a long, long rest. What with flying, and visiting, and laying eggs, she had become very tired; and it was not strange, for she had not eaten a mouthful since she got her wings.

This had puzzled the Dragon-Flies very much. They could not understand it, because they were always eating. They would have liked to ask her about it, but they went to sleep for the night soon after she got up, and whenever she saw them coming she flew away. "I do not seem to feel hungry," said she, "so why should I eat? Besides," she added, "I couldn't eat if I wanted to, my mouth is so small and weak. I ate a great deal while I was growing—quite enough to last me—and it saves time not to bother with hunting food now."

When her eggs hatched, the larvæ were slender, soft, six-footed babies called Caddis Worms. They were white, and they showed as plainly in the water as a pond-lily does on the top of it. It is not safe to be white if one is to live in the water; certainly not unless one can swim fast and turn quickly. And there is a reason for this, as any one of the pond people will

tell you. Even the fishes wear all their white on the under side of their bodies, so that if they swim near the top of the water, a hungry Fish Hawk is not so likely to see them and pounce down on them.

The Caddis Worms soon found that white was not a good color to wear, and they talked of it among themselves. They were very bright larvæ. One day the biggest one was standing on a stem of pickerel-weed, when his sister came toward him. She did not come very fast, because she was neither swimming nor walking, but biting herself along. All the Caddis Worms did this at times, for their legs were weak. She reached as far forward as she could, and fastened her strong jaws in the weed, then she gave a jerk and pulled her body ahead. "It is a very good way to travel," said she, "and such a saving of one's legs." Now she was in so great a hurry that sometimes when she pulled herself ahead, she turned a half-somersault and came down on her back.

"What is the matter?" called the Biggest Caddis Worm. "Don't hurry so. There is lots of time." That was just him, for he was lazy. Everybody said so.

"I must hurry," said she, and she breathed very fast with the white breathing hairs that grew on both sides of her body. She picked herself up from her last somersault and stood beside her brother, near enough to speak quite softly. "I have been getting away from Belostoma," she said, "and I was dreadfully afraid he would catch me."

"Well, you're all right now, aren't you?" asked her brother. And that was also like him. As long as he could have enough to eat and was comfortable, he did not want to think about anything unpleasant.

"No, I'm not," she answered, "and I won't be so long as any hungry fish or water-bug can see me so plainly. I'm tired

of being white."

"You are not so white as you were," said her brother. "None of us children are. Our heads and the front part of our bodies are turning brown and getting harder." That was true, and he was particularly hard-headed.

"Yes, but what about the rest of us?" said she, and surely there was some excuse for her if she was impatient. "If Belostoma can see part of me and chase that, he will find the rest of me rather near by."

"Keep quiet then, and see if you don't get hard and brown all over," said he.

"I never shall," said she. "I went to the Clams and asked them if I would, and they said 'No.' I'm going to build a house to cover the back part of my body, and you'd better do the same thing."

The Biggest Caddis Worm looked very much surprised. "Whatever made you think of that?" said he.

"I suppose because there wasn't anything else to think of," said she. "One has to think of something."

"I don't," said he.

She started away to where her other brothers and sisters were. "Where are you going?" cried he.

"Going to build my house," answered she. "You'd better come too."

"Not now," said he. "I am waiting to get the rest of my breakfast. I'll come by and by."

The Biggest Caddis Worm stood on the pickerel-weed and ate his breakfast. Then he stood there a while longer. "I do not think it is well to work right after eating," he said. Below him in the water, his brothers and sisters were busily gathering tiny sticks, stones, and bits of broken shell, with which to make their houses. Each Caddis Worm found his

own, and fastened them together with a sort of silk which he pulled out of his body. They had nobody to show them how, so each planned to suit himself, and no two were exactly alike.

"I'm going to make my house big enough so I can pull in my head and legs when I want to," said one.

"So am I," cried all the other Caddis Worms.

After a while, somebody said, "I'm going to have an open door at the back of my house." Then each of his busy brothers and sisters cried, "So am I."

When the tiny houses were done, each Caddis Worm crawled inside of his own, and lay with head and legs outside the front door. The white part of their bodies did not show at all, and, if they wanted to do so, they could pull their heads in. Even Belostoma, the Giant Water-Bug, might have passed close to them then and not seen them at all.

"Let's hook ourselves in!" cried one Caddis Worm, and all the others answered, "Let's."

So each hooked himself in with the two stout hooks which grew at the end of his body, and there they were as snug and comfortable as Clams. About this time the Big Brother came slowly along the stem of pickerel-weed. "What," said he, "you haven't got your houses done already?"

"Yes," answered the rest joyfully. "See us pull in our heads." And they all pulled in their heads and poked them out again. He was the only white-bodied person in sight.

"I must have a home," said he. "I wish one of you Worms would give me yours. You could make yourself another, you know. There is lots more stuff."

"Make it yourself," they replied. "Help yourself to stuff."

"But I don't know how," he said, "and you do."

"Whose fault is that?" asked his sister. Then she was afraid that he might think her cross, and she added quickly, "We'll

tell you how, if you'll begin."

The Biggest Caddis Worm got together some tiny sticks and stones and pieces of broken shell, but it wasn't very much fun working alone. Then they told him what to do, and how to fasten them to each other with silk. "Be sure you tie them strongly," they said.

"Oh, that's strong enough," he answered. "It'll do, anyhow. If it comes to pieces I can fix it." His brothers and sisters thought he should make it stouter, yet they said nothing more, for he would not have liked it if they had; and they had already said so once. When he crawled into his house and hooked himself in, there was not a Caddis Worm in sight, and they were very proud to think how they had planned and built their houses. They did not know that Caddis Worms had always done so, and they thought themselves the first to ever think of such a thing.

The Biggest Caddis Worm's house was not well fastened together, and every day he said, "I really must fix it to-morrow." But when to-morrow came, it always proved to be to-day, and, besides, he usually found something more interesting to be done. It took him a great deal of time to change his skin, and that could not be easily put off. He grew so fast that he was likely to awaken almost any morning and find his head poking through the top of his skin, and, lazy as he was, he would not have the pond people see him around with a crack in the skin of his head, right where it showed. So when this happened, he always pulled his body through the crack, and threw the old skin away. There was sure to be a whole new one underneath, you know.

When they had changed their skin many times, the Caddis Worms became more quiet and thoughtful. At last the sister who had first planned to build houses, fastened hers to

a stone, and spun gratings across both its front and its back doors. "I am going to sleep," she said, "to grow my feelers and get ready to fly and breathe air. I don't want anybody to awaken me. All I want to do is to sleep and grow and breathe. The water will come in through the gratings, so I shall be all right. I couldn't sleep in a house where there was not plenty of fresh water to breathe." Then she cuddled down and dozed off, and when her brothers and sisters spoke of her, they called her "the Caddis Nymph."

They did not speak of her many times, however, for they soon fastened their houses to something solid, and spun gratings in their doorways and went to sleep.

One day a Water-Adder came around where all the Caddis houses were. "Um-hum," said he to himself. "There used to be a nice lot of Caddis Worms around here, and now I haven't seen one in ever so long. I suppose they are hidden away somewhere asleep. Well, I must go away from here and find my dinner. I am nearly starved. The front half of my stomach hasn't a thing in it." He whisked his tail and went away, but that whisk hit a tiny house of sticks, stones, and bits of broken shell, and a fat sleeping Caddis Nymph rolled out. It was the Biggest Brother.

Soon Belostoma, the Giant Water-Bug, came that way. "What is this?" he exclaimed, as he saw the sleeping Caddis Nymph. "Somebody built a poor house to sleep in. You need to be cared for, young Caddis." He picked up the sleeping Caddis Nymph in his stout forelegs and swam off. Nobody knows just what happened after that.

When the other Caddis Nymphs awakened, they bit through their gratings and had a good visit before they crawled out of the pond into their new home, the air. "Has anybody seen my biggest brother?" asked one Nymph of another, but

everybody answered, "No."

Each looked all around with his two far-apart eyes, and then they decided that he must have awakened first and left the water before them. But you know that he could not have done so, because he could never be a Caddis Fly unless he finished the Nymph-sleep in his house, and he did not do that. He had stopped being a Caddis Worm when he turned into a Caddis Nymph. Nobody will ever know just what did become of him unless Belostoma tells—and Belostoma is not likely to tell.





The Tadpole Who Wanted to Be Grown-Up

It was a bright, warm April day when the First Tadpole of the season ate his way out of the jelly-covered egg in which he had come to life. He was a very tiny, dark brown fellow. It would be hard to tell just what he did look like, for there is nothing in the world that one Tadpole looks like unless it is another Tadpole. He had a very small head with a busy little mouth opening on the front side of it: just above each end of this mouth was a shining black eye, and on the lower side of his head was a very wiggly tail. Somewhere between his head and the tip of this were his small stomach and places for legs, but one could not see all that in looking at him. It seemed as if what was not head was tail, and what was not tail was head.

When the First Tadpole found himself free in the water, he swam along by the great green floating jelly-mass of Frogs' eggs, and pressed his face up close to first one egg and then another. He saw other Tadpoles almost as large as he, and they were wriggling inside their egg homes. He couldn't talk to them through the jelly-mass—he could only look at them, and they looked greenish because he saw them through green jelly. They were really dark brown, like him. He wanted them to come out to play with him and he tried to show them that it was more interesting where he was, so he opened and shut his hard little jaws very fast and took big Tadpole-mouthfuls of green jelly.

Perhaps it was seeing this, and perhaps it was because the warm sunshine made them restless—but for some reason the shut-in Tadpoles nibbled busily at the egg-covering and before long were in the water with their brother. They all looked alike, and nobody except that one particular Tadpole knew who had been the first to hatch. He never forgot it, and indeed why should he? If one has ever been the First Tadpole, he is quite sure to remember the loneliness of it all his life.

Soon they dropped to the bottom of the pond and met their neighbors. They were such little fellows that nobody paid much attention to them. The older pond people often seemed to forget that the Tadpoles heard what they said, and cared too. The Minnows swam in and out among them, and hit them with their fins, and slapped them with their tails, and called them "little-big-mouths," and the Tadpoles couldn't hit back because they were so little. The Minnows didn't hurt the Tadpoles, but they made fun of them, and even the smallest Minnow would swim away if a Tadpole tried to play with him.

Then the Eels talked among themselves about them. "I shall be glad," said one old Father Eel, "when these youngsters hide their breathing-gills and go to the top of the water."

"So shall I," exclaimed a Mother Eel. "They keep their tails wiggling so that it hurts my eyes to look at them. Why can't they lie still and be good?"

Now the Tadpoles looked at each other with their shining black eyes. "What are our breathing-gills?" they asked. "They must be these little things on the sides of our heads."

"They are!" cried the First Tadpole. "The Biggest Frog said so. But I don't see where we can hide them, because they won't come off. And how could we ever breathe water without them?"

"Hear the children talk," exclaimed the Green Brown Frog, who had come down to look the Tadpoles over and decide which were hers. "Why, you won't always want to breathe water. Before long you will have to breathe air by swallowing it, and then you cannot stay long under water. I must go now. I am quite out of breath. Good-bye!"

Then the Tadpoles looked again at each other. "She didn't tell us what to do with our breathing-gills," they said. One of the Tadpoles who had hatched last, swam up to the First Tadpole. "Your breathing-gills are not so large as mine," she said.

"They surely are!" he exclaimed, for he felt very big indeed, having been the first to hatch.

"Oh, but they are not!" cried all his friends. "They don't stick out as they used to." And that was true, for his breathing-gills were sinking into his head, and they found that this was happening to all the older Tadpoles.

The next day they began going to the top to breathe air, the oldest ones first, and so on until they were all there. They thought it much pleasanter than the bottom of the pond, but it was not so safe. There were more dangers to be watched for here, and some of the careless young Tadpoles never lived to be Frogs. It is sad, yet it is always so.

Sometimes the Frogs came to see them, and once—once, after the Tadpoles had gotten their hindlegs, the Biggest Frog sat in the marsh near by and told them stories of his Tadpolehood. He said that he was always a very good little Tadpole, and always did as the Frogs told him to do; and that he was such a promising little fellow that every Mother Frog in the pond was sure that he had been hatched from one of her eggs.

"And were you?" asked one Tadpole, who never listened carefully, and so was always asking stupid questions.



The Biggest Frog Told Them Stories

The Biggest Frog looked at him very sternly. "No," said he, "I was not. Each wanted me as her son, but I never knew to which I belonged. I never knew! Still," he added, "it does not so much matter who a Frog's mother is, if the Frog is truly great." Then he filled the sacs on each side of his neck with air, and croaked loudly. His sister afterward told the Tadpoles that he was thinking of one of the forest people, the Ground Hog, who was very proud because he could remember his grandfather.

The Green Brown Frog came often to look at them and see how they were growing. She was very fond of the First Tadpole. "Why, you have your forelegs!" she exclaimed one morning. "How you do grow!"

"What will I have next?" he asked, "more legs or another tail?"

The Green Brown Frog smiled the whole length of her mouth, and that was a very broad smile indeed. "Look at me," she said. "What change must come next to make you look like a Frog?"

"You haven't any tail," he said slowly. "Is that all the difference between us Tadpoles and Frogs?"

"That is all the difference now," she answered, "but it will take a long, long time for your tail to disappear. It will happen with that quite as it did with your breathing-gills. You will grow bigger and bigger and bigger, and it will grow smaller and smaller and smaller, until some day you will find yourself a Frog." She shut her mouth to get her breath, because, you know, Frogs can only breathe a little through their skins, and then only when they are wet. Most of their air they take in through their noses and swallow with their mouths closed. That is why they cannot make long speeches. When their mouths are open they cannot swallow air.

After a while she spoke again. "It takes as many years to make a newly hatched Tadpole into a fully grown Frog," she said, "as there are toes on one of your hindfeet."

The First Tadpole did not know what a year was, but he felt sure from the way in which she spoke that it was a long, long time, and he was in a hurry to grow up. "I want to be a Frog sooner!" he said, crossly. "It isn't any fun at all being a Tadpole." The Green Brown Frog swam away, he was becoming so disagreeable.

The First Tadpole became crosser and crosser, and was very unreasonable. He did not think of the pleasant things which happened every day, but only of the trying ones. He did not know that Frogs often wished themselves Tadpoles again, and he sulked around in the pondweed all day. Every time he looked at one of his hindfeet it reminded him of what the Green Brown Frog had said, and he even grew out of patience with his tail—the same strong wiggly little tail of which he had been so proud.

"Horrid old thing!" he said, giving it a jerk. "Won't I be glad to get rid of you?" Then he thought of something—foolish, vain little First Tadpole that he was. He thought and he thought and he thought and he thought, and when his playmates swam around him he wouldn't chase them, and when they asked him what was the matter, he just answered, "Oh nothing!" as carelessly as could be.

The truth was that he wanted to be a Frog right away, and he thought he knew how he could be. He didn't want to tell the other Tadpoles because he didn't want any one else to become a Frog as soon as he. After a while he swam off to see the Snapping Turtle. He was very much afraid of the Snapping Turtle, and yet he thought him the best one to see just now. "I came to see if you would snap off my tail," said he.

"Your what?" said the Snapping Turtle, in his most surprised way.

"My tail," answered the First Tadpole, who had never had a tail snapped off, and thought it could be easily done. "I want to be a Frog to-day and not wait."

"Certainly," said the Snapping Turtle. "With pleasure! No trouble at all! Anything else I can do for you?"

"No, thank you," said the First Tadpole, "only you won't snap off too much, will you?"

"Not a bit," answered the Snapping Turtle, with a queer look in his eyes. "And if any of your friends are in a hurry to grow up, I shall be glad to help them." Then he swam toward the First Tadpole and did as he had been asked to do.

The next morning all the other Tadpoles crowded around to look at the First Tadpole. "Why-ee!" they cried. "Where is your tail?"

"I don't know," he answered, "but I think the Snapping Turtle could tell you."

"What is this?" asked the Green Brown Frog, swimming up to them. "Did the Snapping Turtle try to catch you? You poor little fellow! How did it happen?" She was very fond of the First Tadpole, and had about decided that he must be one of her sons.

"Well," he said slowly, for he didn't want the other Tadpoles to do the same thing, "I met him last evening and he—"

"Snapped at you!" exclaimed the Green Brown Frog. "It is lucky for you that he doesn't believe in eating hearty suppers, that is all I have to say! But you are a very foolish Tadpole not to keep out of his way, as you have always been told you must."

Then the First Tadpole lost his temper. "I'm not foolish, and I'm not a Tadpole," he said. "I asked him to snap it off,

and now I am a Frog!"

"Oho!" said the voice of the Yellow Brown Frog behind him. "You are a Frog, are you? Let's hear you croak then. Come out on the bank and have a hopping match with me."

"I—I don't croak yet," stammered the First Tadpole, "a—and I don't care to hop."

"You are just a tailless Tadpole," said the Yellow Brown Frog sternly. "Don't any more of you youngsters try such a plan, or some of you will be Tadpole-less tails and a good many of you won't be anything."

The old Snapping Turtle waited all morning for some more Tadpoles who wanted to be made into Frogs, but none came. The Biggest Frog croaked hoarsely when he heard of it. "Tails! Tails! Tails! Tails! Tails! Tails! Tails! Tails!" said he. "That youngster will never be a strong Frog. Tadpoles must be Tadpoles, tails and all, for a long time, if they hope to ever be really fine Frogs like me." And that is so, as any Frog will tell you.

The Green Brown Frog sighed as she crawled out on the bank. "What a silly Tadpole," she said; "I'm glad he isn't my child!"



The Runaway Water Spiders

When the little Water Spiders first opened their eyes, and this was as soon as they were hatched, they found themselves in a cosy home of one room which their mother had built under the water. This room had no window and only one door. There was no floor at all. When Father Stickleback had asked Mrs. Spider why she did not make a floor, she had looked at him in great surprise and said, "Why, if I had built one, I should have no place to go in and out." She really thought him quite stupid not to think of that. It often happens, you know, that really clever people think each other stupid, just because they live in different ways. Afterward, Mrs. Water Spider saw Father Stickleback's nest, and understood why he asked that question.

When her home was done, it was half as large as a big acorn and a charming place for Water Spider babies. The side walls and the rounding ceiling were all of the finest Spider silk, and the bottom was just one round doorway. The house was built under the water and fastened down by tiny ropes of Spider silk which were tied to the stems of pond plants. Mrs. Water Spider looked at it with a happy smile. "Next I must fill it with air," said she, "and then it will be ready. I am out of breath now."

She crept up the stem of the nearest plant and sat in the air for a few minutes, eating her lunch and resting. Next she

walked down the stem until just the end of her body was in the air. She stood so, with her head down, then gave a little jerk and dove to her home. As she jerked, she crossed her hindlegs and caught a small bubble of air between them and her body. When she reached her home, she went quickly in the open doorway and let go of her bubble. It did not fall downward to the floor, as bubbles do in most houses, and there were two reasons for this. In the first place, there was no floor. In the second place, air always falls upward in the water. This fell up until it reached the rounded ceiling and had to stop. Just as it fell, a drop of water went out through the open doorway. The home had been full of water, you know, but now that Mrs. Spider had begun to bring in air something had to be moved to make a place for it.

She brought down thirteen more bubbles of air and then the house was filled with it. On the lower side of the open doorway there was water and on the upper side was air, and each stayed where it should. When Mrs. Spider came into her house, she always had some air caught in the hairs which covered her body, even when she did not bring a bubble of it in her hindlegs. She had to have plenty of it in her home to keep her from drowning, for she could not breathe water like a fish. "Side doors may be all right for Sticklebacks," said she, "for they do not need air, but I must have bottom doors, and I will have them too!"

After she had laid her eggs, she had some days in which to rest and visit with the Water-Boatmen who lived near. They were great friends. Belostoma used to ask the Water-Boatmen, who were his cousins, why they were so neighborly with the Water Spiders. "I don't like to see you so much with eight-legged people," he said. "They are not our kind." Belostoma was very proud of his family.

"We know that they have rather too many legs to look well," said Mrs. Water-Boatman, "but they are pleasant, and we are interested in the same things. You know we both carry air about with us in the water, and so few of our neighbors seem to care anything for it." She was a sensible little person and knew that people who are really fond of their friends do not care how many legs they have. She carried her air under her wings, but there were other Water-Boatmen, near relatives, who spread theirs over their whole bodies, and looked very silvery and beautiful when they were under water.

One day, when Mrs. Water Spider was sitting on a lily-pad and talking with her friends, a Water-Boatman rose quickly from the bottom of the pond. As soon as he got right side up (and that means as soon as he got to floating on his back), he said to her, "I heard queer sounds in your house; I was feeding near there, and the noise startled me so that I let go of the stone I was holding to, and came up. I think your eggs must be hatching."

"Really?" exclaimed Mrs. Water Spider. "I shall be so glad! A house always seems lonely to me without children." She dove to her house, and found some very fine Water Spider babies there. You may be sure she did not have much time for visiting after that. She had to hunt food and carry it down to her children, and when they were restless and impatient she stayed with them and told them stories of the great world.

Sometimes they teased to go out with her, but this she never allowed. "Wait until you are older," she would say. "It will not be so very long before you can go safely." The children thought it had been a long, long time already, and one of them made a face when his mother said this. She did not see him, and it was well for him that she did not. He should have been



As Soon as He Got to Floating on His Back

very much ashamed of himself for doing it.

The next time Mrs. Water Spider went for food, one of the children said, "I tell you what let's do! Let's all go down to the doorway and peek out." They looked at each other and wondered if they dared. That was something their mother had forbidden them to do. There was no window to look through and they wanted very much to see the world. At last the little fellow who had made a face said, "I'm going to, anyway." After that, his brothers and sisters went, too. And this shows how, if good little Spiders listen to naughty little Spiders, they become naughty little Spiders themselves.

All the children ran down and peeked around the edge of the door, but they couldn't see much besides water, and they had seen that before. They were sadly disappointed. Somebody said, "I'm going to put two of my legs out!" Somebody else said, "I'll put four out!" A big brother said, "I'm going to put six out!" And then another brother said, "I'll put eight out! Dare you to!"

You know what naughty little Spiders would be likely to do then. Well, they did it. And, as it happened, they had just pulled their last legs through the open doorway when a Stickleback Father came along. "Aren't you rather young to be out of the nest?" said he, in his most pleasant voice.

Poor little Water Spiders! They didn't know he was one of their mother's friends, and he seemed so big to them, and the bones on his cheeks made him look so queer, and the stickles on his back were so sharp, that every one of them was afraid and let go of the wall of the house—and then!

Every one of them rose quickly to the top, into the light and the open air. They crawled upon a lily-pad and clung there, frightened, and feeling weak in all their knees. The Dragon Flies flew over them, the Wild Ducks swam past

them, and on a log not far away they saw a long row of Mud Turtles sunning themselves. Why nothing dreadful happened, one cannot tell. Perhaps it was bad enough as it was, for they were so scared that they could only huddle close together and cry, "We want our mother."

Here Mrs. Water Spider found them. She came home with something for dinner, and saw her house empty. Of course she knew where to look, for, as she said, "If they stepped outside the door, they would be quite sure to tumble up into the air." She took them home, one at a time, and how she ever did it nobody knows.

When they were all safely there and had eaten the food that was waiting for them, Mrs. Spider, who had not scolded them at all, said, "Look me straight in the eye, every one of you! Will you promise never to run away again?"

Instead of saying at once, "Yes, mother," as they should have done, one of them answered, "Why, we didn't run away. We were just peeking around the edge of the doorway, and we got too far out, and somebody came along and scared us so that we let go, and then we couldn't help falling up into the air."

"Oh, no," said their mother, "you couldn't help it then, of course. But who told you that you might peep out of the door?"

The little Water Spiders hung their heads and looked very much ashamed. Their mother went on, "You needn't say that you were not to blame. You were to blame, and you began to run away as soon as you took the first step toward the door, only you didn't know that you were going so far. Tell me," she said, "whether you would ever have gone to the top of the water if you had not taken that first step?"

The little Water Spiders were more ashamed than ever,

but they had to look her in the eye and promise to be good.

It is very certain that not one of those children even peeped around the edge of the doorway from that day until their mother told them that they might go into the world and build houses for themselves. "Remember just one thing," she said, as they started away. "Always take your food home to eat." And they always did, for no Water Spider who has been well brought up will ever eat away from his own home.





The Slow Little Mud Turtle

When the twenty little Mud Turtles broke their egg-shells one hot summer day, and poked their way up through the warm sand in which they had been buried, they looked almost as much alike as so many raindrops. The Mother Turtle who was sunning herself on the bank near by, said to her friends, "Why! There are my children! Did you ever see a finer family? I believe I will go over and speak to them."

Most of the young Mud Turtles crawled quickly out of the sand and broken shells, and began drying themselves in the sunshine. One slow little fellow stopped to look at the broken shells, stubbed one of his front toes on a large piece and then sat down until it should stop aching. "Wait for me!" he called out to his brothers and sisters. "I'm coming in a minute."

The other little Turtles waited, but when his toe was comfortable again and he started toward them, he met a very interesting Snail and talked a while with him. "Come on," said the Biggest Little Turtle. "Don't let's wait any longer. He can catch up."

So they sprawled along until they came to a place where they could sit in a row on an old log, and they climbed onto it and sat just close enough together and not at all too close. Then the Slow Little Turtle came hurrying over the sand with a rather cross look in his eyes and putting his feet down a little harder than he needed to—quite as though he were out of



"Good Morning," Said She; "I Believe
You Are My Children"

patience about something. "Why didn't you Turtles wait for me?" he grumbled. "I was coming right along."

Just then the Mother Turtle came up. "Good morning," said she. "I believe you are my children?"

The little Mud Turtles looked at each other and didn't say a word. This was not because they were rude or bashful, but because they did not know what to say. And that, you know, was quite right, for unless one has something worth saying, it is far better to say nothing at all.

She drew a long Mud Turtle breath and answered her own question. "Yes," she said, "you certainly are, for I saw you scrambling out of the sand a little while ago, and you came from the very place where I laid my eggs and covered them during the first really warm nights this year. I was telling your father only yesterday that it was about time for you to hatch. The sun has been so hot lately that I was sure you would do well."

The Mother Turtle stretched her head this way and that until there was hardly a wrinkle left in her neck-skin, she was so eager to see them all. "Why are you not up here with your brothers and sisters?" she asked suddenly of the Slow Little Turtle, who was trying to make a place for himself on the log.

"They didn't wait for me," he said. "I was coming right along but they wouldn't wait. I think they are just as mea—"

The Mother Turtle raised one of her forefeet until all five of its toes with their strong claws were pointing at him. She also raised her head as far as her upper shell would let her. "So you are the one," she said. "I thought you were when I heard you trying to make the others wait. It is too bad."

She looked so stern that the Slow Little Turtle didn't dare finish what he had begun to say, yet down in his little Turtle heart he thought, "Now they are going to catch it!" He was

sure his mother was going to scold the other Turtle children for leaving him. He wanted to see what they would do, so he looked out of his right eye at the ten brothers and sisters on that side, and out of his left eye at the nine brothers and sisters on that side. He could do this very easily, because his eyes were not on the front of his head like those of some people, but one on each side.

"I have raised families of young Turtles every year," said the Mother Turtle. "The first year I had only a few children, the next year I had more, and so it has gone—every year a few more children than the year before—until now I never know quite how many I do have. But there is always one Slow Little Turtle who lags behind and wants the others to wait for him. That makes him miss his share of good things, and then he is quite certain to be cross and think it is somebody else's fault."

The Slow Little Turtle felt the ten brothers and sisters on his right side looking at him out of their left eyes, and the nine brothers and sisters on his left side looking at him out of their right eyes. He drew in his head and his tail and his legs, until all they could see was his rounded upper shell, his shell sidewalls, and the yellow edge of his flat lower shell. He would have liked to draw them in too, but of course he couldn't do that.

"I did hope," said the Mother Turtle, "that I might have one family without such a child in it. I cannot help loving even a slow child who is cross, if he is hatched from one of my eggs, yet it makes me sad—very, very sad."

"Try to get over this," she said to the Slow Little Turtle, "before it is too late. And you," she added, turning to his brothers and sisters, "must be patient with him. We shall not have him with us long."

"What do you mean?" asked the Slow Little Turtle, peeping out from between his shells. "I'm not going away."

"You do not want to," said his mother, "but you will not be with us long unless you learn to keep up with the rest. Something always happens to pond people who are too slow. I cannot tell you what it will be, yet it is sure to be something. I remember so well my first slow child—and how he—" She began to cry, and since she could not easily get her forefeet to her eyes, she sprawled to the pond and swam off with only her head and a little of her upper shell showing above the water.

The Slow Little Turtle was really frightened by what his mother had said, and for a few days he tried to keep up with the others. Nothing happened to him, and so he grew careless and made people wait for him just because he was not quite ready to go with them, or because he wanted to do this or look at that or talk to some other person. He was a very trying little Turtle, yet his mother loved him and did not like it when the rest called him a Land Tortoise. It is all right, you know, to be a Land Tortoise when your father and mother are Land Tortoises, and these cousins of the Turtles look so much like them that some people cannot tell them apart. That is because they forget that the Tortoises live on land, have higher back shells, and move very, very slowly. Turtles live more in the water and can move quickly if they will. This is why other Turtles sometimes make fun of a slow brother by calling him a Land Tortoise.

One beautiful sunshiny afternoon, when most of the twenty little Turtles were sitting on a floating log by the edge of the pond, their mother was with some of her friends on another log near by. She looked often at her children, and thought how handsome their rounded-up back shells were in the sunshine with the little red and yellow markings showing

on the black. She could see their strong little pointed tails too, and their webbed feet with a stout claw on each toe. She was so proud that she could not help talking about them. "Is there any sight more beautiful," she said, "than a row of good little Turtles?"

"Yes," said a fine old fellow who was floating near her, "a row of their mothers!" He was a Turtle whom she had never liked very well, but now she began to think that he was rather agreeable after all. She was just noticing how beautifully the skin wrinkled on his neck, when she heard a splash and saw two terrible great two-legged animals wading into the pond from the shore.

"Boys!" she cried, "Boys!" And she sprawled off the end of her log and slid into the water, all her friends following her. The Biggest Little Turtle saw these great animals coming toward him. He sprawled off the end of his log and slid into the water, and all his brothers and sisters followed him except the Slow Little Turtle. "Wait for me," he said. "I'm coming in just a—"

Then one of these great animals stooped over and picked him up, and held him bottom side uppermost and rapped on that side, which was flat; and on the other side, which was rounded; and stared at him with two great eyes. Next the other great animal took him and turned him over and rapped on his shells and stared at him. The poor Slow Little Turtle drew in his head and tail and legs and kept very, very still. He wished that he had side-pieces of shell all around now, instead of just one on each side between his legs. He was thinking over and over, "Something has happened! Something has happened!" And he knew that back in the pond his mother would be trying to find him and could not.

The boys carried him to the edge of the meadow and put

him down on the grass. He lay perfectly still for a long, long time, and when he thought they had forgotten about him he tried to run away. Then they laughed and picked him up again, and one of them took something sharp and shiny and cut marks into his upper shell. This did not really give him pain, yet, as he said afterward, "It hurts almost as much to think you are going to be hurt, as it does to be hurt."

It was not until the sun went down that the boys let the Slow Little Turtle go. Then he was very, very tired, but he wanted so much to get back to his home in the pond that he started at once by moonlight. This was the first time he had ever seen the moon, for, except when they are laying eggs, Turtles usually sleep at night. He was not quite sure which way he should go, and if it had not been for the kindness of the Tree Frog he might never have seen his brothers and sisters again. You know the Tree Frog had been carried away when he was young, before he came to live with the meadow people, so he knew how to be sorry for the Slow Little Turtle.

The Tree Frog hopped along ahead to show the way, and the Turtle followed until they reached a place from which they could see the pond. "Good night!" said the Tree Frog. "You can find your way now."

"Good night!" said the Turtle. "I wish I might help you some time."

"Never mind me," said the Tree Frog. "Help somebody else and it will be all right." He hopped back toward his home, and for a long time afterward the Turtle heard his cheerful "Pukr-r-rup! Pukr-r-rup!" sounding over the dewy grass and through the still air. At the edge of the pond the Slow Little Turtle found his nineteen brothers and sisters sound asleep. "I'm here!" he cried joyfully, poking first one and then another of them with his head.

The Biggest Little Turtle moved without awakening. "I tell you I'm not hungry," he murmured. "I don't want to get up." And again he fell fast asleep.

So the Slow Little Turtle did not disturb him, but cuddled inside his two shells and went to sleep also. He was so tired that he did not awaken until the sun was high in the sky. When he did open his eyes, his relatives were sitting around looking at him, and he remembered all that had happened before he slept. "Does my shell look very bad?" he cried. "I wish I could see it. Oh, I am so glad to get back! I'll never be slow again, Never! Never!"

His mother came and leaned her shell lovingly against his. "If you will only learn to keep up with your brothers and sisters," she said, "I shall not be sorry that the boys carried you off."

"You just wait and see," said the Slow Little Turtle. And he was as good as his word. After that he was always the first to slip from the log to the water if anything scared them; and when, one day, a strange Turtle from another pond came to visit, he said to the Turtles who had always lived there, "Why do you call that young fellow with the marked shell 'The Slow Little Turtle?' He is the quickest one in his family."

The pond people looked at each other and laughed. "That is queer!" they said. "After this we will call him 'The Quick Little Turtle.'"

This made him very happy, and when, once in a while, somebody forgot and by mistake called him "The Quick Slow Little Turtle," he said he rather liked it because it showed that a Turtle needn't keep his faults if he did have them.



The Dragon-Fly Children and the Snapping Turtle

The Dragon-Flies have always lived near the pond. Not the same ones that are there now, of course, but the great-great-great-grandfathers of these. A person would think that, after a family had lived so long in a place, all the neighbors would be fond of them, yet it is not so. The Dragon-Flies may be very good people—and even the Snapping Turtle says that they are—still, they are so peculiar that many of their neighbors do not like them at all. Even when they are only larvæ, or babies, they are not good playmates, for they have such a bad habit of putting everything into their mouths. Indeed, the Stickleback Father once told the little Sticklebacks that they should not stir out of the nest, unless they would promise to keep away from the young Dragon-Flies.

The Stickleback Mothers said that it was all the fault of the Dragon-Fly Mothers. "What can you expect," exclaimed one of them, "when Dragon-Fly eggs are so carelessly laid? I saw a Dragon-Fly Mother laying some only yesterday, and how do you suppose she did it? Just flew around in the sunshine and visited with her friends, and once in a while flew low enough to touch the water and drop one in. It is disgraceful!"

The Minnow Mothers did not think it was so much in the way the eggs were laid, "although," said one, "I always lay

mine close together, instead of scattering them over the whole pond." They thought the trouble came from bad bringing up or no bringing up at all. Each egg, you know, when it is laid, drops to the bottom of the pond, and the children are hatched and grow up there, and do not even see their fathers and mothers.

Now most of the larvæ were turning into Nymphs, which are half-grown Dragon Flies. They had been short and plump, and now they were longer and more slender, and there were little bunches on their shoulders where the wings were growing under their skin. They had outgrown their old skins a great many times, and had to wriggle out of them to be at all comfortable. When a Dragon-Fly child became too big for his skin, he hooked the two sharp claws of each of his six feet firmly into something, unfastened his skin down the back, and wriggled out, leaving it to roll around in the water until it became just part of the mud.

Like most growing children, the Dragon-Fly larvæ and Nymphs had to eat a great deal. Their stomachs were as long as their bodies, and they were never really happy unless their stomachs were full. They always ate plain food and plenty of it, and they never ate between meals. They had breakfast from the time they awakened in the morning until the sun was high in the sky, then they had dinner until the sun was low in the sky, and supper from that time until it grew dark and they went to sleep: but never a mouthful between meals, no matter how hungry they might be. They said this was their only rule about eating, and they would keep it.

They were always slow children. You would think that, with six legs apiece and three joints in each leg, they might walk quite fast, yet they never did. When they had to, they hurried in another way by taking a long leap through the

water. Of course they breathed water like their neighbors, the fishes and the Tadpoles. They did not breathe it into their mouths, or through gills, but took it in through some openings in the back part of their bodies. When they wanted to hurry, they breathed this water out so suddenly that it sent them quickly ahead.

The Snapping Turtle had called them "bothering bugs" one day when he was cross (and that was the day after he had been cross, and just before the day when he was going to be cross again), and they didn't like him and wanted to get even. They all put their queer little three-cornered heads together, and there was an ugly look in their great staring eyes.

"Horrid old thing!" said one larva. "I wish I could sting him."

"Well, you can't," said a Nymph, turning towards him so suddenly that he leaped. "You haven't any sting, and you never will have, so you just keep still." It was not at all nice in her to speak that way, but she was not well brought up, you know, and that, perhaps, is a reason why one should excuse her for talking so to her little brother. She was often impatient, and said she could never go anywhere without one of the larvæ tagging along.

"I tell you what let's do," said another Nymph. "Let's all go together to the shallow water where he suns himself, and let's all stand close to each other, and then, when he comes along, let's stick out our lips at him!"

"Both lips?" asked the larvæ.

"Well, our lower lips anyway," answered the Nymph. "Our upper lips are so small they don't matter."

"We'll do it," exclaimed all the Dragon-Fly children, and they started together to walk on the pond-bottom to the shallow water. They thought it would scare the Snapping Turtle

dreadfully. They knew that whenever they stuck out their lower lips at the small fishes and bugs, they swam away as fast as they could. The Giant Water-Bug (Belostoma), was the only bug who was not afraid of them when they made faces. Indeed, the lower lip of a Dragon-Fly child might well frighten people, for it is fastened on a long, jointed, arm-like thing, and has pincers on it with which it catches and holds its food. Most of the time, the Dragon-Fly child keeps the joint bent, and so holds his lip up to his face like a mask. But sometimes he straightens the joint and holds his lip out before him, and then its pincers catch hold of things. He does this when he is hungry.

When they reached the shallow water, the Dragon-Fly children stood close together, with the larvæ in the middle and the Nymphs all around them. The Snapping Turtle was nowhere to be seen, so they had to wait. "Aren't you scared?" whispered one larva to another.

"Scared? Dah! Who's afraid," answered he.

"Oh, look!" cried a Nymph. "There go some grown-up Dragon-Flies over our heads. Just you wait until I change my skin once more, and then won't I have a good time! I'll dry my wings and then I'll—"

"Sh-h!" said one of the larvæ. "Here comes the Snapping Turtle."

Sure enough, there he came through the shallow water, his wet back-shell partly out of it and shining in the sunlight. He came straight toward the Dragon-Fly children, and they were glad to see that he did not look hungry. They thought he might be going to take a nap after his dinner. Then they all stood even closer together and stuck out their lower lips at him. They thought he might run away when they did this. They felt sure that he would at least be very badly frightened.

The Snapping Turtle did not seem to see them at all. It was queer. He just waddled on and on, coming straight toward them. "Ah-h-h!" said he. "How sleepy I do feel! I will lie down in the sunshine and rest." He took a few more steps, which brought his great body right over the crowd of Dragon-Fly children. "I think I will draw in my head," said he (the Dragon-Fly children looked at each other), "and my tail (here two of the youngest larvæ began to cry) and lie down." He began to draw in his legs very, very slowly, and just as his great hard lower shell touched the mud, the last larva crawled out under his tail. The Nymphs had already gotten away.

"Oh," said the Dragon-Fly children to each other, "Wasn't it awful!"

"Humph," said the Snapping Turtle, talking to himself—he had gotten into the way of doing that because he had so few friends—"How dreadfully they did scare me!" Then he laughed a grim Snapping Turtle laugh, and went to sleep.





The Snappy Snapping Turtle

There was but one Snapping Turtle in the pond, and he was the only person there who had ever been heard to wish for another. He had not always lived there, and could just remember leaving his brothers and sisters when he was young. "I was carried away from my people," he said, "and kept on land for a few days. Then I was brought here and have made it my home ever since."

One could tell by looking at him that he was related to the Mud Turtles. He had upper and lower shells like them, and could draw in his head and legs and tail when he wanted to. His shells were gray, quite the color of a clay-bank, and his head was larger than those of the Mud Turtles. His tail was long and scaly and pointed, and his forelegs were large and warty. There were fine, strong webs between his toes, as there were between the toes of his relatives, the Mud Turtles.

When he first came to live in the pond, people were sorry for him, and tried to make him feel at home. He had a chance to win many friends and have all his neighbors fond of him, but he was too snappy. When the water was just warm enough, and his stomach was full, and he had slept well the night before, and everything was exactly as he wished it to be—ah, then he was a very agreeable Turtle, and was ready to talk in the most gracious way to his neighbors. That was all very well. Anybody can be good-natured when everything is

exactly right and he can have his own way. But the really delightful people, you know, are the ones who are pleasant when things go wrong.

It was a Mud Turtle Father who first spoke to him. "I hope you'll like the pond," said he. "We think it very homelike and comfortable."

"Humph! Shallow little hole!" snapped the one who had just come. "I bump my head on the bottom every time I dive."

"That is too bad," exclaimed the Mud Turtle Father. "I hope you dive where there is a soft bottom."

"Sometimes I do and sometimes I don't," answered the Snapping Turtle. "I can't bother to swim down slowly and try it, and then go back to dive. When I want to dive, I want to dive, and that's all there is to it."

"Yes," said the Mud Turtle Father. "I know how it is when one has the diving feeling. I hope your head will not trouble you much, and that you will soon be used to our waters." He spread his toes and swam strongly away, pushing against the water with his webbed feet.

"Humph!" said the Snapping Turtle to himself. "It is all very well to talk about getting used to these waters, but I never shall. I can hardly see now for the pain in the right side of my head, where I bumped it. Or was it the left side I hit? Queer I can't remember!" Then he swam to shallow water, and drew himself into his shell, and lay there and thought how badly he felt, and how horrid the pond was, and what poor company his neighbors were, and what a disagreeable world this is for Snapping Turtles.

The Mud Turtle Father went home and told his wife all about it. "What a disagreeable fellow!" she said. "But then, he is a bachelor, and bachelors are often queer."

"I never was," said her husband.

"Oh!" said she. And, being a wise wife, she did not say anything else. She knew, however, that Mr. Mud Turtle was a much more agreeable fellow since he had married and learned to think more of somebody else than of himself. It is the people who think too much of themselves you know, who are most unhappy in this world.

The Eels also tried to be friendly, and, when he dove to the bottom, called to him to stay and visit with them. "You must excuse us from making the first call," they said. "We go out so little in the daytime."

"Humph!" said the Snapping Turtle. "Do you good to get away from home more. No wonder your eyes are weak, when you lie around in the mud of the dark pond-bottom all day. Indeed, I'll not stay. You can come to see me like other people."

Then he swam away and told the Clams what he had said, and he acted quite proud of what was really dreadful rudeness. "It'll do them good to hear the truth," said he. "I always speak right out. They are as bad as the Water-Adder. They have no backbone."

The Clams listened politely and said nothing. They never did talk much. The Snapping Turtle was mistaken though, when he said that the Eels and the Water-Adder had no backbone. They really had much more than he, but they wore theirs inside, while his was spread out in the shape of a shell for everybody to see.

He did not even try to keep his temper. He became angry one day because Belostoma, the Giant Water-Bug, ate something which he wanted for himself. His eyes glared and his horny jaws snapped, and he waved his long, pointed, scaly tail in a way which was terrible to see. "You are a good-for-nothing bug," he said. "You do no work, and you eat more than any

other person of your size here. Nobody likes you, and there isn't a little fish in the pond who would be seen with you if he could help it. They all hide if they see you coming. I'll be heartily glad when you get your wings and fly away. Don't let any of your friends lay their eggs in this pond. I've seen enough of your family."

Of course this made Belostoma feel very badly. He was not a popular bug, and it is possible that if he could have had his own way, he would have chosen to be a Crayfish or a Stickleback, rather than what he was. As for his not working—there was nothing for him to do, so how could he work? He had to eat, or he would not grow, and since the Snapping Turtle was a hearty eater himself, he should have had the sense to keep still about that. Belostoma told the Mud Turtles what the Snapping Turtle had said, and the Mud Turtle Father spoke of it to the Snapping Turtle.

By that time the Snapping Turtle was feeling better natured and was very gracious. "Belostoma shouldn't remember those things," said he, moving one warty foreleg. "When I am angry, I often say things that I do not mean; but then, I get right over it. I had almost forgotten my little talk with him. I don't see any reason for telling him I am sorry. He is very silly to think so much of it." He lifted his big head quite high, and acted as though it was really a noble thing to be ugly and then forget about it. He might just as sensibly ask people to admire him for not eating when his stomach was full, or for lying still when he was too tired to swim.

When the Mud Turtle Mother heard of this, she was quite out of patience. "All he cares for," said she, "is just Snapping Turtle, Snapping Turtle, Snapping Turtle. When he is good-natured, he thinks everybody else ought to be; and when he is bad-tempered he doesn't care how other people feel. He

will never be any more agreeable until he does something kind for somebody, and I don't see any chance of that happening."

There came a day, though, when the pond people were glad that the Snapping Turtle lived there. Two boys were wading in the edge of the pond, splashing the water and scaring all the people who were near them. The Sticklebacks turned pale all over, as they do when they are badly frightened. The Yellow Brown Frog was so scared that he emptied out the water he had saved for wetting his skin in dry weather. He had a great pocket in his body filled with water, for if his skin should get dry he couldn't breathe through it, and unless he carried water with him he could not stay ashore at all.

The boys had even turned the Mud Turtle Father onto his back in the sunshine, where he lay, waving his feet in the air, but not strong enough to get right side up again. The Snapping Turtle was taking a nap in deep water, when the frightened fishes came swimming toward him as fast as their tails would take them. "What is the matter?" said he.

"Boys!" cried they. "Boys! The dreadful, splashing, Turtle-turning kind."

"Humph!" said the Snapping Turtle. "I'll have to see about that. How many are there?"

"Two!" cried the Sticklebacks and Minnows together.

"And there is only one of me," said the Snapping Turtle to himself. "I must have somebody to help me. Oh, Belostoma," he cried, as the Giant Water-Bug swam past. "Help me drive those boys away."

"With pleasure," said Belostoma, who liked nothing better than this kind of work. Off they started for the place where the boys were wading. The Snapping Turtle took long, strong strokes with his webbed feet, and Belostoma could not keep up with him. The Snapping Turtle saw this. "Jump onto my

back," cried he. "You are a light fellow. Hang tight."

Belostoma jumped onto the Snapping Turtle's clay-colored shell, and when he found himself slipping off the back end of it, he stuck his claws into the Snapping Turtle's tail and held on in that way. He knew that he was not easily hurt, even if he did make a fuss when he bumped his head. As soon as they got near the boys, the Snapping Turtle spoke over his back-shell to Belostoma. "Slide off now," said he, "and drive away the smaller boy. Don't stop to talk with these Blood-suckers."

So Belostoma slid off and swam toward the smaller boy, and he ran out his stout little sucking tube and stung him on the leg. Just then the Snapping Turtle brought his horny jaws together on one of the larger boy's feet. There was a great splashing and dashing as the boys ran to the shore, and three Bloodsuckers, who had fastened themselves to the boy's legs, did not have time to drop off, and were carried ashore and never seen again.

"There!" said the Snapping Turtle. "That's done. I don't know what the pond people would do, if you and I were not here to look after them, Belostoma."

"I'm glad I happened along," said the Giant Water-Bug quietly, "but you will have to do it all after this. I'm about ready to leave the pond. I think I'll go to-morrow."

"Going to-morrow!" exclaimed the Snapping Turtle. "I'm sorry. Of course I know you can never come back, but send your friends here to lay their eggs. We mustn't be left without some of your family."

"Thank you," said Belostoma, and he did not show that he remembered some quite different things which the Snapping Turtle had said before, about his leaving the pond. And that showed that he was a very wise bug as well as a brave



There Was a Great Splashing and Dashing

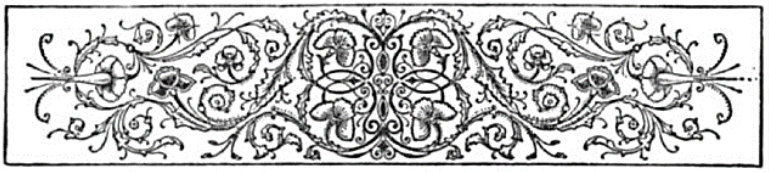
one.

"Humph!" said the Snapping Turtle. "There is the Mud Turtle Father on his back." And he ran to him and pushed him over onto his feet. "Oh, thank you," cried the Mud Turtle Mother. "I was not strong enough to do that."

"Always glad to help my neighbors," said the Snapping Turtle. "Pleasant day, isn't it? I must tell the fishes that the boys are gone. The poor little fellows were almost too scared to swim." And he went away with a really happy look on his face.

"There!" said the Mud Turtle Mother to her husband. "He has begun to help people, and now he likes them, and is contented, I always told you so!"





The Clever Water-Adder

None of the pond people were alone more than the Water-Adders. The Snapping Turtle was left to himself a great deal until the day when he and Belostoma drove away the boys. After that his neighbors began to understand him better and he was less grumpy, so that those who wore shells were soon quite fond of him.

Belostoma did not have many friends among the smaller people, and only a few among the larger ones. They said that he was cruel, and that he had a bad habit of using his stout sucking tube to sting with. Still, Belostoma did not care; he said, "A Giant Water-Bug does not always live in the water. I shall have my wings soon, and leave the water and marry. After that, I shall fly away on my wedding trip. Mrs. Belostoma may go with me, if she feels like doing so after laying her eggs here. I shall go anyway. And I shall flutter and sprawl around the light, and sting people who bother me, and have a happy time." That was Belostoma's way. He would sting people who bothered him, but then he always said that they need not have bothered him. And perhaps that was so.

With the Water-Adders it was different. They were good-natured enough, yet the Mud Turtles and Snapping Turtle were the only ones who ever called upon them and found them at home. The small people without shells were afraid of them, and the Clams and Pond Snails never called upon any

one. The Minnows said they could not bear the looks of the Adders—they had such ugly mouths and such quick motions. The larger fishes kept away on account of their children, who were small and tender.

One might think that the Sand-Hill Cranes, the Fish Hawks, and the other shore families would have been good friends for them, but when they called, the Adders were always away. People said that the Adders were afraid of them.

The Yellow Brown Frog wished that the Adders could be scared, badly scared, some time: so scared that a chilly feeling would run down their backs from their heads clear to the tips of their tails. "I wish," said he, "that the chilly feeling would be big enough to go way through to their bellies. Their bellies are only the front side of their backs, anyway," he added, "because they are so thin." Of course this was a dreadful wish to make, but people said that one of the Adders had frightened the Yellow Brown Frog so that he never got over it, and this was the reason he felt so.

The Water-Adders were certainly the cleverest people in the pond, and there was one Mother Adder who was so very bright that they called her "the Clever Water-Adder." She could do almost anything, and she knew it. She talked about it, too, and that showed bad taste, and was one reason why she was not liked better. She could swim very fast, could creep, glide, catch hold of things with her tail, hang herself from the branch of a tree, lift her head far into the air, leap, dart, bound, and dive. All her family could do these things, but she could do them a little the best.

One day she was hanging over the pond in a very graceful position, with her tail twisted carelessly around a willow branch. The Snapping Turtle and a Mud Turtle Father were in the shallow water below her. Her slender forked tongue was

darting in and out of her open mouth. She was using her tongue in this way most of the time. "It is useful in feeling of things," she said, "and then, I have always thought it quite becoming." She could see herself reflected in the still water below her, and she noticed how prettily the dark brown of her back shaded into the white of her belly. You see she was vain as well as clever.

The Snapping Turtle felt cross to-day, and had come to see if a talk with her would not make him feel better. The Mud Turtle was tired of having the children sprawl around him, and of Mrs. Mud Turtle telling about the trouble she had to get the right kind of food.

The Clever Water-Adder spoke first of the weather. "It must be dreadfully hot for the shore people," she said. "Think of their having to wear the same feathers all the year and fly around in the sunshine to find food for their children."

"Ah yes," said the Mud Turtle. "How they must wish for shells!"

"Humph!" said the Snapping Turtle. "What for? To fly with? Let them come in swimming with their children, if they are warm and tired."

The Water-Adder laughed in her snaky way, and showed her sharp teeth. "I have heard," she said, "that when the Wild Ducks bring their children here to swim, they do not always take so many home as they brought."

The Snapping Turtle became very much interested in his warty right foreleg, and did not seem to hear what she said. The Mud Turtle smiled. "I have heard," she went on, "that when young Ducks dive head first, they are quite sure to come up again, but that when they dive feet first, they never come up."

"What do you mean?" asked the Snapping Turtle, and he

was snappy about it.

"Oh, nothing," replied the Water-Adder, swinging her head back and forth and looking at the scales on her body.

"I know what you mean," said the Snapping Turtle, "and you know what you mean, but I have to eat something, and if I am swimming under the water and a Duckling paddles along just above me and sticks his foot into my mouth, I am likely to swallow him before I think."

The Water-Adder saw that he was provoked by what she had said, so she talked about something else. "I think the Ducks spoil their children," said she. "They make such a fuss over them, and they are not nearly so bright as my children. Why, mine hatch as soon as the eggs are laid, and go hunting at once. They are no trouble at all."

"I never worry about mine," said the Mud Turtle, "although their mother thinks it is not safe for them all to sleep at once, as they do on a log in the sunshine."

"It isn't," said the Adder decidedly. "I never close my eyes. None of us Adders do. Nobody can ever say that we close our eyes to danger." They couldn't shut their eyes if they wanted to, because they had no eyelids, but she did not speak of that. "How stupid people are," she said.

"Most of them," remarked the Turtles.

"All of them," she said, "except us Adders and the Turtles. I even think that some of the Turtles are a little queer, don't you?"

"We have thought so," said the Mud Turtle.

"They certainly are," agreed the Snapping Turtle, who was beginning to feel much better natured.

"What did you say?" asked the Adder who, like all her family, was a little deaf.

"Ouch!" exclaimed the Snapping Turtle. "Ouch! Ouch!"

"What is the matter?" asked the Mud Turtle. Then he began to slap the water with his short, stout tail, and say "Ouch!"

Two naughty young Water-Boatmen had swum quietly up on their backs, and stung the Turtles on their tails. Then they swam away, pushing themselves quickly through the water with swift strokes of their hairy oar-legs.

"Ah-h-h!" exclaimed the Snapping Turtle, and he backed into the mud, knowing that fine, soft mud is the best thing in the world for stings.

"Ah-h-h!" exclaimed the Mud Turtle, "if I could only reach my tail with my head, or even with one of my hind feet!"

"Reach your tail with your head?" asked the Water-Adder in her sweetest voice. "Nothing is easier." And she wound herself around the willow branch in another graceful position, and took the tip of her tail daintily between her teeth.

"Humph!" said the Snapping Turtle, and he pulled his tail out of the mud and swam away.

"Ugh!" said the Mud Turtle, and he swam away with the Snapping Turtle.

"What a rude person she is!" they said. "Always trying to show how much more clever she is than other people. We would rather be stupid and polite."

After a while the Snapping Turtle said, "But then, you know, we are not stupid."

"Of course not," replied the Mud Turtle, "not even queer."



The Good Little Cranes Who Were Bad

When the Sand-Hill Cranes were married, they began to work for a home of their own. To be sure, they had chosen a place for it beforehand, yet there were other things to think about, and some of their friends told them it would be very foolish to build on the ground. "There are so many accidents to ground nests," these friends said. "There are Snakes, you know, and Rats, and a great many other people whom you would not want to have look in on your children. Besides, something might fall on it."

The young couple talked this all over and decided to build in a tree. "We are not afraid of Snakes and Rats," they said, "but we would fear something falling on the nest." They were talking to quite an old Crane when they said this.

"Do you mean to build in a tree?" said he. "My dear young friends, don't do that. Just think, a high wind might blow the nest down and spoil everything. Do whatever you wish, but don't build in a tree." Then he flew away.

"Dear me!" exclaimed young Mrs. Crane, "one tells me to do this and never to do that. Another tells me to do that and never to do this. I shall just please myself since I cannot please my friends."

"And which place do you choose?" asked her husband, who always liked whatever she did.

"I shall build on the ground," she said decidedly. "If the

tree falls, it may hit the nest and it may not, but if we build in the tree and it falls, we are sure to hit the ground."

"How wise you are!" exclaimed her husband. "I believe people get in a way of building just so, and come to think that no other way can be right." Which shows that Mr. Sand-Hill Crane was also wise.

Both worked on the nest, bringing roots and dried grasses with which to build it up. Sometimes they went to dance with their friends, and when they did they bowed most of the time to each other. They did not really care very much about going, because they were so interested in the nest. This they had to build quite high from the ground, on account of their long legs. "If I were a Duck," said Mrs. Sand-Hill Crane, "it would do very well for me to sit on the nest, but with my legs? Never! I would as soon sit on two bare branches as to have them doubled under me." So she tried the nest until it was just as high as her legs were long.

When it was high enough, she laid in it two gray eggs with brown spots. After that she did no more dancing, but stood with a leg on either side of the nest, and her soft body just over the eggs to keep them warm. It was very tiresome work, and sometimes Mr. Crane covered the eggs while she went fishing. The Cranes are always very kind to their wives.

This, you know, was the first time that either had had a nest, and it was all new and wonderful to them. They thought that there never had been such a beautiful home. They often stood on the ground beside it, and poked it this way and that with their bills, and said to each other, "Just look at this fine root that I wove in," or, "Have you noticed how well that tuft of dried grass looks where I put it?" As it came near the time for their eggs to hatch, they could hardly bear to be away long enough to find food.

One day young Mr. Sand-Hill Crane came home much excited. "Our neighbors, the Cranes who live across the pond," said he, "had two children hatched this morning."

"Oh, how glad I am!" cried his wife. "How glad I am! Those eggs were laid just before ours, which must hatch very soon now."

"That is what I thought," said he. "I feel so sorry for them, though, for I saw their children, and they are dreadfully homely—not at all like their parents, who are quite good-looking."

"I must see them myself," said his wife, "and if you will cover the eggs while I go for food, I will just peep in on them. I will hurry back." She flew steadily across the pond, which was not very wide, and asked to see the babies. She had never seen any Crane children, you know, since she herself was little. She thought them very ugly to look at, and wondered how their mother could seem bright and cheerful with two such disappointing children. She said all the polite things that she honestly could, then got something to eat, and flew home. "They are very, very homely," she said to her husband, "and I think it queer. All their older children are good-looking."

She had hardly said this when she heard a faint tapping sound in the nest. She looked, and there was the tip of a tiny beak showing through the shell of one egg. She stood on one side of the nest, watching, and her husband stood on the other while their oldest child slowly made his way out. They dared not help for fear of hurting him, and besides, all the other Cranes had told them that they must not.

"Oh, look!" cried the young mother. "What a dear little bill!"

"Ah!" said the young father. "Did you ever see such a neck?"

"Look at those legs," cried she. "What a beautiful child he is!"

"He looks just like you," said the father, "and I am glad of it."

"Ah, no," said she. "He is exactly like you." And she began to clear away the broken egg-shell.

Soon the other Crane baby poked her bill out, and again the young parents stood around and admired their child. They could not decide which was the handsomer, but they were sure that both were remarkable babies. They felt more sorry than ever for their neighbors across the pond, who had such homely children. They took turns in covering their own damp little Cranes, and were very, very happy.

Before this, it had been easy to get what food they wanted, for there had been two to work for two. Now there were two to work for four, and that made it much harder. There was no time for dancing, and both father and mother worked steadily, yet they were happier than ever, and neither would have gone back to the careless old days for all the food in the pond or all the dances on the beach.

The little Cranes grew finely. They changed their down for pin-feathers, and then these grew into fine brownish gray feathers, like those which their parents wore. They were good children, too, and very well brought up. They ate whatever food was given to them, and never found fault with it. When they left the nest for the first time, they fluttered and tumbled and had trouble in learning to walk. A Mud Turtle Father who was near, told them that this was because their legs were too long and too few.

"Well," said the brother, as he picked himself up and tried to stand on one leg while he drew the other foot out of the tangled grass, "they may be too long, but I'm sure there are

enough of them. When I'm thinking about one, I never can tell what the other will do."

Still, it was not long before they could walk and wade and even fly. Then they met the other pond people, and learned to tell a Stickleback from a Minnow. They did not have many playmates. The saucy little Kingfishers sat on branches over their heads, the Wild Ducks waddled or swam under their very bills, the Fish Hawks floated in air above them, and the Gulls screamed hoarsely to them as they circled over the pond, yet none of them were long-legged and stately. The things that the other birds enjoyed most, they could not do, and sometimes they did not like it very well. One night they were talking about the Gulls, when they should have been asleep, and their father told them to tuck their heads right under their wings and not let him hear another word from them. They did tuck their heads under their wings, but they peeped out between the feathers, and when they were sure their father and mother were asleep, they walked softly away and planned to do something naughty.

"I'm tired of being good," said the brother. "The Gulls never are good. They scream, and snatch, and contradict, and have lots of fun. Let's be bad just for fun."

"All right," said his sister. "What shall we do?"

"That's the trouble," said he. "I can't think of anything naughty that I really care for."

Each stood on one leg and thought for a while. "We might run away," said she.

"Where would we go?" asked he.

"We might go to the meadow," said she. So they started off in the moonlight and went to the meadow, but all the people there were asleep, except the Tree Frog, and he scrambled out of the way as soon as he saw them coming,

because he thought they might want a late supper.

"This isn't any fun!" said the brother. "Let's go to the forest."

They went to the forest, and saw the Bats flitting in and out among the trees, and the Bats flew close to the Cranes and scared them. The Great Horned Owl stood on a branch near them, and stared at them with his big round eyes, and said, "Who? Who? Waugh-ho-oo!" Then the brother and sister stood closer together and answered, "If you please, sir, we are the Crane children."

But the Great Horned Owl kept on staring at them and saying, "Who? Who? Waugh-ho-oo!" until they were sure he was deaf, and answered louder and louder still.

The Screech Owls came also, and looked at them, and bent their bodies over as if they were laughing, and nodded their heads, and shook themselves. Then the Crane children were sure that they were being made fun of, so they stalked away very stiffly, and when they were out of sight of the Owls, they flew over toward the farmhouse. They were not having any fun at all yet, and they meant to keep on trying, for what was the good of being naughty if they didn't?

They passed Horses and Cows asleep in the fields, and saw the Brown Hog lying in the pen with a great many little Brown Pigs and one White Pig sleeping beside her. Nobody was awake except Collie, the Shepherd Dog, who was sitting in the farmyard with his nose in the air, barking at the moon.

"Go away!" he said to the Crane children, who were walking around the yard. "Go away! I must bark at the moon, and I don't want anybody around." They did not start quite soon enough to please him, so he dashed at them, and ran around them and barked at them, instead of at the moon, until they were glad enough to fly straight home to the place where their

father and mother were sleeping with their heads under their wings.

"Are you going to tell them?" asked the brother.

"I don't know," answered the sister. When morning came, they looked tired, and their father and mother seemed so worried about them that they told the whole story.

"We didn't care so very much about what we did," they said, "but we thought it would be fun to be naughty."

The father and mother looked at each other in a very knowing way. "A great many people think that," said the mother gently. "They are mistaken after all. It is really more fun to be good."

"Well, I wish the Gulls wouldn't scream, 'Goody-goody' at us," said the brother.

"What difference does that make?" asked his father. "Why should a Crane care what a Gull says?"

"Why, I—I don't know," stammered the brother. "I guess it doesn't make any difference after all."

The next day when the Crane children were standing in the edge of the pond, a pair of young Gulls flew down near them and screamed out, "Goody-goody!"

Then the Crane brother and sister lifted their heads and necks and opened their long bills, and trumpeted back, "Baddy-baddy!"

"There!" they said to each other. "Now we are even."



The Oldest Dragon-Fly Nymph

When the Oldest Dragon-Fly Nymph felt that the wings under her skin were large enough, she said good-bye to her water friends, and crawled slowly up the stem of a tall cat-tail. All the other Dragon-Fly Nymphs crowded around her and wished that their wings were more nearly ready, and the larvæ talked about the time when they should become Nymphs. The Oldest Nymph, the one who was going away, told them that if they would be good little larvæ, and eat a great deal of plain food and take care not to break any of their legs, or to hurt either of their short, stiff little feelers, they would some day be fine great Nymphs like her. Then she crawled slowly up the cat-tail stem, and when she drew the tenth and last joint of her body out of the water, her friends turned to each other and said, "She is really gone." They felt so badly about it that they had to eat something at once to keep from crying.

The Oldest Nymph now stopped breathing water and began to breathe air. She waited to look at the pond before she went any farther. She had never seen it from above, and it looked very queer to her. It was beautiful and shining, and, because the sky above it was cloudless, the water was a most wonderful blue. There was no wind stirring, so there were no tiny waves to sparkle and send dancing bits of light here and there. It was one of the very hot and still summer days, which Dragon-Flies like best.

A sad look came into the Nymph's great eyes as she stood there. "The pond is beautiful," she said; "but when one looks at it from above, it does not seem at all homelike." She shook her three-cornered head sadly, and rubbed her eyes with her forelegs. She thought she should miss the happy times in the mud with the other children.

A Virgin Dragon-Fly lighted on the cat-tail next to hers. She knew it was a Virgin Dragon-Fly because he had black wings folded over his back, and there were shimmering green and blue lights all over his body and wings. He was very slender and smaller than she. "Good morning," said he. "Are you just up?"

"Yes," said she, looking bashfully down at her forefeet. She did not know how to behave in the air, it was so different from the water.

"Couldn't have a finer day," said he. "Very glad you've come. Excuse me. There is a friend to whom I must speak." Then he flew away with another Virgin Dragon-Fly.

"Hurry up and get your skin changed," said a voice above her, and there was a fine great fellow floating in the air over her head. "I'll tell you a secret when you do."

Dragon-Flies care a great deal for secrets, so she quickly hooked her twelve sharp claws into the cat-tail stem, and unfastened her old skin down the back, and wriggled and twisted and pulled until she had all her six legs and the upper part of her body out. This made her very tired and she had to rest for a while. The old skin would only open down for a little way by her shoulders, and it was hard to get out through such a small place. Next she folded her legs close to her body, and bent over backward, and swayed this way and that, until she had drawn her long, slender body from its outgrown covering.

She crawled away from the empty skin and looked it over.

It kept the shape of her body, but she was surprised to find how fast she was growing slender. Even then, and she had been out only a short time, she was much longer and thinner than she had been, and her old skin looked much too short for her. "How styles do change," she said. "I remember how proud I was of that skin when I first got it, and now I wouldn't be seen in it."

Her beautiful gauzy wings with their dark veinings, were drying and growing in the sunshine. She was weak now, and had them folded over her back like those of the Virgin Dragon-Fly, but, as soon as she felt rested and strong, she meant to spread them out flat.

The fine Big Dragon-Fly lighted beside her. "How are your wings?" said he.

"Almost dry," she answered joyfully, and she quivered them a little to show him how handsome they were.

"Well," said he. "I'll tell you the secret now, and of course you will never speak of it. I saw you talking with a Virgin Dragon-Fly. He may be all right, but he isn't really in our set, you know, and you'd better not have anything to do with him."

"Thank you," she said. "I won't." She thought it very kind of him to tell her.

He soon flew away, and, as she took her first flight into the air, a second Big Dragon-Fly overtook her. "I'll tell you a secret," said he, "if you will never tell."

"I won't," said she. "I saw you talking to a Virgin Dragon-Fly a while ago. You may have noticed that he folded his wings over his back. The Big Dragon-Flies never do this, and you must never be seen with yours so."

"Thank you," she said. "I won't. But when they were drying I had to hold them in that way."



She Swayed This Way and That

"Of course," said he. "We all do things then that we wouldn't afterward."

Before long she began egg-laying, flying low enough to touch her body to the water now and then and drop a single egg. This egg always sank at once to the bottom, and she took no more care of it.

A third Big Dragon-Fly came up to her. "I want to tell you something," he said. "Put your head close to mine."

She put her head close to his, and he whispered, "I saw you flying with my cousin a few minutes ago. I dislike to say it, but he is not a good friend for you. Whatever you do, don't go with him again. Go with me."

"Thank you," said she, yet she began to wonder what was the matter. She saw that just as soon as she visited with anybody, somebody else told her that she must not do so again. Down in the pond they had all been friends. She wondered if it could not be so in the air. She rubbed her head with her right foreleg, and frowned as much as she could. You know she couldn't frown very much, because her eyes were so large and close together that there was only a small frowning-place left.

She turned her head to see if any one else was coming to tell her a secret. Her neck was very, very slender and did not show much, because the back side of her head was hollow and fitted over her shoulders. No other Dragon-Fly was near. Instead, she saw a Swallow swooping down on her. She sprang lightly into the air and the Swallow chased her. When he had his beak open to catch her as he flew, she would go backward or sidewise without turning around. This happened many times, and it was well for her that it was so, for the Swallow was very hungry, and if he had caught her—well, she certainly would never have told any of the secrets she knew.

The Swallow quite lost his patience and flew away grumbling. "I won't waste any more time," he said, "on trying to catch somebody who can fly backward without turning around. Ridiculous way to fly!"

The Dragon-Fly thought it an exceedingly good way, however, and was even more proud of her wings than she had been. "Legs are all very well," she said to herself, "as far as they go, and one's feet would be of very little use without them; but I like wings better. Now that I think of it," she added, "I haven't walked a step since I began to fly. I understand better the old saying, 'Make your wings save your legs.' They certainly are very good things to stand on when one doesn't care to fly."

Night came, and she was glad to sleep on the under side of a broad leaf of pickerel-weed. She awakened feeling stupid and lazy. She could not think what was the matter, until she heard her friends talking about the weather. Then she knew that Dragon-Flies are certain to feel so on dark and wet days. "I don't see what difference that should make," she said. "I'm not afraid of rain. I've always been careless about getting my feet wet and it never hurt me any."

"Ugh!" said one of her friends. "You've never been wet in spots, or hit on one wing by a great rain-drop that has fallen clear down from a cloud. I had a rain-drop hit my second right knee once, and it has hurt me ever since. I have only five good knees left, and I have to be very careful about lighting on slippery leaves."

It was very dull. Nobody seemed to care about anybody or anything. The fine Big Dragon-Flies, who had been so polite to her the day before, hardly said "Good morning" to her now. When she asked them questions, they would say nothing but "Yes" or "No" or "I don't know," and one of them yawned in

her face. "Oh dear!" she said. "How I wish myself back in the pond where the rain couldn't wet me. I'd like to see my old friends and some of the dear little larvæ. I wish more of the Nymphs would come up."

She looked all around for them, and as she did so she saw the shining back-shell of the Snapping Turtle, showing above the shallow water. "I believe I'll call on him," she said. "He may tell me something about my old friends, and anyway it will cheer me up." She lighted very carefully on the middle of his back-shell and found it very comfortable. "Good morning," said she. "Have you—"

"No," snapped he. "I haven't, and I don't mean to!"

"Dear me," said she. "That is too bad."

"I don't see why," said he. "Is there any particular reason why I should?"

"I thought you might have just happened to," said she, "and I should like to know how they are."

"What are you talking about?" snapped he.

"I was going to ask if you had seen the Dragon-Fly children lately," she said. And as she spoke she made sure that she could not slip. She felt perfectly safe where she was, because she knew that, no matter how cross he might be, he could not reach above the edges of his back-shell.

"Well, why didn't you say so in the first place," he snapped, "instead of sitting there and talking nonsense! They are all right. A lot of the Nymphs are going into the air to-day!" Now that he had said a few ugly things, he began to feel better natured. "You've changed a good deal since the last time I saw you."

"When was that?" asked she.

"It was one day when I came remarkably near sitting down on a lot of you Dragon-Fly children," he chuckled. "You were

a homely young Nymph then, and you stuck out your lower lip at me."

"Oh!" said she. "Then you did see us?"

"Of course I did," answered he. "Haven't I eyes? I'd have sat down on you, too, if I hadn't wanted to see you scramble away. The larvæ always are full of mischief, but then they are young. You Nymphs were old enough to know better."

"I suppose we were," she said. "I didn't think you saw us. Why didn't you tell us?"

"Oh," said the Snapping Turtle, "I thought I'd have a secret. If I can't keep a secret for myself, I know that nobody can keep it for me. Secrets can swim faster than any fish in the pond if you once let them get away from you. I thought I'd better not tell. I might want to sit on you some other time, you know."

"You'll never have the chance," said she, with a twinkle in her big eyes. "It is my turn to sit on you." And after that they were very good friends—as long as she sat on the middle of his shell.



The Eels' Moving-Night

The Eels were as different from the Clams as people well could be. It was not alone that they looked unlike, but that they had such different ways of enjoying life. The Clams were chubby people, each comfortably settled in his own shell, which he could open or shut as he chose. They never wanted to live anywhere else, or to get beyond the edges of their own pearl-lined shells.

The Eels were long, slender, and slippery people, looking even more like snakes than they did like fishes. They were always careful to tell new acquaintances, though, that they were not even related to the snakes. "To be sure," they would say, "we do not wear our fins like most fishes, but that is only a matter of taste after all. We should find them dreadfully in the way if we did." And that was just like the Eels—they were always so ready to explain everything to their friends.

They were great talkers. They would talk about themselves, and their friends, and the friends of their friends, and the pond, and the weather, and the state of the mud, and what everything was like yesterday, and what it would be likely to be like to-morrow, and did you really think so, and why? The Water-Adder used to say that they were the easiest people in the pond to visit with, for all one had to do was to keep still and look very much interested. Perhaps that may have been why the Clams and they were such good friends.

The Clams, you know, were a quiet family. Unless a Clam

was very, very much excited, he never said more than "Yes," "No," or "Indeed?" They were excellent listeners and some of the most popular people in the pond. Those who were in trouble told the Clams, and they would say, "Indeed," or "Ah," in such a nice way that their visitor was sure to leave feeling better. Others who wanted advice would go to them, and talk over their plans and tell them what they wanted to do, and the Clams would say, "Yes," and then the visitors would go away quite decided, and say, "We really didn't know what to do until we spoke to the Clams about it, but they agree with us perfectly." The Clams were also excellent people to keep secrets, and as the Eels were forever telling secrets, that was all very well.

Mother Eel was fussy. She even said so herself. And if a thing bothered her, she would talk and talk and talk until even her own children were tired of hearing about it. Now she was worrying over the pond water.

"I do not think it nearly so clean as it was last year," she said, "and the mud is getting positively dirty. Our family are very particular about that, and I think we may have to move. I do dread the moving, though. It is so much work with a family the size of mine, and Mr. Eel is no help at all with the children."

She was talking with Mother Mud Turtle when she said this, and the little Eels were wriggling all around her as she spoke. Then they began teasing her to go, until she told them to swim away at once and play with the young Minnows. "I'm afraid I shall have to go," said she, "if only on account of the children. I want them to see something of the world. It is so dull in this pond. Were you ever out of it?" she asked, turning suddenly to Mrs. Mud Turtle.

"Oh, yes," answered she. "I go quite often, and one of my



She Was Talking with Mother Mud Turtle

sons took a very long trip to the meadow. He went with some boys. It was most exciting."

"Is that the one with the—peculiar back-shell?" asked Mother Eel.

"Yes," replied Mother Mud Turtle sweetly. "He is very modest and does not care to talk about it much, but I am really quite pleased. Some people travel and show no sign of it afterward. One would never know that they had left home (Mother Eel wondered if she meant her), but with him it is different. He shows marks of having been in the great world outside."

Mother Eel wriggled a little uneasily. "I think I must tell you after all," she said. "I have really made up my mind to go. Mr. Eel thinks it foolish, and would rather stay here, but I am positive that we can find a better place, and we must consider the children. He thinks he cares as much for them as I do, yet he would be willing to have them stay here forever. He was hatched here, and thinks the pond perfect. We get to talking about it sometimes, and I say to him, 'Mr. Eel, where would those children be now if it were not for me?'"

"And what does he say then?" asked the Mud Turtle Mother.

"Nothing," answered Mother Eel, with a smart little wriggle. "There is nothing for him to say. Yes, we shall certainly move. I am only waiting for the right kind of night. It must not be too light, or the land people would see us; not too dark, or we could not see them. And then the grass must be dewy. It would never do for us to get dry, you know, or we should all be sick. But please don't speak of this, dear Mrs. Turtle. I would rather leave quietly when the time comes."

So the Mud Turtle Mother remembered that it was a secret, and told nobody except the Mud Turtle Father, and

he did not speak of it to anybody but the Snapping Turtle.

"Did you say that it was a secret?" asked the Snapping Turtle.

"Yes," said the Mud Turtle Father, "It is a great secret."

"Humph!" said the Snapping Turtle. "Then why did you tell me?"

That same day when the Stickleback Father came to look for nineteen or twenty of his children who were missing, Mother Eel told him about her plans. "I thought you would be interested in hearing of it," she said, "but I shall not mention it to anybody else."

"You may be sure I shall not speak of it," said he. And probably he would not have told a person, if it had not been that he forgot and talked of it with the Snails. He also forgot to say that it was a secret, and so they spoke freely of it to the Crayfishes and the Caddis Worms.

The Caddis Worms were playing with the Tadpoles soon after this, and one of them whispered to a Tadpole right before the others, although he knew perfectly well that it was rude for him to do so. "Now, don't you ever tell," said he aloud.

"Uh-uh!" answered the Tadpole, and everybody knew that he meant "No," even if they hadn't seen him wave his hindlegs sidewise. Of course, not having the right kind of neck for it, he couldn't shake his head.

Then the other Tadpoles and Caddis Worms wanted to tell secrets, and they kept whispering to each other and saying out loud, "Now don't you ever tell." When a Caddis Worm told a Tadpole anything, he said, "The Eels are going to move away." And when a Tadpole told a secret to a Caddis Worm, he just moved his lips and said, "Siss-el, siss-el, siss-el-siss. I'm only making believe, you know." But he was sure to add out

loud, "Now don't you tell." And the Caddis Worm would answer, "Uh-uh!"

The Eel Mother also spoke to the Biggest Frog, asking him to watch the grass for her and tell her when it was dewy enough for moving. He was afraid he might forget it, and so told his sister and asked her to help him remember. And she was afraid that she might forget, so she spoke to her friend, the Green Brown Frog, about it. The Yellow Brown Frog afterward said that he heard it from her.

One night it was neither too dark nor too light, and the dew lay heavy on the grass. Then Mother Eel said to her children, "Now stop your wriggling and listen to me, every one of you! We shall move because the mud here is so dirty. You are going out into the great world, and I want you to remember everything you feel and see. You may never have another chance."

The little Eels were so excited that they couldn't keep still, and she had to wait for them to stop wriggling. When they were quiet, she went on. "All the Eels are going—your uncles and aunts and cousins—and you children must keep with the older ones. Be careful where you wriggle to, and don't get on anybody else's tail."

She led the way out of the water and wriggled gracefully up the bank, although it was quite steep at that place. "I came this way," she said, "because I felt more as though this was the way to come." She closed her mouth very firmly as she spoke. Mr. Eel had thought another way better. They had to pass through crowds of pond people to reach the shore, for everybody had kept awake and was watching. The older ones cried out, "Good-bye; we shall miss you," and waved their fins or their legs, or their tails, whichever seemed the handiest. The younger ones teased the little Eels and tried to hold them

back, and told them they'd miss lots of fun, and that they guessed they'd wish themselves back in the pond again. When they got onto the shore, the Frogs and the Mud Turtles were there, and it was a long time before they could get started on their journey. One of the little Eels was missing, and his mother had to go back for him. She found that a mischievous young Stickleback had him by the tail.

When at last they were all together on the bank, the Eel Father said to his wife, "Are you sure that the Cranes and Fish Hawks don't know about our moving? Because if they did—"

"I know," she said. "It would be dreadful if they found out; and we have been so late in getting started. We shall have to stop at the very first water we find now, whether we like it or not." She lay still and thought. "I have a feeling," said she, "that we should go this way." So that way they went, dragging their yellow bellies over the ground as carefully as they could, their dark green backs with their long fringes of back fins hardly showing in the grass. It was a good thing that their skin was so fat and thick, for sometimes they had to cross rough places that scraped it dreadfully and even rumpled the tiny scales that were in it, while their long fringes of belly fins became worn and almost ragged. "If your scales were on the outside," said their father, "like those of other fishes, you wouldn't have many left."

Mother Eel was very tired and did not say much. Her friends began to fear that she was ill. At last she spoke, "I do not see," she said, "how people found out that we were to move."

"You didn't tell anybody?" said Mr. Eel.

"No indeed!" said she; and she really believed it. That was because she had talked so much that she couldn't remember what she did say. It is always so with those that talk too much.



The Crayfish Mother

Three Stickleback Mothers and several Clams were visiting under the lily-pads in the early morning. Mother Eel was also there. "Yes," she said, "I am glad to come back and be among my old friends, and the children are happier here. As I often tell Mr. Eel, there is no place like one's home. We had a hard journey, but I do not mind that. We are rested now, and travel does teach people so much. I should think you would get dreadfully tired of being in the water all the time. I want my children to see the world. Now they know grass, and trees, and air, and dry ground. There are not many children of their age who know more than they. We stayed in a brook the one day we were gone, so they have felt running water too. It was clean—I will say that for it—but it was no place for Eels, and so we came back."

There is no telling how long she would have kept on talking if she had not been called away. As soon as she left, the Sticklebacks began to talk about her.

"So she thinks we must be tired of staying in the water all the time," said one. "It doesn't tire me nearly so much as it would to go dragging myself over the country, wearing out my fins on the ground."

"Indeed?" said a Clam, to whom she turned as she spoke.

"Well, I'll tell you what I think," said another Stickleback Mother. "I think that if she didn't care so much for travel

herself, she would not be dragging her family around to learn grass and trees. Some night they will be learning Owls or men, and that will be the end of them!"

"I do not believe in it at all," said the first speaker. "I certainly would not want my sons to learn these things, for they must grow up to be good nest-builders and baby-tenders. I have told their fathers particularly to bring them up to be careful housekeepers. With my daughters, it is different."

For a long time nobody spoke; then a Clam said, "What a difference there is in mothers!" It quite startled the Sticklebacks to hear a Clam say so much. It showed how interested he was, and well he might be. The Clam who brings up children has to do it alone, and be both father and mother to them, and of course that is hard work. It is hard, too, because when a little Clam is naughty, his parent can never say that he takes his naughtiness from any one else.

"And there is a difference in fathers too," exclaimed one fine-looking Stickleback Mother. "I say that a father's place is by the nest, and that if he does his work there well, he will not have much time to want to travel, or to loaf around by the shore." The Clams looked at each other and said nothing. Some people thought that the Stickleback Mothers were lazy.

Just then a Crayfish Mother came swimming slowly along, stopping often to rest. Her legs were almost useless, there were so many little Crayfishes clinging to them.

"Now look at her," said one Stickleback. "Just look at her. She laid her eggs at the beginning of last winter and fastened them to her legs. Said she was so afraid something would happen if she left them, and that this was a custom in her family anyway. Now they have hatched, and her children hang on to her in the same way."

The Crayfish Mother stopped with a sigh. "Isn't it dread-

fully warm?" said she.

"We haven't found it so," answered the Sticklebacks, while the Clams murmured, "No."

"Let me take some of your children," said one Stickleback. "Perhaps carrying them has made you warm and tired."

The Crayfish stuck her tail-paddles into the mud, and spread her pinching-claws in front of her family. "Oh no, thank you," said she. "They won't be contented with any one but me."

"That must make it hard for you," said another Stickleback politely. She was thinking how quickly she would shake off the little Crayfishes if they were her children.

"It does," answered their mother. "It is hard, for I carried the eggs on my legs all through the cold weather and until it was very warm again; and now that they are hatched, the children hang on with their pinching-claws. Still, I can't bear to shake them off, poor little things!" She held up first one leg and then another to show off her dangling babies.

"I don't know what will happen to them when I cast my shell," said she. "I shall have to soon, for I can hardly breathe in it. My sister changed hers some time ago, and her new one is getting hard already."

"Oh, they'll be all right," said a Stickleback cheerfully. "Their fathers tell me that my children learn remarkably fast how to look out for themselves."

"But my children can't walk yet," said the Crayfish Mother, "and they don't know how to swim."

"What of that?" asked a Stickleback, who was beginning to lose her patience. "They can learn, can't they? They have eight legs apiece, haven't they, besides the ones that have pincers? Isn't that enough to begin on? And haven't they tail-paddles?"

"I suppose so," said their mother, with a sigh, "but they don't seem to want to go. I must put them to sleep now and try to get a little rest myself, for the sun is well up."

The next night she awakened and remembered what the Sticklebacks had said, so she thought she would try shaking her children off. "It is for your own good," she said, and she waved first one leg and then another. When she got four of her legs free, and stood on them to shake the other four, her children scrambled back to her and took hold again with their strong little pinching-claws. Then she gave it up. "You dear tiny things!" she said. "But I do wish you would walk instead of making me carry you."

"We don't want to!" they cried; "we don't know how."

"There, there!" said their mother. "No, to be sure you don't."

The next night, though, they had to let go, for their mother was casting her shell. When it was off she lay weak and helpless on the pond-bottom, and her children lay around her. They behaved very badly indeed. "Come here and let me catch hold of you," cried one. "I can't walk," said another, "because I don't know how."

Some of them were so cross that they just lay on their backs and kicked with all their eight feet, and screamed, "I won't try!" It was dreadful!

The Crayfish Mother was too weak to move, and when the Wise Old Crayfish came along she spoke to him. "My children will not walk," said she, "even when I tell them to." He knew that it was because when she had told them to do things before, she had not made them mind.

"I will see what I can do," said he, "but you must not say a word." He walked backward to where they were, and kept his face turned toward their mother, which was polite of him.

"Do you want the Eels to find you here?" he said, in his gruffest voice. "If you don't, you'd better run."

What a scrambling there was! In one way or another, every little Crayfish scampered away. Some went forward, some went sidewise, and some went backward. Some didn't keep step with themselves very well at first, but they soon found out how. Even the crossest ones, who were lying on their backs flopped over and were off.

The Wise Old Crayfish turned to their mother. "It is no trouble to teach ten-legged children to walk," said he, "if you go at it in the right way."

The little Crayfishes soon got together again, and while they were talking, one of their many aunts came along with all her children hanging to her legs. Then the little Crayfishes who had just learned to walk, pointed their pinching-claws at their cousins, and said, "Sh-h-h! 'Fore I'd let my mother carry me! Babies!"



Two Little Crayfishes Quarrel

The day after the Eels left, the pond people talked of nothing else. It was not that they were so much missed, for the Eels, you know, do not swim around in the daytime. They lie quietly in the mud and sleep or talk. It is only at night that they are really lively. Still, as the Mother Mud Turtle said, "They had known that they were there, and the mud seemed empty without them."

The larger people had been sorry to have them go, and some of them felt that without the Eels awake and stirring, the pond was hardly a safe place at night.

"I think it is a good deal safer," remarked a Minnow, who usually said what she thought. "I have always believed that the Eels knew what became of some of my brothers and sisters, although, of course, I do not know."

"Why didn't you ask them?" said a Stickleback.

"Why?" replied the Minnow. "If I had gone to the Eels and asked them that, my other brothers and sisters would soon be wondering what had become of me."

"I have heard some queer things about the Eels myself," said the Stickleback, "but I have never felt much afraid of them. I suppose I am braver because I wear so many of my bones on the outside."

Just then a Wise Old Crayfish came along walking sidewise. "What do you think about the Eels?" asked the Stickle-

back, turning suddenly to him.

The Crayfish stuck his tail into the mud. He often did this when he was surprised. It seemed to help him think. When he had thought for a while, he waved his big pinching-claws and said, "It would be better for me not to tell what I think. I used to live near them."

This showed that the Wise Old Crayfish had been well brought up, and knew he should not say unpleasant things about people if he could help it. When there was need of it, he could tell unpleasant truths, and indeed that very evening he did say what he thought of the Eels. That was when he was teaching some young Crayfishes, his pupils. Their mother had brought up a large family, and was not strong. She had just cast the shell which she had worn for a year, and now she was weak and helpless until the new one should harden on her. "It is such a bother," she said, "to keep changing one's shell in this way, but it is a comfort to think that the new one will last a year when I do get it."

While their mother was so weak, the Wise Old Crayfish amused the children, and taught them things which all Crayfishes should know. Every evening they gathered around him, some of them swimming to him, some walking forward, some sidewise, and some backward. It made no difference to them which way they came. They were restless pupils, and their teacher could not keep them from looking behind them. Each one had so many eyes that he could look at the teacher with a few, and at the other little Crayfishes with a few more, and still have a good many eyes left with which to watch the Tadpoles. These eyes were arranged in two big bunches, and, unless you looked very closely, you might think that they had only two eyes apiece. They had good ears, and there were also fine smelling-bristles growing from their heads. The Wise Old

Crayfish sometimes said that each of his pupils should sit in a circle of six teachers, so that he might be taught on all sides at once.

"That is the way in which children should learn," he said, "all around at once. But I do the best I can, and I at least teach one side of each."

This evening the Wise Old Crayfish was very sleepy. There had been so much talking and excitement during the day that he had not slept so much as usual; and now, when he should have been wide awake, he felt exceedingly dull and stupid. When he tried to walk, his eight legs stumbled over each other, and the weak way in which he waved his pinching-claw legs showed how tired he was.

After he had told his pupils the best way to hold their food with their pinching-claws, and had explained to them how it was chewed by the teeth in their stomachs, one mischievous little fellow called out, "I want to know about the Eels. My mother would never let me go near them, and now they've moved away, and I won't ever see them, and I think it's just horrid."

"Eels, my children," said their teacher, "are long, slender, sharp-nosed, slippery people, with a fringe of fins along their backs, and another fringe along their bellies. They breathe through very small gill-openings in the backs of their heads. They have large mouths, and teeth in their mouths, and they are always sticking out their lower jaws."

"And how do—" began the Biggest Little Crayfish.

"Ask me that to-morrow," said their teacher, stretching his eight walking legs and his two pinching-claw legs and his tail paddles, "but remember this one thing:—if you ever see an Eel, get out of his way. Don't stop to look at him."

"We won't," said one little Crayfish, who thought it smart

to be saucy. "We'll look to stop at him." All of which meant nothing at all and was only said to annoy his teacher.

They scrambled away over the pond-bottom, upsetting Snails, jiggling the young Clams, and racing with each other where the bottom was smooth. "Beat you running backward!" cried the Saucy Crayfish to the Biggest Little Crayfish, and they scampered along backward in the moonlit water. There was an old log on the bottom of the pond, and they sat on that to rest. The Biggest Little Crayfish had beaten. "I would like to see an Eel," said he.

"I'd like to see them running on the land," said the saucy one.

"Pooh!" said the biggest one. "That's all you know! They don't run on land."

"Well, I guess they do," replied the saucy one. "I know as much about it as you do!"

"Eels swim. They don't run," said the biggest one. "Guess I know!"

"Well, they don't swim in air," said the saucy one. "That's the stuff that lies on top of the water and the ground, and people can't swim in it. So there!"

"Well, I've seen the Wild Ducks swim in it! They swim with their legs in the water, and with their wings in the air," said the biggest one.

"I don't believe it," said the saucy one. "Anyhow, Eels run on land."

"Eels swim on land," said the biggest one.

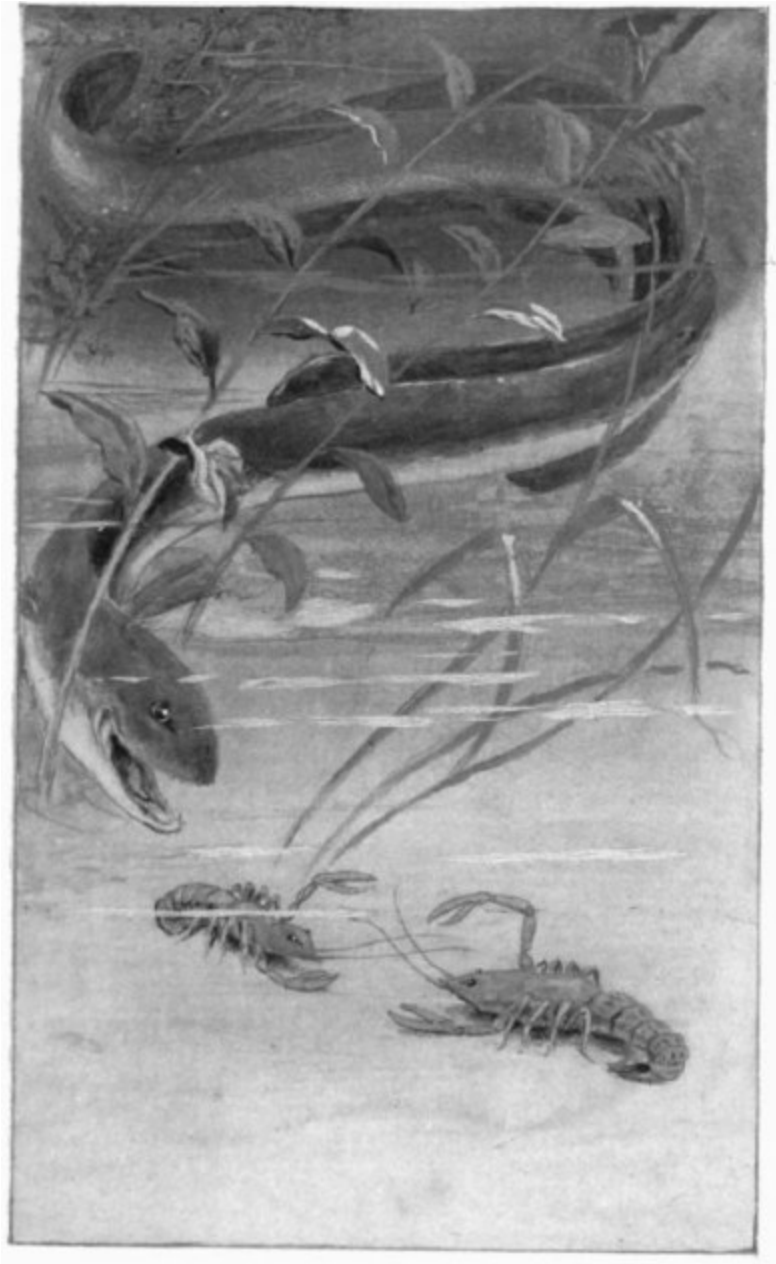
"Eels run!"

"Eels swim!"

"Run!"

"Swim!"

Then the two little Crayfishes, who had been talking



Mother Eel Opened Her Big Mouth

louder and louder and becoming more and more angry, glared at each other, and jerked their feelers, and waved their pinching-claws in a very, very ugly way.

They did not notice a great green and yellow person swimming gently toward them, and they did not know that the Eels had come back to live in the old pond again. Mother Eel opened her big mouth very wide. "On land," she said decidedly, as she swallowed the Biggest Little Crayfish, "Eels wriggle." Then she swallowed the Saucy Crayfish.

"There!" said she. "I've stopped that dreadful quarrel." And she looked around with a satisfied smile.





The Lucky Mink

During the warm weather, the Minks did not come often to the pond. Then they had to stay nearer home and care for their babies. In the winter, when food was not so plentiful and their youngest children were old enough to come with them, they visited there every day. It was not far from their home.

The Minks lived by a waterfall in the river, and had burrows in the banks, where the young Minks stayed until they were large enough to go out into the world. Then the fathers and mothers were very busy, for in each home there were four or five or six children, hungry and restless, and needing to be taught many things.

They were related to the Weasels who lived up by the farmyard, and had the same slender and elegant bodies and short legs as they. Like the Weasels, they sometimes climbed trees, but that was not often. They did most of their hunting in the river, swimming with their bodies almost all under water, and diving and turning and twisting gracefully and quickly. When they hunted on land, they could tell by smelling just which way to go for their food.

The Minks were a very dark brown, and scattered through their close, soft fur were long, shining hairs of an even darker shade, which made their coats very beautiful indeed. The fur was darker on their backs than on the under part of their bodies, and their tapering, bushy tails were almost black.

Their under jaws were white, and they were very proud of them. Perhaps it was because they had so little white fur that they thought so much of it. You know that is often the way—we think most of those things which are scarce or hard to get.

There was one old Mink by the river who had a white tip on his tail, and that is something which many people have never seen. It is even more uncommon than for Minks to have white upper lips, and that happens only once in a great while. This Mink was a bachelor, and nobody knew why. Some people said it was because he was waiting to find a wife with a white tip on her tail, yet that could not have been, for he was too wise to wait for something which might never happen. However it was, he lived alone, and fished and hunted just for himself. He could dive more quickly, stay under water longer, and hunt by scent better than any other Mink round there. His fur was sleeker and more shining than that of his friends, and it is no wonder that the sisters of his friends thought that he ought to marry.

When the Minks visited together, somebody was sure to speak of the Bachelor's luck. They said that, whatever he did, he was always lucky. "It is all because of a white tip on his tail," they said. "That makes him lucky."

The young Minks heard their fathers and mothers talking, and wished that they had been born with white tips on their tails so that they could be lucky too. Once the Bachelor heard them wishing this, and he smiled and showed his beautiful teeth, and told them that it was not the tip of his tail but his whole body that made him lucky. He did not smile to show his teeth, because he was not at all vain. He just smiled and showed his teeth.

There was a family of young Minks who lived at the foot of the waterfall, where the water splashed and dashed in the



Used to Follow Him Around

way they liked best. There were four brothers and two sisters in this family, and the brothers were bigger than the sisters (as Mink Brothers always are), although they were all the same age. One was very much larger than any of the rest, and so they called him Big Brother. He thought there was never such a fine Mink as the Bachelor, and he used to follow him around, and look at the tip on his tail, and wish that he was lucky like him. He wished to be just like him in every way but one; he did not want to be a bachelor.

The other young Minks laughed at Big Brother, and asked him if he thought his tail would turn white if he followed the Bachelor long enough. Big Brother stood it very patiently for a while; then he snarled at them, and showed his teeth without smiling, and said he would fight anybody who spoke another word about it. Minks are very brave and very fierce, and never know when to stop if they have begun to fight; so, after that, nobody dared tease Big Brother by saying anything more about the Bachelor. Sometimes they did look at his tail and smile, but they never spoke, and he pretended not to know what they meant by it.

A few days after this, the Bachelor was caught in a trap—a common, clumsy, wooden trap, put together with nails and twine. It was not near the river, and none of his friends would have found him, if Big Brother had not happened along. He could hardly believe what he saw. Was it possible that a trap had dared to catch a Mink with a white-tipped tail? Then he heard the Bachelor groan, and he knew that it was so. He hurried up to where the trap was.

"Can't you get out?" said he.

"No," said the Bachelor. "I can't. The best way to get out is not to get in—and I've gotten in."

"Can't you do something with your lucky tail to make the

trap open?" asked Big Brother.

"I could do something with my teeth," answered the Bachelor, "if they were only where the tip of my tail is. Why are Minks always walking into traps?" He was trying hard not to be cross, but his eyes showed how he felt, and that was very cross indeed.

Then Big Brother became much excited. "I have good teeth," said he. "Tell me what to do."

"If you will help me out," said the Bachelor, "I will give you my luck."

"And what shall I do with the tail I have?" asked the young Mink, who thought that the Bachelor was to give him his white-tipped tail.

"Never mind now," answered the Bachelor, and he told the young Mink just where to gnaw. For a long time there was no sound but that of the young Mink's teeth on the wood of the trap. The Bachelor was too brave to groan or make a fuss, when he knew there was anybody around to hear. Big Brother's mouth became very sore, and his stomach became very empty, but still he kept at work. He was afraid somebody would come for the trap and the Mink in it, before he finished.

"Now try it," said he, after he had gnawed for quite a while. The Bachelor backed out as far as he could, but his body stuck in the hole. "You are rumpling your beautiful fur," cried the young Mink.

"Never mind the fur," answered the Bachelor. "I can smooth that down afterward. You will have to gnaw a little on this side." And he raised one of his hind feet to show where he meant. It was a beautiful hindfoot, thickly padded, and with short partly webbed toes, and no hair at all growing between them. The claws were short, sharp, and curved.

Big Brother gnawed away. "Now try it," said he. The

Bachelor backed carefully out through the opening and stood there, looking tired and hungry and very much rumpled.

"You are a fine young Mink," said he. "We will get something to eat, and then we will see about making you lucky."

They went to the river bank and had a good dinner. The Bachelor ate more than Big Brother, for his mouth was not sore. But Big Brother was very happy. He thought how handsome he would look with a white-tipped tail, and how, after he had that, he could surely marry whoever he wished. It was the custom among his people to want to marry the best looking and strongest. Indeed it is so among all the pond people, and that is one reason why they care so much about being good-looking. It is very hard for a young Mink to have the one he loves choose somebody else, just because the other fellow has the bushiest tail, or the longest fur, or the thickest pads on his feet.

"Now," said the Bachelor, "we will talk about luck. We will go to a place where nobody can hear what we say." They found such a place and lay down. The Bachelor rolled over three times and smoothed his fur; he was still so tired from being in the trap. Then he looked at the young Mink very sharply. "So you want my tail?" said he.

"You said you would give me your luck," answered Big Brother, "and everybody knows that your luck is in your tail."

The Bachelor smiled. "What will you do with the tail you have?" said he.

"I don't know," answered Big Brother.

"You wouldn't want to wear two?" asked the Bachelor.

"Oh, no," answered Big Brother. "How that would look!"

"Well, how will you put my tail in place of yours?" asked the Bachelor.

"I don't know," answered the young Mink, "but you are

so wise that I thought you might know some way." He began to feel discouraged, and to think that the Bachelor's offer didn't mean very much after all.

"Don't you think?" said the Bachelor slowly, "don't you think that, if you could have my luck, you could get along pretty well with your own tail?"

"Why, yes," said the young Mink, who had begun to fear he was not going to get anything. "Yes, but how could that be?"

The Bachelor smiled again. "I always tell people," said he, "that my luck is not in my tail, and they never believe it. I will tell you the secret of my luck, and you can have luck like it, if you really care enough." He looked all around to make sure that nobody was near, and he listened very carefully with the two little round ears that were almost hidden in his head-fur. Then he whispered to Big Brother, "This is the secret: always do everything a little better than anybody else can."

"Is that all?" asked the young Mink.

"That is enough," answered the Bachelor. "Keep trying and trying and trying, until you can dive deeper, stay under water longer, run faster, and smell farther than other Minks. Then you will have good luck when theirs is poor. You will have plenty to eat when they are hungry. You can beat in every fight. You can have sleek, shining fur when theirs is dull. Luck is not a matter of white-tipped tails."

The more the young Mink thought about it, the happier he became. "I don't see that I am to have your luck after all," said he. "When I have learned to do everything in the very best way, it will be luck of my own."

"Of course," answered the Bachelor. "Then it is a kind of luck that cannot be lost. If I carried mine in the tip of my tail, somebody might bite it off and leave me unlucky."

Big Brother kept the secret, and worked until he had learned to be as lucky as the Bachelor. Then he married the person he wanted, and she was very, very handsome. It is said that one of their sons has a white-tipped tail, but that may not be so.





The Playful Muskrats

One warm day in winter, when some of the pussy-willows made a mistake and began to grow because they thought spring had come, a party of Muskrats were visiting in the marsh beside the pond. All around them were their winter houses, built of mud and coarse grasses. These homes looked like heaps of dried rushes, unless one went close to them. If one did that, he could plainly see what they were; and if one happened to be a Muskrat, and could dive and go into them through their watery doorways, he would find under the queer roof of each, a warm, dry room in which to pass the cold days.

"Fine weather!" said every Muskrat to his neighbor. "Couldn't sleep all of such a day as this." They spoke in that way, you know, because they usually sleep in the daytime and are awake at night.

"We wish it would always be warm weather," said the young Muskrats. "What's the use of winter?"

"Hard to tell," answered one Muskrat, who had lived in the marsh longer than the rest. "Hard to tell: I know it always gives me a good appetite, though." Then all the Muskrats laughed. They were a jolly, good-natured company, and easy to get along with. The other pond people liked them much better than they did their neighbors, the Minks. The Wild Ducks who nested in the sedges, were quite willing that the young Muskrats should play with their children, and the Mud

Hens were not afraid of them. Mud Hens cannot bear Minks. They say that when a Mud Chicken is missing from the nest, there is quite sure to be a Mink somewhere near with a full stomach and down around the corners of his mouth.

Perhaps if the Wild Ducks and the Mud Hens were raising their families in the winter time it might be different, for then the Muskrats get hungry enough to eat almost anything. In spring and summer, when they can find fresh grasses and young rushes, or a few parsnips, carrots, and turnips from the farmers' fields, other animals are quite safe. In the winter they live mostly on roots.

"Fine day!" screamed the Gulls, as they swept through the air. "Pity the Frogs don't come out to enjoy it!"

"Yes, great pity," chuckled the old Muskrat. "How glad you would be to see them!" He smiled all around his little mouth and showed his gnawing teeth. He knew that the Frogs were better off asleep in the mud at the bottom of the pond, than they would be sitting in the sunshine with a few hungry Gulls above them. The Turtles were sleeping all winter, too, in the banks of the pond. The Eels were lying at the bottom, stupid and drowsy, and somewhere the Water-Adders were hidden away, dreaming of spring. Of all the birds who lived by the water, only the Gulls were there, and they were not popular. It is true that they helped keep the pond sweet and clean, and picked up and carried away many things which made the shore untidy, still, they were rude, and talked too loudly, and wore their feathers in such a way that they looked like fine large birds, when really they were lean and skinny and small. The other pond people said that was just like them, always pretending to be more than they really were.

Fifteen young Muskrats, all brothers and sisters, and all born the summer before, started off to look at the old home

where they were children together. That is to say, they were not all there at once, but there were five born early in the season; and when they were old enough to look out for themselves, five more came to live in the old nest; and when these were old enough to leave the nest, another five were born.

It doesn't mean so much to Muskrats to be brothers and sisters as it does to some people, still they remembered that they were related, and they played more with each other than with those young Muskrats who were only their cousins or friends. Their mother was very proud of them, and loved to watch them running around on their short legs, and to hear them slap their long, scaly tails on the water when they dove. They had short, downy fur, almost black on the back, soft gray underneath, and a reddish brown everywhere else. There was very little fur on their tails or on their feet, and those parts were black.

These fifteen children had been fairly well brought up, but you can see that their mother had many cares; so it is not strange if they sometimes behaved badly. In some other families, where there were only nine or ten babies all the season, they had been brought up more strictly. Like all young Muskrats, they were full of fun, and there were few pleasanter sights than to see them frolicking on a warm moonlight evening, when they looked like brown balls rolling and bounding around on the shore or plunging into the water. If they had all been exactly the same age, it would have been even pleasanter, for the oldest five would put on airs and call the others "the children"; and the next five would call the youngest five "babies"; although they were all well grown. There was no chance for the youngest five to call other Muskrats "babies," so when they were warm and well fed and good-natured they laughed and said, "Who cares?" When they were cold and

hungry, they slapped their tails on the ground or on the water and said, "Don't you think you're smart!"

When they got to talking so and their mother heard it, she would say, "Now, children!" in such a way that they had to stop. Their father sometimes slapped them with his tail. Teasing is not so very bad, you know, although it is dreadfully silly, but when people begin by teasing they sometimes get to saying things in earnest—even really hateful, mean things. And that was what made the Muskrat father and mother stop it whenever they could.

Now the whole fifteen crowded around the old summer home, and some of them went in one way, and some of them went in another, for every Muskrat's summer house has several burrows leading to it. When they reached the old nest at the end, all of them tried to get in at once, and they pushed each other around with their broad little heads, scrambled and clutched and held on with their strong little feet. Five of them said, "It's our turn first. We're the oldest." And five more said, "Well, it's our turn next anyway, 'cause we're next oldest." The others said, "You might give up to us, because we're the youngest."

They pushed and scrambled some more, and one of the youngest children said to one of the oldest, "Well, I don't care. I'm just as big as you are" (which was so). And the older one answered back, "Well, you're not so good-looking" (which was also true).

Then part of the brothers and sisters took sides with one, and part took sides with the other. What had been a lovely frolic became an unpleasant, disgraceful quarrel, and they said such things as these:

"'Fore I'd make such a fuss!"

"Who's making any more fuss than you are, I'd like to

know?"

"Oh, yes. You're big enough, but you're just as homely as you can be. So there!"

"Quit poking me!"

"You slapped your tail on my back!"

"I'm going to tell on you fellows!"

"I dare you to!"

"Won't you catch it though!"

And many more things which were even worse. Think of it. Fifteen young Muskrats who really loved each other, talking like that because they couldn't decide whether the oldest or the youngest or the half-way-between brothers and sisters should go first into the old nest. And it didn't matter a bit who was oldest or who was youngest, and it never would have happened had it not been for their dreadful habit of teasing.

Just as they had become very hot and angry, they heard their mother's voice say, "Now, children!" but they were too much excited to mind, and they did not stop until their father came and slapped them with his tail. Then they kept still and listened to their mother. She told them that they should leave the place at once, and not one of them should even set foot in the old nest. "Suppose somebody had gotten hurt," she said. This made the young Muskrats look very sober, for they knew that the Muskrat who is hurt in winter never gets well.

After she had let them think about this for a while, she said, "I shall punish you all for this." Then there was no quarrel among her children to see who should have the first turn—not at all.

One young Muskrat said, "Aren't you going to let us play any more?"

"Yes," said she. "I shall let you play all the rest of the day, but I shall choose the games. The oldest five will play 'Mud

Turtles in winter,' the next five will play 'Frogs in winter,' and the youngest five will play 'Snakes in winter.' The way to play these games is to lie perfectly still in some dark place and not say a word."

The young Muskrats looked at each other sorrowfully. They thought it sounded very much the same as being sent to bed for being naughty. They did not dare say anything, for they knew that, although their mother was gentle, as Muskrats are most of the time, she could be very severe. So they went away quietly to play what she had told them they must. But it was not much fun to play those games when all the others were having a fine time in the sunshine.

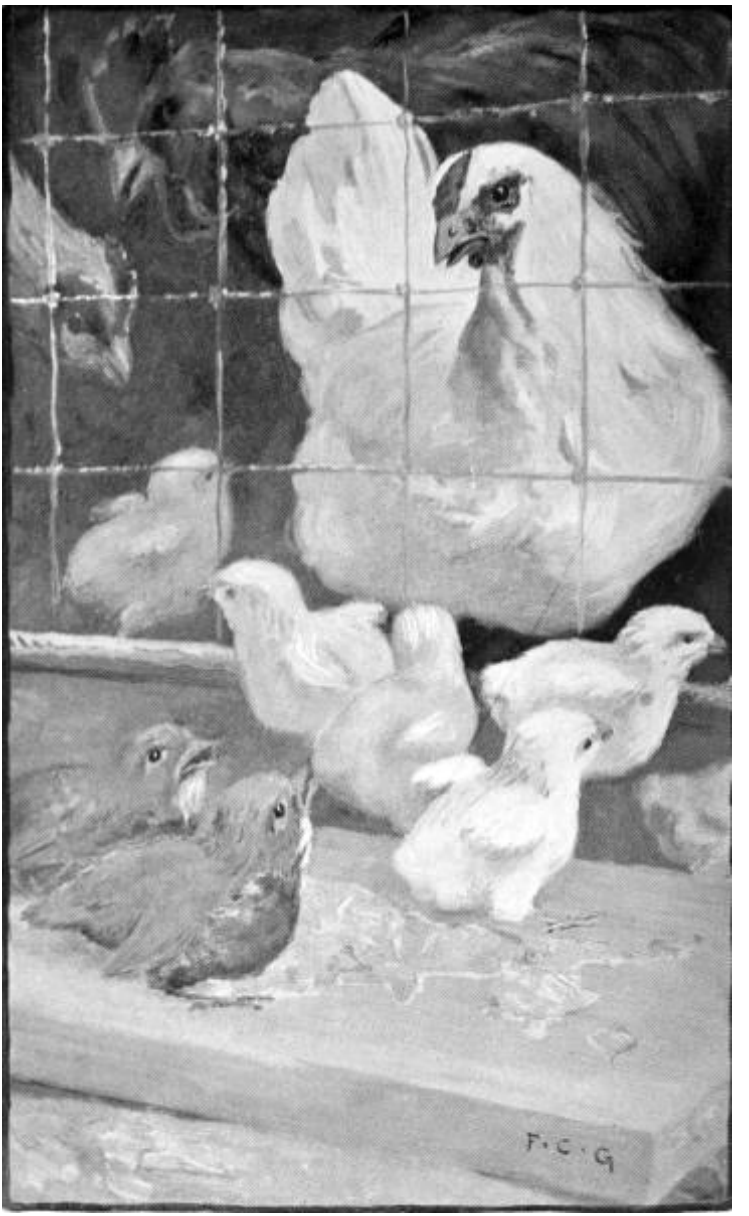
There were nine of the young Muskrats who did not tease any after that. Even the other six were more careful.

THE END.

Dooryard Stories

By Clara Dillingham Pierson
Illustrated by F. C. Gordon





The Very Rude Young Robins

Preface

My Dear Little Friends:—

These stories are of things which I have seen with my own eyes in my own yard, and the people of whom I write are my friends and near neighbors. Some of them, indeed, live under my roof, and Silvertip has long been a member of our family. So, you see, I have not had to do like some writers—sit down and think and think how to make the people act in their stories. These tales are of things which have really happened, and all I have done is to write them down for you.

Many of them have been told over and over again to my own little boy, and because he never tires of hearing of the time when Silvertip was a Kitten, and about the Wasps who built inside my shutters, I think you may care to hear also. He wants me to be sure to tell how the baby Swift tumbled down the chimney into his bedroom, and wishes you might have seen it in the little nest we made. When I tell these tales to him, I have great trouble in ending them, for there is never a time when he does not ask: "And what did he do then Mother?" But I am telling you as much as I can of how everything happened, and if there was more which I did not see and cannot describe, you will have to make up the rest to suit yourselves.

Besides, you know, there is always much which one cannot see or hear, but which one knows is happening somewhere in this beautiful great world. The birds do not stop living and working and loving when they leave us for the sunny south, and above us, around us, and even under our

feet many things are done which we cannot see. As we become better acquainted with the little people who live in our dooryards, we shall see more and more interesting things, and I wish you might all grow to be like my little boy, who is never lonely or in need of a playmate so long as a Caterpillar or a Grasshopper is in sight.

See how many tiny neighbors you have around you, and how much you can learn about them. Then you will find your own dooryard as interesting as mine and know that there are playmates everywhere.

Your friend,
Clara D. Pierson.

Stanton, Michigan,
October 30, 1902.



Silvertip

A very small, wet, and hungry Kitten pattered up and down a board walk one cold and rainy night. His fur was so soaked that it dripped water when he moved, and his poor little pink-cushioned paws splashed more water up from the puddly boards every time he stepped. His tail looked like a wet wisp of fur, and his little round face was very sad. "Meouw!" said he. "Meouw! Meouw!"

He heard somebody coming up the street. "I will follow that Gentleman," he thought, "and I will cry so that he will be sorry for me and give me a home."

When this person came nearer he saw that it was not a Gentleman at all, but a Lady who could hardly keep from being blown away. He could not have seen her except that Cat's eyes can see in the dark. "Meouw!" said the Kitten. "Meouw! Meouw!"

"Poor little Pussy!" said a voice above him. "Poor little Pussy! But you must not come with me."

"Meouw!" answered he, and trotted right along after her. He was a Kitten who was not easily discouraged. He rubbed up against her foot and made her stop for fear of stepping on him. Then he felt himself gently lifted up and put aside. He scrambled back and rubbed against her other foot. And so it was for more than two blocks. The Lady, as he always called her afterward, kept pushing him gently to one side and he

kept scrambling back. Sometimes she even had to stand quite still for fear of stepping on him.

"Meouw!" said the Kitten, and he made up his mind that anybody who spoke so kindly to strange Kittens would be a good mistress. "I will stick to her," he said to himself. "I don't care how many times she pushes me away, I will scramble back."

When they turned in at a gate he saw a big house ahead of him with many windows brightly lighted and another light on the porch. "I like that home," he said to himself. "I will slip through the door when she opens it."

But after she had turned the key in the door she pushed him back and closed the screen between them. Then he heard her say: "Poor little Pussy! I want to take you in, but we have agreed not to adopt another Cat." Then she closed the door.

He wanted to explain that he was not really a Cat, only a little Kitten, but he had no chance to say anything, so he waited outside and thought and cried. He did not know that the Lady and her husband feared that Cats would eat the many birds who nested in the trees on the lawn. He thought it very hard luck for a tiny Kitten to be left out in the cold rain while the Lady was reading by a blazing grate fire. He did not know that as she sat by the fire she thought about him instead of her book, for she loved little Kittens, and found it hard to leave any out in the street alone.

While he was thinking and crying, a tall Gentleman with a black beard and twinkling brown eyes came striding up to the brightly lighted porch. "Well, Pussy-cat!" said the Gentleman, and took a bunch of shining, jingling things out of his pocket and stuck one of them into a little hole in the door and turned it. Then the door swung open, and the Gentleman, who was trying to close his umbrella and shake off the

rain, called first to the Lady and then to the kitten. "O Clara!" he cried. "Come to see this poor little Kitten. Here Kitty, Kitty, Kitty! I know you want to see him. Here Kitty, Kitty, Kitty! I should have thought you would have heard him crying. Here Kitty, Kitty, Kitty!"

The Lady came running out and was laughing. "Yes, John," she said, "I have had the pleasure of meeting him before. He was under my feet most of the way home from church to-night, and I could hardly bear to leave him outside. But you know what we promised each other, that we would not adopt another Cat, on account of the birds."

The Gentleman sat down upon the stairs and wiped the Kitten off with his handkerchief. "Y-yes, I know," he said weakly, "but Clara, look at this poor little fellow. He couldn't catch a Chipping Sparrow."

"Not now," answered the Lady, "yet he will grow, if he is like most Kittens, and you know what we said. If we don't stick to it we will soon have as many Cats as we did a few years ago."

The Kitten saw that if he wanted to stay in this home he must insist upon it and be very firm indeed with these people. So he kept on crying and stuck his sharp claws into the Gentleman's sleeve. The Gentleman said, "Ouch!" and lifted him on to his coat lapel. There he clung and shook and cried.

"Well, I suppose we mustn't keep him then," said he; "but we will give him a warm supper anyway." So they got some milk and heated it, and set it in a shallow dish before the grate. How that Kitten did eat! The Lady sat on the floor beside him, and the Gentleman drew his chair up close, and they said that it seemed hard to turn him out, but that they would have to do it because they had promised each other.

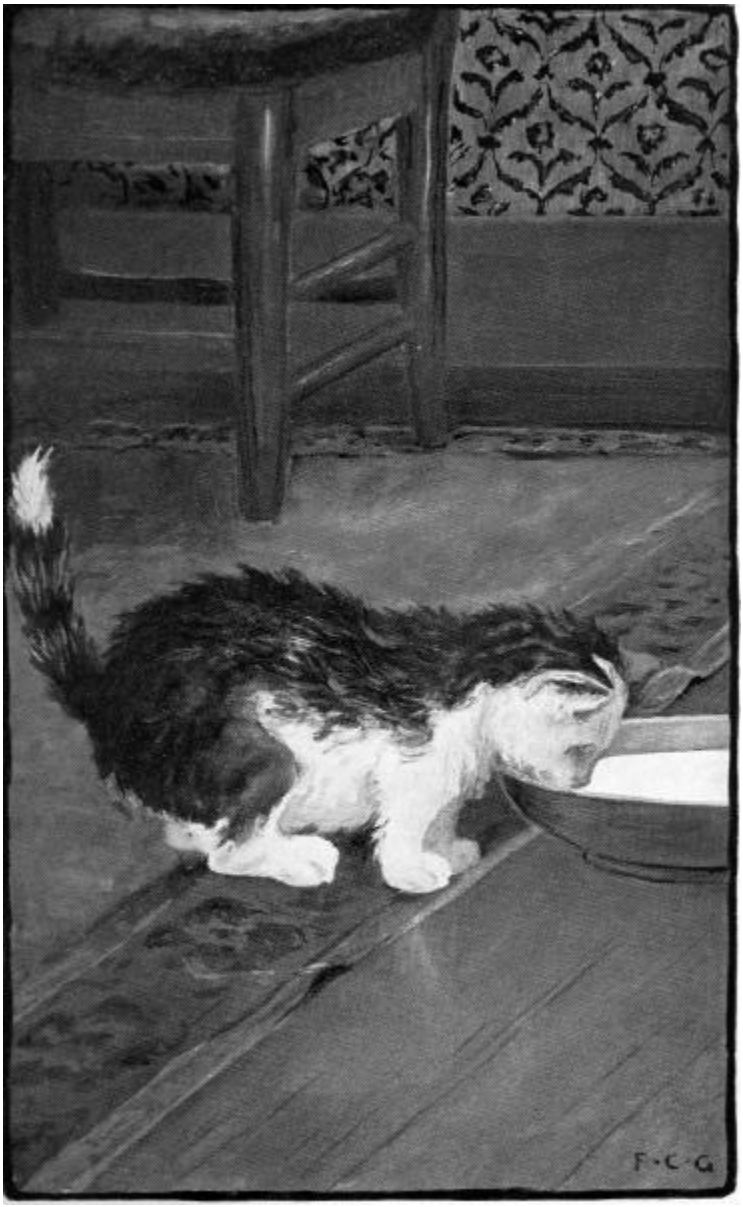
The Kitten lapped up his milk with a soft click-clicking of

his little pink tongue, and then turned his head this way and that until he had licked all the corners clean. He was so full of warm milk that his sides bulged out, and his fur had begun to dry and stuck up in pointed wisps all over him. He pretended to lap milk long after it was gone. This was partly to show them how well he could wash dishes, and partly to put off the time when he should be thrust out of doors.

When he really could not make believe any longer, his tongue being so tired, he began to cry and rub against these two people. The Gentleman was the first to speak. "I cannot stand this," he said. "If he has to go, I want to get it over." He picked up the Kitten and took him to the door. As fast as he loosened one of the Kitten's claws from his coat he stuck another one in, and at last the Lady had to help get him free. "He is a regular Rough Rider," said the Gentleman. "There is no shaking him off."

The Kitten didn't understand what a Rough Rider was, but it did not sound like finding a home, so he cried some more. Then the door was shut behind him and he was alone in the porch. "Well," he said, "I like that house and those people, even if they did put me out. I think I will make them adopt me." So he cuddled down in a sheltered, dry corner, put his four feet all close together, and curled his tail, as far as it would go, around them. And there he stayed all night.

In the morning, when the rain had stopped and the sun was shining brightly, he trotted around the house and cried. He went up on to another porch, rubbed against the door and cried. The Maid opened the door and put out some milk for him. He could see into the warm kitchen and smell the breakfast cooking on the range. When she came out to get the empty dish, he slipped in through the open door. She said "Whish!" and "Scat!" and "Shoo!" and tried to drive him out,



The Kitten Lapped Up His Milk

but he pretended not to understand and cuddled quietly down in a corner where she could not easily reach him. Just then some food began to burn on the range and the Maid let him alone. The Kitten did not cry now. He had other work to do, and began licking himself all over and scratching his ears with his hind feet.

When he heard the Gentleman and the Lady talking in the dining-room, he watched his chance and slipped in. He decided to pay the most attention to the Gentleman, for he had been the first to take him up. They were laughing and talking and saying how glad they were that the rain had stopped falling. "I believe, John," the Lady said, "that if it had not been for me, you would really have kept that Kitten last night."

"Oh, no," answered the Gentleman. "We ought not to keep Cats. I think that if it had not been for me you would have kept him."

Just at that minute the Kitten began climbing up his trousers leg and crying. "Poor little Pussy," said the Gentleman. "Clara, can't we spare some of this cream?" He reached for the pitcher. The Kitten began to feel more sure of a home.

"O John, not here?" began the Lady, and the Maid came in to explain how it all happened. The Kitten stuck his claws into the Gentleman's coat and would not let go. Then he cried some more and waved his tail. He had a very beautiful tail, marked just like that of a Raccoon, and he turned it toward the Lady. He had heard somewhere about putting the best foot forward, and thought that a tail might do just as well. While he was waving his tail at the Lady he rubbed his head against the Gentleman's black beard.

"If we should keep him, John," said the Lady, "we ought to call him Silvertip, because he has such a pretty white tip to

his tail." The Kitten waved it again and began to purr.

"If you knew what a strong and fearless fellow he is, you would call him Teddy," answered the Gentleman, turning over a paper which said in big black letters, "Our Teddy Wins."

"Call him Teddy Silvertip then," said the Lady, as she reached for the bell. When the Maid came in answer to her ring, she said, "Belle, please take our Kitten into the kitchen and feed him." Then the Kitten let go and was carried away happy, for he had found a home. He had also learned how to manage the Lady and the Gentleman, and he was always very firm with them after that.





The Fight for the Bird-House

Under the cornice of the tool-house was an old cigar-box with a tiny doorway cut in one end and a small board nailed in front of it for a porch. This had been put up for a bird-house, and year after year a pair of Wrens had nested there, until they began to think it really their own. When they left it in the fall to fly south, they always looked back lovingly at it, and talked over their plans for the next summer.

"I think we might better leave this nest inside all winter," Mrs. Wren always said. "It will seem so much more home-like when we return, and it will not be much trouble to clear it out afterward."

"An excellent plan, my dear," her cheerful little husband would reply. "You remember we did so last season. Besides," he always added, "that will show other birds that Wrens have lived here, and they will know that we are expecting to return, since that is the custom in our family."

"And then do you think they will leave it for us?" Mrs. Wren would ask. "You know they might want it for themselves."

"What if they did want it?" Mr. Wren had said. "They could go somewhere else, couldn't they? Do you suppose I would ever steal another bird's nesting-place if I knew it?"

"N-no," said Mrs. Wren, "but not everybody is as unselfish as you." And she looked at him tenderly.

The Wrens were a most devoted couple—all in all, about the nicest birds on the place. And that was saying a great deal, for there were many nesting there and others who came to find food on the broad lawn. They were small birds, wearing dark brown feathers on the upper parts of their bodies and lighter grayish ones underneath. Even their bills were marked in the same way, with the upper half dark and the lower half light. Their wings were short and blunt, and they had a habit of holding their tails well up in the air.

People said that Mrs. Wren was very fussy, and perhaps it was true, but even then she was not a cross person. Besides, if she wished to do a thing over five times in order to make it suit her, she certainly had a perfect right to do so. It was she who always chose the nesting-place and settled all the plans for the family. Mr. Wren was quite content to have it so, since that was the custom among Wrens, and it saved him much work. Mr. Wren was not lazy. He simply wanted to save time for singing, which he considered his own particular business. Besides, he never forgot what had happened to a cousin of his, a young fellow who found fault with his wife and insisted on changing to another nesting-place. It had ended in his going, and her staying there and marrying another Wren. So he had lost both his home and his wife by finding fault.

Now the April days had come, with their warm showers and green growing grass. A pair of English Sparrows, who had nested in the woodbine the summer before and raised several large broods of bad-mannered children, decided that they would like to try living in the bird-house. Having been on the place all winter, they began work early. The Blackbirds were already back, and one reminded them that it belonged to the Wrens.

"Guess not now," said Mr. Sparrow, with a bad look in his

eyes. "Nothing belongs to anybody else if I want it. Do you see?" Then he picked up and swallowed a fat Grub which the Blackbird had uncovered for himself and left lying there until he should finish talking. One could hardly blame the Blackbird for being vexed about this, for everybody knows that English Sparrows really prefer seeds, and that this one ate the Grub only to be mean. It did not make the Blackbird any happier to hear his relatives laugh at him in the evergreens above, and he made up his mind to get even with that Sparrow.

The Sparrows pitched all the old nest out of doors and began quarrelling with each other about building their own. They always quarrelled. Indeed, that was the way in which they had courted each other. Mrs. Sparrow had two lovers, and she married the one who would stand the worst pecking from her. "For," she said, "what is the use of having a husband unless you can beat him when you fight with him?"

Now they stuffed the dainty little bird-house full of straws, sticks, feathers, and anything they could find, until there was hardly room left in which to turn around. They were just beginning to wonder if they must throw some out when they heard the happy song of Mr. Wren.

"Get inside!" cried Mr. Sparrow to his wife. "I will stand on the porch and fight them."

Down flew Mr. and Mrs. Wren. "Oh, isn't it pleasant to get home again?" she exclaimed. "But what is that Sparrow doing on our porch?"

"This is our home now," said Mrs. Sparrow, "and we are very busy. Get out of my way."

"Your home?" cried the Wrens. "How is that? You lived in the woodbine last season and knew that this was ours. You are surely not in earnest."

Mr. Wren looked at his wife and she nodded. Then he

flew at Mr. Sparrow and they fought back and forth on the grape trellis near by them, in the air, then on the ground. Mrs. Sparrow peeped out of the open door to see if her husband needed help. He was the larger of the two, but not so quick in darting and turning. Now they passed out of sight behind the tool-house and she forgot Mrs. Wren and flew down to see better. She was hardly off the tiny porch when Mrs. Wren darted in. Mrs. Sparrow saw when it was too late what a mistake she had made, and tried to get back. She reached the porch again just in time to have a lot of straws, twigs, and feathers poked into her face by the angry Mrs. Wren.

"I am cleaning house," said Mrs. Wren. "My house, too! Get out of my way!" Then she pushed out more of the same sort of stuff. Mrs. Sparrow tried to get in, and every time she put her head through the doorway she was pecked by Mrs. Wren. And she deserved it. She called Mr. Sparrow, but he could not help her, and Mr. Wren was so pleased that he sat on top of the tool-house and sang and sang and sang. To look at him you would have thought he was trying to kill himself. He puffed up his throat and swelled up his body and sang so fast that he seemed to be saying about four words at a time.

"Good for you! Good for you! Good for you!" he sang. "Stick to it! Stick to it! Stick to it! I'm here! I'm here! I'm here, here, here!"

Mrs. Wren was too busy to say much, but she did a great deal. Every scrap of the nest was thrown out, and as she worked she decided to keep that house if she starved there.

This was in the middle of the morning and she could not get out to feed until late in the afternoon. Mr. Wren found some delicious insects on the grapevines, and tried to carry a few billfuls to his wife, but the Sparrows prevented him. He would have enjoyed his own dinner better if she could have

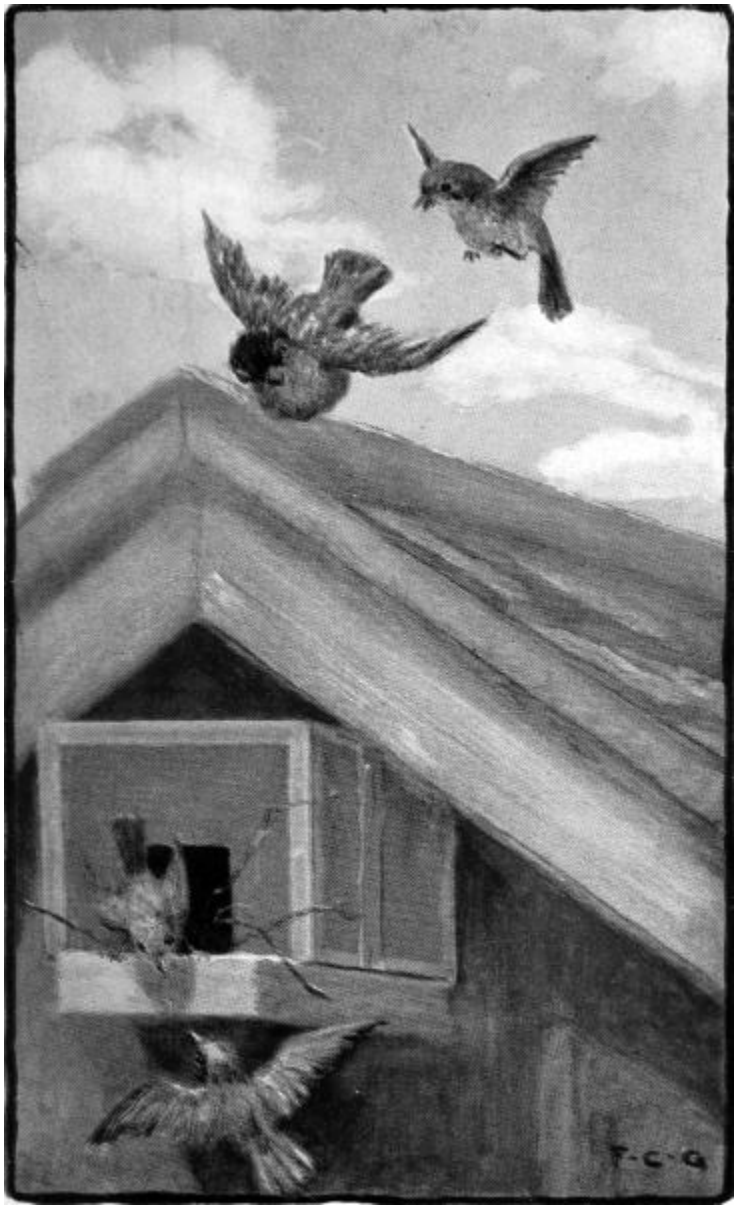
eaten with him. When he asked how she was, she chirped back that she was hungry but would not give up. Mr. Wren spent most of his time walking around the roof of the tool-house in circles, dragging his wings on the shingles, and saying, "Tr-r-r-r-r-r!" He was so angry that sometimes he could not say anything else. The Sparrows sat on the grape trellis and said mean things.

They were still doing this late in the afternoon, while the tree shadows grew longer and longer on the lawn with the lowering of the sun. Suddenly a Blackbird alighted on the trellis. It was the same one whose fat Grub Mr. Sparrow had stolen.

"This has gone far enough," said he. "This house belongs to the Wrens and they are going to have it. I say so. If I catch either of you Sparrows around here again, I will drive you off the place. I can do it, too. You may think it over until the next time that grapevine is blown against the tool-house. If you do not go then, there will be trouble." He ruffled up his feathers and glared with his yellow eyes. That was all he had to do. Before the grapevine swayed again, the Sparrows were far away.

The Wrens thanked him, even before Mrs. Wren ate her late dinner. "You are welcome," he said. "It was just fun for me. I cannot bear those Sparrows, and I hoped they would stay and give me a chance to fight them. How I wish they had stayed!" He looked sad and disappointed.

"I'll never have another such good chance," said he. And he never did. Perhaps it was just as well, although there are times when it is not wrong to fight, and the Wrens think this would have been one.



The Fight for the Bird House



The Fir-Tree Neighbors

With so many trees in the yard, it always seemed a little strange that three families should choose to build so close together in one. Still, it must also be remembered that there were many birds who liked to build near the big house, and thought of that yard as home.

The Lady spoke of this tree as "The Evergreen Apartment House." The birds simply called it "The Tallest Fir Tree."

Early in the spring a pair of English Sparrows decided to build there. Perhaps one should say that Mrs. Sparrow decided, since her husband had nothing to say about it, except to murmur, "Yes, dear," when she told him of her choice. They built well up in the tree, and had a big mass of hay, grass, and feathers together there when the Blackbirds came. This would have more than made a nest for most birds. Mrs. Sparrow called it only a beginning, and was always looking for more to add to it.

When the Blackbirds came in a dashing flock, they began hunting for building places and talking it all over among themselves. One mother Blackbird, who had nested on the place the year before, had counted on having that particular tree.

"I decided on it last fall," said she, "before I went South, and I have been planning for it all winter. I shall build in it just the same." She shut her bill in such a way that nobody

could doubt her meaning exactly what she said. Her husband didn't like the place particularly well, but she said something to him which settled it. "You need not ruffle up your feathers for me," she said, "or stand on tip-toe to squeak at me, unless you are willing to live there."

They built higher than the nest of the English Sparrows. "We have always been well up in the world," she said, "and we do not care to come down now." That was all right. One could not blame them for feeling above the English Sparrows.

The English Sparrows had added more stuff to what they had, and the Blackbirds had their nest about half done when a pair of Hairbirds came to look for a comfortable tree. They were a young couple, just married that spring, and very devoted to each other. They did not decide matters in the same way as the English Sparrow, and the Blackbirds.

Although there were eleven other great evergreens in the yard, besides a number of trellises covered with vines, and all the vine-covered porches, there was no place which suited them so well as that particular tree. Yet each was so eager to please the other that it was rather hard to get either to say what he really thought. They perched on the tips of the fir branches and chattered and twittered all morning about it.

"What do you think?" Mrs. Hairbird said.

"What do you?" he replied.

"But I want to know what you think," she insisted.

"And I would rather know what you think," said he.

"No, but really," asked she, "do you like this tree?"

"Do you?" asked Mr. Hairbird.

"Yes, yes," answered she.

"So do I!" he said, with a happy twitter. "Isn't it queer how we always like the same things?"

"I wonder if we like the same branch?" said Mrs. Hairbird,

after a long pause, in which both picked insects off the fir-tree and ate them.

"Which branch do you like?" asked he. But he could not help looking out of the side of his eye at the one he most fancied. He could not look out of the corner of his eye, you know, because round eyes have no corners, and being a bird his eyes were perfectly round.

"I like that one," she cried, and laughed to think how easily she had found out his choice. Then he laughed, too, and it was all decided, although Mrs. English Sparrow, fussing around in her mass of hay and feathers above them, declared that she never heard such silliness in her life, and that when she had made up her own mind that was enough. She never bothered her husband with questions. Mr. English Sparrow heard her say this, and thought he would rather like to be bothered in that way.

Mrs. Blackbird thought it all a great joke. "When they have been married as long as I have," she said, "it won't take so long to decide things." Mrs. Blackbird laughed at everything, but she was mistaken about this, for the Hairbirds, or Chipping Sparrows, as they are sometimes called, are always devoted and unselfish.

It being the custom in their family, the newcomers built quite low in the tree. Such a happy time as they had. Every bit of grass root which either of them dragged loose and brought to the tree, was the prettiest and stoutest and best they had ever seen. And when it got to the Horsehairs for lining, they visited all the barns for a block around, hunting for them. Once, when Mrs. Hairbird wished for a white hair for one particular place, Mr. Hairbird even watched for a white Horse, and pulled it out of his tail.

You can imagine how surprised the Horse was when he

felt that little tweak at his tail, and, looking around, saw a small brown bird pulling at one of his longest hairs. "I am sorry to annoy you," said this bird, "but Mrs. Hairbird needed a white hair."

"That is all right," said the Horse, to whom one hair was a very small matter, and who dearly loved a joke. "Please tell Mrs. Hairbird that my tail is hers if she wishes it."

"Your tail is hers!" exclaimed Mr. Hairbird, who ought to have seen the joke, since he was not an English Sparrow. "Oh, no, surely not! Surely your tail is not her tail. They are quite different, you know!" Then he understood and hurried away, but not in time to help hearing the Horse laugh.

When the white hair was woven in, the nest was done, and Mrs. Hairbird laid in it four greenish blue eggs with dark brown specks. In the nest above were six greenish white ones with brown and light purple spots. In the nest above that were five dingy streaked and speckled ones. Mrs. Hairbird said that hers were by far the prettiest. "It is not because I laid them," she said to her husband. "It is not for that reason that I think so, but they really are."

Mr. and Mrs. Hairbird were the only ones who paid for the chance to build in the tree. They picked insects off the branches, insects that would have robbed the tree of some of its strength.

The Blackbirds would not bother with such small bits of food. The English Sparrows should have paid in the same way, but they would not.

Their great-great-great- —a great many times great- — grandparents were brought over to this country just to eat the insects which were hurting the trees and shrubs, but when they got here they would not do it. "No, indeed," said they; "we are here now, and we will eat what we choose." Their

great-great-great- —a great many times great- —grandchildren were just like them.

Silvertip often came to sit under this tree. He called it a family tree, because it had so many little families in its branches. He could not climb it. The fine branches and twigs were so close together that he could not get up the trunk, and they were not strong enough for him to step from one to another of them.

As might perhaps have been expected, there was some gossiping among neighbors in this tree. The Blackbirds usually climbed to their nest by beginning at the bottom of the trunk and going around and around it to the top. This took them so close to the other nests that they could not help looking in. At any rate, they didn't help it.

Mrs. Blackbird told Mrs. Hairbird that the way Mrs. Sparrow kept house was a disgrace to the tree. Mrs. Sparrow told her to be very careful not to leave her eggs or young children alone when the Blackbirds were around, because when they were very hungry they had been known to—! She did not finish her sentence in words, but just ruffled up her feathers and fluttered her wings, which was a great deal meaner. If she were going to say such things about people, you know, she should have said them, and not made Mrs. Hairbird guess the worst part.

Mr. Blackbird said he pitied Mr. Sparrow with all his heart. He knew something what it was to have a wife try to run things, but that if Mrs. Blackbird had ever acted as Mrs. Sparrow did, he would leave her, even if it were in the early spring.

Mr. Sparrow said it was most disagreeable to have such noisy neighbors as the Blackbirds overhead. That if his wife had known they were coming to that tree, she would have

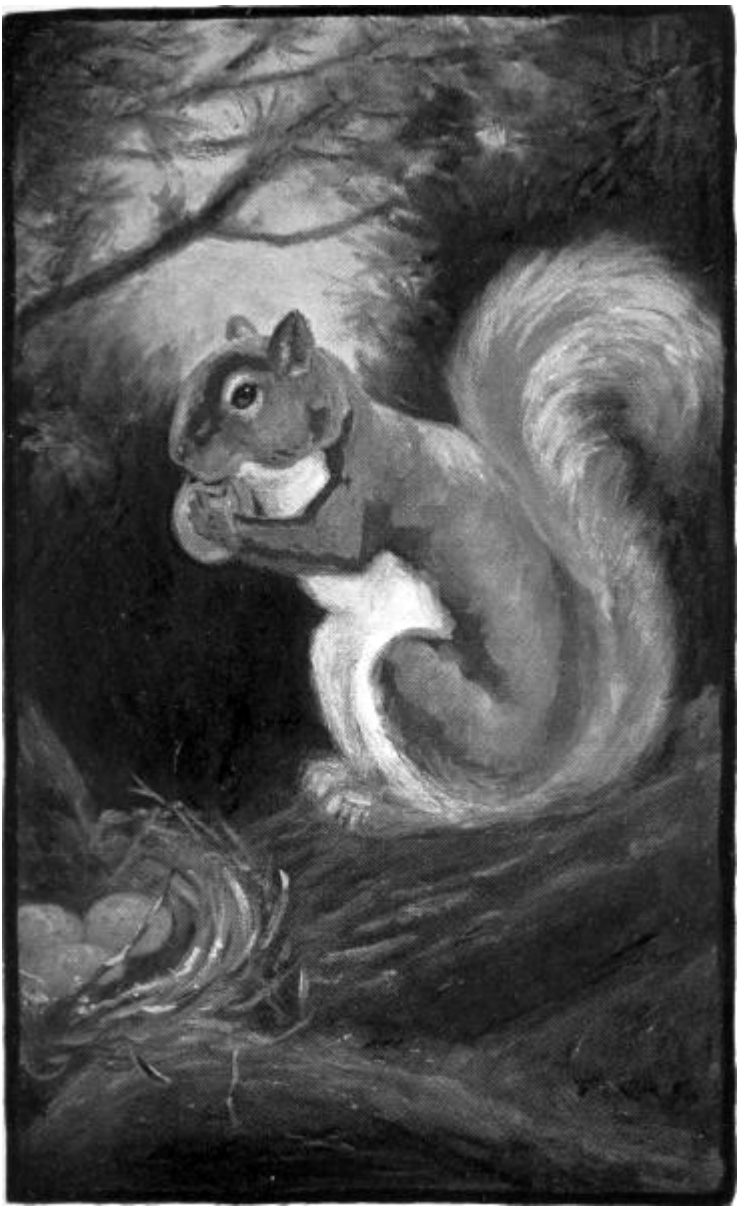
chosen another place. "Of course it was too late for her to change when she found it out," he said. "Her nest was well begun, and she had some very choice straws and feathers which she didn't care to move. You know how such things get spoiled in carrying them from place to place."

Most of these things were told to Mrs. Hairbird, because she was at home with the eggs, but she repeated them all to her husband when he came. She even told him how Mr. Sparrow flew down one day just after a quarrel with his wife, and of all the things he had said when angry. It was quite right in Mrs. Hairbird to tell her husband, and yet she never chirped them to another bird. And that also was right.

When people talked these things to her, she always looked bright and pleasant, but she did not talk about them herself. Indeed, she often made excuses for her neighbors when she repeated things to her husband. For instance, when she told what Mrs. Sparrow had said about Mrs. Blackbird, she added: "I suppose that may be so, still I feel sure that Mrs. Blackbird would not eat any of our children unless she were dreadfully hungry."

You can see what a sweet and wise little person Mrs. Hairbird was, and her husband was exactly like her. No matter how other people quarrelled, they did not. No matter what gossip they heard, they did not repeat it. And it ended just as such things always do.

In late spring, about the time that the Bees were gathering varnish for their homes, and every fir-tree tip had one or two buzzing around it, there was a dreadful quarrel in the family tree. Mrs. Sparrow wanted some grasses from the outside of the Blackbirds' nest, and she sat on her own and looked at them until she felt she could not live without them. Of course, that was very wrong. She might have forgotten all about them



A Red Squirrel Ate Them

if she had made herself think about something else. Any bird who wants something he ought not to have should do that. She might better have looked down at her own breast, or counted her wing feathers over and over. However, she didn't. She took those grasses.

Mrs. Blackbird missed them, and then saw them woven loosely into the nest below hers. She did not say much, and she did not eat the eggs out of the Sparrows' nest. Some people said that she ate them, but that was a mistake. All that she did was to sit very quietly on her nest while a Red Squirrel ate them. When this same fellow would have eaten those in the nest below, both the Hairbirds being away, she drove him off herself.

You can imagine what the Sparrows said when they returned. Or perhaps you might better not try to, for they said very cross things. Then Mrs. Blackbird told what she thought about those stolen grasses, and her husband joined in, until there was more noise than a flock of Crows would make.

It ended in Mr. and Mrs. Sparrow tearing down that nest and building another in the woodbine, where most of their relatives lived. Some of their neighbors thought the Blackbirds right and some thought the Sparrows right, but through it all Mr. and Mrs. Hairbird were happy and contented, and brought up their four charming children to be as good birds as they were themselves.

The Sparrows often said that the worst thing about going away from the family tree was leaving the Hairbirds, who were such delightful neighbors. The Blackbirds said that the pleasantest thing about the tree was having the Hairbirds for neighbors. The Hairbirds were liked by everybody, and never made trouble between friends. It was all because they knew how and when to keep their bills shut.

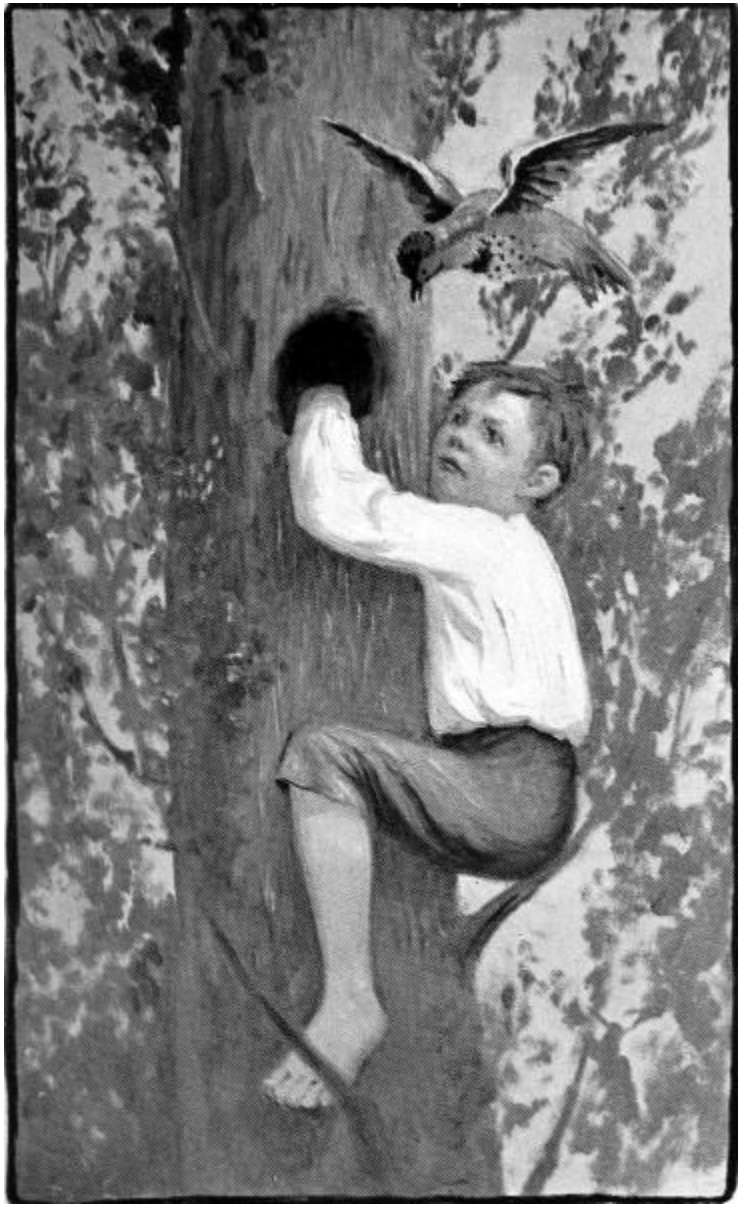


The Industrious Flickers

If the Bad Boy who lived in the next block had known more about the habits of Flickers, there would probably have been no young ones to feed on the lawn of the big house. He had watched Mr. and Mrs. Flicker in the spring when they were making their nest ready, and had waited only long enough for the eggs to be laid before climbing the tall Lombardy poplar to rob it.

You must not think that Mr. and Mrs. Flicker were stupid in showing the Bad Boy where their nest was. There was never a more careful couple, but they were so large and handsome that, if they went anywhere at all, they were sure to be seen. After they had once been seen, it was easy for any one with plenty of time to watch and follow them home.

Mr. Flicker was clad mostly in golden brown, barred with black. He had a very showy black spot on his breast, which was just the shape of a new moon, black patches on his cheeks and smaller ones on his belly. The linings of his wings, and the quills of his long wing- and tail-feathers were a bright yellow, and on the back of his head he had a beautiful red band. All these were very fine, but the most surprising thing was a large patch of pure white feathers on the lower part of his back. These did not show except when he was flying. At other times his folded wings quite hid them from sight. Mrs. Flicker looked so much like her husband that you could not



A Very Cruel Thing to Do

tell one from the other, unless you were near enough to see their cheeks. Then you would know, for Mrs. Flicker had no black spots on hers.

When the Bad Boy was sure that the nest was high up in the trunk of the old Lombardy poplar, just across the street from the big house, he waited until his mother and his big sister were out of the way, and then he climbed that tree and took the six white eggs out of it. That was a very, very cruel thing to do. It would have been bad enough to take one, but to take all six was a great deal worse. You will not pity the Bad Boy when you know that he tore his trousers and hurt one hand on his way down.

Poor Mrs. Flicker cried herself to sleep that night. "If we had not been careful," she sobbed, "I wouldn't feel so badly, but to have it happen after all the trouble we took! I am sure that when we cut the hole for our nest, not a single chip fell to the ground below. We carried them all far away before dropping them.

"Excepting the ones we left for the eggs to lie on," added Mr. Flicker, who was always particular and exact in what he said, even when in great trouble.

"Yes, excepting those," sobbed his poor wife. "I left a few of the best ones inside."

"I wonder where the eggs are now," said Mr. Flicker. He looked toward the Bad Boy's home as he spoke. If he had but known it, the Bad Boy had not one left. Two had been broken in coming down the tree (for his mouth had not been big enough to carry all six), three he had traded for marbles, and the last one, which he meant to keep for a "specimen," had rolled off his desk in school and smashed on the floor. The Bad Boy had been kept in at recess for this, but that did not make the egg whole again.

The Flickers went sadly to sleep, and dreamed of a land where Birds were as big as Cows and Boys as small as Goldfinches—where boys were afraid of birds and hid when they saw them coming.

When the morning sunshine awakened them and they had breakfasted well, Mrs. Flicker began to feel more hopeful. "I am really ashamed of myself," she said, "for being so discouraged. There would be some excuse for it if I were another kind of bird, but since I am a Flicker and can lay more eggs whenever my nest is robbed, I think I'd better stop crying and plan for six more."

"My brave wife!" exclaimed Mr. Flicker. "You are quite right. It is all very sad, but we will make the best of it and try to be happy."

The Bad Boy passed under the tree more than twenty times before the second lot of eggs were hatched, and he wished and wished for a Flicker's egg (only he called them High Holes, because they built in high holes). He never guessed that in the nest above his head lay six more just as fine as the ones he had stolen. It is not strange that he did not, for who but a Flicker can lay and lay and lay eggs when her nest is robbed?

Now the young Flickers were hatched and ready to leave their comfortable home. They were much more helpless than most young birds are when they leave the nest. In fact, they could hardly fly at all, and had to tumble and sprawl their way to the ground, catching here and there in the branches of the poplar. Her neighbors thought Mrs. Flicker quite heartless to let them go so soon, but when she told them what a care her six nestlings were, they felt differently about it.

"Did you ever hear of such a thing?" exclaimed Mrs. Catbird, who thought herself quite overworked in caring for her

six, and who had only known Flickers by sight before this. "Did you ever hear of such a thing? She tells me that she and Mr. Flicker not only have to find all the food for their children, but have to eat it for them also. I remember the Mourning Doves doing that, but then, they never have more than two children at a time, so it is not so hard."

"What is that?" asked a Blackbird, who, like the rest of her family, always wanted to know about everything.

"Why," repeated Mrs. Catbird, "the Flickers have to eat all the food they get for their children, and then, when it has become soft and ready for young birds, they unswallow it into their children's bills. It takes so much time to do this and to fly back and forth that they want to have them out of the nest as soon as possible. Then they can take them around with them."

You can imagine how anxious the parents were for a few days, while their six babies were still so awkward and helpless. They took them across the street to the lawn around the big house, and tucked them away in dusky places where their brown feathers would not show against anything light. Most of them were under the edge of a board walk, one was under a porch, and one was under a low branching evergreen. Mrs. Robin, who was then hatching her second brood, kept watch for Silvertip, and this was a great help to the Flickers on the ground below.

First one and then another of the young Flickers went out with one of the parents, and it was most interesting to see them fed. The Flickers, you know, are woodpeckers, and their long bills are slender, curved, and pointed, just right for picking Grubs and nice fat little Bugs out of tree-bark. Their tails, also, are stiff and right to prop them as they work up and around the trunk of a tree. Still, they feed on the ground more

than on trees, and like Ants better than anything else in the world.

Now, one could see Mr. Flicker by an Ant-hill with a nestling beside him, his head going up and down like a hammer, and an Ant picked up in his bill at every stroke. Every now and then he would stop, turn his head, place his bill in that of his child, and unswallow some Ants, which the nestling would gulp down. Between feedings the nestling would settle his head between his shoulders, and slide his thin eyelids over his eyes. He never slid his thick eyelids over. He saved those for night, when he would really sleep.

While the father was feeding one, the mother would be feeding another. When these two were satisfied they were sent back to their hiding-places and two more had their turns. It was very hard work, in spite of their being so good. They never fussed or teased. They waited patiently for their turns and found no fault with the food.

"Oh," said Mrs. Flicker to her husband, as she swallowed the six hundred-and-forty-eighth Ant since sunrise. "I am so tired that I feel like giving up. If it were not for you and the children, I believe I would just as soon let that Cat catch me as not."

"I know," he answered. "I am very tired myself, and I am sure you must be more so. You do not seem strong since you were shut in so long while brooding the eggs."

"It is easier in one way, now that all are out of the nest," said she. "It saves my wings a great deal, but my neck and throat ache from such steady work. I used to rather enjoy eating for myself. The food tasted good, and it was something pleasant to do. This eating for a whole family is quite different."

"Well, it won't last much longer," her husband said

comfortingly. "The children will soon be able to feed themselves, and you can have a good rest. Then we will go picnicking in the fields beyond this place, and every one shall get his own lunch."

In a few more days they did this, and for three mornings they might have been seen, in a happy party of eight, walking around together, quite as Pigeons do. At the end of the third day, Mr. Flicker said to his wife: "Well, my dear, are you having a good time? This is a pleasant change from caring for the children, isn't it?"

To his surprise, she turned her head away and did not answer. When he repeated his questions, she replied with a little choke in her voice. "It is very easy," she said, "and a great rest, but it seems to me I have nothing to do. I eat all I can and try to swallow slowly, but when my stomach is full I have to just walk around. I miss the children putting their dear little bills up to mine and taking food from me. I believe I am lonely."

Poor Mr. Flicker was young and inexperienced. He did not know how quickly some people change their minds, or how mothers miss the care of children.

"Isn't there something you can do," he asked, "to make you happier?"

"Could you help me clean out our old hole in the Lombardy poplar?" said she. "I believe I will lay some more eggs."

"What?" cried her husband. "When you have been so tired? And then you will be shut in so long while brooding them. Why not fly off on a pleasure trip with me?"

"I will," said she. "I'd love to go. But let us get the nest all ready first."

Mr. Flicker was young and inexperienced, as has been said before, yet he flew right off to work on that nest and let his

wife do exactly as she chose. Which shows that, although she did change her mind and he could not understand why, they were a very happy and sensible couple, after all.





Plucky Mrs. Polistes

Mrs. Polistes was a charming little widow, who had slept through the long, cold winter, snugly tucked away in a crack in the barn belonging to the big house. She had married late in the fall, but her husband was a lazy fellow who had soon left her, and sat around in the sunshine with his brothers and the other fellows whom he knew. Each sat in his own little spot, and at last died because he was so lazy. That is the way with many insects who will not work. They die, and the members of their families who keep busy live to a good old age.

Now it was spring, and Mrs. Polistes awakened happy and full of plans. You must not think her hard-hearted to be happy after her husband was dead. If he had been a different sort of a fellow, you know, she would have missed him more. As it was, she did not even think of marrying again, but set to work to build her home and bring up her children to be good and industrious Wasps like herself.

She asked another young widow to work with her, and together they flew around hunting for a good building-place. They talked first of hanging their nest from the branch of a bush, but both were very careful Wasps and preferred to be sheltered from rain-storms. (Some of their family, however, did choose to build on bushes). Next they flew into the ice-house and tried several of the corners there. Mrs. Polistes did most of the talking, being a Wasp of very decided opinions.

"It is too chilly here," she said. "I should never feel like myself in such a cold place. And you know perfectly well," she added, "that if anybody should disturb us in here, we would not be warm enough to sting. Or if we did sting, we could never pump much poison in."

There was nothing to be said after that, for everybody knows that unless a Wasp can sting, and sting hard, he is not safe.

Then they looked at the porch ceilings. Their cousins, the Vespæ, had started some nests there, and they preferred not to be too near them. The Vespæ were very good Wasps, but, as Mrs. Polistes said, "We wish to bring our children up to be Polistes Wasps, and if they see the way in which the Vespæ live, they will get their ideas all mixed. I do not think it wise to rear them within sight of covered nests, and you know as well as I [this was to her friend] how the Vespæ wall around their cells."

After this they found what they thought a most delightful place. It was just inside the closed shutters of a bedroom window. The upper sash of the window was lowered, and inside of that was a fine wire netting. "Excellent!" said the friend. "That is probably there to keep the people inside from coming out this way."

Mrs. Polistes was not quite sure that the netting was there for that reason, but she liked the place, so they flew off together to the stump-fence which enclosed the great field back of the house. Then they looked for an old stump, sat down on one of its prongs, and began to gnaw off wood fibre. They did not talk much, for they had to work so hard with their mouths. Each gnawed length-wise of the grain until she had a little bundle of wood fibre in her jaws. When these were ready, they flew off to their chosen spot and began to build. First it had

to be chewed for a long time, until it was soft and pulpy, then, working together and very carefully, they built a slender, stemlike thing down from the top of the window casing.

It took many trips to bring enough wood fibre for this, and between trips they had to stop for food. It took longer to find it so early in the season than it would later, for Flies and insects of all kinds were scarce and there were not many flowers yet. Some of those which looked most tempting were for Bees, and not for Wasps. The Wasps, you know, have such short tongues that they cannot get the honey from most flowers. That is why they so like the flat-topped ones and the shallow ones into which they can reach easily. Mrs. Polistes and her friend at last found a bed of sweet clover which made them fine meals.

That first day they only chose the place for their home and got the stem ready, but it was not long before they had three tiny cells begun and eggs in two of them. Mrs. Polistes and the homemakers of her family always insisted upon doing in this way.

"It not only saves time," said Mrs. Polistes, "to have several kinds of work going at once, but it rests one, too. When my jaws are tired of chewing wood fibre or shaping it into cells, I rest myself by laying an egg. And when my sting is tired from that, I hunt food for myself and the babies. There is nothing like having a change of work."

Mrs. Polistes spoke in this way about her sting, you understand, because it was her ovipositor, or egg-layer, as well. She really used it in this way much more than the other. She did not wish to sting with it any more than she had to. It tired her very much to pump poison through it when she stung. There was always the danger, too, if she stung a large creature, like a boy, of getting it stuck in him and not being able to pull it

out without breaking. If it broke, she would die.

Mrs. Polistes and her friends took turns in laying eggs, and soon had to begin another row of cells around the first. They laid their oblong white eggs in them long before the cells were done, and had to stick them up to the side walls to keep them from falling out of the opening at the bottom. Then, when they had time, they lowered the walls of the cells. When the babies hatched, which was only a few days after the laying of the eggs, they brought food and fed them as they hung in their cells.

The Lady who lived in the big house watched this very often, and Mrs. Polistes and her friend became so used to it that they were not at all frightened or disturbed. Wasps, you know, are very easily tamed by any one who moves gently. The Lady stood on a chair just inside the window, and put her face close to the screen. She could see exactly how the mother Wasps bit the cell walls into shape, moving backward all the time. She could see Mrs. Polistes and her friend bring nicely chewed-up Flies and other insects with which to feed the babies, and watched them go quietly from cell to cell, giving a lunch to each.

They were very interesting babies. Being still fastened to the cell wall by the tail end, only their heads showed, tiny white heads with two little eyes and brown, horny jaws. Sometimes, when Mrs. Polistes and her friend were away, the Lady would softly lower the screen from the top of the window and touch the nest very, very gently with her pencil. Then each baby thought it was his mother or his aunt, and thrust his tiny head out for food. Perhaps this was not kind to the Wasp babies, but if the Lady made them and their mother amuse her, she was also very careful about worrying them. The older Wasps never found out that the screen had been moved, and

the Lady told everybody in the house that the upper window sash must not be put up. She feared that it would strike the outer cells and loosen the nest if raised.

All would have gone well if it had not been for that dreadful thunderstorm just before daylight one morning. The Gentleman found the raindrops blowing in through the bedroom window, and got it almost closed before he remembered the Wasps' nest. Then he lowered the upper sash again and left it down, in spite of the rain.

Sad to say, when morning came the dainty little nest lay on the top edge of the upper sash. It had been loosened but not crushed, and had fallen on to the only place it could. Mrs. Polistes and her friend were flying in and out with food for the babies, who were now all tilted up sidewise, instead of hanging head downward, as Wasp babies should.

"I don't understand it at all," said the friend. "Everything is exactly as it was when we went to sleep, except that the nest has fallen."

"I was dreaming as I hung on the nest last night," replied Mrs. Polistes, "when suddenly I felt a great jar and was knocked off."

"So was I," exclaimed her friend.

"I flew around in the dark until I found it again," added Mrs. Polistes, "but I had to wait until daylight to see what had happened. Oh, dear! It is so upsetting to find one's home upside down, and two of my children are just ready to spin their cocoons."

"Your children?" asked her friends quite sharply, for it made her cross to have such misfortunes. "Your children? One of those children is mine."

"Which one?" asked Mrs. Polistes, who thought she remembered her own egg-laying.

"I don't know which, now that the nest is all turned around," was the answer. "It has mixed those babies up, and I can't pick out mine."

"Well, it doesn't really matter," said Mrs. Polistes kindly. "You may call them both yours, if you want to. Just laying the egg doesn't count for much, and we have both fed and cared for them. I supposed we would share babies as we have shared everything else."

This made the friend ashamed of herself, and she said that she was sorry she was cross, and that Mrs. Polistes should call one of the cocoons hers.

Then they put their heads together to decide what to do with the nest. When Wasps put their heads together, they stroke each other with their long feelers, or antennæ, and in that way each is sure what the other is thinking. They also smell with these feelers, you know, and some people say that they hear with them. A Wasp with broken antennæ can do but little, and as for not having any—why, a Wasp might as well die at once as to lose his antennæ.

Poor Mrs. Polistes and her little friend! It looked now as though if they were to bring up those children at all, they would have to do it wrong side up. The right way, you know, is to raise them upside down, and here they were lying with their heads up in cells that were open at the top.

Yet, even while they were thinking about it, something else happened. The window sash on which the nest lay began to move slowly and steadily upward, not stopping until the nest almost touched the casing above.

Mrs. Polistes was so frightened! She thought that nest, children, and all were about to be crushed flat. She said afterward that she was so scared she could think of nothing but stinging, and there was nobody whom she could sting. Of

course, that would be so, for a Wasp who is frightened always wants to sting, and it is a great comfort to him if he can. It gives him something new to think about, you know.

The Lady was the one who slowly pushed the sash upward. She thought it might help the poor little mothers somewhat. And it did. They began at once to hunt food for their children and bring it in. The nest now lay on the middle of the sash. Before it was knocked loose, it had hung over in one corner of the casing. It would now have been much nearer for the little mothers to crawl through the middle of the shutters. But they were Wasps, and Wasps do not easily change their paths, so they entered each time at precisely the old place, and then flew or crawled to the nest. One who watches Wasps in the open air would never expect them to go by a roundabout way, for they fly so swiftly, strongly, and directly, yet they are easily puzzled by changes around the nest.

Mrs. Polistes had not fed more than half her share of children when she had an idea. She struck her antennæ against those of her friend and told her about it. Then they walked all around the nest, looked at it, felt of it, and gave it little pushes. The Lady stood on her chair watching them, but they were used to her and did not mind it.

"I believe we can," said Mrs. Polistes.

"It would be lovely if we could," answered her friend, "but I am sure we can't."

"We can try it, anyway," said Mrs. Polistes.

"What is the use?" said her friend. "It will just scare the babies and tire us out. We might better feed them where they are."

"No," said Mrs. Polistes, and she spoke very positively. "No! There are worse things than being scared, and they must stand it. If we leave this nest as it is, the first hard wind will

tumble it around, and a rolling nest raises no Wasps."

"Mothers!" cried the children, in their weak little voices. "Mothers! What are you talking about?"

"We are going to fix your nest up again," answered Mrs. Polistes. "Now be good children, and do not bother us with questions."

Then she and her friend began pushing and pulling and rolling and tumbling the nest around to get it more nearly right side up. They got it tipped so that all the cells slanted downward, and then they began chewing wood-pulp and building a new stem toward it from the casing above. Mrs. Polistes worked so hard that her friend was really worried about her. She would not take time to eat. At last her friend stood right in front of her and unswallowed a drop of delicious honey. "You must eat it," she said. "When I swallowed it, I meant to keep it for myself, but I would much rather give it to you." Mrs. Polistes lapped it up and felt stronger at once.

Such a stout stem as this one was! The cell walls also had to be strengthened with more of the wood pulp and sticky saliva from the Wasps' mouths, because the stem was to be fastened to them in a new place. It was not until the next day that all this work was done, and the mothers could begin living in the old way again. The babies were glad when this time came, for they had not been fed so much while extra building had to be done.

The two children who were ready to do so had spun their cocoons in their cells. They used the silky stuff which they had in their mouths, and which oozed out through a little hole in each child's lip. The others were growing finely, the nest was hanging from its new stem, the Lady had lowered the window sash once more, and Mrs. Polistes and her friend had a little time to rest. "I am going to give myself a thorough

cleaning," said she, licking her front feet off and then rubbing her head with them. "And then I am going away for a play-spell."

She cleaned herself all over with her legs, and was most particular about her antennæ. She had special cleaners for these, you know—little prongs which grow in the bend of the fourth and fifth joints of the forelegs and fit closely around the antennæ, scraping them clean between the bent legs and the prongs. You can see she would need to be particular, because she had to do her talking, her smelling, part of her feeling, and perhaps some of her hearing with them. When she was well scrubbed, she took a good look at the children and flew off for a fine time, while her friend took care of things at home.

Such fun as she had! She caught and ate Cabbage Butterflies, Earwigs, and other food which will not be touched by most insects and birds. She supped a tiny bit of honey from the sweet clover, and then flew straight to the cherry tree. A Catbird was already there, helping himself to the best in the tree-top, and laughing at the Lady when she tried to scare him away. He was never afraid of her throwing straight enough to hit him.

Mrs. Polistes sipped juice from one ripe cherry after another, and then, sad to say, she began to drink from one which was over-ripe. She may not have known that it was so, but not knowing made no difference with her feelings. She was soon so weak in all her six legs that she could not walk, and so weak in her wings that her big front and her small hind pairs would not stay hooked together as they should be. It was a long time before she could get home.

When she did go, she carried back some good things for the children, and then took care of them while her friend had

a playspell. After all, when she was once rested, she enjoyed work better than play. Her children all grew finely, and so did those of her friend, which was exceedingly fortunate. If one had died, you know, after the tumbling down of the nest, each would have thought it her own.

The little Wasps also grew up as well as could be expected. The sons all took after their father, and were lazy, but, apart from that, they were all right. The Queen daughters were exactly like their mothers, and the little Workers, of whom there were the most of all, were the greatest of comforts. They did the work of the home as soon as they were old enough. It was truly a family which paid for saving.

When people asked Mrs. Polistes how she ever came to think of such a thing as putting the nest up again, she simply flirted her wings and replied: "Where else should I put it? I couldn't leave my children there."





Silvertip Stops a Quarrel

This is the story of something which did not really happen in the dooryard of the big house, yet it has seemed best to put it in with these tales because it could all be seen from that yard, and because Silvertip had a part in it.

He was sitting quietly upon the broad top-rail of the fence one afternoon, wishing that the sun would shine again. It had rained most of the time for three days, and he did not like wet weather. He thought it was going to clear off, for the clouds had not sent any drops down since noon. The grass and walks were still damp, so he sat on the fence-rail. He had stayed in the house so long that he was tired of it, and he was also watching a pair of Robins who had built a nest on one of the upstairs window-ledges. They had put it right on top of a last year's Robins' nest, and that was on one of the year before. You can see that it was well worth looking at.

Silvertip had been here only a short time, when he saw Mr. White Cat, from another house, walking over to the one across the street. Miss Tabby Cat lived there, and he knew that Mr. Tiger Cat was around somewhere. Mr. White Cat looked very cross. He was one of those people who are good-natured only when the sun is shining and they have everything they want, and this, you know, is not the best sort of a person.

"Um-hum!" said Silvertip to himself. "I think there will be

a fight before long. I will watch." He stood up and stretched himself carefully and sat down the other way, so as to see all that happened. Silvertip himself never fought. He spent a great deal of time in making believe fight, and usually entertained his Cat callers by glaring, spitting, or even growling at them, but he never really clawed and scratched and bit. He did not care to have sore places all over him, and he did not wish to get his ears chewed off.

"I can get what I want without fighting for it, so why should I fight?" said he. He was a very good sort of Cat, and had never been really cross about anything except when the Little Boy came to live in the big house. Then he had been sulky for weeks, and would not stay in the room with the Little Boy at all. He thought that if he made enough fuss about it, the Gentleman and the Lady would not let the Little Boy live there. When he found the Little Boy would stay anyway, he stopped being cross. After a while he loved him too.

No, Silvertip would not fight. But he very much liked to watch other Cats fight. Now he saw Miss Tabby sit quietly by the house across the street and right in front of a hole under the porch. She had her legs tucked beneath her, and her tail neatly folded around them. She looked as though she had found a small spot which was dry, and wanted to get all of herself on that.

Just inside the open doorway of the barn, there sat Mr. Tiger Cat. He also had his legs tucked in and his tail folded around him. Mr. White Cat walked straight up to him and stood stiff-legged. Mr. Tiger Cat, who had just eaten a hearty meal and wanted an after-dinner nap, half opened his eyes and looked at him. Then he closed them again.

This made Mr. White Cat more ill natured still. He did not like to have people look at him and then shut their eyes.

He began to switch his tail and stand his hair on end. He decided to make the other Cat fight anyway. He cared all the more about it because Miss Tabby was watching him. He had not noticed Silvertip. "Er-oo!" said he, drawing back his head and lowering his tail stiffly. "Did you say it was going to rain, or did you say it was not?"

"I hardly think it will," answered Mr. Tiger Cat pleasantly.

"You don't think it will, hey?" asked Mr. White Cat. "Well, I say it will pour."

Mr. Tiger Cat slid his thin eyelids over his eyes.

"Did you hear me?" asked Mr. White Cat, still standing in the same way.

"Certainly," answered the other.

"Well, what do you say to that?" asked Mr. White Cat, and now he began to stand straighter and hold his tail out behind.

"I am willing it should pour," said Mr. Tiger Cat, beginning to uncover his eyes slowly.

"Oo-oo! You are?" growled Mr. White Cat. "You are, are you? Well, I am not!"

There was no answer. You see Mr. Tiger Cat did not want to fight. He did not need to just then, and he never fought for the fun of it when his stomach was so full. He supposed he would have to in the end, for he knew when a fellow has really made up his mind to it, and is picking a quarrel, it has to end in that way. At least, it has to end in that way when one is a Cat. If one is bigger and better, there are other ways of ending it.

Mr. Tiger Cat knew all this, and yet he waited. "The longer I wait," he thought, "the more I shall feel like it. My stomach will not be so full and I can fight better. He needn't think he can come around and pick a quarrel and chew my

ears when Miss Tabby is looking on. No indeed."

You see Mr. Tiger Cat was also fond of Miss Tabby.

"Er-roo!" said Mr. White Cat, straightening his legs until he stood very tall indeed. "Er-roo!"

He had made himself so angry now that he could not talk in words at all. Mr. Tiger Cat sat still.

"Er-row!" said Mr. White Cat, speaking way down his throat. "Er-row!" Mr. Tiger Cat sat still.

Silvertip became so excited that he could not stay longer on the fence. He dearly loved to see a good fight, you know, so he jumped quietly down without looking away from the barn door, and began walking softly toward it. He knew that when a Cat got to saying "Er-row!" down in his throat, something was going to happen very soon. Silvertip did not know, however, exactly what it would be because he did not see a couple of big Dogs trotting down the street toward him.

He crept nearer and nearer to the barn, hardly looking where he stepped for fear of missing some of the fun. His pretty white paws got wet and dirty, but that did not matter now. Paws could be licked clean at any time. Fights must be watched while they may be found.

"Ra-ow!" said Mr. White Cat, giving a forward jump.

"Pht!" answered Mr. Tiger Cat, standing stiffly on his hind feet and letting his front ones hang straight down. He was wide awake now, and ready to teach Mr. White Cat a lesson in politeness.

"Bow-wow!" said the Dogs just behind Silvertip. He might have run up a tree near by, but he had a bright idea.

"I'll do it," he exclaimed. "The Little Boy says it is wicked to fight, anyway." Then he ran straight in through that open door and jumped to a high shelf in the barn. He saw Miss Tabby turn a summersault backward and crawl under the

porch.

Mr. Tiger Cat took a long jump to the sill of a high window. Mr. White Cat did not seem to care at all whether it was going to pour or not. He sprang to the top round of a ladder. The Dogs frisked below, wagging their tails and talking to each other about the Cats.

Mr. Tiger Cat, who was very well-bred and could always think of something polite to say, remarked to Silvertip: "Your call was quite an unexpected pleasure!" He had a smiling look around the mouth as he spoke.

"Yes," answered Silvertip, who liked a joke as well as anybody, unless it were a joke on himself alone. "Yes, I found myself coming this way, and just ran in."

Then they both settled down comfortably where they were, tucking their feet under them and wrapping their tails around. Nobody said anything to Mr. White Cat, who had no chance to sit down, and, indeed, could hardly keep from falling off the ladder.

The Dogs frisked and tumbled in the barn for a while and hung around the foot of the ladder. They knew they could not get either of the others, but they had a happy hope that Mr. White Cat might fall.

When at last the Dogs had gone, and Mr. White Cat had also sneaked away, Mr. Tiger Cat said: "Fighting is very wrong."

"Yes," replied Silvertip, "very wrong indeed. But," he added, "I'll make believe fight anybody." So he jumped stiffly down and Mr. Tiger Cat jumped stiffly down, and they glared and growled at each other all the afternoon and never bit or even unsheathed a claw. They had a most delightful time, and Miss Tabby came out from under the porch and smiled on them both. She loved Cats who acted bravely.

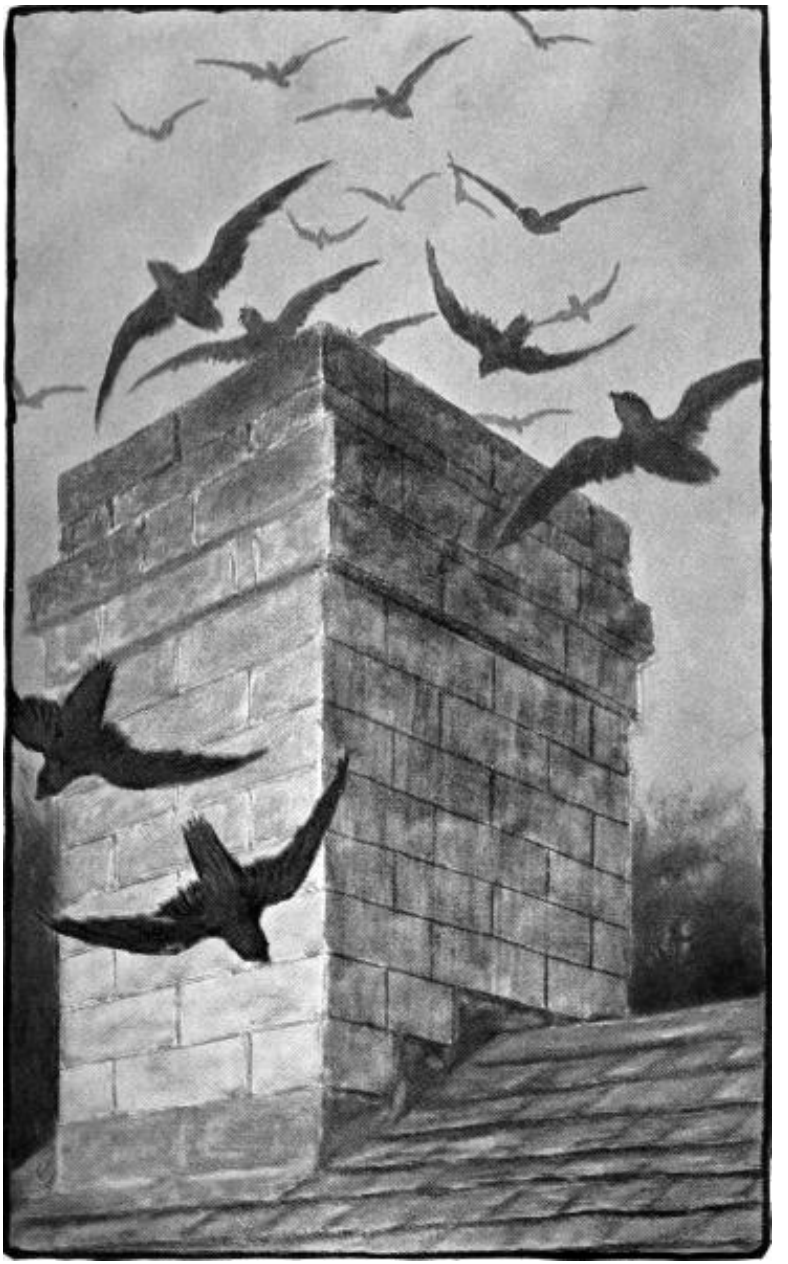


A Young Swift Tumbles

In one of the chimneys of the big house several families of Chimney Swifts had built their homes. They had come north in April and flown straight to this particular place. It was the family home of this branch of the Swifts, and every year since great-grandfather Swift discovered it, some of his children and grandchildren had come back there to build. They were quite airy, and thought a great deal about appearances. "Swifts are sure to be judged by the chimney in which they live," they said, "and there is no use in choosing a poor one when there are good ones to be found."

Nobody would have dared remind these Chimney Swifts that their great-great-great-great-grandparents lived in hollow trees, if indeed any of their friends knew it. They themselves never spoke of the Swifts who still do so, and since they had always lived in a land of chimneys, they did not dream of the times when there were none to be found. Of course, before the white men came to this country Swifts had to build in hollow trees.

You can just imagine what a happy, busy place this chimney was in the springtime, when last year's nests were being torn down and new ones were building. The older Swifts were there and those who were to keep house for the first time. Then, of course, the younger ones had married and brought new wives there, and they had to be introduced and shown



The Chimney-Swift's Home

all over the chimney.

Some wanted to build nearer the top than others, and the older ones were always advising the younger ones. It was so hard for a Swift mother to remember that her married son was old enough to decide things for himself; and many such mothers fluttered around the sons' nests, telling them how to place each twig, and giving the new wives advice as to how to bring up the babies who would soon come to live with them.

This story is about a young couple who built the lowest nest of all. They were dressed just alike in sleek, sooty, brown feathers, which were of a lighter shade on their throats. Their necks and heads were very broad, their bills short but able to open very wide; their wings were longer than their tails, and the quills of their tail feathers stuck out stiff and bare far beyond the soft, feathery part. The Swifts are all very proud of these bare quills. "There are not many birds," they say, "who can show their quills in that fashion."

These quills are very useful, too, for after a Swift has broken off a tiny twig for his nest, he has to cling to the side of the chimney and fix it into place, and he could not do this without supporting himself by these tail quills. It is hard work building nests, and you can see that it would be. They have to cling with both feet, support themselves with their tails, put each tiny twig in place with their bills, and glue it there with sticky saliva from their mouths or else with tree-gum.

The young husband who was building his first home low down in the chimney was a sturdy and rather wilful fellow, who was very sure what he wanted, and just as sure that he was going to get it. When he said, "I shall do this," or, "I am going to have that," other people had learned to keep still. They sometimes had a smiling look around the bill, but they said nothing. His wife was a sweet and sensible Swift who

never made a fuss about anything, or bragged of what she meant to do. Still, other Swifts who watched them said that she had her way quite as often as he had his.

It was really she who had chosen to build well down in the chimney. Her husband had preferred to be near the top, and she had agreed to that, but spoke of what would happen if one of their children should fall out of the nest.

"There is no need of one falling out," said Mr. Swift. "Tell them to lie still and not push around. Then they will not fall out."

Mrs. Swift fixed one of the feathers on the under side of her left wing, and then remarked: "And you do not think it would disturb you to have our neighbors passing all the time."

"Yes, I do," he replied. "I have thought so from the first, and I am thinking that it might be well to build lower for that reason. Then we could be passing the others instead."

He flew down and pecked at the bricks in a few places to make sure that he could fasten a nest securely. Then he came back to his wife. "I have decided to build the lowest nest of all," said he, "but you understand it is not on account of the children. There is no sense in their moving around in the nest."

"I understand," said Mrs. Swift, and he flew away for twigs while she stayed behind to visit with her mother-in-law.

The mother-in-law's eyes twinkled. "I believe my son said that his children were not to move around in the nest," she said with a laugh. "I wonder how he is going to stop their doing so."

"Tell them, I suppose," answered young Mrs. Swift, smilingly. "Did he push around at all when he was a baby?"

"He?" replied the older Swift. "He was the most restless child I ever hatched. He will know more about bringing up

children after he has raised a brood or two. Don't worry, my dear. It will come out all right." She flew off and the young wife went for twigs also, and thought how happy she ought to be in having such a mother-in-law.

When the lowest nest was built and the four long pure white eggs were laid in it, Mr. and Mrs. Swift were a very proud young couple. The nest was so thin that one could see the eggs through it quite plainly, but it was exceedingly stout and firm. It was not a soft nest, and it had no real lining, although Mrs. Swift had laid in one especially perfect grass blade "to give it style."

That grass blade may be seen to this day by any one who cares to look at the nest as it lies in a cabinet in the house. It was the only nest in the chimney which had anything but twigs in it, and some people wondered at Mrs. Swift's taste. One stout elderly mother Swift said "she supposed it was all right, but that she had never done such a thing and her children had turned out all right." However, young Mrs. Swift smiled in her pretty way and did not talk back.

When they were planning for the four children whom they expected, Mrs. Swift spoke of how patient they would have to be with them, but Mr. Swift said: "They must be brought up to mind! If I tell a child once to do a thing, that is enough. You will see how I bring them up." Then he ruffled up his feathers, puffed out his throat, and looked very important.

They did most of their visiting in the beautiful night-time, for it is a custom among their people to fly and hunt and visit in the dark, and rest by day. Their busiest time is always just before the sun comes up, and so it happened that the Little Boy who slept in the room below did not often hear the rumbling noise in the chimney as they flew in and out. When they

were awakened he slept quietly in his snug little bed, and as he was awakening, and stretching, and getting his dimples ready for the day, the Swifts were going to sleep after a busy night.

When the baby Swifts broke their shells and were seen for the first time by their loving father and mother, Mr. Swift was surprised to find how small they were. Mrs. Swift murmured sweet words to them and worked as hard as her husband to find them food. There were now so many mouths to be fed that they flew by day as well as by night, and often the Little Boy in the room below thought he heard distant thunder when it was only the Swifts coming down the chimney with food for their babies. All sorts of tiny winged creatures were brought them to eat, for Swifts catch all their food as they fly, and that means that they can feed upon only such creatures as also fly.

When they were stretching up to reach the food, Mrs. Swift would say to the children: "Now learn to move carefully, for if you should get over the edge of the nest you will tumble down into that fireplace of which I have told you."

When he was feeding them Mr. Swift would say: "You may open your bills, but not one of you must move beyond that twig. Do you understand?"

Three of them obeyed without asking questions, but the eldest brother was always trying to see just how far he could go without tumbling, and he would talk back to his father.

"You don't care if I put one wing out, do you?" he would ask.

"Not one wing!" his father would answer.

"Why?" the son would ask. "I wouldn't tumble just because I put one wing out."

"It is not minding me," his father would say, "to see how

far you can go without tumbling. I did not tell you only to keep from falling out. I told you to keep inside that twig."

Then the son would pout his bill and act very sulky, getting close to the twig which he had been told not to pass. When he thought his father was not looking, he would even wriggle a little beyond it. Mrs. Swift was worried, but what could she do? She noticed that her husband did not talk so much as he used to about making a child mind the very first time he is spoken to.

One night when the Swifts had fed their children faithfully, this son was unusually naughty. It may be that he had eaten more than his share or that he had picked for the biggest insect every time that lunch was brought. It may be, too, that he was naughty simply because he wanted to be. It does not always mean that a child is ill when he is naughty. His father had just told him to be more careful, and he made a face (yes, he did) and flopped aside to show what he could do without falling.

Then he felt a tiny twig on the edge of the nest break beneath him, and he went tumbling, bumping, and scraping down into the fireplace below. He could not fly up, for his wings were not strong enough to carry him up such a narrow space, and his parents could not get him. He heard his brother and sisters crying and his mother saying that she had always expected that to happen.

"Horrid old twig!" he said. "Don't see why it had to break! Should think they might build their nest stronger. I don't care! I was sick of being told not to wriggle, anyway!"

Then he fluttered and sprawled through a crack beside the screen of the grate until he was out in the room. The Little Boy lay asleep in the bed, and that frightened the young Swift. When they tried to scare each other the children had always

pretended that a Boy was after them. He crawled behind a picture which leaned against the wall, and stayed there and thought about his dear, dear home up in the chimney.

The Little Boy stirred and awakened and called out: "Mother! Mother! There is somefing making a scratching noise in my room. I fink it is a Bear."

The young Swift sat very still while the Lady came in and hunted for the Bear. She never came near his hiding-place, and laughed at the Little Boy for thinking of Bears. She told him that the only Bears around their town were two-legged ones, and when he asked her what that meant she laughed again.

He peeped out from behind the picture and saw the Little Boy dress himself. He heard him say: "I can't poss'bly get vese shoes on, but I'll try and try and try." He thought how much pleasanter it was to be a Swift and have all his clothes grow on, and to go barefoot all the year.

He heard the Lady say: "Why, you precious Boy! You did get your shoes on, after all." Then he saw them go off to breakfast, racing to see who would beat.

After they were gone, he fluttered out to the window, and there the Lady found him, and the Little Boy danced around and wanted to touch him, but didn't quite dare. The Lady said: "I think this must have been your Bear," and the Little Boy said: "My teeny-weeny little bitty Bear wiv feavers on." He heard the Little Boy ask, too, why the bird had so many pins sticking out of his tail, and this made him cross. He did not understand what pins were, but he felt that anybody ought to know about tail-quills.

He didn't know much about Boys, for this was the first one he had ever seen, and he wondered what those shiny white things were in his mouth. He had never seen teeth and

he could not understand. He wondered how the Boy got along without a bill, and pitied him very much. This Little Boy did not seem so very terrible. He even acted a bit afraid of the Swift.

Next the young Swift felt himself lifted gently in the Lady's hand and laid in a box with soft white stuff in it and two small holes cut in the cover. He was carried from room to room in the house and shown to other people. Once he heard a queer voice say, "Meouw!" and then the Little Boy stamped his foot and said: "Go way, Teddy Silvertip. You can't have my little bird, you hungry Cat."

After this the young Swift was more scared than before, and would have given every feather he had to be safely back in the nest in the chimney. He was hungry, too, and he wanted to see his father and his dear mother. He beat his wings against the sides of the box and cried for his mother. "Oh," he said, "if I were only back in the nest I wouldn't move. I wouldn't move a bit." Then the Cat mewed again and he kept still from fright.

At last he was taken into the open air and placed in the top of a short evergreen, where the Cat could not reach him. Here he clung, weak and lonely and scared, blinking his half-blinded eyes in a light brighter than he had yet seen. All the rest of that day he stayed there, while his father and mother and their other children were sleeping in the home nest. He expected never to see them again, but he did want to tell them how sorry he was.

After the sun had set and the moon was shining, he saw his father darting to and fro above him. "Father!" he cried. "Father, I am so sorry that I moved past the twig. I was very naughty."

His father heard and flew down to tuck a fat and juicy

May Beetle into his mouth. "You poor child!" said he. "Eat that and don't try to talk. You will not do such things when you are older. I will get you some more food."

When he returned Mrs. Swift was with him, and they petted and fed the young Swift all night, never scolding him at all, because, as they said, he had been punished quite enough and was sorry. And that was true. His grandmother came also with a bit of food. She told him that they would feed him every night and that he should hide in the branches each day until his feathers were grown.

"In three days more," said she, "you will be ready to fly, and you look more like your father all the time. In three days more," she said, "if nobody eats you up."

You can imagine how anxious the young Swift was during those three days, and how small he tried to be when Silvertip was around. "Surely," he thought, "the sun and moon were never before so slow in marking off the time."

When at last he was ready for flight, Silvertip was under the snowball bush near by. The young Swift sprang into the air. "Good-by, my Cat friend," said he. "You look hungry, but you have lost your best chance at me. You should have been waiting at the grate for me. You might have known that such a foolish young Swift as I would tumble down sooner or later. All that saves some people is not having their foolishness found out!"





The Very Rude Young Robins

Why this pair of Robins chose to build so near the Sparrows, nobody knows. It was not at all like Robins to do so, for they are quite careful how they bring up their children. One would expect them to think how likely the little Robins would be to grow up rude and quarrelsome.

However, there their nest was, not the length of a bean-pole from those of two pairs of Sparrows. When the nestlings were hatched, they listened all day to what the Sparrows were saying and looked at what they were doing. They heard and saw many things which Mr. and Mrs. Robin did not like. But there was no helping it then, and all that their parents could do was to try to bring them up to be good little birds, and do as they had been told, and not as they had seen naughty children do.

It did make a difference in the behavior of the children, however, and after they left the nest this showed very plainly. When they were old enough to go outside the yard in which they had been hatched, they went to the place next door. There were many fowls on this place, and several Hens in coops with young Chickens around them. The father and mother left the young Robins in safe places while they went to hunt Worms in the newly hoed garden. Two children, a brother and a sister, were half hidden under the drooping branches of a large gooseberry bush.

They had been there for some time, when the sister said, "Just see what lots of good, clean food that Hen and her Chickens have. Don't you wish you had some of it?"

"Um-hum!" answered the brother. "What a pretty yellow it is. I just know it is good!"

Neither of them spoke again for a long time. Indeed, the brother had begun to settle his head down on his shoulders and slide the thin lids over his eyes, when his sister said, "If you were a Sparrow, you'd get some."

"Well, I'm not a Sparrow," he answered, "and so I shall have to go without."

He was almost cross to his dear little sister, but perhaps one could partly excuse him. He saw that there was much more than the Chickens could eat, and that it would lie there spread out on the board until they had spoiled it all by trampling it with muddy feet. Now it was lovely, clean, sweet cornmeal mush. Besides, he was becoming dreadfully hungry. It was fully ten minutes, you know, since he had been fed anything.

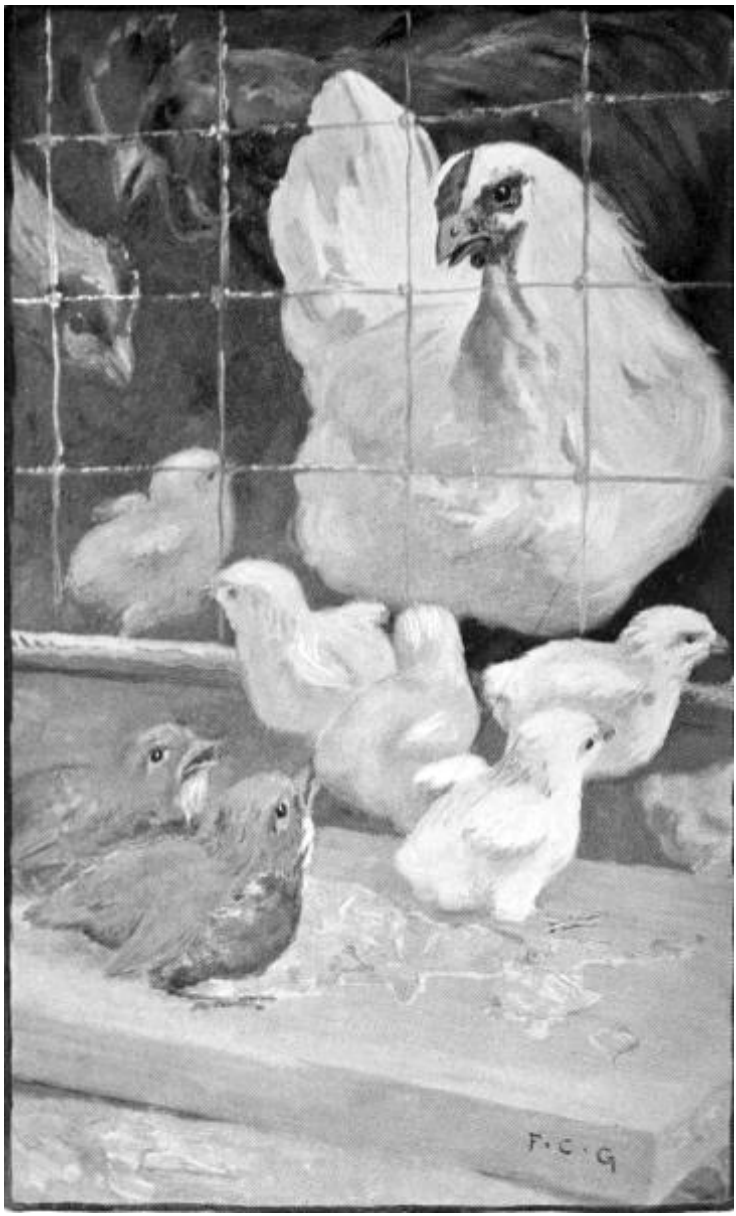
The little sister kept still for a while. Her mother had taught her that it does not always pay to talk too much. At last she asked, "Do you suppose those tiny bits of Chickens know the difference between a Sparrow and a Robin?"

Her brother opened his eyes very wide, and stretched his head up so that one could see the black and white feathers under his bill. He was almost full-grown. "I've a good mind to try to fool them," he said. "You see, the Hen can't reach the board where the food is."

"I dare you to!" cried his sister, who really should have been his brother, she was so brave.

"All right," he answered. "Only you come too."

"I will," she said. "But let's wait until Father and Mother



The Very Rude Young Robins

are looking the other way."

Twice they started out and came back because their parents were looking. At last they made a dash and were by the board.

"Stand aside!" said the brother, talking as nearly like a Sparrow as he could. "Let us have some of this!"

"Who are you?" asked the Chickens, while the old Hen cluck-cluck-clucked and strutted to and fro in the coop. Every little while she stuck her head out as far as she could reach, and her neck feathers spread around in a funny, fat way against the slats of her coop.

"Go away!" she scolded. "Go right away! That is not your mush! You are not my Chickens! Go right home to your mother! Cr-r-r-r-r!" She said this last, you know, because she was getting so angry that she could say nothing else.

The fowls behind the netting of the poultry-yard all came to see what was going on, and chattered about it in their cackling way. "Send them off!" they cried. "Send them off! The idea of their trying to take food from the Chickens!" The Cocks looked particularly big and fierce. Still, there is not much fun in looking big and fierce behind a wire netting, when the people whom you want to scare are in front of it.

The young Robins were dreadfully frightened, but having feathers all over their face, it did not really show. Neither one was willing to be the first to start away, and they didn't like to speak about it to each other for fear of being overheard. You know, if you can keep other people from finding out that you are scared, you may end by scaring them, and that was exactly what the Robins meant to do.

"Get out of our way!" said they. "Don't brush against us so again! If you were not young, we wouldn't have stood it this time. When you have feathers you may know better."

Then the little Chickens were very badly scared indeed. They backed away as quickly as they could, and crawled in beside their mother. She told them to go back; that the Robins couldn't hurt them, and that she was ashamed to have them act so Chicken-hearted.

"Let us get under your wings!" they said. "Please let us get under your wings!" And they followed, peeping, after her, as she marched to and fro in the narrow coop. Sometimes they got so near her feet that she almost knocked them over, and at last they quite gave up trying to cuddle down under her, and got together in little groups in the back part of the coop.

"Had enough?" asked the brother at last.

"Yes, indeed," answered his sister. "I can't swallow any more now. I'm just making believe because you are not through."

"All right!" said he.

He turned to the Chickens. "Now you may come," he said. "But another time get out of our way more quickly." Then they turned their backs and hopped off. They didn't want to try flying, because that would show how very young they were.

"We did it," exclaimed those two naughty children. "Did you ever see such little Geese as those Chickens? But oh, what if our parents should find it out?"

"See here," chirped their mother, who could not speak very plainly because she had two large Earthworms hanging in wriggling loops from her bill, "Here is a lovely lunch for you."

"Give it to Brother," said the little sister. "He always wants more than I."

"Oh, no. Give it to Sister," said he. "I don't mean to be selfish."

"You shall both have some," said their mother, tucking a large Worm down each unwilling throat. "Little birds will never be big birds unless they eat plenty of the right kind of food. I will bring you more."

When she was gone they looked at each other. "I just cannot eat another billful," said the sister.

"And I won't!" said the brother. After a while he added, "Is there any of that mush sticking to my bill?"

"No," said the sister. "Is there any on mine?"

They did not feel at all sure that their mother would have let them eat so much mush if she had been asked. They wondered if it would make them sick. They began to think about the stomach-ache, and felt sure that they had one—that is to say, two—one apiece, you know.

Over in the garden, Mrs. Robin said to her husband, "Do you know what those children have done? It was a very ill-bred, Sparrow-like trick. They scared the little Chickens away, and ate all they could of their mush. I am dreadfully ashamed of them, but I shall pretend I did not see it."

"Make them eat plenty of Worms," suggested Mr. Robin.

"Just what I am going to do," answered his wife. "It won't really hurt them to overeat for once in their lives, and it will punish them very well."

That was why Mr. and Mrs. Robin worked so especially hard all morning, and made so many trips in under the gooseberry bush. The two young Robins who were there kept insisting that they didn't need any more, and that they really couldn't eat another Worm. After they said this, Mrs. Robin always looked sharply at them and asked, "What have you children been doing? Young birds should always want all the Worms their parents can bring them."

The little Robins were not brave enough to tell what they

had done. You know it often takes more courage to confess a fault than it does to scare people. So whenever their mother said this they agreed to eat one more Worm apiece, and choked and gulped it down. It was a dreadful morning for them.

Inside the Chicken-coop the old Hen was trying to settle down again, and the Chickens were talking it over.

"Wasn't it dreadful?" asked one. "I didn't know that Robins were so fierce."

"Mother said that we shouldn't be afraid of them," cried another, "but I guess she'd be afraid her own self if she wasn't in that coop. She'd be 'fraider if she was little, too."

"I'm glad they didn't eat it all," said a third Chicken. "When do you suppose they'll come again?"

"Every day," said another, a Chicken who always expected bad things to happen. "Perhaps they will come two times a day! Maybe they'll even come three!"

But they didn't. They didn't come at all. And they never wanted corn-meal mush again.





The Systematic Yellow-Billed Cuckoo

The people who lived in the big house were much worried about the maple trees which shaded the sidewalk around the place. It was spring now, and they feared another such summer as the last, when the lawn had been covered with fine, healthy, large maple leaves, gnawed off by hungry Caterpillars. One could be sure they were not blown or knocked off, for each stem was neatly eaten through at about the length of a fir needle from the leaf. The lawn did not look well, and the Man who cared for it grumbled and scolded under his breath as he went around raking them up. He could not see that the Caterpillars were of any use in the world. The birds thought differently, but he was a busy Man and not used to thinking of things in that way.

Now spring had come again, and every day the people looked for more leaves on their lawn. They had not found them yet, because the Caterpillars were not old enough to nibble through the stems. Then, one morning while they were eating their breakfast, these people heard a new voice outside. It was not a sweet voice. It sounded somewhat like a thumping on rough boards. It was saying, "Kuk-kuk-kuk!"

Some men who were passing by stopped to look up at the trees, then shook their heads and went on. The Little Boy wanted to leave his breakfast and go out at once to find the new bird, but he had to stay where he was, eat slowly, and fold

his napkin before he was allowed to do this. When he went, the Lady and the Gentleman went with him. None of them could see the bird, although they heard his "kuk-kuk-kuk!" in first one tree and then another.

"I am sure that is a Yellow-billed Cuckoo," said the Lady, "and if it is, he has come for the Caterpillars that are spoiling our trees."

"Why, Mother?" asked the Little Boy. "How do you know? You didn't see him."

"If you had your eyes shut, and I spoke to you," she replied, "wouldn't you known whose voice it was?"

The other birds also seemed to know whose voice it was, for they flew around in fright, and scolded and chattered until the visitor had left that row of maples and gone far away. Even then the more timid ones could not settle down to their regular duties. "It has given me such a start," said one Robin, whose nerves were always easily upset, "that I don't believe I can weave another grass-blade into my nest to-day."

"Nonsense!" exclaimed a Blackbird. "Eat something and you will feel all right. There is nothing like eating to make one feel better."

The Robin did as she was told and felt somewhat steadier, yet even then she talked of nothing else that morning. "To think of a Yellow-billed Cuckoo coming here!" she said. "It makes my quills tingle to think of it. My poor babies! My poor babies!"

"Couldn't you stop worrying for a while?" her husband asked. "You know you have not even laid your eggs, so your children are not in danger yet."

Mr. Robin was always gentle with his wife. The other birds didn't see how he could stand it, for she was forever worrying about something.

"No," she replied, "they are not laid yet, but they will be, and you know perfectly well, Mr. Robin, how glad that dreadful Cuckoo would be to suck every one of them. If he were only a Black-billed Cuckoo, it would not be so bad, but I saw his bill quite plainly, and it was yellow. Besides, he said, 'Kuk-kuk-kuk!' instead of 'Kow-kow-kow-kuk-kuk!'"

"We will guard the nest carefully when the eggs are laid," said Mr. Robin. "And now I think I will go across the street to hunt." That also was a wise thing to do, for Mrs. Robin was always more sensible when she was alone.

The birds saw nothing more of the Cuckoo that morning, but in the afternoon he came again. He was a large and very fine-looking bird, with green-gray feathers on the upper part of his body and in the middle of his tail, the outer tail-feathers being black with white spots. His wings were a bright brown, and the under part of his body was grayish-white. His bill was a very long and strong one, and the under half of it was yellow.

He had a habit of sitting very quietly every now and then on some branch to think. At such times he looked handsome but stupid, and really, when he got to thinking so, he was in great danger. It is at just such times that Hawks like to find Cuckoos, and after a Hawk has found one, nobody else ever has a chance. If you remember what sort of food Hawks like, you will understand what this means.

When he was flying, however, he was exceedingly careful, always flitting from tree to tree by the nearest way, and never talking until he was well sheltered again by leafy branches. When he came to a row of maples, he began at one end and went right through, stopping a little while in each to hunt. He was very systematic, and that, you know, means that he always tried to do the same things in the same way. This was why, during all the summer that followed, he came both

morning and afternoon at just the same times as on that first day. That is, he did on every day but one.

Mrs. Cuckoo looked exactly like her husband. Indeed, some of their neighbors could hardly tell them apart. She was a very poor housekeeper. Her nest was only a few sticks laid on a bush in the edge of an orchard. She often said that she did not take easily to home life, so many of her great-grandparents having built no nests at all, but laid their eggs in the homes of other birds. Since this was so, people should not have expected too much of Mrs. Cuckoo.

Another thing which made it hard for her, was the way in which she had to lay eggs, hatch eggs, and feed nestlings at the same time all summer. This was not her fault, for of course when an egg was ready it had to be laid, and there were seldom two ready at once. It kept her busy and worried and tired all summer, and one could forgive her if she sometimes grew impatient.

"I can never half do anything after my first egg is hatched," she used to say. "I go to get food for that child, and all the time I am worrying for fear the second egg, which I have just laid, will get cold. Of course one newly hatched nestling cannot keep a large egg like mine warm. Then, when I am having all I can do to care for child and egg, I have to stop to lay another egg."

Mr. Cuckoo was always sleek and respectable-looking. He never seemed in a hurry. He said that haste was ill-mannered. "Always take time," he said, "to do things in the best way. If you are not sure which is the best way, sit down and think about it." He was much annoyed by Mrs. Cuckoo, and often told her how she needed to be systematic. "You have such a hurried way, my dear," said he. "It is really very disagreeable."

She was naturally a sweet-tempered bird, but one day she

made up her mind to let her husband see how systematic he could be in her place. At that time she had a young bird and two eggs in the nest, and was very sure that one of the eggs was about to hatch.

When they awakened the next morning, she said sweetly to Mr. Cuckoo, "My dear, please stay with the baby until I get back." Then she flew away without giving him time to ask how long it would be or anything about it. Mr. Cuckoo was much surprised, and sat there thinking, as you know he was likely to do, until the nestling fairly screamed for food.

"Dear me!" said he to himself, "I must do something to keep that child still." So he hunted food and stuffed it down the nestling's wide-open bill. While he was doing so, he remembered the eggs, which he found rather cool. "She will never forgive me if those get cold," he said, so he hopped onto the nest and covered them with his breast. He wished that his wife would return. He thought that when a mother-bird had home cares she should stay by the nest. Just then his child cried for more food.

"Hush!" he exclaimed. "I cannot go now. Don't you see that I am warming these eggs?"

"I don't care! I am hungry," cried she. "You didn't feed me enough."

"Well, I couldn't get you more just then," he said. "Now be patient until your mother comes. That's a good child."

"I can't be patient. I'm hungry," cried the nestling. "I want a Caterpillar."

Mr. Cuckoo could not stand teasing, so he hopped off the nest and picked up the first Caterpillar he found. It was not a good kind, and the little Cuckoo made a bad face and would not swallow it. Mr. Cuckoo rushed away to get a better one. That was eaten, and he was just getting on the eggs again

when he heard a faint tapping inside of one. This made him very nervous, for he was not used to caring for newly hatched children. He called several times to Mrs. Cuckoo, but received no answer.

There was more tapping, and the second child stuck his little bill through the shell and broke it. "Ouch!" cried the older one; "that pricks me. Take it away!"

"'Sh!" exclaimed his father, who knew that it would never do to help a young bird out of its shell. The elder child began to cry.

Well! You can just imagine what kind of morning Mr. Cuckoo had. He had to quiet and feed the older child, clear away the broken shell when the second was out, keep the remaining egg warm, get some food for himself, and just hurry and worry until noon. He was about worn out when his wife came back. She looked very trim and happy, and there was no ill-mannered haste in her motions as she flew toward the nest.

"I have had such a pleasant morning," she said. "I met my sister and we went hunting together. I hope you did not mind. I felt quite easy about everything. I knew that you would manage it all beautifully, because you are so systematic." She looked at him with such a sweet smile that he did not say any of the things which he had been planning to say about mother-birds staying at home.

Just then the elder nestling said, "I'm hungry, Mother! I haven't had a Caterpillar in ever so long."

Mrs. Cuckoo answered cheerfully, "All right, I'll get you one," and was about to start off when Mr. Cuckoo spoke up:

"You stay here and look after your newly hatched nestling," said he. "I'll get some food."

Mrs. Cuckoo was delighted to find another egg hatched,



Stuffed It Down the Wide-Open Bill

and the morning away had been a great rest to her. Only one thing troubled her. "I do wish," she murmured, "that I could have seen Mr. Cuckoo trying to do three or four things at once and be systematic. Now I shall never know how it worked."

But she did know. Her first-hatched child said, "I'm so glad you are back. It made Father cross to hurry." She also knew from another thing: Mr. Cuckoo never again told her to be systematic, or said that it was ill-mannered to hurry.

And that was the one day when Mr. Cuckoo did not make his two regular hunting trips through the maple trees around the big house.





The Helpful Tumble-Bugs

In the corner of the barnyard was a pile of manure which was to be put upon the garden and plowed in. This would make the ground better for all the good things growing in it, but now it was waiting behind the high board fence, and many happy insects lived in it. There were big Bugs and little Bugs, fat Bugs and slim Bugs, young Bugs and old Bugs, good Bugs and—well, one does not like to say that there were bad Bugs, but there were certainly some not so good as others.

Among all these, however, there were none who worked harder or thought more of each other than the Tumble-bugs. One couple, especially, were thrifty and devoted. They had been married in June, when each was just one day old. June weddings were the fashion among their people.

Mr. Tumble-bug believed in early marriages. "I have known Tumble-bugs," he said, "who did not marry until they were two days old, but I think that a great mistake. Each becomes so used to having his own way that it is very hard for husband and wife to agree on anything. Now Mrs. Tumble-bug and I always think alike." Then he smiled at Mrs. Tumble-bug and Mrs. Tumble-bug smiled at him. They were nearly always together and busy. Perhaps it was because they worked together every day that they cared so much for each other. You know that makes a great difference, and if one had worked all the time while the other was playing, they would

soon have come to care for other things and people.

One hot summer morning, Mrs. Tumble-bug said to her husband, who was just finishing his breakfast, "I have found the loveliest place you ever saw for burying an egg-ball. Do hurry up! I can hardly wait to begin work."

Mr. Tumble-bug gulped down his last mouthful and answered, "I'm ready now."

"Follow me then," she cried, and led the way over all sorts of little things which littered up the ground of the barnyard. No Horse was there just then, and she felt safe. Mr. Tumble-bug followed close behind her, and a very neat-looking couple they made. Both were flat-backed and all of shining black. "We do not dress so showily as some Bugs," they were in the habit of saying, "but black always looks well." And that was true. Although they spent most of their days working in the earth, they were ever clean and shining, with smiling, shovel-shaped faces.

"There!" said Mrs. Tumble-bug, as she stopped for breath and pointed with her right fore-leg to the ground just ahead of her. "Did you ever see a finer place?" She could point in this way, you know, without falling over, because she had five other legs on which to stand. There are some very pleasant things about having six legs, and the only tumbling she and her husband did was part of their work.

"Excellent!" exclaimed Mr. Tumble-bug. "And the ground is so soft that it will not tire you very much to dig in it." He did not have to think whether it would tire him, because he never helped in that part of the work. His wife always liked to do that alone.

Then both Tumble-bugs scurried back to the manure heap. "I cannot see why some of our neighbors are so foolish," said she. "There is a Beetle now, laying her eggs right in this

pile. She will leave them there, too, and as likely as not some hungry fellow will come along before the sun goes down and eat every one of them. She might much better take a little trouble, put her egg in a mass of food, and roll it away to a safe place for burial. When my children hatch out into soft little Grubs, I intend they shall have a chance to grow up safely and comfortably. Such Beetles do not deserve to have children."

"Well, they won't have many," said her husband. "Perhaps only a pitiful little family of twenty or thirty."

"Now," exclaimed Mrs. Tumble-bug, "We must get to work. Help me roll this ball of manure. I have laid an egg in it while we were talking, so that time was not wasted."

Together they rolled a ball which was bigger than both of them when it started, and grew larger and larger as they got it away from the heap and the dust of the ground stuck to it and crusted it over.

Mrs. Tumble-bug stood on top of the ball, and, creeping far out on it, pulled it forward with her hind feet, while he stood on his head behind it and pushed with his hind legs. Of course if Mrs. Tumble-bug had not been climbing backward all the time, the ball would have rolled right over her. To pull forward with part of your legs and climb backward with all of them at the same time, and that when your head is a good deal lower than your heels, is pretty hard work and takes much planning. Mrs. Tumble-bug had very little breath for talking, but she did not lose her temper. And that shows what an excellent Bug she was. "Harder!" she would call out to Mr. Tumble-bug. "We are coming to a little hill."

Then Mr. Tumble-bug, who, you will remember, had to stand on his head all the time, and really did the hardest part of the work, would brace himself more firmly and push until

it seemed as though his legs would break. He could never see just where they were going unless he let go of the ball, and Mrs. Tumble-bug did not believe in turning out for anything.

"What if there is a hill?" she often said. "Can't we go over it?" And over it they always went, although they might much more easily have gone around it. Mrs. Tumble-bug did not want anybody to think her afraid of work, and she knew her husband would have a chance to rest while she was burying the ball. Once in a while, when the ball came down suddenly on the farther side of a twig or chip, it rolled quite on top of her, and Mr. Tumble-bug would be greatly alarmed. Some people thought this served her quite right for insisting that they should go over things instead of around them. Still, one hardly likes to say a thing like that.

If it were much of a hill, she would climb down from the ball and talk with him. Then they would put their shovel-shaped heads together under the back side of the ball, and, pushing at the same time, send it over. "Two heads are better than one," they would say, "and this needs a great deal of head-work."

At last the ball had reached the spot where they intended to have it buried. Both were hot and tired. "Many legs make light work," said Mrs. Tumble-bug, as she carefully cleaned hers before eating dinner, "and if there is anything I enjoy, it is finishing a good job like this!"

Mr. Tumble-bug sighed heavily and said he thought he would go for a walk with some of his friends that afternoon. "All work and no play would make me a dull Bug," said he. Then he called out "Good-by" to his wife, and told her not to work too hard.

Mrs. Tumble-bug looked after him lovingly. "Now, isn't he good?" she said to herself. "There are not many Bugs who

will help their wives at all, and most of them never look at an egg, much less see to getting it well placed." And that is true, for the Tumble-bugs are the model Bug fathers.

Now, indeed, Mrs. Tumble-bug was at her best. She hurried down her dinner, taking mouthfuls which were much too large for good manners, and began plowing the earth around the ball as it lay there. She plowed so deep that sometimes she was almost buried in the loose earth. At last she came up, took a good look around, knocked some grains of dust off her shining back, then dived in again upside down, and pulled the ball in after her by holding it tightly with her middle legs. All the time she was kicking the earth away with her two hind legs and her two front ones, which were stout diggers, so that little by little she sank deeper into the ground.

She made a much larger hole for the ball than it really needed. "I might just as well, while I am about it," she said. "And I should so dislike to have any one think me afraid of work."

At last she finished and crawled away, covering the place neatly over, so that nobody could see where she went in or out. "There!" she said. "Now I am ready to play."

A stray Chicken came along and she hurried under a chip to be safe. The Chicken was lost and calling to his mother. "Mother!" he cried. "Mother Hen, I want to get home and go to sleep under your wings."

"Dear me!" exclaimed Mrs. Tumble-bug. "Is it time for Chickens to go to sleep?" She looked through a crack in the fence and across the lawn to the big house. The shadows lay long upon the short grass. "It certainly is," she said. "And here I have spent all day burying that egg properly. I think it very strange that I cannot get more time for rest and play." So she had to eat her supper and go straight to bed to get rested for

the next day's work.

Mrs. Tumble-bug did not understand then, and perhaps never will learn, that if she would stop doing things in the hardest way and begin doing them in the easiest way, she might get a great deal of work done in a day and still have time to rest. If one were to tell her so, she might think that meant laziness, but it would not, you know. It is always worth while to make one's head save one's feet, and when a single head could save six feet it would certainly be worth while. Still, although Mrs. Tumble-bug never dreamed of such a thing, she probably enjoyed work about as much as her neighbors enjoyed play.





Silvertip Learns a Lesson

You may remember what a funny time Silvertip had with the first Mouse he caught; how he carried it so long in his mouth before daring to lay it down, and how frightened he was each time that it wriggled. That was because he was just beginning to hunt. Cats have to learn by doing things over and over, just like other people. He used to hear the Little Boy sing.

> If at first you do not try
> Try, try again.

After a while he heard him sing.

> If at first you don't succeed
> Try, try again.

He did not understand just what this meant, but he soon knew that Little Boys have to learn things quite as Cats do. He watched him afterward learning to turn summersaults, and saw him do just that and nothing else for nearly a whole afternoon.

It was in some such way that Silvertip came to be a good hunter. He used to spend whole hours under the low branches of some evergreen, crouching and springing at every passing bird. In summer he crawled through the wheat-field back of the house, looking for Mice. If he found nothing better, he caught Moles, although he never ate them. He thought that

Moles were probably made for Cats to practice on, and that good little Cats, who did the best they could on Moles, would find Mice to catch after a while—if they were patient.

When he could not find anything alive to hunt, he practiced on the dead leaves which were blown over the lawn, or chased empty spools across the kitchen floor. In the spring, when the Gentleman went out before breakfast to work in his garden, Silvertip played with the onion sets, chasing them down the narrow trench in which they had been placed, until the Gentleman had to carry him off and shut him up.

This is how he became so fine a hunter, and it is perhaps not strange that after a while he grew conceited. You know what it means to be conceited. Well, Silvertip was so. He thought himself really the cleverest Cat that had ever lived, a Cat who could catch anything he tried to. He bragged to the other Cats who came around, and when he was alone he purred to himself about the fine things he could do. Now people who think themselves clever are not always conceited, for sometimes they are as clever as they think. But when a person is always thinking and talking about what he can do, you watch him to see if he does as well as he thinks. If not, then he is conceited.

Silvertip even used to climb nearly to the top of the tall maple-trees after Blackbirds, and crouch there, switching his tail, yet he never caught any. When the other Cats asked him about this, he would smile, and say that he decided not to eat any more just then, or that he had found that Blackbirds disagreed with him. Undoubtedly these excuses were both true, still they did not keep him from trying again and again.

The only Blackbird he ever caught was a young one who had disobeyed her mother and flopped away from the tangle of rosebushes where she had been told to stay. She was dread-

fully punished for it—but then it was very wrong for her not to mind her mother. If she had stayed where she was, the thorns would have kept Cats away.

Silvertip had been in the big house nearly a year, when Mr. Chipmunk came to live in the yard. He chose to burrow under the open shed which ran along by the back fence, and under which wood was piled to dry before it was split and carried into the wood-house. He was the first Chipmunk who had ever lived on the place, and all his new neighbors were much interested in him.

"Shall you bring your family here?" Mr. Robin asked him, as he watched his own children caring for themselves. Mr. Robin had worked hard all summer, and now he was enjoying a little visiting time before starting south.

"My family?" answered Mr. Chipmunk, with a chuckling laugh. "No, indeed! One is company and two is crowd with Chipmunks. Of course mothers have to live with their children for a time, but fathers always have holes to themselves."

Mr. Robin did not think that right, yet he kept still. He knew that it is not always wise or polite to say all that one thinks. He thought it was not fair to make the mothers have all the care of the children. There is great difference in animals about this.

Mr. Chipmunk began at once to dig his burrow. He had not seen Silvertip yet, and did not know that there was a Cat around. He began just in front of the woodpile, and when he had enough earth loosened to fill his cheek-pockets, he brought it out and emptied it by the doorway of his burrow. Quite a pile was there already when Silvertip came walking past.

"Meouw!" said he. "What sort of creature is at work here?"

Mr. Chipmunk heard his voice, and lay still in his burrow.

If Silvertip had not spoken just then, this story might end very differently. In fact, it would probably be ended already. "A Cat!" said he. "Well, it is always something, and it might as well be a Cat as a Dog. He won't be so likely to dig me out, anyway."

After a long time he turned around, and went quietly toward the door-way of the burrow, just far enough to see who was there. What he saw was a white face with tiger spots and a pink nose. Long white whiskers stuck out on either side, and the nose was twitching. Silvertip was trying to get a good smell of the new-comer.

Mr. Chipmunk did not move, and being brown and in the darkness of the hole, Silvertip, who stood in the sunshine, could not see him. For a long time neither moved. Then Silvertip walked slowly away. He was not very hungry that morning. Mr. Chipmunk always believed in keeping still as long as possible. "If the other fellow is the larger," said he, "always wait to see what he is going to do. Then you can decide better what you should do."

After this Silvertip came often to the burrow. He learned the Chipmunk by smell long before he saw him. When at last he did see him, Mr. Chipmunk was perched on a low stick of wood, with his small fore paws clasped on his breast and his beautiful fur glistening in the sunshine. He was facing Silvertip, so the Cat did not see the five dark stripes on his back till later.

Silvertip crouched and tried his muscles by shaking himself a little. He did not say that it was a pleasant day, or that he was glad to become acquainted with Mr. Chipmunk. He did not even say, "I see you are making a new home!" He was sure this was the little creature whom he had been smelling for several days, and he saw no use in saying anything. He

meant to eat Mr. Chipmunk, and Mr. Chipmunk understood it. There was really nothing to be said. Mr. Chipmunk might object to being eaten. People usually did object to it, but Silvertip saw no sense in talking it over. He would rather have no conversation whatever at meals than to speak of disagreeable things or to quarrel.

Mr. Chipmunk did not care to talk, either. He believed in thinking before you speak, and he had a great deal of thinking to do just then. A team stopped by the gate of the driveway. Mr. Chipmunk dared not look to see what was coming. Silvertip did not look until the Milkman was near him carrying the milk bottles. Then he gave one quick upward glance. When he looked back, the stick of wood was there, but Mr. Chipmunk was gone.

Silvertip was not at all happy, and he felt still worse when Mr. Chipmunk stuck his saucy little face out of the burrow and called, "Chip-r-r-r! Milk is better for Cats anyway, you know!" Mr. Chipmunk did not have to stop to think when he was in his hole.

That was the beginning of the acquaintance, and a very merry one it was for Mr. Chipmunk. "I have to be hunted anyway," he said, "so I might as well have some fun out of it."

Whenever he saw Silvertip having an especially comfortable nap, he would run near and give his chirping, chuckling laugh. Then he would run away. Sometimes he would stand as still as a stone, with his tiny fore paws clasped on his breast. Silvertip would creep and crawl up close to him, and he would act too scared to move. Then, just as Silvertip was ready to spring, he would cry out, "Chip-r-r-r!" and tumble heels over head into his burrow.

Sometimes, too, Silvertip would be walking along as happily as possible, not even thinking of Chipmunks, when a

mischievous little face would peep out from the woodpile just beside him. Mr. Chipmunk would say, "Good-morning!" then draw back and disappear, only to peep out again and again from new places as the Cat came along. You know nothing can catch a Chipmunk when he is in a woodpile. The worst of it was that there always seemed to be so many other people around to see how poor Silvertip was teased. You would never have thought that Silvertip was hunting Mr. Chipmunk. It always seemed to be Mr. Chipmunk who was hunting Silvertip.

At last Mr. Chipmunk had his burrow all done. He had made an opening at the second end and closed the one at the first, so nobody could tell from the pile of earth what had been happening. He said he had crawled into the hole and pulled it in after him. The last opening, which was now to be his only door, was under the woodpile. No rain could fall into it and no Dog could dig at it. Mr. Chipmunk was very happy.

He made friends with the Lady, too. She seemed to be perfectly harmless, and she brought him a great deal of corn and many peanuts. Sometimes he found butternuts tucked around in the woodpile, which could not possibly have fallen from any tree. He decided that he might come to some sort of agreement with Silvertip. He got ready for it by being more annoying than ever. When Silvertip's tail was switching and his nose twitching with anger, Mr. Chipmunk peeped out from a hollow stick in the pile and called to him.

"Silvertip!" cried he, "O Silvertip! I want to talk with you. How would you like to be eaten up?"

There was no answer, except a murmuring under his breath that he "guessed there wasn't much danger."

"Enjoy the acquaintance, do you, Silvertip?" asked Mr. Chipmunk. "Find me a pleasant talker? Ever tell anybody that

you were going to eat me?"

Now Silvertip had told some of his friends exactly that, but this was before he knew so much about Chipmunks. He growled something under his breath about "Quit your teasing."

"I will if you will quit trying to catch me," answered Mr. Chipmunk. "Tell your friends that you changed your mind. Tell them that I am not to your taste. Tell them anything you wish, but let me alone and I will let you alone."

"All right," said Silvertip. "Now don't you ever speak to me again."

"Never!" answered Mr. Chipmunk. "Walnuts couldn't hire me to!" And after that there was peace around the woodpile.





Mr. Chipmunk on the Woodpile



The Robins' Double Brood

The Robins who nested on the west-side second-story window-ledge had four as good children as you would care to see. They were healthy nestlings, brought up to mind and to eat what was given to them without fussing. If, for any reason there came a time when they had to go without for a while, they were good-natured then also. Their parents had raised other broods the year before, and had learned that it is not really kind to children to spoil them.

"You must never forget," Mrs. Robin used to say, "that your father is your father and your mother is your mother. If it were not for us, you would not be here at all, and if it were not for us you would have nothing to eat now that you are here. Little birds should be very thoughtful of their parents."

When it was bedtime, and the young Robins wanted to play instead of going to sleep, their father would often leave the high branch where he was singing his evening song and come over to talk to them. When he did this he did not scold, but he looked so grave that each child listened to every word. "Your mother," he would say, "has been busy all day, hunting Worms for you and flying up to the nest with them. Now she is tired, and would enjoy perching on a branch and sleeping alone, but because that would leave you cold and lonely she is willing to sleep in the nest and cover you with her soft feathers. Do you think it is fair for you to keep her awake?"

Then all the little Robins would hang their heads and murmur, "No, Father."

"What are you going to do about it?" would be the next question. And then the little Robins never failed to raise their heads and answer, "We will be good and not say a word."

Mrs. Robin often said that there would be more happy mothers in the world if their children took as good care of them as her nestlings took of her. "They have to be reminded," she said, "because they are so young, but when they have been told the right thing to do, they always do it." The Catbird, however, who was a very shrewd fellow, said he thought it was not so much what their father said to them that made them good, as what they saw him do. He was always kind to Mrs. Robin himself, you know, and spoke gently, and left the biggest Worms for her to eat, so his children felt sure that this was the right way.

Mrs. Robin, too, was always polite to her husband. She spoke pleasantly of him to the children, and if he had any faults she did not talk about them. The little Robins were certain that they had the finest father in the world, and meant to be exactly like him when they grew up. That is, the sons did. The daughters meant to be like their mother.

When the little Robins' tail-feathers were about as long as fir needles, they were surprised to find a beautiful blue egg in the nest beside them. "Is it for us to play with?" they asked their mother. "Did we come out of eggs like that? Why is this here?"

Then their wise and gentle mother stood on the ledge beside the nest and talked to them. She was a busy bird, you know, but she always said that it took no longer to answer children's questions than it did to tell them over and over again to keep still.

"Each of you came out of just such an egg as that," she said. "This one is here because I had it ready to lay, and there was no other good place to put it. You may play with it very carefully, and be sure not to push it out of the nest, for then it would fall on the porch roof and break. You may take turns lying next to it, and before long I will lay another, so you can all be next to an egg at the same time."

"What are you going to do with them?" asked the Oldest Nestling. "What will become of them when we are old enough to leave the nest?"

"That is the loveliest part of it," answered their mother. "I shall hatch these eggs, too, and then you can have baby brothers and sisters, perhaps both."

"But who will take care of us?" asked the Youngest Nestling, and she looked as though she wanted to cry when she spoke.

"Don't you worry, little Robin," said her mother cheerfully. "There are always enough people to do the things which have to be done, if they will only keep sweet and not make a fuss. We will all help each other and everything will come out beautifully. This is the first time I ever laid the eggs for the second brood before the first brood was out of the nest, but we shall manage. Besides," she added, "I believe you are the first little Robins I ever knew who had a chance to help hatch eggs before being grown up. Won't that be fine?"

Mrs. Robin looked so bright and happy as she spoke that her children were sure it was going to be great fun, and one and all chirped back, "Oh, let's! We'll hatch them just as hard as we can."

Mrs. Robin fixed them with the new egg in the middle of the nest, and went off to help their father find dinner for them. After they had been fed with about fifteen Worms, she

laid the second egg. "That will be all for this brood," she said, "and perhaps it is just as well. Too many eggs would crowd the nest."

Then she told them what wonderful things eggs are; how what is going to be the young bird is at first only a tiny, soft, stringy thing, floating around inside the shell, with a ball of yellow food-stuff in the middle of the shell and clear white stuff all around it. She told them, too, how this little thing which is to be a bird floats on top of the other stuff, and so is always next to the mother's breast as she sits over it on the nest. "It is the being warm for a long time and all the time that changes it into a bird strong enough to break the shell. You will remember that, won't you," said she, "and keep the top side of the eggs warm when I am not here?"

All the little birds were sure that they could, and very proud to think that she would trust them so. Perhaps if she had said, "Now, don't you let me catch you leaving those eggs uncovered!" they might have murmured to each other, "What do we care about her old eggs? Let them get cold!" It is a great pity, you know, when people in families get to talking in that way. And the worst of it is that every time one person speaks so, another is almost sure to answer in the same way.

Now the Robin family were all caretakers, and when Mrs. Robin flew up with choice Worms for her children, she gave them loving glances, and said, "You are such helpers! I don't know how I could get along without you."

Mr. Robin, too, remarked every now and then that it made him happy to see how thoughtful they were of their mother. After he had said these things, the children always stretched themselves, so that they might look as big as they felt.

With four growing children besides the two eggs in the

nest, it soon became very much crowded. Mr. and Mrs. Robin talked it over while hunting in the garden, where the Hired Man was spading. After they had fed the children whole billfuls of Worms, which they had found wriggling there on top of the ground, Mr. Robin said: "Now, if you will keep very still and not interrupt, I will tell you some good news."

When all was quiet, he said: "I shall take you out into the great world to-morrow. I shall teach you to fly, to perch on branches, and to hunt for yourselves."

"Oh goody!" cried all the little Robins together. Then they remembered how stubby their wings and tails still were, and wondered how they could ever get to the ground. "Won't we tumble some?" they asked doubtfully.

"You may tumble some," answered their father, "but isn't it worth a tumble to get out into the world? Mother will stay up here and finish hatching the eggs while I am with you, and we will stay near enough for her to see how fast you learn."

You can imagine how excited the young Robins were then. They talked so much that day that not one of them took a nap, and if their mother had not insisted upon it, they would not have quieted down at sunset.

Early the next morning their parents helped them to the ground. First they tumbled, fluttered, and sprawled to the porch roof below the nest. Then when they had rested, they tumbled, fluttered, and sprawled to the tops of the sweetbriar bushes underneath. There they clung until after breakfast, while their father hunted for them and their mother sat on the eggs above. If they had not been taught to mind, it would have been much harder. As it was, when their parents said, "Flutter your wings! Get ready! Fly!" they did the very best they could at once. And that is exactly the way children must do if they wish to grow strong and help themselves.

There never were such plump, cheerful, and obedient little Robins as these. Their father had them stay in the lower branches of the fir tree, within sight of the nest, and the mother watched them while he was hunting, and called down comforting things to them. When they had tumbles in trying to fly, she would say: "Never mind! Pick yourselves up! Robins must tumble before they can fly. After awhile, when I have finished hatching these eggs, you can come right up to this window ledge and see the babies."

Then the little Robins would try harder than ever, for they were already proud of the babies to be hatched, since they had helped keep the eggs warm.

Sometimes Silvertip would stroll around the corner of the house, and Mrs. Robin would be so scared that she could hardly scream, "Cat!" Yet she always managed to do it in some way, and all the other Robins would help her. Then the Lady, who was almost always writing or sewing at the sitting-room window, within sight of the nest, would drop her work and run out the nearest door, pick up Silvertip, and carry him inside. There he would stand, with his nose pressed against the screen and his tail switching angrily.

The Lady seemed to understand Robins. When they only cried, "Trouble!" she did not move, knowing it was something she could not help, but when they cried, "Cat! Cat!" she always hurried out. Sometimes, though, it was the Gentleman who came, and sometimes the Little Boy. Mrs. Robin often said that she was sure she could never raise children so well in any other place as here, in spite of Silvertip's being around.

Every day the young Robins were larger and stronger, and their tail-feathers were better grown. When at last the joyful time came for the two babies to chip the shell, every one of the four children managed to get up to the window ledge to

see them. It was a hard trip, and they had to try and try again, and rest between times. They were not all there at once, but oh, it was a happy, happy time!

The mother told the babies how their big brothers and sisters had helped hatch them, and the father told the mother how beautifully she had managed everything. Then the mother told him how faithfully he had worked, and they both told the older children how proud they were of them. Everybody said lovely things to everybody else, and the best part of it was that all these lovely things were true.

The babies were too little to talk much, but they stretched their necks up lovingly and sleepily to all the family, and acted as though they really understood how many people had been loving and working for them, even before they were hatched.





The Sparrows Inside the Eaves

One does not like to say such things, but the English Sparrows were very disagreeable people. And they are very disagreeable people. Also, they always have been, and probably always will be, very disagreeable people. They were the first birds to make trouble among neighbors anywhere around the big house. If it had not been that the Gentleman who lived there was so very tender-hearted, their nests would probably have been poked down with poles long before the eggs could have been laid in them. When Boys came around with little rifles and ugly looking bags slung over their shoulders, they were always ordered away and told that the Gentleman would have no shooting near his house.

It is not strange then that the woodbine was full of Sparrows' nests, and that many of the evergreens also bore them in their top branches. One had even been tucked in behind a conductor pipe, and their owners hunted and argued and fussed all over the place. There was just one way in which the English Sparrows were not cared for like other birds around the big house. Silvertip was allowed to eat all that he could catch. And you may be very sure that no Robin ever called "Cat!" when he was ready to spring upon a Sparrow.

"It may be wrong," said one Robin mother, "but I cannot do it. I remember too well how they have robbed my nests and quarrelled with my friends. I say that they must care for their

own children. And if they do not—well, so much the better for Silvertip!"

You see that the birds were not angry at Silvertip for trying to eat them. It was all to be expected, as they knew very well. It was not pleasant, but it had to be, just as Worms and Flies had to expect to be eaten, unless they were clever enough to keep out of the way of birds. Only the quickest and strongest could live, so of course all the young ones tried hard to become quick and strong.

When Miss Sparrow, from the nest behind the conductor pipe, was old enough to marry, she had many lovers, and that was quite natural. She was a plump and trim-looking bird, and pretty, too, if one came close enough to her. Her feathers were gray and brown, with a little white and black in places. Her bill was black, and her feet were brown. She was very careful to keep clean, and although she had to hunt food in the mud of the street, she bathed often in fine dust and kept her wings and tail well up. Her lovers were dressed in the same colors, but with more decided markings.

Her parents were very clever to think of building where they did; and because they had such a large nest and so near the eaves of the house, they were much looked up to by the other Sparrows. They were very proud of their home, and especially on days when the water running down the pipe made a sweet guggle-guggle-guggling sound. Sparrows like noise, you know, and this always amused the children and kept them quiet on rainy days.

All the young Sparrows who were not already in love, and a few who were, began to court Miss Sparrow as soon as it was known that she cared to marry. This was partly on her own account, and partly because of her distinguished family.

Some birds would have waited for their suitors to speak

first about marriage. Miss Sparrow did not. The Sparrows are not very well bred. "Of course I am going to marry," she said. "I am only waiting to make up my mind whom I will choose."

They flocked around her as she fed in the dust of the road, all talking at once in their harsh voices. When a team passed by, and that was not often, they flew or hopped aside at the last minute. When they settled down again there was always a squabble to see who should be next to Miss Sparrow. Her lovers fought with each other over choice seeds, but they let Miss Sparrow have everything she wished. She always seemed very cross when her lovers were around (as well as most of the time when they were not), and often scolded and pecked at them. Sometimes one who was not brave, and would not stand pain, flew away and began courting somebody else.

After a while she had driven away so many that only two were left. She flew at these, striking first one and then the other, until, brave as they were, one went away. Then she turned to the suitor who was left with a sweet smile. "I will marry you," she said.

His wings were lame from her fighting him, his head smarted where she had picked at it, and two or three small feathers were missing from his breast. Miss Sparrow was certainly a strong bird, and he knew that anybody who wanted her would have to stand just what he had stood. He would have preferred to court as the Goldfinches and Wrens do, by singing to their sweethearts, but that could not be. In the first place, he could not sing, and in the second place she would not have taken him until she had beaten him anyway. It would have been more fun for him to fight some of the other birds and let the winner have her, yet that could not be done either. If he wanted to marry, he had to marry an English Sparrow, and if he wanted to marry an English Sparrow he

had to go about it in her way. It would have been just the same if he had courted her sister or her cousin.

The truth is that, although the Sparrow husbands swagger and brag a great deal and act as though they owned everything in sight, there is not one whose wife does not order him around. Miss Sparrow would not have taken him if she had not made sure that she could whip him.

"What do I need of a husband," she said, "unless he will mind me? And when I feel crosser than usual I want somebody always near and at home, where I can treat him as I choose. That is what I care for in a home."

"Now," she said, "if you are to be my husband, I will show you where we are to build."

Mr. Sparrow flew meekly along after her. You would be meek with lame wings, a sore head, and three feathers off from your breast. She led the way to the front west porch, where the syringa shoots made a little hedge around it and a tall fir tree made good perching places beside it.

"Where are we going to build?" asked Mr. Sparrow. He saw plenty of good window ledges and places which would do for Robins and Phœbes and other birds who plaster their nests. Yet he did not see a single corner or big crack where a Sparrow's nest could be made to hold together.

"I will show you," answered Mrs. Sparrow. She perched on the top of a porch column and looked up at a small round hole nearly over her head. It was the place where a conductor pipe had once run through the cornice. Now the pipe had been taken away and the opening was left. She gave an upward spring and flutter and went straight up through the hole. "Come up!" she cried in the most good-natured way. "Come up! This is the best place I ever saw. Our nest will be all hidden, and no large bird or Squirrel can possibly get in. The rain

can never fall on it, and on cold days we shall be warm and snug."

She did not ask him what he thought of it, and he did not expect her to. So he just said, "It is a most unusual place."

"That is what I think," she replied. "Very unusual, and I would not build in the woodbine like some Sparrows. No, indeed! One who has been brought up in style beside a water-pipe, as I was, could never come down to woodbine. It should not be expected."

"I'm sure it was not, my dear," said her husband.

"Very well," said she. "Since you like this place so much, we may as well call it settled and keep still about it until we are ready to build."

Mr. Sparrow had not said that he liked it, yet he knew better than to tell her so. If he did, she might leave him even now for one of her other lovers. He really dreaded getting out through that hole, and let her go while he watched her. She went head first, clinging to the rough edges of the hole with both feet, let go with one, hung and twisted around until she was headed right, then dropped and flew away. Mr. Sparrow did the same, but he did not like it.

After a while they began nest-building, and all the straws, sticks, and feathers had to be dragged up through the little round doorway to the nest. Mrs. Sparrow did most of the arranging, while her husband flew in and out more than a hundred times a day. She was a worker. Any bird will tell you that. Still, you know, there are different ways of working. Some of the people who do the most work make the least fuss. Mrs. Sparrow was not one of these. When she did a thing, she wanted everybody to know it, and since her building-place was hidden she talked all the more to Mr. Sparrow.

"I am going to have a large nest," she said. "So bring

plenty of stuff. Bring good things, too," she added. "You have brought two straws already that were really dirty, and this last stick isn't fit to use. I will push it back into a corner."

Mr. Sparrow would have liked to tell her what hard work his was, and ask her to use things he brought, even if they were not quite what she wanted. He was too wise for this, however, so he flew out and pitched into another Sparrow who was getting straws for his wife. He tried to steal his straw, and they fought back and forth until their wives came to see what was the matter and began fighting also. When they stopped at last, the straw had been carried away by a Robin, so neither had it. But they had had a lovely, loud, rough fight, and Sparrows like that even better than straw, so they all felt good-natured again.

Twice Mrs. Sparrow decided to move her nest a little this way or a little that, and such a litter as she made when doing it! Some of the best sticks fell down through the doorway, and the Lady swept them off the porch. Then Mrs. Sparrow scolded her. She was not afraid of a Lady. "She might have left them there," she said. "I would have had my husband pick them up soon. Yesterday she had the Maid put some of her own horrid chairs and tables out here while they were cleaning, and I never touched them."

Mr. Sparrow flew up with a fine Turkey feather. "It came from the Lady's duster," he said. "I think it will give quite an air to your nest."

"Excellent!" cried his wife. "Just wait until I get ready for it." He clung patiently by one foot to the doorway. When that was tired he changed to the other. When that was tired he perched on the top of the column. He was very hungry, and he saw some grain dropped from a passing wagon.

"Hurry up, my dear!" he called. "It is past my dinner-time

already."

"Wait until supper then," cried his wife. "As if I hadn't enough to do without thinking about your dinner! Don't let go of it or it will be blown away."

Then Mr. Sparrow lost his temper. He stuck that feather into a crack near by, and flew softly away to eat some grain. He thought he might be back in time to carry in the feather and his wife never know where he had been. Unfortunately, he got to talking and did not hear his wife call him.

"Mr. Sparrow!" said she. "Mr. Sparrow! I am ready for that feather."

When he did not answer, she put her head out of the doorway. There was the Turkey feather stuck into a crack, and in the road beyond was her husband eating happily with several of his friends. She looked very angry and opened her bill to speak. Then she changed her mind and flew quietly off the other way. She went straight to the Horse-block, where another old suitor was, the one who had come so near winning her. "Mr. Sparrow has disobeyed me," she said, "and is actually eating his dinner when he should be waiting by the nest to help me. I believe that I ought to have married you, but better late than never. Come now."

This was how it happened that when Mr. Sparrow's stomach was quite full, and he suddenly remembered his work, he flew back and found the Turkey feather gone. In the eaves overhead he heard Mrs. Sparrow telling somebody else what to do. He tried to force his way up there. Every time he was shoved back, and not very gently either.

"You might better look for another home," said Mrs. Sparrow's voice. "I have found another husband, one who will help me as I wish. Good-by."

That was the ending of Mr. Sparrow's first marriage. It was

a very sad affair, and the birds talked of nothing else for a long time afterward. Some said that it served him exactly right, because he married to get into a fine family, when there were dozens of Sparrow daughters much prettier and nicer than the one he chose. There may have been something in this, for certainly if Mrs. Sparrow had not been so sure of finding another to take his place, she would not have turned him out in the way she did. It is said, however, that her second husband had a hard life of it.





A Rainy Day on the Lawn

When the sun rose, that morning late in April, he tried and tried to look at the big house and see what was happening. All he could see was a thick gray cloud veil stretched between him and the earth, and, shine as hard as he might, not a single sunbeam went through that veil.

When the Blackbirds awakened, they found a drizzling rain falling, and hurried on their waterproofs to get ready for a wet time. Blackbirds are always handsome, yet they never look better than when it rains. They coat their feathers with oil from the pockets under their tails, as indeed all birds do, and then they fly to the high branches of some tall and swaying tree and talk and talk and talk and talk. They do not get into little groups and face each other, but scatter themselves around and face the wind. This is most sensible, for if one of them were to turn his back to the wind, it would rumple up his feathers and give the raindrops a chance to get down to his skin. When they speak, or at least when they have anything really important to say, they ruffle their own feathers and stand on tip-toe, but they ruffle them carefully and face the wind all the time.

When the Robins opened their round eyes, they chirped cheerfully to each other and put on their waterproofs. "Good weather for us," they said. "It will make fine mud for plastering our new nests, and it will bring out the Worms."



"O Mother, It Is Raining!"

The English Sparrows, Goldfinches, and other seed-eaters were not made happy by the rain. With them it was only something to be borne patiently and without complaining. The Hummingbirds found fewer fresh blossoms open on cloudy days, and so had to fly farther and work harder for their food. The Pewees and other fly-catchers oiled their feathers and kept steadily at work.

The birds had not awakened so early as usual, because it was darker. They had hardly got well started on their breakfast before a sleepy little face appeared at the window of the big house and a sleepy little voice called out: "O Mother, it is raining! I didn't want it to rain."

"Foolish! Foolish! Foolish!" chirped the Robins on the lawn. "Boys would know better than to say such things if they were birds."

"Boys are a bother, anyway," said an English Sparrow, as he spattered in the edge of a puddle. "I wish they had never been hatched."

"Ker-eeeee!" said a Blackbird above his head. "I suppose they may be of some use in the world. I notice that the Gentleman and the Lady seem to think a great deal of this one, and they are a very good sort of people."

"I'd like them better if they didn't keep a Cat," said his brother. "Their Cat is the greatest climber I ever saw. He came almost to the top of this maple after me yesterday, and I have seen him go clear to the eaves of the big house on the woodbine."

"That is because the Sparrows live there," said Mr. Wren. "He went to see their children. Silvertip says that he is very fond of children—they are so much more tender than their parents." Mr. Wren could laugh about this because his own children were always safely housed. Besides, you know, he had

reason to dislike Sparrows.

"I would not stay here," said a Sparrow who had just come up, "if the people here were not of the right sort. They have mountain ash trees and sweetbrier bushes where birds find good feeding. And in the winter that Boy throws out bread crumbs and wheat for us."

"Humph!" said the Oldest Blackbird. "There is no need of talking so much about it. You can always tell what sort of people live in a place by seeing if they have a bird-house. If they have, and it is a sensible one, where a bird could live comfortably, they are all right."

After that the birds worked more and talked less, for the Oldest Blackbird, while he was often grumpy and sometimes cross, was really a very sensible bird, and what he had said was true. The Robins went here and there over the lawn in quick, short runs, pausing once in a while with their heads bent forward and then pulling up choice Worms to eat. Some of their mouthfuls were half as long as they, but that was not rude in Robins. What they insist on in bringing up their children is that mouthfuls should not be too broad, and that they should not stop swallowing until all the Worm is out of sight.

The Blackbirds hunted in a more dignified way. They never ran after food, or indeed after anything else. "If walking is not fast enough," the Blackbird mothers say, "then fly, but do not run." They walked in parties over the lawn and waggled their heads at each step. When they found Grubs they did not appear greedy, yet never a Grub escaped.

"There are two ways of hurrying," they often said. "One is the jerky way and the other is our way, of being sure and steady. Of course our way is the better. You will see that we do just as much and make less fuss."

Silvertip came to the edge of the porch and looked around.

He was licking his lips, and every bird on the lawn was happy to see that, for it meant that he had just finished his breakfast. His eyes gleamed and his tail waved stiffly as he saw the fat Robins so near. He even crouched down and took four short steps, quivering his body and trying his muscles. Then he remembered how wet the grass was and turned back with a long sigh. After all, his stomach was full and he could afford to wait until the grass was dry. The Robins would be there then, and if they kept on eating Worms at this rate, they would be growing plump and juicy all the time. He began to lick himself all over, as every truly tidy Cat does after eating. By the time he had finished the tip of his tail he was sleepy, so he went into the kitchen and dozed by the fire.

The front door opened with a bang, and the Little Boy stood there, shouting and waving a piece of red paper with a string tied to it. "See my kite!" he cried. "Whee-ee-ee!"

Five birds who had been feeding near flew off in wild alarm. "Now why did he do that?" asked one, after they had settled down elsewhere. Nobody answered. None but Little Boys understand these things, and even they do not always tell.

The Lady came to the door behind him and helped him start away. He proudly carried a small new umbrella, and the precious kite fluttered out behind him. When he was outside the gate, he peeped through it and called back: "Good-by, Mother! I'm going to school to learn everyfing. I'll be a good Boy. Good-by!" Then he ran down the walk with the umbrella held back over his shoulder and the rain falling squarely in his face. All that the birds could see of the Little Boy then was his fat legs bobbing along below the umbrella.

"There!" said all the birds together. "There! Silvertip is asleep and the Little Boy has gone to school. Now we can take

comfort."

When the morning was nearly past, and the birds felt so safe that they had grown almost careless, Silvertip wakened and felt hungry. He walked slowly out of the kitchen door and looked at the grass. The sun was now shining, and it was no longer sparkling with tiny drops. He crept down the steps and around to a place under a big spruce tree, the lower branches of which lay along the ground. A fat Robin was hunting near by.

Silvertip watched her hungrily, and if you were a Cat you might have done exactly the same thing. So you must not blame Silvertip. He was creeping, creeping, creeping nearer, and never looking away from her, when the Little Boy came tramping across the grass. He had come in by the gate of the driveway, and was walking straight toward Silvertip, who neither saw nor heard him.

Then the Little Boy saw what was happening, and dropped his bright paper chain on the grass beside him. "G'way!" he cried, waving his umbrella. "G'way! Don't you try to eat any birds 'round here. My father doesn't 'low it. G'way! G'way! Else I'll tell my mother that you are a bad Cat."

Silvertip fled under the porch, the Robin flew up onto the snowball bush, and all around the birds sang the praises of the good Little Boy with the umbrella. But the Little Boy didn't know this. He stood by the porch and dangled his pretty paper chain until Silvertip forgave him and came out to play. Then they ran together into the house, and the birds heard him shouting, "Mother! Mother! Where are you? I want to give Silvertip some cream. He is so very hungry that he most had to eat up a Robin, only I wouldn't let him."



The Persistent Phœbe

It is not often that a Phœbe will nest anywhere except near running water, and nobody but the Phœbes themselves will ever know why this pair chose to build under a porch of the big house. When they came there on their wedding trip the other birds supposed that they were only visiting, and it was not until a Catbird heard them discussing different porches that any one really believed they might come there to live.

Mrs. Phœbe was eager to begin at once, and could not pass a soft bit of moss or an unusually good blade of grass without stopping to look it over and think how she could weave it in. "I see no use in waiting," said she. "I know just as much about building now as I shall after a while, and I should like a home of my own. It makes my bill fairly tingle to see all these fine grasses and mosses waiting to be used. And the worst of it is," she added, "that if we wait, some other bird may get them instead."

Mr. Phœbe wanted to think it over a little longer. He was older than his wife and had been married before. "Phœbe!" he would exclaim. "Wait a day. You know we are building by a house to please you, now wait one more day to please me."

That, you see, was quite right and perfectly fair, for it is not fair for one person to decide everything in a family, and it was right for the wife to wait as long as she could. She could not, of course, wait many days, for there were eggs to be laid,

and when it was time for them, the nest had to be ready. Mr. Phœbe knew this and wasted no time.

"We cannot build on a rock," said he, "because there are no rocks here, and we cannot build under a bridge because there is no bridge here. My other wife and I lived under a bridge." Then he stood silent for a long time and looked down at his black feet. When he spoke of his first wife he always seemed sad. The second Mrs. Phœbe had not liked this at first, but he was so good and kind to her, and let her have her own way so much more than some husbands would, that she had begun to feel happier about it.

There is reason to think that she chose an unusual nesting place just to see how far she could coax him out of his old ways. Perhaps, too, she thought that there would be less in such a place to remind him of his first wife. Another thing which had made her come to feel differently was remembering that if he died or left her she would marry again. Then, you know, she might want to think and talk about her first husband.

She was very proud of him, and watched him as he stood thinking. His upper feathers were deep brown, his under ones a dingy white, and the outer edges of some of his tail-feathers were light colored. His most beautiful features were his black bill and feet and the crest which he could raise on the top of his head. Mrs. Phœbe had the same coloring as her husband, yet she always insisted that he was the better looking of the two, while he insisted, as a good and wise husband should, that she was by far the handsomer.

Now Mr. Phœbe was speaking. "We have decided to build on this house," said he, "and under a porch. Still, there are four large ones and we must find out which is the best. You feed on the shady side and I will feed on the sunny side of the

house. Then we shall see how much these people use their porches."

"I'll do it," answered his wife, "but isn't it a pity that there are people living in this house? It would be so much pleasanter if it were empty."

Mrs. Phœbe perched on a maple branch on the shady side and watched two porches. She thought she would like the front one the better, and had already chosen her window ledge, when she noticed a pair of English Sparrows dragging straws and feathers toward it and disappearing inside the cornice. "Not there," she said firmly, as she clutched the branch even more tightly with her pretty black feet. "I will not have quarrelsome neighbors, and I could never bring our children up to be good if the young Sparrows were always near, showing them how to be naughty." Then she darted after a Fly, caught and swallowed him, and was back on her perch.

"I wonder how the back one would do?" she said. "There are no steps leading to it, and those sweetbrier bushes all around it would keep Boys from climbing onto the railing."

She flew near and saw the Maid kneading bread by one window. A door stood open into the big kitchen, and through two other windows she could look into a pleasant dining-room. "I wouldn't mind that," she said. "If I have plenty to eat myself, I would just as soon see other people eating. We like different things anyway. I dare say those people never tasted an insect in their lives and do not even know the flavor of a choice Fly." Then she swallowed a careless Bug who had mistaken her for an English Sparrow and flown when he should have stayed hidden. Mrs. Phœbe was much interested in the nest, but not so much as to let an insect escape. Oh, never so much as that!

Mr. Phœbe watched the back porch on his side. Some

Robins were building on a window-ledge there, which he thought exceeding imprudent. But then he was not surprised, for everybody knows how careless Robins are. That is why so many of them have to leave their nests—because they are built where no nest should be. Mr. Phœbe could tell at a glance that no bird should build there. Woodbine climbed over the pillars and fell in a thick curtain from the cornice, and beside the door stood a saucerful of milk. "That means a Cat," said he, "a Cat who stays on this porch most of the time and always comes here when he is hungry. And when he tires of milk he will climb up that woodbine and finish with young Robin. Or, perhaps," he added, "I should say that he will finish a young Robin."

The front porch on his side was sunshiny and quiet, but there was the woodbine again, and with the Cat so near. He next looked at the portico over the front door. Under the roof of this was a queer shiny, thin thing with a loop of black thread hanging down in it. He tried to get the thread, but only hit and hurt his bill against the shiny, thin stuff. Then he remembered seeing a bright light in it the night before when he had been awakened by a bad dream. "That will never do," he said. "It is not good for children to sleep with a light near. One would want to be catching insects there, too," he added, "when he should be sleeping. There must be many drawn by the light."

So it ended in the couple building under the dining-room porch on the shelf-like top of a column. Mrs. Phœbe chose this instead of a window-ledge because from here she could look into the window while brooding her eggs. "You may laugh at me all you choose," said she to her husband, "for I did wish the house empty. Since it cannot be, however, I might as well see what the people in it do."

"I was not laughing, my dear," answered her husband meekly (you remember that he had been married before). "I was only smiling with pleasure at our fine nest. You have so much taste in arranging grasses!"

That was the way in which the Phœbes began housekeeping. It was not always easy, sitting on the nest day after day as Mrs. Phœbe had to, with only a chance now and then to stretch her tired legs. She was even glad that people lived in the house. "It gives me something to think about," said she, "although I do get much out of patience with them sometimes. Much they know about bringing up children! That Boy of theirs eats only three times a day. How can they ever hope to raise him unless he eats more? Now, I expect to feed my children all the time, and that is the way to do." Here she darted away to catch a Fly who came blundering along.

"It's a good thing for that Fly that I got him," she said, smilingly. "It saved him from being caught in the Spider's web over there, and I am sure it is much pleasanter to be swallowed whole by a polite Phœbe than to be nibbled at by a horrid Spider."

Mr. Phœbe sometimes brought her a dainty morsel, but he spent much of his time by the hydrant. "There is not much chance to bathe," he said, as he wallowed around in the little pool beside it, "but it is something to smell water. You know we Phœbes like to fly in and out of ponds and rivers, even when we cannot stop for a real bath." His favorite perch was on the top of a tall pole covered with cinnamon vine, in the flower garden. Here he would sit for a whole morning at a time, darting off now and then for an insect, but always returning to the same place and position. He did not even face the other way for a change.

The little Phœbes were hatched much like other birds,

and were about as good and about as naughty as children usually are. Mrs. Phœbe was positive that they were remarkable in every way. Mr. Phœbe, having raised other broods, did not think them quite so wonderful, although he admitted that there was not another nestling on the place to compare with them. "Still," as he would modestly remark, "we must remember that we are the only Phœbes here, and that it is not fair to compare them with the young of other birds. You could not expect our neighbors' children to be as bright as they."

Unfortunately there were only two little Phœbes, so each parent could give all his time to one. The mother cared for the son and the father for the daughter. When it was time for them to learn to catch their own Flies, these children did not want to do so. The father made his daughter learn, in spite of the fuss she made. He gave her his old perch on the cinnamon vine pole, and told her that she must try to catch every insect that flew past. This was after she had been out of the nest several days, and had learned to use her feet and wings.

"If you do not," he said, "I shall not feed you anything." When she pouted her bill, he paid no attention to it, and she soon stopped. There is no use in pouting, you know, unless somebody is looking at you and wishing that you wouldn't. Perhaps it was because he had brought up children before that Mr. Phœbe was so wise.

Mrs. Phœbe meant to be very firm also, but when her son whimpered and said that he couldn't, he knew he couldn't, catch a single one, and that he was sure he would tumble to the ground if he tried it, she always felt sorry for him and said: "Perhaps you can to-morrow." Then she would catch food for him again.

This is how it happened that, day after day, a plump and strong young Phœbe sat on a branch of the syringa bush and

let his tired mother feed him. At last his father quite lost patience and interfered. "My dear," he said to his wife, "I will be with our son to-day, and you may have a rest."

"You are very kind," she replied, "but he is so used to having me that I think I might better—"

"I said," interrupted her husband, "that I would be with our son to-day. I advise you to fly away with our daughter and show her something of the world." Mrs. Phœbe did not often hear him speak in that tone of voice. When he did, she always agreed with him.

As soon as father and son were alone, the father said: "Now you are going to catch Flies before sunset. You have let your poor mother nearly work her feathers off for you. (Of course, feathers do not come off so, but this was his way of speaking.) She is very tired, and you are not to act like this again. There comes a Fly. Catch him!"

The young Phœbe made a wild dash, missed his Fly, and came back to the syringa bush whimpering. "I knew I couldn't," he said. "I tried as hard as I could, but he flew away."

"Yes," said his father. "You tried once, just once. You may have to try a hundred times before you catch one, but that is no reason why you should not try. Go for that Mosquito."

The son went, and missed him, of course. This time he knew better than to talk about it. He just flew back to his perch and looked miserable.

"I think you got a little nearer to this one," said his father. "Go for that Fly!"

The young Phœbe was kept darting here and there so often that he had no time to be sulky. Indeed, if people have to keep moving quite fast, they soon forget to want to be sulky. At last he was surprised by his father's tucking a very

delicious Bluebottle down his throat. "Just for a lunch," he explained. "Now try for that one."

The son made a sudden lurch and flight, and actually caught him. It was a much smaller Fly than the one which his father had fed him, but it tasted better. He swallowed it as slowly as he could, so as to feel it going down as long as possible. Then he began to be happier. "Watch me catch that Mosquito," he said. And when he missed him, as he did, he made no fuss at all—only said: "I'll get the next one!" When he missed that he simply said: "Well, I'll get the next one, anyhow!"

And he did.

All day long he darted and failed or darted and succeeded, and more and more often he caught the insect instead of missing him.

When the long shadows on the lawn showed that sunset was near, his mother and sister came back. His mother had a delicious morsel for him to eat. "Open your bill very wide," she said, "you poor, tired, hungry child."

He did open his bill, because a Phœbe can always eat a little more anyway, but he did not open it until he had said: "Why, I'm not much tired, and I am not really hungry at all. You just ought to see me catch Flies!"

You can imagine how surprised his mother was. And in the tall fir tree near by he heard a Blackbird say something in a hoarse voice about a persistent Phœbe. But that didn't make much difference, because, you see, he didn't know what "persistent" meant, and if he had known he could not have told whether the Blackbird was talking about him or about his father. Could you have told, if you had been a Phœbe?



The Sad Story of the Hog Caterpillar

The grape-vines on the trellis were carefully pruned and tended, but that did not prevent a few Hog Caterpillars of the Vine from making their home upon them. There were a number of other Hog Caterpillars on the place, and all expected to be Hawk Moths when they grew up. Sometimes they thought and talked too much about this, and planned too far ahead. They might better have thought more about being the best kind of Caterpillars. For sometimes, when they were telling what great things they would do by-and-by, they forgot to do exactly as they should just then.

None of them knew when they got their name. Somebody who noticed their small heads and very smooth, fat, and puffy-looking bodies must have begun it. Perhaps, too, this person thought that the queer little things sticking upward and backward from the end of their bodies looked like the tail of a Hog. Those who lived on grape-vines were called Hog Caterpillars of the Vine. Then, when their friends spoke of them, people knew at once to what family they belonged.

If you were to look closely at a Hog Caterpillar of the Vine, you would think him handsome. He has seven reddish spots along the middle of his back, every one set in a patch of pale yellow. On each side you would see a long green stripe with white edges, and below this you would find seven slanting white ones.

When these Hog Caterpillars of the Vine were hatched, they were very, very tiny, and had to feed and rest and change their skins over and over, just as all Caterpillars must. Of course when they changed their skins, they had nobody to help them, because their parents were Hawk Moths and never bothered with the care of children. They believed that Caterpillars should help themselves. "They will have plenty of time to play when they are grown up," the Hawk Moths said, "and it is much better for children to have to change their own skins. If they do that, they will be more careful of their new ones, when they get them."

There is a great deal in the way a child is brought up, and no Caterpillar ever says, "I can't do this;" or, "Somebody must help me get off my old skin, so there!" No indeed! Caterpillars help themselves and make no fuss at all.

This is not saying that they have no faults. It just means that this fault was not one of theirs. Perhaps their worst fault was bragging about what they were going to do. It was either that or carelessness, and every now and then some one of them would be dreadfully punished. With so many hungry birds around, Caterpillars should be very careful. One of those on the grape-vines laughed at a Robin for being afraid of Silvertip. Of course he did not expect to be heard by any except his relatives. He was, though, and as soon as Silvertip had walked off, the Robin came back and hunted for him and ate him. He was very, very sorry for his rudeness, and tried to wriggle out of it, when the Robin spoke about it, but he should have remembered sooner. "I laughed before I thought," he said. "I'll never do it again. Never! Never!"

"Say nothing more about it," answered the Robin, who was noted for his polite ways; "I am very sure you won't." Then he swallowed him while he was talking. The Catbird

said that the Robin took in all that the Caterpillar was saying, but the other birds didn't quite understand what he meant by that.

The oldest Hog Caterpillar of the Vine was always reckless. He would feed in plain sight in the sunshine if he wanted to, and he was forever telling what a fine Hawk Moth he expected to be. "If a bird comes after me," he would say, "I will just let go of the leaf and fall to the ground in a little round bunch. I can lie so quietly in the grass that he will never see me." He looked so haughty when saying this that none of his relatives dared to say a word, although a pretty young one wept quietly under her grape-leaf. He had been very attentive to her, and she wanted to marry him after they had changed into Moths. Such plans, you know, might be sadly upset by a hungry and sharp-sighted bird.

Yet birds were not the only people to fear. The Ichneumon Wasps and their cousins the Braconids were always flying around and looking for fat and juicy Caterpillars, and many a promising young fellow had been pounced upon by them. They were so much smaller and more quiet than the birds that they were really much more to be feared. His friends and relatives used to tell the oldest Hog Caterpillar to keep hidden from them, but he paid no attention. "Do you suppose," said he, "that a fine fellow like me is going to sneak under leaves for a slender Ichneumon or a little Braconid? Not I!"

So it is not surprising that when a mother Braconid came along one day, looking for a good place to lay eggs, she saw him busily eating in the sunshine. He had just taken the sixth mouthful from an especially fine leaf when she alighted on him. "Don't move!" she said. "Your position is exactly right. Keep perfectly still and I shall soon be through."

The Hog Caterpillar of the Vine understood every word she said, but he moved as fast as he could. Unfortunately, you know, his legs were all on the under side of his body, and were so stubby that he could not reach up to push her away. He did rub up against a leaf and brush her off for a minute, but she was right back and talking to him again.

"You are very foolish to make such a fuss," she said. "You might better keep still and get it over. I have decided on you, and you can't help yourself. Now hold still!"

There was only one other thing left for the poor Hog Caterpillar of the Vine to do. He let go of the grape leaf and fell to the ground. He had hardly struck it, however, when the Braconid was on his back. "No more nonsense," said she sternly. "You really make me quite out of patience, and I shall not wait any longer. I want to get my eggs laid and have some time for play."

Then she ran her ovipositor, which is the tube through which insects lay their eggs, into his fat back and slipped an egg down through it. How it did hurt! The poor Hog Caterpillar of the Vine squirmed with pain, and all the Braconid said was: "It would be much easier for me if you would lie quietly. Still, I am used to working under difficulties…. You won't mind it so after a while." Then she drew out her ovipositor, stuck it into another place, and laid another egg.

Before she left him, the Braconid had laid thirty-five eggs in his body, and the Hog Caterpillar of the Vine was so tired with pain and anger that he could hardly move. Of the two, perhaps the anger tired him the more. He had time to do a great deal of thinking before he climbed onto the vine again. "I will be more careful after this," he said, "but I guess there isn't any need of telling the other fellows what has happened. None of them were around when that dreadful Braconid

came."

When he was up on the vine again, one of his relatives said: "You look sick. What is the matter?" And he answered: "Oh, I am rather tired. Guess this skin is getting too tight."

The next day he felt quite well, but as time went on he grew worse and worse. He ate a great deal, yet he did not grow as he should, and the other Hog Caterpillars of the Vine began to talk about it. The truth was, you know, that the Braconid's thirty-five eggs had all hatched, and her children were eating up the poor Hog Caterpillar of the Vine. They were fat little Worms then, and when they were old enough to spin cocoons, they cut thirty-five tiny doors in his skin and spun their cocoons on the outside.

Then all his relatives and friends knew what was the matter with him, for wherever he went he had to carry on his back and sides thirty-five beautiful little shining white cocoons. He did not think them beautiful, yet they were, and the Braconid mother looked at them with great pride as she flew past.

"I should like to see them cut off the tiny round lids of their cocoons," she said, "and fly away, but I suppose I shall not be around then. It is very hard not to have the pleasure of bringing up one's own children. Yet I suppose it is better for them, and one must not be selfish." She flew away with a very good, almost too good, look on her face.

The Hog Caterpillar of the Vine was so tired that he died —what there was left of him. Really the Braconid babies had eaten most of him before spinning their cocoons. The only truly happy people around were the Braconid children, who came out strong and active the next day.

This is all a very, very sad story. It is true, though, and it had to be written, because there may still be some Hog Caterpillars of the Vine, or perhaps some other people, who will not

take advice about what they should do, and so they come to trouble.





The Cat and the Catbird

It was late in the fall when Silvertip came to live in the big house, and he was then a very small kitten. All through the winter which followed, he was the pet of the Gentleman and the Lady, of the Maid, and of the people who came there to visit. He liked the Gentleman best and showed it very plainly, but that was only right, for it was the Gentleman, you know, who first brought him into the house.

At night he slept on a red cushion in a basket in the kitchen, except when he made believe catch Mice with a spool for a Mouse. Sometimes, when the other people were in bed, they could hear him running and jumping out there and having the finest kind of a time all by himself. During the days he spent most of his time on a red lamb's-wool rug under a desk where the Lady kept her typewriter. He thought the desk must be a Cathouse, for the room under it was just large enough and just high enough to suit him, and there were walls on three sides to make it warmer. He did not see why the Lady should sit down at it nearly every day and thump-thump-thump on the queer-looking little machine which she kept upstairs in this house. When she did this he had to move farther back on his rug, and it bothered him to do so when he was sleepy.

Sometimes, when he had been really awakened by the thump-thump-thumping of the machine and the ringing of

the little bell on it, he would jump up behind it. Then he would peep over its top at the Lady and chew the paper which stuck out in his face until he was gently lifted or pushed away. Sometimes he sat by the side of it, and then he would watch the little bell ringing until he learned to put up one tiny white paw and ring it himself. After he had watched and played in this way for a while, he would lie on the high part of the desk, over where the drawers were, and sleep again. Yet he was never too sleepy to pat with his paws every printed sheet which the Lady took from the machine, or to play with every clean white one which she fastened into it. He liked the white ones the better and didn't see why the Lady wanted to mark them all up so. Still, he thought it was probably her way of playing, so it didn't matter.

Sometimes, when she seemed tired, the Lady would bend over and put her face down against his back and call him "her little collaborator." He did not know what that big word meant. He thought it might be something about his tail. They were both interested in tales.

When the Lady was writing on her lap in the funny way that Ladies sometimes have, he would cuddle down under her portfolio and sleep. For these things he liked her, but she would hardly ever take time to play with him. So, when he heard the latch-key rattle in the front door, he listened, and if it were the Gentleman's step which he heard, he ran to the hall door and waited with his little pink nose to the crack until the Gentleman came in. Then what romps they would have! Back and forth from one room to another, with balls, spools tied onto the most charming strings, and even yardsticks and tape-measures, and things taken from the Lady's sewing-stand.

He liked the Maid, too. She was always kind to him,

although she did shut him up one day when he stole a silvery little sardine from the table. She would not let him have anything but milk to eat until he was nearly grown-up. Whenever he smelled a roast or a fine juicy steak he would beg as hard as he knew how, but not one taste did he ever get until he had lost all his Kitten-teeth and his Cat-teeth were growing in. When he was older and knew more about life, he understood that this was to keep him from swallowing a loose tooth with a mouthful of meat, and that Kittens who are given all sorts of food are very likely to do this and bring on fits. You can just imagine what trouble it would make to have a sharp tooth get into a Kitten's stomach.

This was probably the reason, too, why Silvertip grew so very large and handsome. At Christmas time he was given a red ribbon to wear around his neck, red being very becoming to his complexion. He did not care very much for the ribbon, though, and went off into a corner and scratched at it with his hind feet until it came off. Then he chewed it into a wet wisp and left it.

This was Silvertip's life during that first winter. Sometimes on sunshiny days he sat out on the kitchen porch, and once in a while he sunned himself on the broad rail of one of the front porches. Whatever he wanted he had, except, of course, some kinds of food, which he ought not to have anyway. Nobody was ever cross to him and many people were doing things to make him happy. He had yet to learn that this could not last forever.

When spring came he lived more out of doors, and followed the Hired Man around barn and woodshed. He went into the ice-house once, but found that too cold. In these places he saw his first Mice. He will never forget the very first one which he caught. It was just at supper time and he brought

it into the kitchen. He could not understand why the Maid should scream and act so queerly. He thought perhaps she wanted it herself.

Whenever the Mouse wriggled or flirted its tail into his eyes he jumped backward. It scared him dreadfully, but he would not let go. Instead of that he would walk backward two or three times around the kitchen range. He wanted to lay the Mouse down and play with it, only he did not know just how to go about it. He tried to have the Maid help him, but every time he went to lay it at her feet she jumped into a chair. At last she called for the Lady. Then the Lady came out and laughed at both of them. How it ended nobody but Silvertip knows, for he walked around the kitchen with it in his mouth until late in the evening, and the next morning there was not a sign of it to be found.

It was this spring, too, that he became acquainted with the Catbird. He heard a queer Cat-like voice saying, "Zeay! Zeay!" many times, and yet could never find the Cat to whom it belonged. "Come out here!" he would cry. "Come out here, and we will make believe fight!" When no Cat came he couldn't understand it. He had already become acquainted with many Cats in the neighborhood, and whenever one came to call they made believe fight. It was their favorite game. They would sit around and glare at each other and growl a whole day at a time. So Silvertip could not understand a Cat who said "Zeay!" instead of "Meouw!" and would not fight.

One morning when Silvertip was sitting on the back porch, a slender gray bird, with black crown, tail, bill, and feet, perched on the woodbine over his head and said, "Zeay!" It sounded as though somebody in the little apple-tree had said it, but Silvertip was looking at the bird and saw him open and

shut his bill.

"Pht!" said Silvertip, as he began to let his tail and the hair along his back bristle. "Pht! Don't you dare to mock me!"

"Zeay!" answered the bird. "Zeay! Zeay!"

"I don't say it just that way, anyhow," said Silvertip; "so quit!"

"Zeay!" answered the bird.

"I am the Cat who belongs here," said Silvertip. "You quit mocking me or go away!"

"Zeay!" replied the bird, putting his head upon one side. "I am the Catbird who belongs here. I had a nest here last year before you were born, and when I went south for the winter you were not here. Zeay!"

Now Silvertip, not having had a chance to learn much about birds, thought that this one was not telling the truth, and he quite lost his temper. "You deserve to be eaten," he cried, and he began to climb up the woodbine, feeling his way along without taking his eyes from the Catbird. The Catbird sat there and twitched his tail until Silvertip had almost reached him. Then he said, "Zeay!" and flew off. A few minutes later he was sitting on the top twig of a fir tree and singing wonderfully. This was what he sang: "Prut! Prut! Coquillicot! Really! Really! Coquillicot! Hey, Coquillicot! Hey! Victory!"

Silvertip walked back and forth on the kitchen porch. He was too angry to sit down at once. When at last he did, and began to wash himself, he was thinking all the time how mean the Catbird was.

Every day the Catbird came and flirted around and said, "Zeay! Zeay!" till Silvertip lost his temper. He just ached to get his claws into that bird, and that even when his stomach was full. He did not care so much about eating him, you see, although he would undoubtedly have done so if he had had

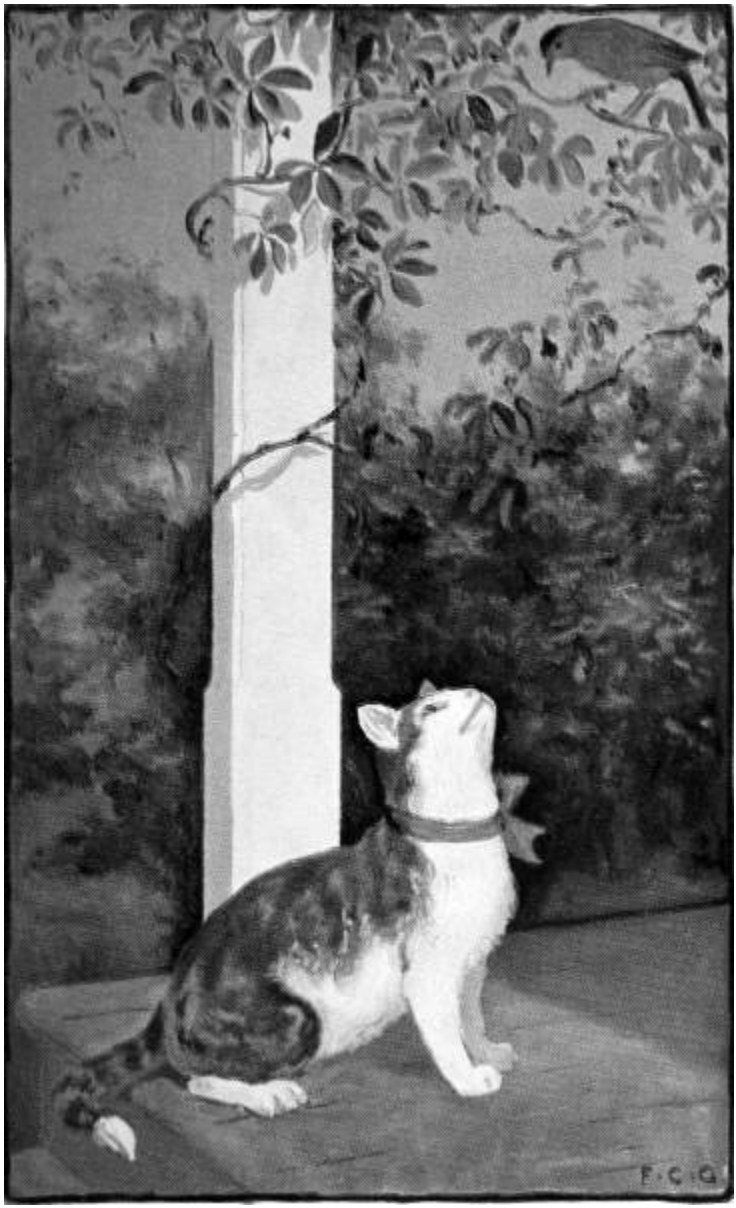
the chance, but he wanted to stop his teasing.

One day he was looking out through a screen door and happened to see the Catbird mocking another bird. He was surprised to hear the other say: "Mock away, if it is any fun! It doesn't hurt me any." Then he heard the Catbird laugh and saw him fly away.

"I wonder what he would do if I were to try that?" said Silvertip. "I believe I will the next time."

That very day, when Silvertip was sunning himself on the porch and heard the same teasing voice say, "Zeay!" above his head, he opened his thick eyelids and slid the other ones about half-way to one side, and looked lazily up. "Pretty good!" he said. "You do a little better every day I think. If you keep at it you can say 'Meouw' after a while." Then he began to shut his eyes again.

"Prut!" exclaimed the Catbird. "It's no fun teasing you any more! You don't care enough about it! Good-by!" And that was the last time that Silvertip ever saw him nearer than the top of a tree. So Silvertip learned one of the great lessons of life, which is not to pay any attention to people who make fun of you, or to mind when you are teased.



"You Deserve to Be Eaten"



The Friendly Blackbirds

Ever since the year when the first pair of Blackbirds nested near the big house, there had been some of their family in the tall evergreens. One could not truly say that the Blackbirds were popular. When they first came they had a quarrel with a pair of Catbirds about a certain building-place, and most of the older birds took sides with the Catbirds. Nobody knew which couple first chose this place, so of course nobody knows who was really right, and perhaps it might better all be forgotten.

The Blackbirds were happy there and returned the next year with some of their children, who courted and married and built in other tall evergreens in the same yard. After that they were company for each other and had little to do with Robins, Phœbes, and more quiet neighbors. They were handsome, bold, loud-voiced, teasing, and not at all gentle in their ways. Still, that had to be expected of their family. Their neighbors should have remembered that they were not Chipping Sparrows or Humming-birds. On the other hand they were neither Bluejays nor Hawks, and it is much better to think of a bird's good qualities than of his bad ones.

Now, there were so many that nearly every one of the tall evergreens bore a Blackbird's nest. These were built near the top and close to the trunk of the tree. They were carefully woven of different things and lined with mud. Unless you

knew the ways of Blackbirds, you would never find out that there was a nest on the place. No careful Blackbird, you know, will fly straight to his home if any one is watching him. He will walk around on the lawn in the most careless manner possible, until he has the home tree between him and you. Then he will slip noiselessly in under the low branches and make his way to the top by walking around and around the trunk, quite as you would go up a winding staircase.

Two married brothers built in near-by trees and were much together. Their wives were excellent and hard-working birds—almost, but not quite, as good-looking as their husbands. Like them, they were all black except the yellow rings of their eyes. The only difference was that they were smaller and in the sunlight did not have the same gleaming green, blue, and purple lights on their feathers.

These two couples were courting at the same time, and were usually in the same tree, a tall maple. The brothers would sit there in the sunshine, facing the wind and thinking about their sweethearts. Every now and then they would spread their wings and tails, ruffle up their feathers, stand on tiptoe, and squeak in a hoarse voice. Their sweethearts were hiding in trees near by and crept nearer at each squeak.

Mrs. Wren said she had never heard anything like it, and that, much as she loved Mr. Wren, if he had made love to her in that way she would not have married him. "Think," said she, "of singing like a cartwheel in need of oil! And then think of having to listen to that sort of thing right along after you are married!"

"Oh, that part of it will not be so bad," said an experienced Robin. "They probably will not sing so much to their wives."

"Or if they do sing," said an Oriole who was building in

an apple-tree across the way, "they may go far away from wife and home before beginning. Mr. Oriole will never sing in our own tree. He says he would be seen at once, and then our nest would be found. That is why he always perches near the big house before he begins. You know bright-colored birds have to be very particular."

When the brothers had really won and married their sweethearts, they chose to build as near to each other as possible, and they walked over the lawn together as they hunted for Grubs.

The young wives sat on their eggs and chatted happily with each other. The eggs were bluish-green, with all sorts of queer brown marks. It was very interesting when they were laying them. No two were alike, and then Blackbirds never know how many eggs to expect. It is not with them as it is with other birds, who are sure beforehand of the color and sometimes even of the number.

You can imagine how often the young wives visited each other's nests, and how the one who had only three eggs sat on the other nest, just to see how it would feel to have five under her. Of course this difference meant that the couple who lived in the fir-tree would have to work much harder than the couple in the spruce. Two more mouths take many more Grubs, and Mrs. Spruce-tree Blackbird, as she was sometimes called, could never be sure whether she was glad or sorry that she had only three eggs to hatch. As it happened, it was well for the other family that there were no more.

When the eight little cousins got safely out of their shells and were about as large as Humming-birds, the mother of the fir-tree brood disappeared. She had flown off as usual to find food and nobody ever saw her again. At about this time her neighbors heard a loud bang and saw a red-headed boy pick

up something from the road. He put it quickly into his bag and ran away, for he knew that shooting anywhere near the big house was forbidden.

The five motherless nestlings now had only one parent to feed them, and he was a sadly overworked bird. He did the best he could and brought such great billfuls of food that it was a wonder he did not choke himself. He was up early and worked late, yet his five children looked thin and forlorn while their three little cousins were plump and sturdy.

At last Mrs. Spruce-tree Blackbird could stand it no longer. She heard the motherless children crying hungrily when her own three were filled with Grubs almost to the tips of their bills. She paused on the edge of her nest one day with a delicious lunch all ready. Her own children were ready to swallow whatever she should give them, when she suddenly turned and flew over to the fir-tree. "There!" she said, as she tucked food down into first one gaping bill and then another. "There! I guess it won't hurt my own babies, and I know it won't hurt you, if I make them share once in a while."

She spoke with her mouth full, which is bad manners, even in a Blackbird, but one could forgive her still more than that because of the kind things she was saying. When her husband came home she told him what she had done and asked him to help. "Just think of your poor brother," she said. "Our own children will not suffer, and you know how you would feel if you were the one to bring up a family alone." He looked at her lovingly with his yellow eyes, and sidled up close to her on the branch. He was a dreadful tease, as all Blackbirds are, but he was a kind husband and father.

"We will do it," said he. "I really think our own children have eaten too much lately. The eldest one has peeped crossly three times this very day."

"Yes," added Mrs. Blackbird, "I think they have been overfed myself. The baby slept very poorly last night, and kept me awake much of the time by wriggling around under me."

So it was settled, and after that the poor brother had help. His five motherless children began to grow fat and sturdy, while their cousins were none the worse for sharing. Sad to say, however, they made a dreadful fuss because their parents helped feed their little cousins.

"Guess those children could get along some way," they grumbled. "Mother always gives them the best. It isn't fair! We just won't eat if she does that way!"

When she brought them more food they were sulky and told her to take it to the other nest. She looked sharply at them and flew away. "Guess she will feel sorry when we are starved to death," said the three cross nestlings. And when their father came to feed them they acted in the same way.

Their parents, being very wise for a couple with their first brood, did not urge them to eat, or get worried in any way. They simply paid no attention to them, besides cleaning out the nest once in a while. They also kept on helping the other family. It made them very sad to have their children so foolish and naughty, but they tried to remember how young they were and to be patient.

After a while the three cross children began to feel very badly. Their stomachs had not been really empty since they could remember—not until now. For a while they talked about getting even with their parents. Then they were very still. The baby began to cry. "I am so hungry," said she. And the others cried with her. "So are we," they said.

Their parents flew straight up to the nest. There was nobody watching them, but they were in such haste that they might even have done so if there had been.

"Don't you like to feel hungry?" asked their mother.

"No," sobbed the little Blackbirds. "We want you to feed us."

"What if you had nobody to feed you?" said she. And she never moved toward getting them a Grub.

"B-but we have," they said. "We have a father and a mother."

"Supposing I had been killed," said their mother, "don't you think your aunt would have helped your father care for you?"

"Yes, ma'am," answered all three.

"Then don't you think I ought to help feed your cousins?" said she.

"Yes, ma'am," was the very meek reply.

"Now," said she, "are you willing I should feed your cousins, too?"

"Yes, ma'am," said they, and each was trying to say it first. "We will be good. We won't be cross any more."

Such a meal as the three little Blackbirds had then! It is a wonder that there were not three stomach-aches in that nest at once. When all had been fed and were half asleep under their mother's warm breast, the oldest one said to his sisters: "It must be dreadful not to have enough to eat any of the time. I believe I am glad they fed our cousins."

"We are glad," said the others, and then they went to sleep. So the little Blackbirds learned their first lesson in unselfishness, and they learned it as larger people often have to do, by having a hard time themselves.

THE END