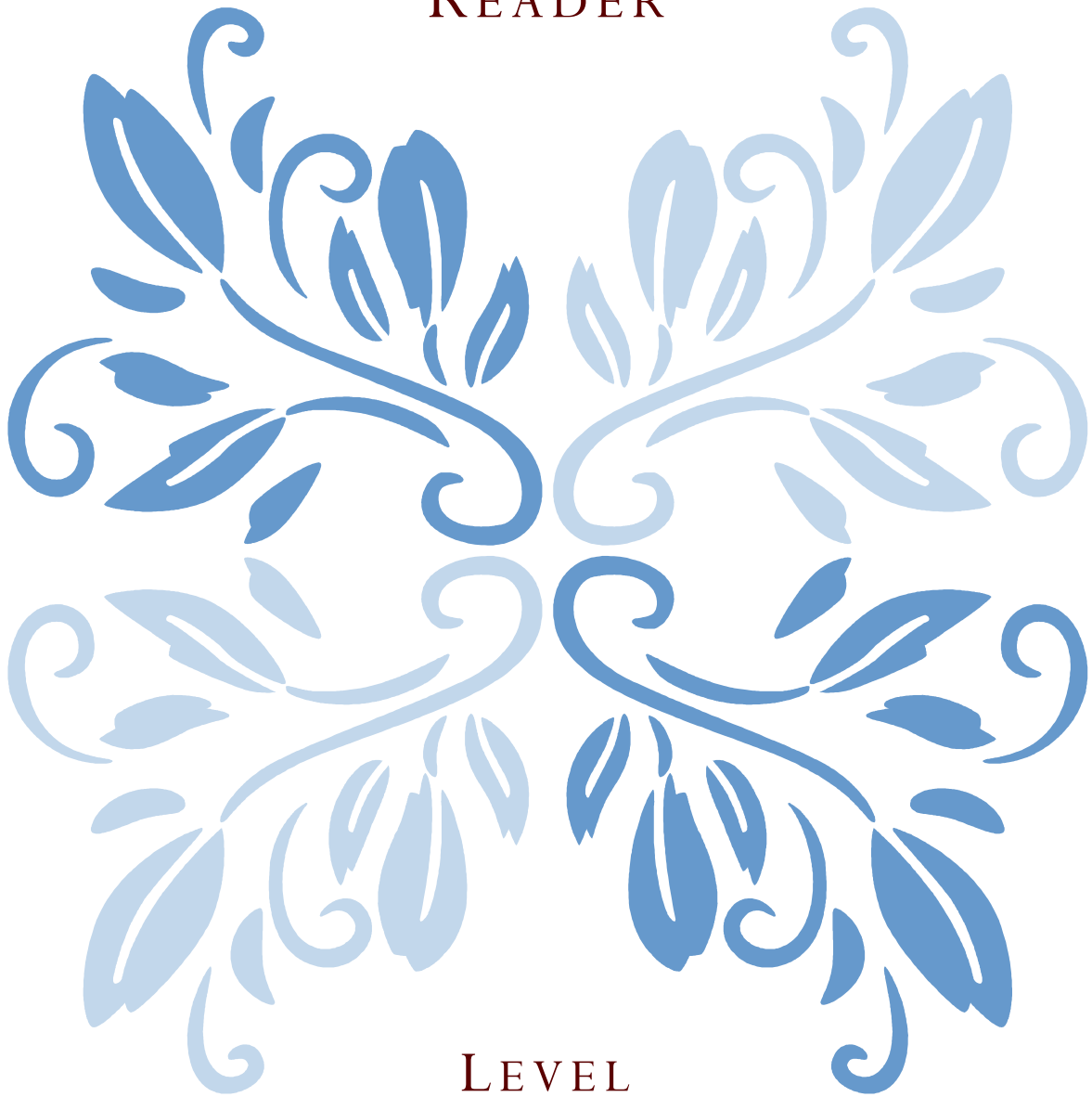


THE
CONCISE

READER



LEVEL

TWO

The Concise Reader

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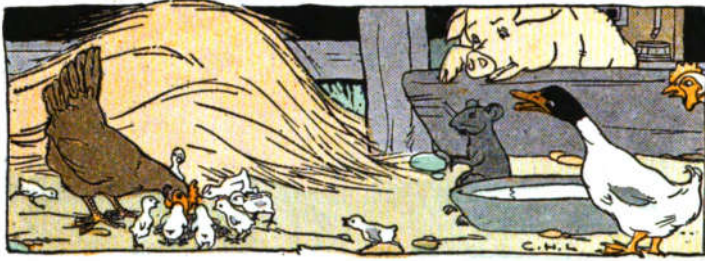
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First edition, first printing.

MY BOOK HOUSE



THE LITTLE RED HEN AND THE GRAIN OF WHEAT

An English Folk Tale

The Little Red Hen was in the farmyard with her chicks looking for something to eat.

She found some grains of wheat and she said:—

“Cut, cut, cut, cudawcut!

These grains of wheat I'll sow;

The rain and warm Spring sunshine

Will surely make them grow.

Now who will help me sow the wheat?”

“Not I,” said the Duck.

“Not I,” said the Mouse.

“Not I,” said the Pig.

“Then I'll sow it myself,” said Little Red Hen.

And she did.

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IN THE NURSERY

When the grain had grown up tall and was ready to cut, Little Red Hen said:—

“Cut, cut, cut, cudawcut!

I'll cut, cut, cut this grain;

It's nodding ripe and golden,

From days of sun and rain.

Now who will help me cut the wheat?”

“Not I,” said the Duck.

“Not I,” said the Mouse.

“Not I,” said the Pig.

“Then I'll cut it myself,” said Little Red Hen.

And she did.

When the wheat was cut, Little Red Hen said:—

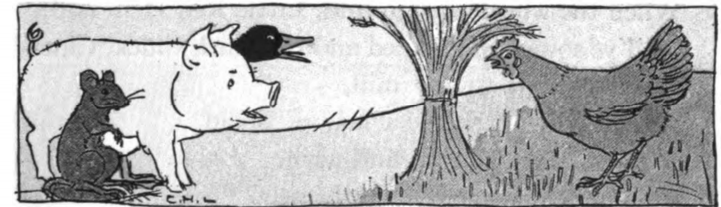
“Cut, cut, cut, cudawcut!

It's time to thresh the wheat;

Each little grain so precious

From out the chaff I'll beat.

Now who will help me thresh the wheat?”



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"Not I," said the Duck.
"Not I," said the Mouse.
"Not I," said the Pig.
"Then I'll thresh it myself," said Little Red Hen.
And she did.

When the wheat was threshed, Little Red Hen said:—

"See where the windmill's great, long arms
Go whirling round and round!
I'll take this grain straight to the mill;
To flour it shall be ground.

Cluck! Cluck! Who'll help me
carry the grain to the mill?"

"Not I," said the Duck.

"Not I," said the Mouse.

"Not I," said the Pig.

"Then I'll carry it myself," said Little Red Hen.
And she did.



When the wheat was ground, Little Red Hen said:—

"I've sowed and reaped and threshed, Cluck, Cluck!
I've carried to the mill,
And now I'll bake a loaf of bread,
With greatest care and skill.

Who'll help me bake the bread?"

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"Not I," said the Duck.
"Not I," said the Mouse.
"Not I," said the Pig.
"Then I'll bake it myself," said Little Red Hen.
And she did.

When the bread was baked, Little Red Hen said:—

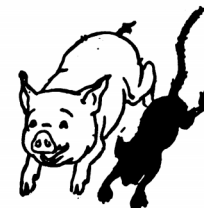
"Cluck, cluck! Cluck, cluck!

The bread is done,
It's light and sweet,
Now who will come
And help me EAT?"

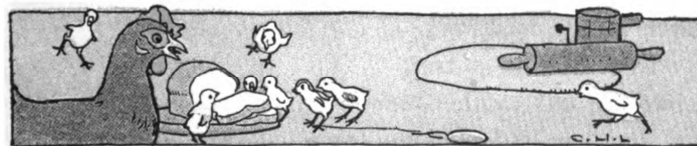
"I WILL," quacked the Duck.

"I WILL," squeaked the Mouse.

"I WILL," grunted the Pig.



"NO! YOU WON'T," said Little Red Hen, "I'll
do it myself. Cluck! Cluck! my chicks! I earned
this bread for you! Eat it up! Eat it up!"
And they did.



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THE LITTLE GRAY PONY*

Maud Lindsay

There was once a man who owned a little gray pony.

Every morning when the dewdrops were still hanging on the pink clover in the meadows, and the birds were singing their morning song, the man would jump on his pony and ride away, clippety, clippety, clap!

The pony's four small hoofs played the jolliest tune on the smooth pike road, the pony's head was always high in the air, and the pony's two little ears were always pricked up; for he was a merry, gray pony, and loved to go clippety, clippety, clap!

The man rode to town and to country, to church and to market, up hill and down hill; and one day he heard something fall with a clang on a stone in the

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IN THE NURSERY

road. Looking back, he saw a horseshoe lying there. And when he saw it, he cried out:—

“What shall I do? What shall I do,
If my little gray pony has lost a shoe?”

Then down he jumped, in a great hurry, and looked at one of the pony's forefeet; but nothing was wrong. He lifted the other forefoot, but the shoe was still there. He examined one of the hindfeet, and began to think that he was mistaken; but when he looked at the last foot, he cried again:—

“What shall I do? What shall I do?
My little gray pony *has* lost a shoe!”

Then he made haste to go to the blacksmith; and when he saw the smith, he called out to him:—

“Blacksmith!
Blacksmith! I've come to you;
My little gray pony has lost a shoe!”



M Y B O O K H O U S E

But the blacksmith answered and said:—

“How can I shoe your pony’s feet,
Without some coal the iron to heat?”

The man was downcast when he heard this; but he left his little gray pony in the blacksmith’s care, while he hurried here and there to buy the coal.

First of all he went to the store; and when he got there, he said:—

“Storekeeper! Storekeeper! I’ve come to you;
My little gray pony has lost a shoe!
And I want some coal the iron to heat,
That the blacksmith may shoe my pony’s feet.”

But the storekeeper answered and said:—

“Now I have apples and candy to sell,
And more nice things than I can tell;
But I’ve no coal the iron to heat,
That the blacksmith may shoe your pony’s feet.”

Then the man went away sighing, and saying:—

“What *shall* I do? What *shall* I do?
My little gray pony has lost a shoe!”

I N T H E N U R S E R Y

By and by he met a farmer coming to town with a wagon full of good things, and he said:—

“Farmer! Farmer! I’ve come to you;
My little gray pony has lost a shoe!
And I want some coal the iron to heat,
That the blacksmith may shoe my pony’s feet.”

Then the farmer answered the man and said:—

“I’ve bushels of corn, and hay, and wheat,
Something for you and your pony to eat;
But I’ve no coal the iron to heat,
That the blacksmith may shoe your pony’s feet.”

So the farmer drove away and left the man standing in the road, sighing and saying:—

“What shall
I do? What
shall I do?
My little gray
pony has lost
a shoe!”

In the farmer’s wagon, full of good things, he



MY BOOK HOUSE



saw corn, which made him think of the mill; so he hastened there, and called to the dusty miller:

"Miller! Miller! I've come to you;
My little gray pony has lost a shoe,
And I want some coal the iron to heat,
That the blacksmith may shoe my pony's feet."

The miller came to the door in surprise; and when he heard what was needed, he said:—

"I have wheels that go round and round,
And stones to turn till the grain is ground;
But I've no coal the iron to heat,
That the blacksmith may shoe your pony's feet."

Then the man turned away sorrowfully, and sat down on a rock near the roadside, sighing and saying:—

"What shall I do? What shall I do?
My little gray pony has lost a shoe!"

IN THE NURSERY

After a while a very old woman came down the road, driving a flock of geese to market; and when she came near the man, she stopped to ask him his trouble. He told her all about it; and when she had heard it all, she laughed till her geese joined in with a cackle; and she said:—

"If you would know where the coal is found,
You must go to the miner, who works in the ground."

Then the man sprang to his feet, and, thanking the old woman, he ran to the miner. Now the miner had been working many a long day down in the mine, under the ground, where it was so dark that he had to wear a lamp on the front of his cap to light him at his work. He had plenty of black coal ready and gave great lumps of it to the man, who took them in haste to the blacksmith.



M Y B O O K H O U S E



The blacksmith lighted his great red fire, and
hammered out four fine new shoes, with a cling! and
a clang! and fastened them on with a rap! and a tap!
Then away rode the man on his little gray pony,—
clippety, clippety, clap!

Yankee Doodle went to town
Upon a little pony;
He stuck a feather in his hat,
And called it Macaroni.

IN THE NURSERY

WYNKEN, BLYNKEN, AND NOD*

Eugene Field

Wynken, Blynken, and Nod one night
Sailed off in a wooden shoe—
Sailed on a river of crystal light,
Into a sea of dew.
“Where are you going, and what do you wish?”
The old moon asked the three.
“We have come to fish for the herring-fish
That live in this beautiful sea;
Nets of silver and gold have we!”
Said Wynken, Blynken, and Nod.

The old moon laughed and sang a song,
As they rocked in the wooden shoe,
And the wind that sped them all night long
Ruffled the waves of dew.
The little stars were the herring-fish
That lived in that beautiful sea—
“Now cast your nets wherever you wish—
But never afeared are we!”
So cried the stars to the fishermen three;
Wynken, Blynken, and Nod.

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MY BOOK HOUSE



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All night long their nets they threw
To the stars in the twinkling foam—
Then down from the skies came the wooden shoe,
Bringing the fishermen home;
'Twas all so pretty a sail, it seemed
As if it could not be,
And some folks thought 'twas a dream they dreamed
Of sailing that beautiful sea—
But I shall name you the fishermen three;
Wynken, Blynken, and Nod.

Wynken and Blynken are two little eyes,
And Nod is a little head,
And the wooden shoe that sailed the skies
Is a wee one's trundle-bed.
So shut your eyes while mother sings
Of wonderful sights that be,
And you shall see the beautiful things
As you rock on the misty sea,
Where the old Shoe rocked the fishermen three;
Wynken, Blynken, and Nod.

M Y B O O K H O U S E

OLE-LUK-OIE, THE SANDMAN

Hans Christian Andersen



HERE is nobody in all the world who can tell so many stories as Ole-Luk-oie! And such stories as he can tell!

When night is drawing on, and the children are sitting round the table as good as possible or on their little footstools, in walks Ole Shut-eyes. He comes so quietly up the stairs that nobody hears him; and, puff! he sends a shower of milk into their eyes in such fine spray as to be invisible; but they can't keep their eyes open after it, and so they never see him. He steals behind them and breathes upon their necks, making their heads as heavy as lead; but he never hurts them; he does it all from kindness to the children. He only wants them to be quiet, and the best way to make them quiet is to have them in bed; when they are settled there, he can tell them his stories.

Then as soon as the children are asleep, Ole Shut-eyes seats himself upon their beds. He is well dressed; his clothes are all of silk; but it is impossible to say what color they are, for it shimmers green, red and blue

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every time he turns. He has an umbrella under his arm, one with pictures on it, and this he holds over the good children, and then they dream the most delightful stories all night long. The other umbrella has no pictures on it, and he holds this one over the children who have been naughty, and then they sleep heavily till the morning and have no dreams at all.

I am now going to tell you about a little boy to whom Ole-Luk-oie went every night for a whole week. His name was Hjalmar.



MY BOOK HOUSE

As soon as Hjalmar was in bed on Tuesday night, Ole Shut-eyes touched all the furniture in the room with his little wooden wand, and everything began to talk. There was a big picture in a gilt frame hanging over the chest of drawers. In it one saw tall, old trees, flowers growing in the grass, and a great piece of water, with a river flowing from it round behind a wood, past many castles and away to the open sea.

Ole-Luk-oie touched the picture with his wand, and the birds in it began to sing, the branches of the trees moved, and the clouds scudded along; you could see their shadows passing over the landscape.

Now Ole-Luk-oie lifted little Hjalmar up close to the frame, and Hjalmar put his leg right into the picture



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among the long grass, and there he stood; the sun shone down upon him through the branches of the trees. He ran to the water and got into a little boat which lay there; it was painted red and white, and the sails shone like silver. Six swans, all with golden crowns round their necks, and a shining silver star upon their heads, drew the boat past the dark green woods where the trees told stories; and the flowers told other stories about the pretty little elves, and all that the butterflies had told them.

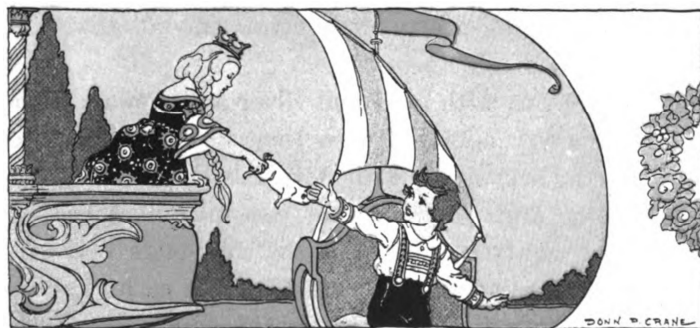
Beautiful fish with gold and silver scales swam after the boat; every now and then they sprang out of the water and back again with a splash. Red and blue birds, large and small, flew in two long lines behind them; the gnats buzzed, and the may-bugs boomed; they all wanted to go with Hjalmar, and each of them had a story to tell.

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That was a sailing trip indeed! Now the woods were thick and dark, now they were like beautiful gardens full of sunshine and flowers, and among them were castles of glass and marble. Princesses stood upon the balconies, and they were all little girls whom Hjalmar knew and used to play with.

They stretched out their hands, each one holding the most beautiful sugar pig, which any cakewoman could sell. Hjalmar took hold of one end of a pig as he sailed by, and the princess held the other tight, and each had a share, she the smaller and Hjalmar the bigger! Little princes stood sentry by each castle; they saluted with golden swords and showered down sugar plums and tin soldiers; they were princes indeed.



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Now he sailed through a wood, now through great halls, or right through a town; he passed through the one where his nurse lived, she who used to carry him about when he was quite a little boy and who was so fond of him. She nodded and waved her hand to him, and sang a pretty little song which she had written herself and sent to Hjalmar:

"I dream of thee for many an hour,
Hjalmar, my own, my sweeting;
My kisses once fell like a shower,
Thy brow and red cheeks greeting.

"Mine ear thy first formed word addressed;
Thy last must be in parting.
May you on earth by Heaven be blessed,
Angel, from Heavenward darting!"

All the birds sang too, the flowers danced upon their stalks, and the old trees nodded, just as if Ole-Luk-oie were telling them stories.

"I'll tell you what!" said Ole Shut-eyes, when he came to Hjalmar on Thursday night, "don't be frightened, and I will show you a little mouse." And he stretched out his hand with the tiny little animal in it. "It

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has come to invite you to a wedding. There are two little mice who intend to be married to-night. They live under the floor of your mother's pantry, which they say is the most delightful home."

"But how can I get through a little mouse hole in the floor!" said Hjalmar.

"Leave that to me," said Ole-Luk-oie. "I'll soon make you small enough!"

Then he touched Hjalmar with his wand, and he quickly grew smaller and smaller; at last he was not as tall as one's finger.

"Now you may borrow the tin soldier's clothes; I think they'll just fit you, and it looks so smart to have on a uniform when one's in company."

"Yes, indeed!" said Hjalmar, and in a moment he was dressed like the grandest tin soldier.

"Be so good as to take a seat in your mother's

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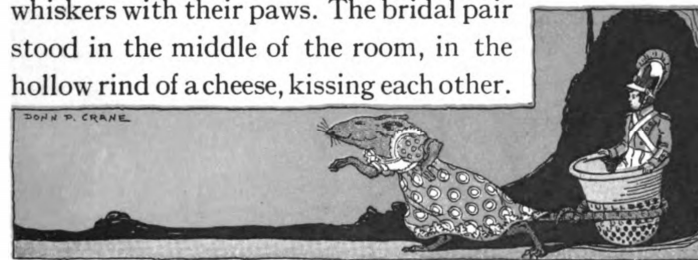
thimble," said the little mouse, "and I shall have the honor of drawing you!"

"Heavens! are you going to take that trouble yourself, young lady!" said Hjalmar, and off they drove to the mouse's wedding.

First they went down under the floor into a long passage, which was just high enough for them to drive through, and the whole passage was lighted up with touch-wood.

"Isn't there a delicious smell here!" said the mouse who was drawing him. "The whole passage has been smeared over with bacon fat! Nothing could be nicer."

Then they came to the bridal hall, where all the little lady mice stood on the right whispering and giggling, as if they were making fun of each other, and on the left stood all the gentlemen mice stroking their whiskers with their paws. The bridal pair stood in the middle of the room, in the hollow rind of a cheese, kissing each other.



M Y B O O K H O U S E

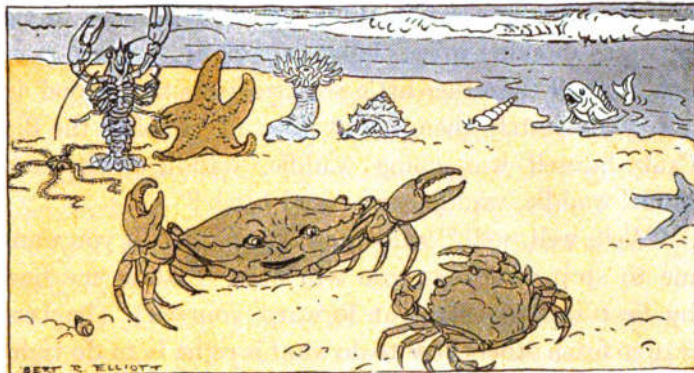
More and more visitors poured in, and the bridal pair took their place in the doorway, so that one could get neither in nor out. The whole room, like the passage, was smeared with bacon fat. There were no other refreshments, but for dessert a pea was produced, in which one of the little mice of the family had bitten the name of the bridal pair; that is to say, the first letter of it, and this was something quite extraordinary.

All the mice said it was a delightful wedding, and the conversation most entertaining.

And then Hjalmar drove home again. He had been in very grand company, but in order to get there he had been obliged to shrink wonderfully, to make himself small enough to get into the uniform of a tin soldier.



IN THE NURSERY



THE TWO CRABS

Adapted from Aesop

One fine, sunny day two Crabs came out from their home in the deep blue sea to take a walk on the yellow sand. There was one Big Crab and one Little Crab.

"Child," said the Big Crab, turning his eyes this way and that to see who was looking at them, "you are walking very awkwardly, twisting all the time from side to side. I don't like to be seen out walking with you. I wish you would learn to go straight forward and stop waddling."

The Little Crab looked at the Big Crab to learn from him just what was the right way to walk. There

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he saw the Big Crab making his way proudly along between speckled green lobsters, bright colored starfish, and all the other little sea creatures that stood in a row to watch them. But lo and behold! the Big Crab himself was going waddle, waddle, twist and hitch! waddle, waddle, twist and hitch!

"Well, well, well!" said the Little Crab, "if you want me to stop waddling, you will have to show me how by first walking straight forward yourself! The best way to teach others how to do what is right is to do right yourself!"

SIR ROBIN

Rollicking Robin is here again.

What does he care for the April rain?

Care for it? Glad of it! Doesn't he know

That the April rain carries off the snow,

And coaxes out leaves to shadow his nest,

And washes his pretty red Easter vest,

And makes the juice of the cherry sweet,

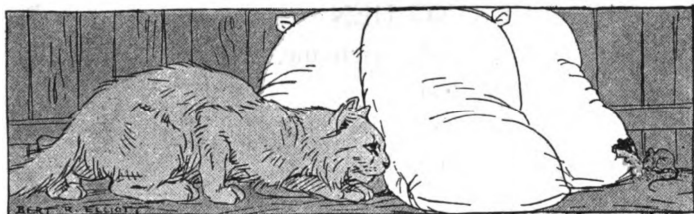
For his hungry little robins to eat?

"Ha! ha! ha!" Hear the jolly bird laugh.

"That isn't the best of the story, by half."

—*Lucy Larcom.*

MY BOOK HOUSE



BELLING THE CAT

Adapted from Aesop

Long ago the Mice all came together to talk over what they could do to keep themselves safe from the Cat. They sat around in a great circle under an old wash tub, with a candle for light, and wiggled their whiskers, and blinked their eyes, and looked very wise indeed. Some said, "Let us do this," and others said, "Let us do that," but at last a young Mouse got up, proudly swished his tail, and looked about as though to say he knew more than all the rest of them put together.

"I have thought of something," said he, "that will be sure to keep us safe from the Cat."

"Tell us what it is then," squeaked the other Mice.

"You all know," said the young Mouse, "it is because Pussy creeps up on us so very quietly, that she is right upon us before we see her. If we could

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only plan something which would let us know when she is coming, then we should always have plenty of time to scamper out of her way. Now I say, let us get a small bell and tie it by a ribbon around her neck. Then she will not be able to move at all without jingling the bell. So when we hear the bell tinkle, we shall always know that she is about and can easily keep out of her reach."

As the young Mouse sat down, very proud of himself, all the others clapped their paws and squeaked:

"Just the thing! Just the thing! Big-Whiskers has told us what we should do!"

They even began talking about whether they should get a silver bell or a brass one, and whether they should use a blue ribbon or a pink one. But at last an old Mouse got slowly up from his seat and said:

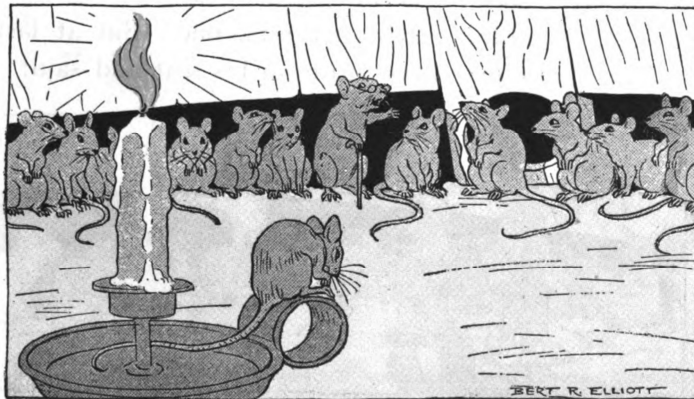


M Y B O O K H O U S E

"It is all very well what Big-Whiskers has said. What he has thought of would truly be wise, but WHO IS GOING TO PUT THE BELL ON THE CAT?"

The Mice looked at one another; nobody spoke a word. Who indeed would dare go straight up to Pussy and tie the bell about her neck? The old Mouse looked straight at Big-Whiskers, but Big-Whiskers was proud no more. He made himself as small as he could, for he had never, never thought to do such a thing himself. Then the old Mouse said:

"It is all very well to TALK about doing great things, but all that really counts is to DO them."



IN THE NURSERY



THE MAGPIE'S NEST An English Folk Tale

Once upon a time when pigs spake rhyme,
And ducks went Quack, quack, quack, O!

All the birds of the air came to Madge Magpie
way up in a tree-top and asked her to teach them
how to build their nests.

The Thrush came in her glossy brown coat;

The Blackbird came in his rusty black;

The Owl came in his best speckled vest, with great
round goggles over his eyes;

The Sparrow came in dust-color;

The Starling came in black satin, all shiny with
purple and green;

and

The Turtle Dove came in her softest gray.

On the branches above Madge Magpie they perched,
and all began to sing at once:

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"Madge Magpie! Oh, Madge Magpie,
Pray will you teach us how
To build such nests as you do
Upon the swaying bough?"

"There's no one in the tree-tops
Who knows so well as you
How birds should build their houses!
Caw, caw! Tu whit, tu whoo!"

Madge Magpie gave a swish to her long silk train,
and smoothed down her wide white sash; then she
answered:

"Come sit in a circle about me.
If you're good, I will show you how
To build just such nests as I do
Way up on the swaying bough."

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First she took some mud and made it into a neat round cake.

"Oh, that's how it's done, is it?" cried the Thrush and she wouldn't wait another minute to hear any more. Off she flew and she sang as she went:

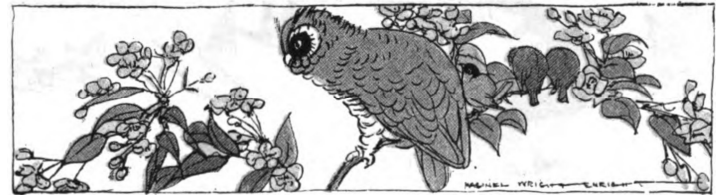
"Quit, quit, quit!
That's all there is to it!
Mud you take,
And make a cake,
Quit, quit, quit!"

So that's all the Thrush ever learned about how to build a nest. Then Madge Magpie took some twigs and arranged them in the mud.

"Oh, that's how it's done, is it?" cried the Blackbird. "Now I know all about it! Here I go to make my nest in a big oak tree in the cornfield.

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"Mud in a cake! I saw! I saw!
Twigs in the mud! Caw! caw!"

So that's all the Blackbird ever learned about how to build a nest. Then Madge Magpie put another layer of mud over the twigs.

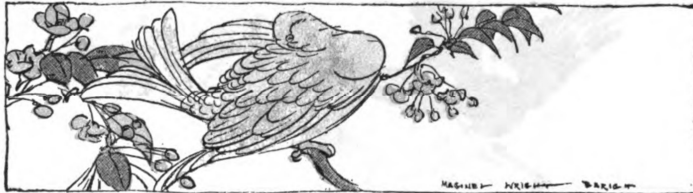
"Oh, I knew all that before I came," said the old Owl, who thought himself so wise, and away he flew to build his nest in the bell tower of the church.

"Tu whit, tu whoo!
I knew! I knew!
I'll build my nest
As I always do!"

So that's all the Owl ever learned about how to build a nest. After this the Magpie took some twigs and twined them round the outside to make the nest firm and strong.

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"The very thing!" cried the Sparrow. "Why stay to hear more? I'll go make my nest in the hedgerow."

"Chip! chip!
Chip! chip!
I know enough
And now I'll skip!"

So that's all the Sparrow ever learned about how to build a nest. Well, then Madge Magpie took some feathers and soft stuff and lined the nest all cozy and snug.

"That suits me!" screeched the Starling and off he flew to build his nest in a little hole in the old stone schoolhouse:

"Tchack! Tchack! Screech!
I'll build way out of reach!
And when my little ones come out,
We'll screech with noisy din about!"

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So that's all the Starling ever learned about how to build a nest. Meanwhile, Madge Magpie went on working and working without looking up, till the only bird that was left was the Turtle Dove, and she hadn't paid any attention all along. She had only kept on repeating her silly cry, "Coo! Coo! Take two, Taffy, take two-o-o-o."

Madge Magpie noticed what the Dove was saying just as she was putting a twig across. So she said:

"No, you don't take two. Take one! One's enough!"

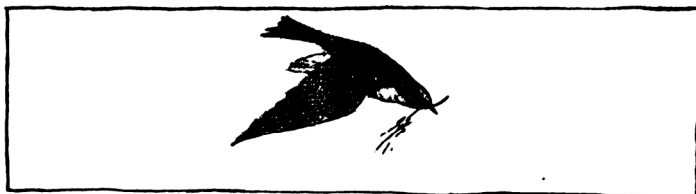
But the Turtle Dove kept on saying: "Coo! Coo! Take two, Taffy, take two-o-o-o!"

"One's enough, I tell you! Don't you see how I lay it across?"

But the Turtle Dove liked only to hear herself talk, so she kept on saying: "Coo! Coo! Take two, Taffy, take two-o-o-o!"

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At last and at last, Madge Magpie looked up and saw nobody near her but the silly Turtle Dove, and then she cried:

‘How can I teach silly birds to build nests if they will not listen to what I say?’ and away she flew. Nor would she ever again tell them what to do.

THERE were two birds sat on a stone,
Fol de ral! laddy!
One flew away and then there was one,
Fol de ral! laddy!
The other flew after, and then there was none,
Fol de ral! laddy!
And so the poor stone was left all alone,
Fol de ral! Fol de ral! laddy!

MY BOOK HOUSE

JOHNNY AND THE THREE GOATS

A Norse Tale

Now you shall hear!

Once there was a boy named Johnny, and he had three goats. All day long those goats leaped and pranced and skipped and climbed way up on the top of a hill, but every night Johnny went to fetch them and drove them home. One evening the frisky things leaped out of the road and over a fence and into a turnip-field, and, try as he would, Johnny could not get them to come out again. There they were and there they stayed. Then the boy sat down on the hillside and cried and cried and cried. As he sat there a Hare came along.

"Why do you cry?" asked the Hare.

"I cry because I can't get the Goats out of the turnip-field," answered Johnny.

"I'll get the Goats out of the turnip-field," said the Hare. So he tried and he tried, but the Goats would not come. Then the Hare sat down beside Johnny and began to cry, too.

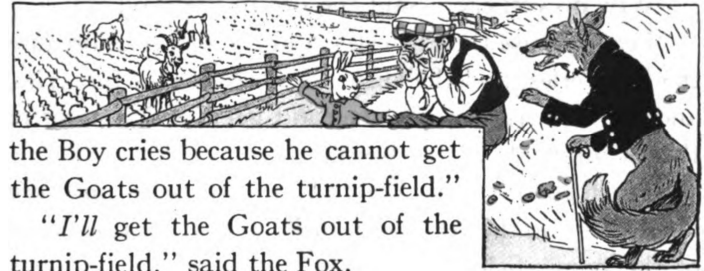
Along came a Fox.

"Why do you cry?" asked the Fox.

"I cry because the Boy cries," said the Hare, "and



IN THE NURSERY



the Boy cries because he cannot get the Goats out of the turnip-field."

"I'll get the Goats out of the turnip-field," said the Fox.

So the Fox tried and he tried and he tried, but the Goats would not come. Then the Fox sat down beside Johnny and the Hare and began to cry, too.

Pretty soon along came a Wolf.

"Why do you cry?" asked the Wolf.

"I cry because the Hare cries," said the Fox, "and the Hare cries because the Boy cries, and the Boy cries because he can't get the Goats out of the turnip-field."

"I'll get the Goats out of the turnip-field," said the Wolf. So he tried and he tried and he tried and he tried, but the Goats would not leave the field. So the Wolf sat down beside Johnny and the Hare and the Fox and began to cry, too.

After a little a Bee flew over the hill and saw them all sitting there crying away for dear life, "Boo-hoo. Boo-hoo. Boo-hoo."

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"Why do you cry?" said the Bee to the Wolf.

"I cry because the Fox cries, and the Fox cries because the Hare cries, and the Hare cries because the Boy cries, and the Boy cries because he can't get the Goats out of the turnip-field."

"Much good it does to sit there and cry about it," said the Bee. "I'll get the Goats out of the turnip-field."

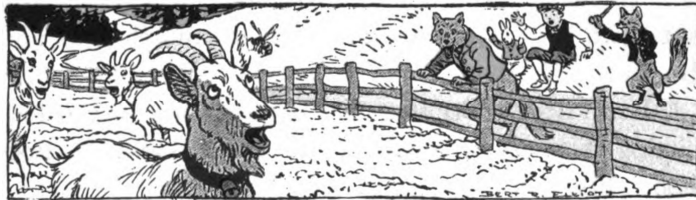


Then the great big Wolf, and the great big Fox, and the great big Hare, and the great big Boy all stopped boo-hooing a moment to poke fun at the tiny Bee.

"*You* get the Goats out of the turnip-field, indeed, when we could not. Ho, ho, ho, and hah, hah, hah. Ridiculous little creature."

But the tiny Bee flew away into the turnip-field and lit square in the ear of one of the Goats, and all he did was say, "Buzz-z-z. Buzz-z-z. Buz-z-z."

And out ran the Goats every one.



IN THE NURSERY



THE DONKEY AND THE LAP-DOG

Adapted from Aesop

A Farmer one day went to his stable to see the beasts that were there. Among these was his favorite Donkey. He was a big, shaggy, gray animal, always well fed and cared for, and every day the Farmer rode upon his back. The Farmer looked about to see that all in the stable was as it should be.

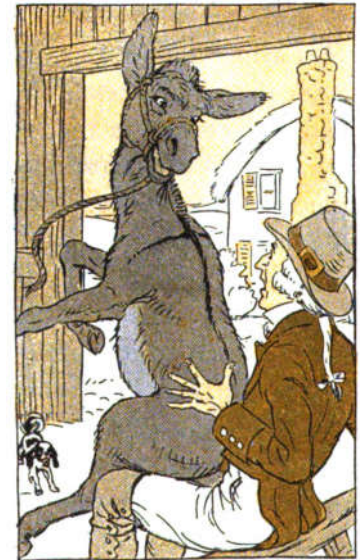
Now with him had come his little white Lap-dog, a teeny, tiny fluff of a creature, who danced and frisked about and licked his master's hand. The Farmer watched his dainty frolic with a smile on his lips. Then he sat down and gave the Lap-dog a piece of sugar. When he had finished eating the sweetmeat, the teeny, tiny fluff of a creature jumped into his master's lap and lay there, curled up and blinking, while the Farmer petted him and stroked his ears.

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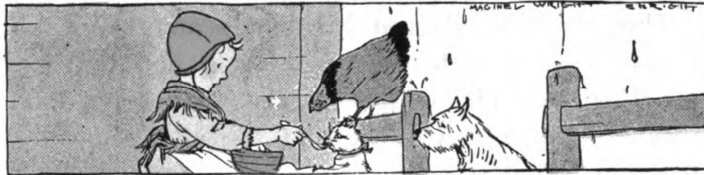
The Donkey, seeing how his master petted the Lap-dog for his dainty ways, suddenly thought to get himself stroked and petted in the same way. So he broke loose from his halter and commenced dancing and prancing about just as the Lap-dog had done. The Farmer held his sides with laughter. There the great, big, clumsy beast went capering about, standing up on his hind legs, waving his hoofs absurdly, and cocking his great shaggy head foolishly on one side.

At last he went up to his master, put his hoofs on the Farmer's shoulder, and tried to climb up into the little Dog's place in his lap. But at that, the Farmer's servants rushed up and drove the Donkey away, for they had to teach him that if he wanted people to love him, he must be himself, and not try to act like someone else.



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LITTLE GUSTAVA*

Celia Thaxter

Little Gustava sits in the sun,
Safe in the porch, and the little drops run
From the icicles under the eaves so fast,
For the bright spring sun shines warm at last,
And glad is little Gustava.

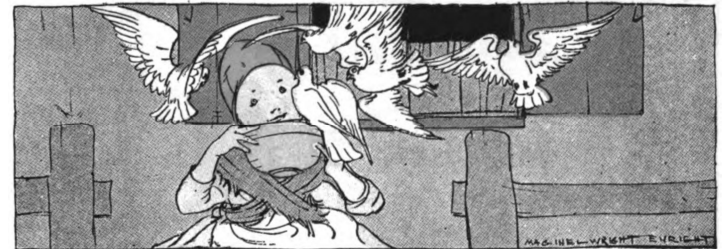
She wears a quaint little scarlet cap,
And a little green bowl she holds in her lap,
Filled with bread and milk to the brim,
And a wreath of marigolds round the rim;
"Ha! ha!" laughs little Gustava.

Up comes her little gray, coaxing cat,
With her little pink nose, and she mews, "What's that?"
Gustava feeds her—she begs for more,
And a little brown hen walks in at the door.
"Good day!" cries little Gustava.

*From *Stories and Poems for Children*. Used by permission of, and by special arrangement with, Houghton Mifflin Company.

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She scatters crumbs for the little brown hen.
There comes a rush and a flutter, and then
Down fly her little white doves so sweet,
With their snowy wings and their crimson feet.
"Welcome!" cries little Gustava.

So dainty and eager they pick up the crumbs.
But who is this through the doorway comes?
Little Scotch terrier, little dog Rags,
Looks in her face and his funny tail wags.
"Ha! ha!" laughs little Gustava.

"You want some breakfast too?" and down
She sets her bowl on the brick floor, brown;
And little dog Rags drinks up her milk,
While she strokes his shaggy locks, like silk.
"Dear Rags!" says little Gustava.

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Waiting without stood sparrow and crow,
Cooling their feet in the melting snow.
“Won’t you come in, good folk?” she cried.
But they were too bashful, and stayed outside,
Though “Pray come in!” cried Gustava.

So the last she threw them, and knelt on the mat
With doves, and biddy, and dog, and cat.
And her mother came to the open house door;
“Dear little daughter, I bring you some more,
My merry little Gustava!”

Kitty and terrier, biddy and doves,
All things harmless Gustava loves.
The shy, kind creatures ’tis joy to feed,
And oh, her breakfast is sweet indeed
To happy little Gustava!

IN THE NURSERY



THE GINGERBREAD MAN

A New England Tale

Once upon a time there were a little old woman and a little old man. They hadn't any little boys or girls of their own, so they lived in a little old house all alone. One day the little old woman was making gingerbread.

"I will make a little gingerbread boy," she said. So she rolled the dough out flat, and cut it in the shape of a little boy. She put a nice little jacket of chocolate on him, and a row of currants down the front for buttons. Then she made eyes of fat raisins, a mouth of pink sugar frosting, and a little peaked cap of pink frosting. She pinched his gingerbread nose and ears into shape, and made two nice, good sized feet.

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"Hah! Hah! Now we'll have a little Gingerbread Boy," laughed she.

She laid him flat on his back in the pan, popped him into the oven and closed the door; then she went about her work, sweeping and cleaning the house—sweeping and cleaning, and she forgot all about the Little Gingerbread Boy.

He baked, he got glossy brown all over, he got hot—very hot; and still the old woman swept and cleaned, and cleaned and swept.

"Mercy!" said the little old woman at last, sniffing the air, "the Gingerbread Boy is burning."

She ran to the oven, opened the door, and up jumped the Gingerbread Boy, hopped on the floor, ran across the kitchen, out of the door, down the walk, through the gate and down the road as fast as his gingerbread legs could carry him! The little old woman and the little old man ran after him, calling: "Stop! Stop! Little Gingerbread Boy!"



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IN THE NURSERY

The Gingerbread Boy looked back and laughed and called out:

"Run! Run! Run!
Catch me if you can!
You can't get me!
I'm the Gingerbread Man,
I am! I am!"

And they couldn't catch him.

So the Gingerbread Boy ran on and on. Soon he came to a cow.

"Um! Um!" sniffed the cow. "Stop, little Gingerbread Boy. I would like to eat you."

But the Little Gingerbread Boy laughed and said:

"I've run away from a little old woman,
I've run away from a little old man,
And I can run away from you, I can."

So the cow ran after him.



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But the Gingerbread Boy shouted back:



"Run! Run! Run!
Catch me if you can!
You can't get me!
I'm the Gingerbread Man,
I am! I am!"

And the cow couldn't catch him.

So the Little Gingerbread Boy ran on and on.

Soon he came to a horse.

"Please stop, Little Gingerbread Boy," said the horse. "You look very good to eat."

But the Little Gingerbread Boy called out:

"I've run away from a little old woman,
I've run away from a little old man,
I've run away from a cow,
And I can run away from you, I can."

So the horse ran after him.



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When the Little Gingerbread Boy was past, he looked back and called:

"Run! Run! Run!
Catch me if you can!
You can't get me!
I'm the Gingerbread Man,
I am! I am!"



And the horse couldn't catch him.

By and by the Little Gingerbread Boy came to a barn where threshers were working. The threshers saw him running and called out, as they tried to pick him up:

"Here is a gingerbread boy. Um! Um! He smells good. Do not run so fast, Little Gingerbread Boy. You look good to eat."

But the Little Gingerbread Boy ran faster and faster and called out:

"Ho! Ho!

I've run away from a little old woman,



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I've run away from a little old man,
I've run away from a cow,
I've run away from a horse,
And I can run away from you,
I can, I can!"

So the threshers ran after him.

But the Gingerbread Boy looked back and laughed:

"Run! Run! Run!
Catch me if you can!
You can't get me!
I'm the Gingerbread Man,
I am! I am!"

And the threshers could not catch him.

Then the Little Gingerbread Boy ran faster than ever. He ran and ran till he came to a field full of mowers. When the mowers saw how fine he looked, they ran after him calling out:

"Wait a bit! Wait a bit, Little Gingerbread Boy!
We will eat you!"



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But the Little Gingerbread Boy laughed harder than ever and ran like the wind. "O ho! O ho!" he cried,

"I've run away from a little old woman,
I've run away from a little old man,
I've run away from a cow,
I've run away from a horse,
I've run away from a barn full of threshers,
And I can run away from you,
I can! I can!"

And the mowers couldn't catch him.

By this time the Little Gingerbread Boy was very proud of himself. He strutted, he danced, he pranced! He thought no one on earth could catch him.

Pretty soon he saw a fox coming across a field. The fox looked at him and began to run, but the Little Gingerbread Boy ran faster still and shouted out:

"Run! Run! Run!
Catch me if you can!
You can't get me!
I'm the Gingerbread Man,
I am! I am!"



I've run away from a little old woman,
I've run away from a little old man,
I've run away from a cow,



MY BOOK HOUSE

I've run away from a horse,
I've run away from a barn full of threshers,
I've run away from a field full of mowers,
And I can run away from you,
I can! I can!"



"Why," said the fox very politely, "I wouldn't catch you if I could. I should never dream of disturbing you."

Just then the Little Gingerbread Boy came to a river. He dared not jump into the water (he would have melted away, frosting cap and all if he had). Still, the cow, the horse and the people were chasing hot on his heels and he was forced to cross the river to keep out of their reach.

"Jump on my tail and I will take you across," said the fox.

So the Little Gingerbread Boy jumped on the fox's tail and the fox swam into the river. A little distance from the shore the fox said:

"Little Gingerbread Boy, I think you had better get on my back or you may fall off!"

So the Little Gingerbread Boy jumped on the fox's back.

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After swimming a little farther, the fox said:

"The water is deep. You may get wet where you are. Jump up on my shoulder."

So the Little Gingerbread Boy jumped up on the fox's shoulder.

When they were near the other side of the river the fox cried out suddenly:

"The water grows deeper still. Jump up on my nose! Jump up on my nose!"

So the Little Gingerbread Boy jumped up on the fox's nose.

Then the fox sprang ashore in a twinkling and threw back his head and snip, snip, snap! At last and at last that Gingerbread Boy went the way of every single gingerbread boy that ever came out of an oven!



MY BOOK HOUSE

A LAUGHING SONG

William Blake



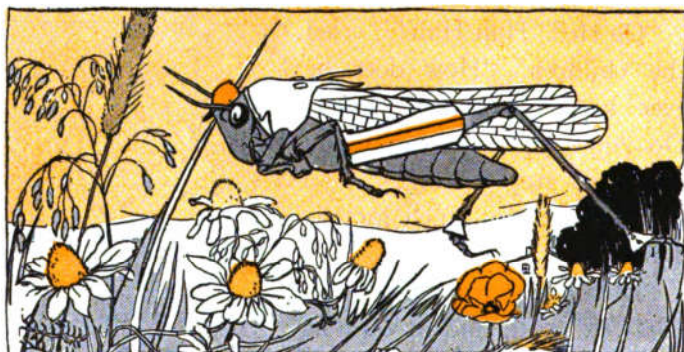
When the greenwoods laugh with
the voice of joy,
And the dimpling stream runs
laughing by;
When the air does laugh with
our merry wit,
And the green hill laughs with
the noise of it;

When the meadows laugh with
lively green,
And the grasshopper laughs
in the merry scene;
When Mary and Susan and Emily
With their sweet round mouths
sing "Ha, ha, he !"

When the painted birds laugh
in the shade,
Where our table with cherries
and nuts is spread;
Come live and be merry and
join with me
To sing the sweet chorus
of "Ha, ha, he !"



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GRASSHOPPER GREEN

Grasshopper Green is a comical chap;
He lives on the best of fare.
Bright little trousers, jacket, and cap—
These are his summer wear.
Out in the meadow he loves to go,
Playing away in the sun;
It's hopperty, skipperty, high and low—
Summer's the time for fun.

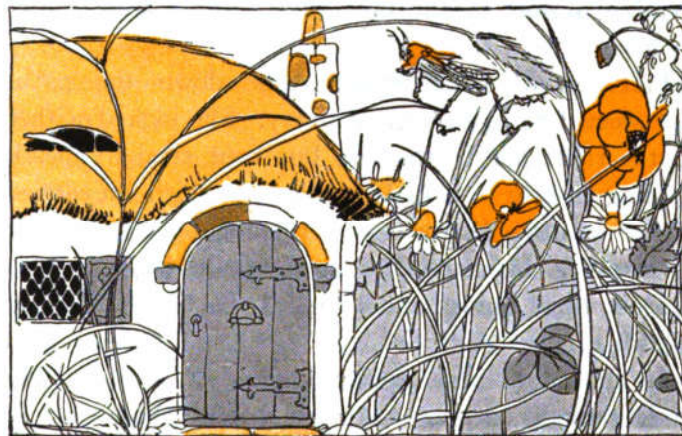
Grasshopper Green has a dozen wee boys,
And, soon as their legs grow strong,
Each of them joins in his frolicsome joys,
Singing his merry song.

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Under the hedge in a happy row,
Soon as the day has begun,
It's hopperty, skipperty, high and low—
Summer's the time for fun.

Grasshopper Green has a quaint little house.
It's under the hedge so gay.
Grandmother Spider, as still as a mouse,
Watches him over the way.
Gladly he's calling the children, I know,
Out in the beautiful sun;
It's hopperty, skipperty, high and low—
Summer's the time for fun.



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SHINGEBISS

A Chippewa Indian Tale

In his lodge on the shores of the great Lake Huron lived little brown duck, Shingebiss. When the fierce North Wind swept down from the white and glittering Land of Snow, four great logs for firewood had little brown duck, Shingebiss; one for each month of the winter.

Brave and cheery was Shingebiss, and no matter how the North Wind raged, he waddled out across the ice and found what food he needed. With his strong bill he pulled frozen rushes up from the pond, and dived down through the holes they left, to get his fish for supper. Then away to his lodge he went, dragging a string of fish behind him. By his blazing fire he cooked his supper and made himself warm and comfortable.

So at last the North Wind shrieked angrily:

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"Woo-oo-oo! Woo-oo-oo! Who dares to brave Big Chief North Wind? All other creatures fear him. But little brown duck, Shingebiss, heeds Big Chief North Wind no more than Minnewawa, little, gently blowing squaw-breeze."

So the North Wind sent out cold, icy blasts, and made high drifts of snow, till not a bird or beast dared venture forth—save Shingebiss. Shingebiss went out the same as before and paid no heed to the weather. He got his fish every day and cooked his supper every night and warmed himself by his glowing fire.

"Ah!" raged the North Wind. "Little brown duck, Shingebiss, cares not for snow or ice or wind! Big Chief North Wind, will freeze his holes, so he gets no food and then Big Chief will conquer him."

So he visited the holes in the ice where Shingebiss fished, breathed into them and froze them up tight; then he heaped up over the pond a mighty mound of snow.

But when Shingebiss came and found his holes all closed so he could not reach the water, he did not even murmur. He went cheerily on till he found a pond that was free of snow and had more rushes.

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Then he pulled up the rushes and made new holes through which he could do his fishing.

North Wind grew angrier still.

"Brown duck shall know who is Big Chief!" he howled, and for days he followed close on the little duck's footsteps, froze up his holes in the ice almost as soon as he made them and covered his ponds with snow. But Shingebiss walked fearlessly forth as before, and always managed to get a few fish before each hole was frozen, or found some other pond that was free and made new holes. So he still went cheerily home every night dragging his fish behind him.

At last the North Wind roared in a fury!

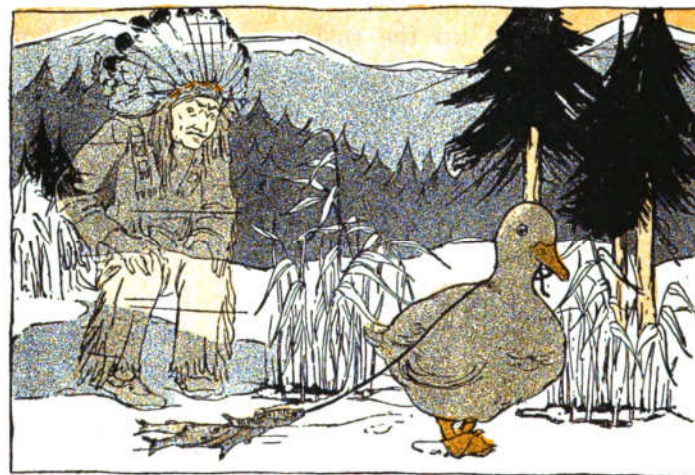
"Woo-oo-oo! Woo-oo-oo! Big Chief go to brown duck's lodge, blow in at his door, sit down beside him, and breathe icy breath till he freezes."

Now Shingebiss had just eaten his supper, his log was burning bright, and he sat cozily warming his little webbed feet by the blaze.

Carefully North Wind crept up to his door, holding his breath, so Shingebiss should not know he was coming. Quietly, quietly he crept along over the snow. But Shingebiss felt the icy cold come in through the cracks of the door.

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"I know who is there," he thought. And he began to sing sturdily:

"Ka neej, ka neej,
Bee in, bee in,
Bon in, bon in,
Ok ee, ok ee,
Ka weya, ka weya!"

Now the North Wind knew this was his way of saying:

"North Wind, North Wind,
Fierce in feature,

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IN THE NURSERY

You are still my
fellow creature;
Blow your worst,
You can't freeze me;
I fear you not,
and so
I'm
FREE!"

Then North Wind was angrier than ever.

"Little brown duck to sing so boldly! Big Chief can bite him, sting him, freeze him!"

So North Wind crept in under the door, slipped up behind Shingebiss and sat down by the fire. Now Shingebiss knew he was there, but he paid no heed. He kept on singing louder than ever.

"Ka neej! ka neej!
Bee in, bee in."

"Big Chief stay here till he freezes," whistled North Wind, and he tried to breathe more fiercely than ever. But at that moment Shingebiss stirred his fire till the sparks leaped up the smoke-flue and the log glowed ruddy gold. Then all at once North Wind's frosty hair began to drip, his icy

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beard began to drip, the tears ran down his cheeks, and his breath came puffing more and more faintly. Still Shingebiss warmed his little webbed feet by the blaze and sang: "North Wind, North Wind,
Fierce in feature,

You are still my
fellow creature."

At length North Wind gave a shriek.

"Big Chief is melting!" And he rushed headlong through the doorway,

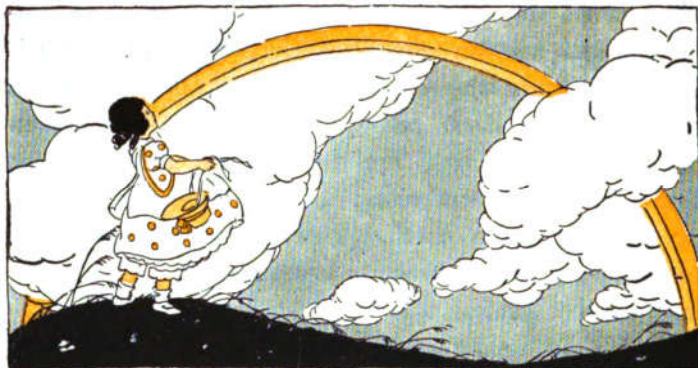
fled out into the darkness, and fell upon a snowbank.

"Strange little brown duck, Shingebiss," he murmured weakly. "Big Chief North Wind, can't starve him, can't freeze him, can't make him afraid! Ugh! Ugh! North Wind will let him alone. The Great Spirit is with him."

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for an everlasting sign that unto those who do good
his mercy and loving-kindness shall last forever.



THE BOW THAT BRIDGES HEAVEN*

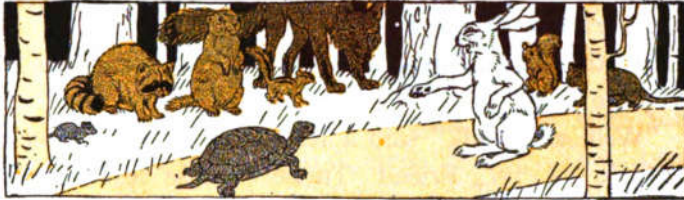
Christina G. Rossetti

Boats sail on the rivers,
And ships sail on the seas,
But clouds that sail across the skies
Are prettier than these.
There are bridges in the river
As pretty as you please,
But the bow that bridges heaven
And overtops the trees,
And builds a roof from earth to sky
Is prettier far than these.

*Used by the courteous permission of The Macmillan Company.

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THE HARE AND THE TORTOISE

Adapted from Aesop

A Hare once said boastfully that he could run faster than any of the other animals.

"I have never yet been beaten," said he, "and I never shall be. I dare anyone here to run a race with me."

The Tortoise answered quietly, "I will run a race with you."

"You!" laughed the Hare, "Hah! Hah! Hah! That is a good joke. A Turtle run a race with a Hare! Why, I could dance around such a slow-poke as you all the way, and still reach the goal first."

"Keep such big talk until you've truly won the race," said the Tortoise.

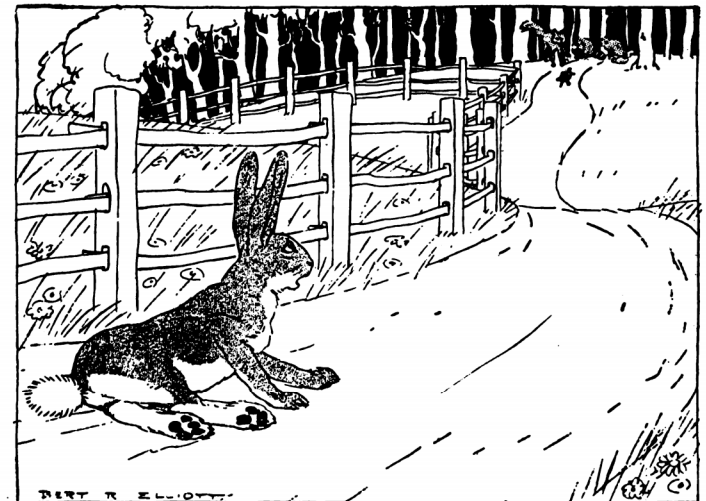
But the Hare continued to laugh: "Ho! Ho! Ho! Hah! Hah! Hah! A Turtle run a race with a Hare. Everybody come and see! The Turtle would

MY BOOK HOUSE

run a race with the Hare."

All the little Forest Folk heard and came up to see the fun.

"Well, well, well," said a Raccoon to a Woodchuck. "Think of it! Friend Turtle, whose legs are so short he can hardly crawl, will run a race with the Hare! Why, the Hare's hind legs are so long he can go at one leap as far as Friend Turtle can creep in fifty slow steps!" So the Raccoon laughed, and the Woodchuck laughed, and all the little Forest



I N T H E N U R S E R Y

Folk laughed. But the Tortoise still stuck to it that he would run the race.

So they decided on a starting place and on the road they should run to the goal. Then they put their toes to the line and made ready. "One, two, three, go!" shouted the Raccoon. They were off!

The Hare darted almost out of sight at once, but when he had gone half way, he stopped. Just to show how certain he was of reaching the goal ahead of the Tortoise, he lay down in the middle of the road and went to sleep. He slept and he slept and he slept, but the Tortoise plodded on and plodded on and plodded on.

At last, when the Hare awoke from his nap, lo and behold! he saw the Tortoise had gone all the way round the race course and was back again near the winning-post. Then, though he ran as fast as he could to make up for lost time, he could not reach the goal until after the Tortoise.

"Three cheers for Friend Turtle! Hurrah! Hurrah! Hurrah!" shouted all the little Forest People. But the Tortoise said quietly to the Hare:

"He who keeps steadily at work always comes out ahead."

MY BOOK HOUSE

THE LION AND THE MOUSE

Adapted from Aesop

Once a great Lion lay asleep in the forest. Suddenly a little teeny, tiny Mouse began running up and down on him. This soon awakened the Lion, and when he saw the Mouse, he stretched out his huge, shaggy paw and caught him, then opened his jaws to swallow him. But the little Mouse squeaked out, "Mercy, O King! Let me go this time! Do not swallow me and I shall never forget your kindness. Who knows, if you let me go, I may be able to help you some day!"

"Help me? You help me?" chuckled the Lion, greatly amused that a little teeny, tiny Mouse should even think himself able to help so powerful a creature as the King of Beasts. "Oh, very well then, I'll let you go!"

He lifted his paw, and the Mouse scampered quickly away.

Some time after this, the Lion was wandering about in the forest, when he fell into a trap that had been set by some hunters to catch him. These hunters wished to take the splendid big beast a captive to the King. So they came and drew him

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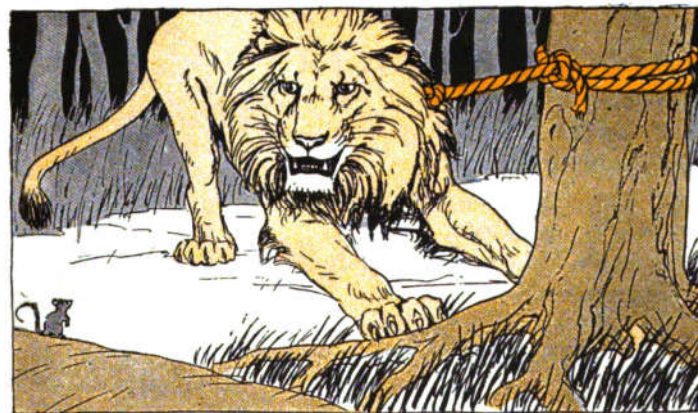
out of the trap, then tied him to a tree, while they went to fetch a wagon in which they might carry him to the palace.

The Lion pulled and tore and tugged at the rope, but all to no purpose. He could not get loose. At last he cried sadly, "They have me fast! I cannot get away!"

Just then the little teeny, tiny Mouse came by.

"Well, well, friend Lion!" he squeaked, "What's this that has happened to you?"

"The hunters have bound me fast," groaned the Lion, "Alas! They will carry me captive off to the King, for I cannot get away."



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"Is that all that has happened?" said the Mouse, and he came straight up to the Lion and began to gnaw at the rope that bound him. Little by little, with his sharp teeth, he cut the strands of the rope until he had gnawed it quite in two, and set the big beast free.

"There," said the little teeny, tiny Mouse, "was I not right? No matter how little one is, there may come a time when he will prove useful even to the greatest."

OLD SHELLOVER*

Walter de la Mare

"Come !" said Old Shellover.

"What?" says Creep.

"The horny old Gardener's fast asleep;

The fat cock Thrush

To his nest has gone,

And the dew shines bright

In the rising Moon;

Old Sallie Worm from her hole doth peep;

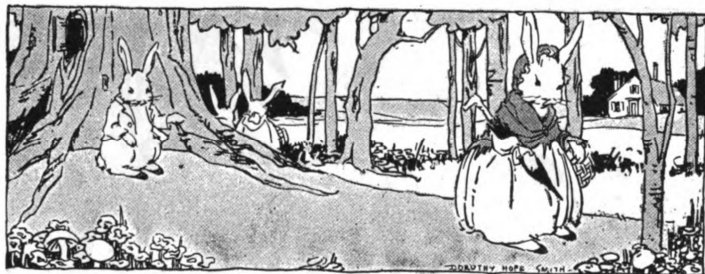
Come !" said Old Shellover,

"Ay !" said Creep.



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MY BOOK HOUSE



TALE OF PETER RABBIT

Beatrix Potter

Once upon a time there were four little Rabbits, and their names were—

Flopsy,

Mopsy,

Cotton-Tail,

and Peter.

They lived with their mother in a sand bank, underneath the root of a very big fir-tree.

"Now, my dears," said Mrs. Rabbit one morning, "you may go into the fields or down the lane, but don't go into Mr. McGregor's garden. Now run along, and don't get into mischief. I am going out."

Then old Mrs. Rabbit took a basket and her umbrella and went through the wood to the baker's. She bought a loaf of brown bread and five currant buns.

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Flopsy, Mopsy, and Cotton-Tail, who were good little bunnies, went down the lane to gather blackberries; but Peter very naughtily ran straight away to Mr. McGregor's garden, and squeezed under the gate!

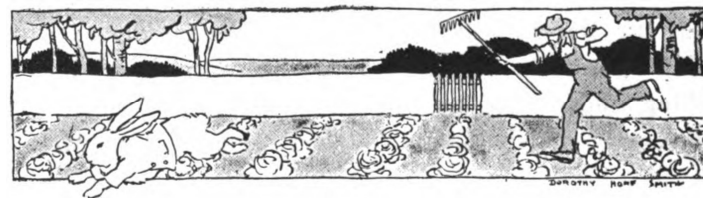
First he ate some lettuces and some French beans; and then he ate some radishes; and then he went to look for some parsley.

But round the end of a cucumber frame, whom should he meet but—Mr. McGregor!

Mr. McGregor was on his hands and knees planting young cabbages, but he jumped up and ran after Peter, waving a rake and calling out, "Stop thief!"

Peter was most dreadfully frightened; he rushed all over the garden, for he had forgotten the way back to the gate. He lost one of his shoes among the cabbages, and the other shoe amongst the potatoes.

After losing them he ran on four legs and went faster, so that I think he might have got away altogether, if he had not unfortunately run into a



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gooseberry net, and got caught by the large buttons on his jacket. It was a blue jacket with brass buttons, quite new.

Peter gave himself up for lost, and shed big tears; but his sobs were overheard by some friendly sparrows, who flew to him in great excitement, and implored him to exert himself.

Mr. McGregor came up with a sieve, which he had intended to pop upon the top of Peter; but Peter wriggled out just in time, leaving his jacket behind him.

He rushed into the tool-shed, and jumped into a can. It would have been a beautiful thing to hide in, if it had not had so much water in it.

Mr. McGregor was quite sure that Peter was somewhere in the tool-shed, perhaps hidden underneath a flowerpot. He began to turn them over carefully looking under each.

Presently Peter sneezed—"Kertyschoo!" Mr. Mc-

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Gregor was after him in no time and tried to put his foot upon Peter, who jumped out of a window, upsetting three plants. The window was too small for Mr. McGregor, and he was tired of running after Peter. He went back to his work.

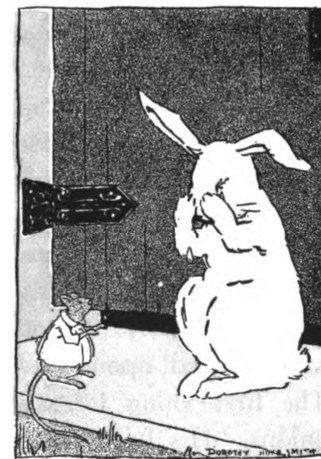
Peter sat down to rest; he was out of breath, and he had not the least idea which way to go.

After a time he began to wander about, going—lippity—lippity—not very fast, and looking all around.

He found a door in a wall; but it was locked, and there was no room for a fat little rabbit to squeeze underneath.

An old mouse was running in and out over the stone doorstep, carrying peas and beans to her family in the wood. Peter asked her the way to the gate, but she had such a large pea in her mouth that she could not answer. She only shook her head at him. Peter began to cry.

Then he tried to find his



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way across the garden, but he became more and more puzzled. Presently he came to the pond where Mr. McGregor filled his water-cans.

A white cat was staring at some gold-fish; she sat very, very still, but now and then the tip of her tail twitched as if it were alive. Peter thought it best to go away without speaking to her; he had heard about cats from his cousin, little Benjamin Bunny.

He went back towards the tool-shed, but suddenly, quite close to him, he heard the noise of a hoe—sc-r-ritch, scratch, scratch, scritch. Peter scuttled underneath the bushes.

But presently as nothing happened, he came out, and climbed upon a wheel-barrow, and peeped over. The first thing he saw was Mr. McGregor hoeing onions. His back was turned towards Peter and

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beyond him was the gate! Peter got down very quietly off the wheelbarrow and started running as fast as he could go along a straight walk behind some black-currant bushes.

Mr. McGregor caught sight of him at the corner, but Peter did not care. He slipped underneath the gate, and was safe at last in the wood outside the garden.

Mr. McGregor hung up the little jacket and the shoes for a scarecrow to frighten the blackbirds.

Peter never stopped running or looked behind him till he got home to the big fir-tree.

He was so tired that he flopped down upon the nice soft sand on the floor of the rabbit hole, and shut his eyes. His mother was busy cooking; she wondered what he had done with his clothes. It was the second little jacket and pair of shoes that Peter had lost in a fortnight.

I am sorry to say that Peter was not very well during the evening. His mother put him to bed and made some camomile tea; and she gave a dose of it to Peter!

"One table-spoonful to be taken at bed time!"

But Flopsy, Mopsy and Cottontail had bread and milk and blackberries for supper.

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THE UGLY DUCKLING

I was so beautiful in the country. It was the summer time. The wheat fields were golden, the oats were green, and the hay stood in great stacks in the green meadows. The stork paraded about among them on his long red legs, chattering away in Egyptian, the language he had learned from his lady mother.

All around the meadows and cornfields grew thick woods, and in the midst of the forest was a deep lake. Yes, it was beautiful, it was delightful in the country.

In a sunny spot stood a pleasant old farmhouse circled all about with deep canals; and from the walls down to the water's edge grew great burdocks, so high that under the tallest of them a little child might stand upright. The spot was as wild as if it had been in the very center of the thick wood.

In this snug retreat sat a duck upon her nest, watching for her young brood to hatch; but the pleasure she had felt at first was almost gone; she had begun to think it a wearisome task, for the little ones were so long coming out of their shells, and she seldom had visitors. The other ducks liked much better to swim about in the canals than to climb the slippery banks and sit under the burdock leaves to have a gossip with her. It was a long time to stay so much by herself.

At length, however, one shell cracked, and soon another, and from each came a living creature that lifted its head and cried "Peep, peep."

"Quack, quack!" said the mother, and then they all tried to say it, too, as well as they could, while they looked all about them on every side at the tall green leaves. Their mother allowed them to look about as much as they liked, because green is good for the eyes.

"What a great world it is, to be sure," said the little ones, when they found how much more room they had than when they were in the eggshell.

"Is this all the world, do you imagine?" said the mother. "Wait till you have seen the garden. Far beyond that it stretches down to the pastor's field, though I have never ventured to such a distance. Are you all out?" she continued, rising to look. "No, not all; the largest egg lies there yet, I declare. I wonder how long this business is to last. I'm really beginning to be tired of it;" but for all that she sat down again.

"Well, and how are you to-day?" quacked an old duck who came to pay her a visit.

"There's one egg that takes a deal of hatching. The shell is hard and will not break," said the fond mother, who sat still upon her nest. "But just look at the others. Have I not a pretty family? Are they not the prettiest little ducklings you ever saw? They are the image of their father—the good for naught! He never comes to see me."

"Let me see the egg that will not break," said the old duck. "I've no doubt it's a Guinea fowl's egg. The same thing happened to me once, and a deal of trouble it gave me, for the young ones are afraid of the water. I quacked and clucked, but all to no purpose. Let me take a look at it. Yes, I am right; it's a Guinea fowl, upon my word; so take my advice and leave it where it is. Come to the water and teach the other children to swim."

"I think I will sit a little while longer," said the mother. "I have sat so long, a day or two more won't matter."

"Very well, please yourself," said the old duck, rising; and she went away.

At last the great egg broke, and the latest bird cried "Peep, peep," as he crept forth from the shell. How big and ugly he was! The mother duck stared at him and did not know what to think. "Really," she said, "this is an enormous duckling, and it is not at all like any of the others. I wonder if he will turn out to be a Guinea fowl. Well, we shall see when we get to the water—for into the water he must go, even if I have to push him in myself."

On the next day the weather was delightful. The sun shone brightly on the green burdock leaves, and the mother duck took her whole family down to the water and jumped in with a splash. "Quack, quack!" cried she, and one after another the little ducklings jumped in. The water closed over their heads, but they came up again in an instant and swam about quite prettily, with their legs paddling under them as easily as possible; their legs went of their own accord; and the ugly gray-coat was also in the water, swimming with them.

"Oh," said the mother, "that is not a Guinea fowl. See how well he uses his legs, and how erect he holds himself! He is my own child, and he is not so very ugly after all, if you look at him properly. Quack, quack! come with me now. I will take you into grand society and introduce you to the farmyard, but you must keep close to me or you may be trodden upon; and, above all, beware of the cat."

When they reached the farmyard, there was a wretched riot going on; two families were fighting for an eel's head, which, after all, was carried off by the cat. "See, children, that is the

way of the world," said the mother duck, whetting her beak, for she would have liked the eel's head herself. "Come, now, use your legs, and let me see how well you can behave. You must bow your heads prettily to that old duck yonder; she is the highest born of them all and has Spanish blood; therefore she is well off. Don't you see she has a red rag tied to her leg, which is something very grand and a great honor for a duck; it shows that every one is anxious not to lose her, and that she is to be noticed by both man and beast. Come, now, don't turn in your toes; a well-bred duckling spreads his feet wide apart, just like his father and mother, in this way; now bend your necks and say 'Quack!'"

The ducklings did as they were bade, but the other ducks stared, and said, "Look, here comes another brood—as if there were not enough of us already! And bless me, what a queer-looking object one of them is; we don't want him here"; and then one flew out and bit him in the neck.

"Let him alone," said the mother; "he is not doing any harm."

"Yes, but he is so big and ugly. He's a perfect fright," said the spiteful duck, "and therefore he must be turned out. A little biting will do him good."

"The others are very pretty children," said the old duck with the rag on her leg, "all but that one. I wish his mother could smooth him up a bit; he is really ill-favored."

"That is impossible, your grace," replied the mother. "He is not pretty, but he has a very good disposition and swims as well as the others or even better. I think he will grow up pretty, and perhaps be smaller. He has remained too long in the egg, and therefore his figure is not properly formed;" and then she stroked his neck and smoothed the feathers, saying: "It is a drake, and therefore not of so much consequence. I think he will grow up strong and able to take care of himself."

"The other ducklings are graceful enough," said the old duck. "Now make yourself at home, and if you find an eel's head you can bring it to me."

And so they made themselves comfortable; but the poor duckling who had crept out of his shell last of all and looked so ugly was bitten and pushed and made fun of, not only by the ducks but by all the poultry.



Bless me, what a queer-
looking object one of them is..

"He is too big," they all said; and the turkey cock, who had been born into the world with spurs and fancied himself really an emperor, puffed himself out like a vessel in full sail and flew at the duckling. He became quite red in the head with passion, so that the poor little thing did not know where to go, and was quite miserable because he was so ugly as to be laughed at by the whole farmyard.

So it went on from day to day; it got worse and worse. The poor duckling was driven about by every one; even his brothers and sisters were unkind to him and would say, "Ah, you ugly creature, I wish the cat would get you" and his mother had been heard to say she wished he had never been born. The ducks pecked him, the chickens beat him, and the girl who fed the poultry pushed him with her feet. So at last he ran away, frightening the little birds in the hedge as he flew over the palings. "They are afraid because I am so ugly," he said. So he flew still farther, until he came out on a large moor inhabited by wild ducks. Here he remained the whole night, feeling very sorrowful.

In the morning, when the wild ducks rose in the air, they stared at their new comrade. "What sort of a duck are you?" they all said, coming round him.

He bowed to them and was as polite as he could be, but he did not reply to their question. "You are exceedingly ugly," said the wild ducks; "but that will not matter if you do not want to marry one of our family."

Poor thing! he had no thoughts of marriage; all he wanted was permission to lie among the rushes and drink some of the water on the moor. After he had been on the moor two days, there came two wild geese, or rather goslings, for they had not been out of the egg long, which accounts for their impertinence. "Listen, friend," said one of them to the duckling; "you are so ugly that we like you very well. Will you go with us and become a bird of passage? Not far from here is another moor, in which there are some wild geese, all of them unmarried. It is a chance for you to get a wife. You may make your fortune, ugly as you are."

"Bang, bang," sounded in the air, and the two wild geese fell dead among the rushes, and the water was tinged with blood. "Bang, bang," echoed far and wide in the distance, and whole flocks of wild geese rose up from the rushes.

The sound continued from every direction, for the sportsmen surrounded the moor, and some were even seated on branches of trees, overlooking the rushes. The blue smoke from the guns rose like clouds over the dark trees, and as it floated away across the water, a number of sporting dogs bounded in among the rushes, which bent beneath them wherever they went. How they terrified the poor duckling! He turned away his head to hide it under his wing, and at the same moment a large, terrible dog passed quite near him. His jaws were open, his tongue hung from his mouth, and his eyes glared fearfully. He thrust his nose close to the duckling, showing his sharp teeth, and then "splash, splash," he went into the water, without touching him.

"Oh," sighed the duckling, "how thankful I am for being so ugly; even a dog will not bite me."

And so he lay quite still, while the shot rattled through the rushes, and gun after gun was fired over him. It was late in the day before all became quiet, but even then the poor young thing did not dare to move. He waited quietly for several hours and then, after looking carefully around him, hastened away from the moor as fast as he could. He ran over field and meadow till a storm arose, and he could hardly struggle against it.

Towards evening he reached a poor little cottage that seemed ready to fall, and only seemed to remain standing because it could not decide on which side to fall first. The storm continued so violent that the duckling could go no farther. He sat down by the cottage, and then he noticed that the door was not quite closed, in consequence of one of the hinges having given way. There was, therefore, a narrow opening near the bottom large enough for him to slip through, which he did very quietly, and got a shelter for the night. Here, in this cottage, lived a woman, a cat, and a hen. The cat, whom his mistress called "My little son," was a great favorite; he could raise his back, and purr, and could even throw out sparks from his fur if it were stroked the wrong way. The hen had very short legs, so she was called "Chickie Short-legs." She laid good

eggs, and her mistress loved her as if she had been her own child. In the morning the strange visitor was discovered; the cat began to purr and the hen to cluck.

"What is that noise about?" said the old woman, looking around the room. But her sight was not very good; therefore when she saw the duckling she thought it must be a fat duck that had strayed from home. "Oh, what a prize!" she exclaimed. "I hope it is not a drake, for then I shall have some ducks' eggs. I must wait and see."

So the duckling was allowed to remain on trial for three weeks; but there were no eggs.

Now the cat was the master of the house, and the hen was the mistress; and they always said, "We and the world," for they believed themselves to be half the world, and by far the better half, too. The duckling thought that others might hold a different opinion on the subject, but the hen would not listen to such doubts.

"Can you lay eggs?" she asked. "No." "Then have the goodness to cease talking." "Can you raise your back, or purr, or throw out sparks?" said the cat. "No." "Then you have no right to express an opinion when sensible people are speaking." So the duckling sat in a corner, feeling very low-spirited; but when the sunshine and the fresh air came into the room through the open door, he began to feel such a great longing for a swim that he could not help speaking of it.

"What an absurd idea!" said the hen. "You have nothing else to do; therefore you have foolish fancies. If you could purr or lay eggs, they would pass away."

"But it is so delightful to swim about on the water," said the duckling, "and so refreshing to feel it close over your head while you dive down to the bottom."

"Delightful, indeed! it must be a queer sort of pleasure," said the hen. "Why, you must be crazy! Ask the cat—he is the cleverest animal I know; ask him how he would like to swim about on the water, or to dive under it, for I will not speak of my own opinion. Ask our mistress, the old woman; there is no one in the world more clever than she is. Do you think she would relish swimming and letting the water close over her head?"

"I see you don't understand me," said the duckling.

"We don't understand you? Who can understand you, I wonder? Do you consider yourself more clever than the cat or the old woman?—I will say nothing of myself. Don't imagine such nonsense, child, and thank your good fortune that you have been so well received here. Are you not in a warm room and in society from which you may learn something? But you are a chatterer, and your company is not very agreeable. Believe me, I speak only for your good. I may tell you unpleasant truths, but that is a proof of my friendship. I advise you, therefore, to lay eggs and learn to purr as quickly as possible."

"I believe I must go out into the world again," said the duckling.

"Yes, do," said the hen. So the duckling left the cottage and soon found water on which it could swim and dive, but he was avoided by all other animals because of his ugly appearance.

Autumn came, and the leaves in the forest turned to orange and gold; then, as winter approached, the wind caught them as they fell and whirled them into the cold air. The clouds, heavy with hail and snowflakes, hung low in the sky, and the raven stood among the reeds, crying, "Croak, croak." It made one shiver with cold to look at him. All this was very sad for the poor little duckling.

One evening, just as the sun was setting amid radiant clouds, there came a large flock of beautiful birds out of the bushes. The duckling had never seen any like them before. They were swans; and they curved their graceful necks, while their soft plumage shone with dazzling whiteness. They uttered a singular cry as they spread their glorious wings and flew away from those cold regions to warmer countries across the sea. They mounted higher and higher in the air, and the ugly little duckling had a strange sensation as he watched them. He whirled himself in the water like a wheel, stretched out his neck towards them, and uttered a cry so strange that it frightened even himself. Could he ever forget those beautiful, happy birds! And when at last they were out of his sight, he dived under the water and rose again almost beside himself with excitement. He knew not the names of these birds nor where they had flown, but he felt towards them as he had never felt towards any other bird in the world.

He was not envious of these beautiful creatures; it never occurred to him to wish to be as lovely as they. Poor ugly creature, how gladly he would have lived even with the ducks, had they only treated him kindly and given him encouragement.

The winter grew colder and colder; he was obliged to swim about on the water to keep it from freezing, but every night the space on which he swam became smaller and smaller. At length it froze so hard that the ice in the water crackled as he moved, and the duckling had to paddle with his legs as well as he could, to keep the space from closing up. He became exhausted at last and lay still and helpless, frozen fast in the ice.

Early in the morning a peasant who was passing by saw what had happened. He broke the ice in pieces with his wooden shoe and carried the duckling home to his wife. The warmth revived the poor little creature; but when the children wanted to play with him, the duckling thought they would do him some harm, so he started up in terror, fluttered into the milk pan, and splashed the milk about the room. Then the woman clapped her hands, which frightened him still more. He flew first into the butter cask, then into the meal tub and out again. What a condition he was in! The woman screamed and struck at him with the tongs; the children laughed and screamed and tumbled over each other in their efforts to catch him, but luckily he escaped. The door stood open; the poor creature could just manage to slip out among the bushes and lie down quite exhausted in the newly fallen snow.

It would be very sad were I to relate all the misery and privations which the poor little duckling endured during the hard winter; but when it had passed he found himself lying one morning in a moor, amongst the rushes. He felt the warm sun shining and heard the lark singing and saw that all around was beautiful spring.

Then the young bird felt that his wings were strong, as he flapped them against his sides and rose high into the air. They bore him onwards until, before he well knew how it had happened, he found himself in a large garden. The apple trees were in full blossom, and the fragrant elders bent their long green branches down to the stream, which wound round a smooth lawn. Everything looked beautiful in the freshness of early spring. From a thicket close by came three beautiful white swans, rustling their feathers and swimming lightly over the smooth water. The duckling saw these lovely birds and felt more strangely unhappy than ever.

"I will fly to these royal birds," he exclaimed, "and they will kill me because, ugly as I am, I dare to approach them. But it does not matter; better be killed by them than pecked by the ducks, beaten by the hens, pushed about by the maiden who feeds the poultry, or starved with hunger in the winter."

Then he flew to the water and swam towards the beautiful swans. The moment they espied the stranger they rushed to meet him with outstretched wings.

"Kill me," said the poor bird and he bent his head down to the surface of the water and awaited death.

But what did he see in the clear stream below? His own image—no longer a dark-gray bird, ugly and disagreeable to look at, but a graceful and beautiful swan.

To be born in a duck's nest in a farmyard is of no consequence to a bird if it is hatched from a swan's egg. He now felt glad at having suffered sorrow and trouble, because it enabled him to enjoy so much better all the pleasure and happiness around him; for the great swans swam round the newcomer and stroked his neck with their beaks, as a welcome.

Into the garden presently came some little children and threw bread and cake into the water.



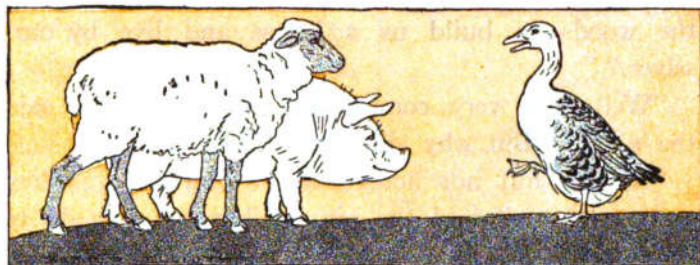
The new one is the most beautiful of all . . .

"See," cried the youngest, "there is a new one;" and the rest were delighted, and ran to their father and mother, dancing and clapping their hands and shouting joyously, "There is another swan come; a new one has arrived."

Then they threw more bread and cake into the water and said, "The new one is the most beautiful of all, he is so young and pretty." And the old swans bowed their heads before him.

Then he felt quite ashamed and hid his head under his wing, for he did not know what to do, he was so happy—yet he was not at all proud. He had been persecuted and despised for his ugliness, and now he heard them say he was the most beautiful of all the birds. Even the elder tree bent down its boughs into the water before him, and the sun shone warm and bright. Then he rustled his feathers, curved his slender neck, and cried joyfully, from the depths of his heart, "I never dreamed of such happiness as this while I was the despised ugly duckling."

IN THE NURSERY



THE SHEEP AND THE PIG THAT MADE A HOME

A Norse Folk Tale

Once upon a time there was a sheep, and he started out into the world to build himself a home. First he went to the pig and he said:

"There is nothing like having a home of your own. If you are of my way of thinking, we will go into the woods and build a house and live by ourselves."

Yes, the pig was quite willing. "It's nice to be in good company," said he, and off they started.

When they had got a bit on the way, they met a goose.

"Good day, my good people. Where are you off to?" said the goose.

"Good day," answered the sheep. "We're off to

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the woods to build us a house and live by ourselves."

"Well, I'm very comfortable where I am," said the goose. "But why shouldn't I join you?"

"Neither hut nor house can be built by gobbling and quacking," said the pig. "What can you do to help us build?"

"I can pluck moss and stuff it into the holes between the logs so the house will be warm and cosy," said the goose.

"Very well, you may come along then," said the sheep and the pig.

When they had gone a bit on the way—the goose was not getting along very fast—they met a hare, who came scampering out of the woods.

"Good day, my good people," said the hare. "Where are you going to-day?"

"Good day," answered the sheep. "We're off to the woods to build a house and live by ourselves. When you have tried both East and West, you'll find that a home of your own is the best."

Well," said the hare, "I live comfortably in every bush, but still I've a good mind to go and build the home with you."

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"But what can you do to help us build?" asked the pig. "Nothing at all, I should say."

"There is always something for willing hands to do in this world," said the hare. "I have sharp teeth to gnaw pegs with, and I have paws to knock them into the walls; so I'll do very well for a carpenter," said the hare.

"Well, you may come along with us then," said the sheep, the pig, and the goose.

When they had got a bit further on the way, they met a cock.

"Good day, my good people," said the cock. "Where are you all going to-day?"

"Good day," said the sheep. "We're off to the woods to build a house and live by ourselves. For, unless at home you bake, what will you do for bread and cake?"

"Well, I am comfortable enough where I am,"

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said the cock, "but it's better to have your own roost, than to sit on a neighbor's roost and crow, and that cock is best off who has a home of his own. If I could join such good company as yours, I, too, should like to go to the woods and build a house."

"Flapping and crowing is all very well for noise, but it won't build a house," said the pig. "How can you help us to build?"

"It is not well to live in a house where there is neither a dog nor a cock to awaken you in the morning," answered the cock. "I rise very early and can awaken you all with my crowing."

"Early to rise makes one happy and wealthy and wise," said the pig, who found it very hard to wake up in the morning. "Let the cock come along then, so we'll lose no good daylight in sleeping, but be up with the sun and at work."

So they all set off to the woods and built the

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house. The pig cut down the trees and the sheep dragged them home; the hare was the carpenter, and gnawed pegs and hammered them into walls and roof; the goose plucked moss and stuffed it into the little holes between the logs; the cock crew and took care that they did not oversleep themselves in the mornings. When the house was ready and the roof covered with birch-bark and thatched with grass, they all lived together and were both happy and contented in each others' company. They often, all of them, said:

"It's pleasant to travel both East and West,
But home is, after all, the best."



The Bee, Harp, Mouse, Bum-Clock

"Well, then," says the man, "how will you and me make a bargain about them?"

"I have no money," says Jack.

"But you have a fine cow," says the man. "I will give you the bee and the harp for it."

"O, but," Jack says, says he, "my poor mother at home is very sad and sorrowful entirely, and I have this cow to sell and lift her heart again."

"And better than this she cannot get," says the man. "For when she sees the bee play the harp, she will laugh if she never laughed in her life before."

"Well," says Jack, says he, "that will be grand."

He made the bargain. The man took the cow; and Jack started home with the bee and the harp in his pocket, and when he came home, his mother welcomed him back.

"And Jack," says she, "I see you have sold the cow."

"I have done that," says Jack.

"Did you do well?" says the mother.

"I did well, and very well," says Jack.

"How much did you get for her?" says the mother.

"O," says he, "it was not for money at all I sold her, but for something far better."

Donegal fairy Stories

"O, Jack! Jack!" says she, "what have you done?"

"Just wait until you see, mother," says he, "and you will soon say I have done well."

Out of his pocket he takes the bee and the harp and sets them in the middle of the floor, and whistles to them, and as soon as he did this the bee began to play the harp, and the mother she looked at them and let a big, great laugh out of her, and she and Jack began to dance, the pots and pans, the wheels and reels began to jig and dance over the floor, and the house itself hopped about also.

When Jack picked up the bee and the harp again the dancing all stopped, and the mother laughed for a long time. But when she came to herself, she got very angry entirely with Jack, and she told him he was a silly, foolish fellow, that there was neither food nor money in the house, and now he had lost one of her good cows also. "We must do something to live," says she. "Over to the fair you must go tomorrow morning, and take the black cow with you and sell her."

And off in the morning at an early hour brave Jack started, and never halted until he was in the fair. When he came into the fair, he saw a

The Bee, Mouse, Harp, Bum-Clock

big crowd gathered in a ring in the street. Said Jack to himself, "I wonder what are they looking at."

Into the crowd he pushed, and saw the wee man this day again with a mouse and a bum-clock, and he put them down in the street and whistled. The mouse and the bum-clock stood up on their hind legs and got hold of each other and began to dance there and jig, and as they did there was not a man or woman in the street who didn't begin to jig also, and Jack and the black cow, and the wheels and the reels, and the pots and pans, all of them were jiggling and dancing all over the town, and the houses themselves were jumping and hopping about, and such a place Jack or any one else never saw before.

When the man lifted the mouse and the bum-clock into his pocket, they all stopped dancing and settled down, and everybody laughed right hearty. The man turned to Jack. "Jack," said he, "I am glad to see you ; how would you like to have these animals ?"

"I should like well to have them," says Jack, says he, "only I cannot."

"Why cannot you?" says the man.

"O," says Jack, says he, "I have no money,

Donegal fairy Stories

and my poor mother is very down-hearted. She sent me to the fair to sell this cow and bring some money to lift her heart."

"O," says the man, says he, "if you want to lift your mother's heart I will sell you the mouse, and when you set the bee to play the harp and the mouse to dance to it, your mother will laugh if she never laughed in her life before."

"But I have no money," says Jack, says he, "to buy your mouse."

"I don't mind," says the man, says he, "I will take your cow for it."

Poor Jack was so taken with the mouse and had his mind so set on it, that he thought it was a grand bargain entirely, and he gave the man his cow, and took the mouse and started off for home, and when he got home his mother welcomed him.

"Jack," says she, "I see you have sold the cow."

"I did that," says Jack.

"Did you sell her well ?" says she.

"Very well indeed," says Jack, says he.

"How much did you get for her ?"

"I didn't get money," says he, "but I got value."

The Bee, Mouse, Harp, Bum-Clock

"O, Jack! Jack!" says she, "what do you mean?"

"I will soon show you that, mother," says he, taking the mouse out of his pocket and the harp and the bee and setting all on the floor; and when he began to whistle the bee began to play, and the mouse got up on its hind legs and began to dance and jig, and the mother gave such a hearty laugh as she never laughed in her life before. To dancing and jigging herself and Jack fell, and the pots and pans and the wheels and reels began to dance and jig over the floor, and the house jigged also. And when they were tired of this, Jack lifted the harp and the mouse and the bee and put them in his pocket, and his mother she laughed for a long time.

But when she got over that she got very down-hearted and very angry entirely with Jack. "And O, Jack," she says, "you are a stupid, good-for-nothing fellow. We have neither money nor meat in the house, and here you have lost two of my good cows, and I have only one left now. To-morrow morning," she says, "you must be up early and take this cow to the fair and sell her. See to get something to lift my heart up."

Donegal fairy Stories

"I will do that," says Jack, says he. So he went to his bed, and early in the morning he was up and turned out the spotty cow and went to the fair.

When Jack got to the fair, he saw a crowd gathered in a ring in the street. "I wonder what they are looking at, anyhow," says he. He pushed through the crowd, and there he saw the same wee man he had seen before, with a bum-clock; and when he put the bum-clock on the ground, he whistled, and the bum-clock began to dance, and the men, women, and children in the street, and Jack and the spotty cow began to dance and jig also, and everything on the street and about it, the wheels and reels, the pots and pans, began to jig, and the houses themselves began to dance likewise. And when the man lifted the bum-clock and put it in his pocket, everybody stopped jigging and dancing and every one laughed loud. The wee man turned, and saw Jack.

"Jack, my brave boy," says he, "you will never be right fixed until you have this bum-clock, for it is a very fancy thing to have."

"O, but," says Jack, says he, "I have no money."

"No matter for that," says the man; "you

The Bee, Mouse, Harp, Bum-Clock

have a cow, and that is as good as money to me."

"Well," says Jack, "I have a poor mother who is very down-hearted at home, and she sent me to the fair to sell this cow and raise some money and lift her heart."

"O, but Jack," says the wee man, "this bum-clock is the very thing to lift her heart, for when you put down your harp and bee and mouse on the floor, and put the bum-clock along with them, she will laugh if she never laughed in her life before."

"Well, that is surely true," says Jack, says he, "and I think I will make a swap with you."

So Jack gave the cow to the man and took the bum-clock himself, and started for home. His mother was glad to see Jack back, and says she, "Jack, I see that you have sold the cow."

"I did that, mother," says Jack.

"Did you sell her well, Jack?" says the mother.

"Very well indeed, mother," says Jack.

"How much did you get for her?" says the mother.

"I didn't take any money for her, mother, but value," says Jack, and he takes out of his pocket the bum-clock and the mouse, and set

Donegal fairy Stories

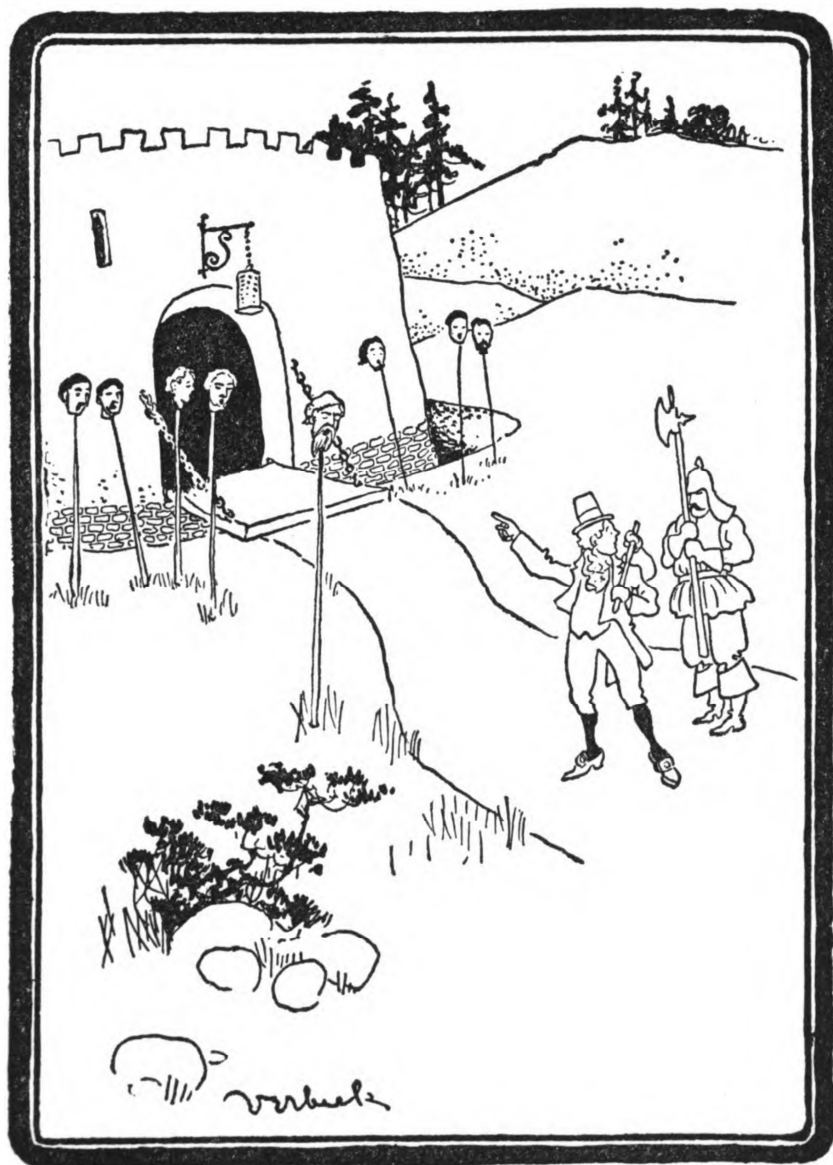
them on the floor and began to whistle, and the bee began to play the harp and the mouse and the bum-clock stood up on their hind legs and began to dance, and Jack's mother laughed very hearty, and everything in the house, the wheels and the reels, and the pots and pans, went jigging and hopping over the floor, and the house itself went jigging and hopping about likewise.

When Jack lifted up the animals and put them in his pocket, everything stopped, and the mother laughed for a good while. But after a while, when she came to herself, and saw what Jack had done and how they were now without either money, or food, or a cow, she got very, very angry at Jack, and scolded him hard, and then sat down and began to cry.

Poor Jack, when he looked at himself, confessed that he was a stupid fool entirely. "And what," says he, "shall I now do for my poor mother?" He went out along the road, thinking and thinking, and he met a wee woman who said, "Good-morrow to you. Jack," says she, "how is it you are not trying for the King's daughter of Ireland?"

"What do you mean?" says Jack.

Says she: "Didn't you hear what the whole world has heard, that the King of Ireland has a



"What heads are these?"
Jack asked.

The Bee, Harp, Mouse, Bum-Clock

daughter who hasn't laughed for seven years, and he has promised to give her in marriage, and to give the kingdom along with her, to any man who will take three laughs out of her."

"If that is so," says Jack, says he, "it is not here I should be."

Back to the house he went, and gathers together the bee, the harp, the mouse, and the bum-clock, and putting them into his pocket, he bade his mother good-by, and told her it wouldn't be long till she got good news from him, and off he hurries.

When he reached the castle, there was a ring of spikes all round the castle and men's heads on nearly every spike there.

"What heads are these?" Jack asked one of the King's soldiers.

"Any man that comes here trying to win the King's daughter, and fails to make her laugh three times, loses his head and has it stuck on a spike. These are the heads of the men that failed," says he.

"A mighty big crowd," says Jack, says he. Then Jack sent word to tell the King's daughter and the King that there was a new man who had come to win her.

In a very little time the King and the King's

Donegal fairy Stories

daughter and the King's court all came out and sat themselves down on gold and silver chairs in front of the castle, and ordered Jack to be brought in until he should have his trial. Jack, before he went, took out of his pocket the bee, the harp, the mouse, and the bum-clock, and he gave the harp to the bee, and he tied a string to one and the other, and took the end of the string himself, and marched into the castle yard before all the court, with his animals coming on a string behind him.

When the Queen and the King and the court and the princes saw poor ragged Jack with his bee, and mouse, and bum-clock hopping behind him on a string, they set up one roar of laughter that was long and loud enough, and when the King's daughter herself lifted her head and looked to see what they were laughing at, and saw Jack and his paraphernalia, she opened her mouth and she let out of her such a laugh as was never heard before.

Then Jack dropped a low courtesy, and said, "Thank you, my lady; I have one of the three parts of you won."

Then he drew up his animals in a circle, and began to whistle, and the minute he did, the bee began to play the harp, and the mouse and the

The Bee, Harp, Mouse, Bum-Clock

bum-clock stood up on their hind legs, got hold of each other, and began to dance, and the King and the King's court and Jack himself began to dance and jig, and everything about the King's castle, pots and pans, wheels and reels and the castle itself began to dance also. And the King's daughter, when she saw this, opened her mouth again, and let out of her a laugh twice louder than she let before, and Jack, in the middle of his jiggling, drops another courtesy, and says, "Thank you, my lady; that is two of the three parts of you won."

Jack and his menagerie went on playing and dancing, but Jack could not get the third laugh out of the King's daughter, and the poor fellow saw his big head in danger of going on the spike. Then the brave mouse came to Jack's help and wheeled round upon its heel, and as it did so its tail swiped into the bum-clock's mouth, and the bum-clock began to cough and cough and cough. And when the King's daughter saw this she opened her mouth again, and she let the loudest and hardest and merriest laugh that was ever heard before or since; and, "Thank you, my lady," says Jack, dropping another courtesy; "I have all of you won."

Then when Jack stopped his menagerie, the

Donegal fairy Stories

King took himself and the menagerie within the castle. He was washed and combed, and dressed in a suit of silk and satin, with all kinds of gold and silver ornaments, and then was led before the King's daughter. And true enough she confessed that a handsomer and finer fellow than Jack she had never seen, and she was very willing to be his wife.

Jack sent for his poor old mother and brought her to the wedding, which lasted nine days and nine nights, every night better than the other. All the lords and ladies and gentry of Ireland were at the wedding. I was at it, too, and got brogues, broth and slippers of bread and came jigging home on my head.





THE TURTLE WHO COULD NOT STOP TALKING
An East Indian Fable

Once there was a Turtle who lived in a muddy little pond, and he loved to crawl out in the sun and talk to everyone who went by. He talked to the beasts, and he talked to the birds, and he talked to the fishes. He talked to the wild geese as they flew by on their way to the south every year, and he talked to the little brown children who lived in the village near by. In fact he was always talking. He talked, and he talked, and he talked; he chattered, and chattered, and chattered.

One fine day there came to his muddy little pond two young wild Geese who had flown on their strong wings a long, long way.

"Friend Turtle," said the Geese, as they rested

beside him on the water, "we have a beautiful home far away,—a shining, blue pool as clear as glass, with nodding green grasses round about. We are on our way there now. It's a far pleasanter place than this. How would you like to come with us?"

The Turtle looked about at his muddy little pond. He had always longed to go south; and he wanted so much to see that shining blue pool, with the nodding green grasses round about. But he answered, "How can I go with you? I have no wings."

"Oh, we will take you, if only you can keep your mouth closed, and say not a word to anyone," said the Geese.

"Of course I can keep my mouth closed," said the Turtle. "Do take me with you. I will do exactly as you say."

So the next day the Geese brought a stick, each one holding an end of it in his bill.

"Now take hold of the middle of this stick with your mouth," said they, "and so we will lift you up in the air. But don't say a word until we reach home, for, if you do, you will lose your hold and fall to the ground."

"Of course! I will do exactly as you say," said the Turtle.

MY BOOK HOUSE



So the Turtle took hold of the stick with his mouth, and the Geese soared up with him between them. Above the green tops of the tall palm trees, up, up into the blue sky they flew. But as they passed over the village, they came down near enough to the earth, so the little brown children below could just see their old friend, the Turtle.

"Oh, look at the Turtle!" the children cried.

"Yes, I'm going on a long, long journey, farther than any of you have ever been!" the Turtle wanted to say, but he remembered just in time and did not open his mouth.

"Look! those Geese are carrying him on a stick. Did you ever in all your life see anyone look so silly?" cried the children.

"Silly yourself! What business is it of yours how I'm carried?" the Turtle wanted to say, but he remembered just in time and did not open his mouth.

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IN THE NURSERY

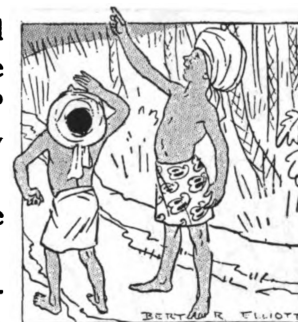
"Oh Ho! Hah Hah!" cried the children. "How does he ever keep his mouth closed? Do you suppose he can really and truly stop talking?"

This was too much for the Turtle.

"Of course I can stop talking!" he cried, and at once he lost his hold on the stick and fell down, crash, at their feet.

"Poor little Turtle," said the children, "he fell because he could not stop talking."

A Bidpai Fable (adapted from the Sanskrit.)



WHITE BUTTERFLIES

Fly, white butterflies, out to sea,
Frail, pale wings for the wind to try,
Small white wings that we scarce can see,
Fly!

Some fly light as a laugh of glee,
Some fly soft as a long, low sigh;
All to the haven where each would be,
Fly!

—Algernon Charles Swinburne.

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MY BOOK HOUSE



JACK FROST*

Gabriel Setoun

The door was shut, as doors should be,
Before you went to bed last night;
Yet Jack Frost has got in, you see,
And left your window silver white.

He must have waited till you slept;
And not a single word he spoke,
But penciled o'er the panes and crept
Away again before you woke.

And now you cannot see the trees
Nor fields that stretch beyond the lane;
But there are fairer things than these
His fingers traced on every pane.

Rocks and castles towering high;
Hills and dales and streams and fields;
And knights in armour riding by,
With nodding plumes and shining shields.

*From *Child's World*; used by the courteous permission of John Lane Company.

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IN THE NURSERY

And here are little boats, and there
Big ships with sails spread to the breeze;
And yonder, palm-trees waving fair
On islands set in silver seas.

And butterflies with gauzy wings;
And herds of cows and flocks of sheep;
And fruit and flowers and all the things
You see when you are sound asleep.

For, creeping softly underneath
The door when all the lights are out,
Jack Frost takes every breath you breathe
And knows the things you think about.

He paints them on the window-pane
In fairy lines with frozen steam;
And when you wake, you see again
The lovely things you saw in dream.



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M Y B O O K H O U S E

THE COCK, THE MOUSE, AND THE LITTLE RED HEN*

Félicité LeFèvre

Once upon a time there was a hill, and on the hill there was a pretty little house.

It had one little green door, and four little windows with green shutters, and in it there lived A COCK, and A MOUSE, and A LITTLE RED HEN. On another hill close by, there was another little house. It was very ugly. It had a door that wouldn't shut, and two broken windows, and all the paint was off the shutters. And in this house there lived A BOLD BAD FOX and FOUR BAD LITTLE FOXES.

One morning these four bad little foxes came to the big bad Fox and said:

"Oh, Father, we're so hungry!"

"We had nothing to eat yesterday," said one.

"And scarcely anything the day before," said another.

The big bad Fox shook his head, for he was thinking. At last he said in a big gruff voice:

"On the hill over there I see a house. And in that house there lives a Cock."

*Used by permission of George W. Jacobs & Company.

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I N T H E N U R S E R Y

"And a Mouse!" screamed two of the little foxes.

"And a little Red Hen," screamed the other two.

"And they are nice and fat," went on the big bad Fox. "This very day I'll take my sack, and I will go up that hill and in at that door, and into my sack I will put the Cock, and the Mouse, and the little Red Hen."

So the four little foxes jumped for joy, and the big bad Fox went to get his sack ready to start upon his journey.

But what was happening to the Cock, and the Mouse, and the little Red Hen, all this time?

Well, sad to say, the Cock and the Mouse had both got out of bed on the wrong side that morning. The Cock said the day was too hot, and the Mouse grumbled because it was too cold.

They came grumbling down to the kitchen, where the good little Red Hen, looking as bright as a sunbeam, was bustling about.

"Who'll get some sticks to light the fire with?" she asked.



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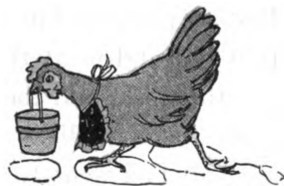
MY BOOK HOUSE

"I shan't," said the Cock.

"I shan't," said the Mouse.

"Then I'll do it myself," said the little Red Hen.

So off she ran to get the sticks. "And now, who'll fill the kettle from the spring?" she asked.



"I shan't," said the Cock.

"I shan't," said the Mouse.

"Then I'll do it myself," said the little Red Hen.

And off she ran to fill the kettle.

"And who'll get the breakfast ready?" she asked, as she put the kettle on to boil.

"I shan't," said the Cock.

"I shan't," said the Mouse.

"I'll do it myself," said the little Red Hen.

All breakfast time the Cock and the Mouse quarrelled and grumbled. The Cock upset the milk jug, and the Mouse scattered crumbs upon the floor.

"Who'll clear away the breakfast?" asked the poor little Red Hen, hoping they would soon leave off being cross.



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IN THE NURSERY

"I shan't," said the Cock.

"I shan't," said the Mouse.

"Then I'll do it myself," said the little Red Hen.

So she cleared everything away, swept up the crumbs and brushed up the fireplace.

"And now, who'll help me to make the beds?"

"I shan't," said the Cock.

"I shan't," said the Mouse.

"Then I'll do it myself," said the little Red Hen.



And she tripped away upstairs.

But the lazy Cock and Mouse each sat down in a comfortable arm-chair by the fire, and soon fell fast asleep.

Now the bad Fox had crept up the hill, and into the garden, and if the Cock and Mouse hadn't been asleep, they would have seen his sharp eyes peeping in at the window.

"Rat tat tat! Rat tat tat!" the Fox knocked at the door.

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MY BOOK HOUSE



enough for the Mouse to creep through.

"Quick," she whispered to the Mouse, "run as fast as you can and bring back a stone just as large as yourself."

Out scampered the Mouse, and soon came back, dragging the stone after him.

"Push it in here," said the little Red Hen, and he pushed it in, in a twinkling.

Then the little Red Hen snipped away at the hole, till it was large enough for the Cock to get through.

"Quick," she said, "run and get a stone as big as yourself."

Out flew the Cock, and soon came back quite out of breath, with a big stone, which he pushed into the sack too.

Then the little Red Hen popped out, got a stone as big as herself, and pushed it in. Next she put on

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her thimble, took out her needle and thread, and sewed up the hole as quickly as ever she could.

When it was done, the Cock, and the Mouse and the little Red Hen ran home very fast, shut the door after them, drew the bolts, shut the shutters, and drew down the blinds and felt quite safe.

The bad Fox lay fast asleep under the tree for some time, but at last he awoke.

"Dear, dear," he said, rubbing his eyes and then looking at the long shadows on the grass, "how late it is getting. I must hurry home."

So the bad Fox went grumbling and groaning down the hill, till he came to the stream. Splash! In went one foot. Splash! In went the other, but the stones in the sack were so heavy that at the very next step, down tumbled Mr. Fox into a deep pool. And then the fishes carried him off to their fairy caves



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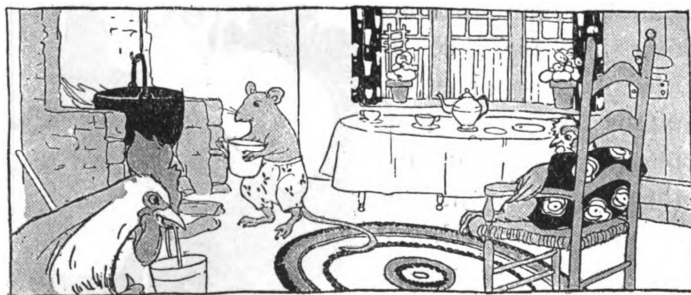
M Y B O O K H O U S E

and kept him a prisoner there, so he was never seen again. And the four greedy little foxes had to go to bed without any supper.

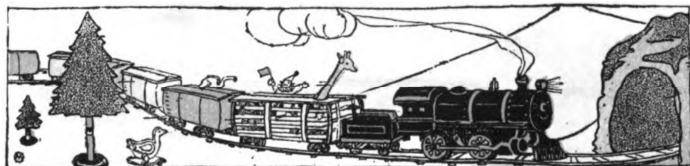
But the Cock and the Mouse never grumbled again. They lit the fire, filled the kettle, laid the breakfast, and did all the work, while the good little Red Hen had a holiday, and sat resting in the big arm-chair.

No foxes ever troubled them again, and for all I know they are still living happily in the little house with the green door and green shutters, which stands on the hill.

—*Abridged*



IN THE NURSERY



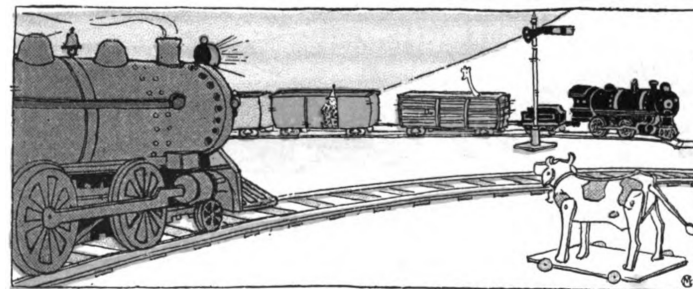
THE LITTLE ENGINE THAT COULD*

Once there was a Train-of-Cars, and she was flying merrily across the country with a load of Christmas toys for the children who lived way over on the other side of the mountain. Her wheels went round ever so fast, squealing along on the track, and leaving the rails humming and singing behind them. Choo, choo! Choo, choo! Choo, choo! Choo, choo! She was such a happy little Train-of-Cars, so pleased with the load she was carrying, and she had just time to get to the end of her journey before the last Christmas shopping.

But all of a sudden, right at the foot of the mountain, Puff! Chug! Squeak! Squeak-ea-eak! The Engine broke down; the wheels slid along a little farther with a shrieking, wailing cry and then stood perfectly still. Now how was the train to cross the mountain and get her toys over there in time for the children's Christmas?

*Retold from *The Pony Engine*, by Mabel C. Bragg. Used by the permission of George H. Doran Company.

MY BOOK HOUSE



Rag dolls, paper dolls, china dolls, little worsted dogs with shoebutton eyes, and celluloid cats, and white fur bunnies, and painted wooden horses, and Noah's arks, and dolls' houses, and dolls' furniture, and rocking horses, and tops, and bats, and balls, and wagons, and carts! Were they all to stay there packed away useless, and the children on the other side to go without them for Christmas?

As the little Train stood there, hoping for help, along toward her came a great strong Engine, all finely cleaned up and black, with his number plate scoured and shining. He had just finished his work of pulling a fine long passenger train, with sleeping cars, parlor car, and dining car, and he was on his way back to the roundhouse now, puffing and blowing with pride.

IN THE NURSERY

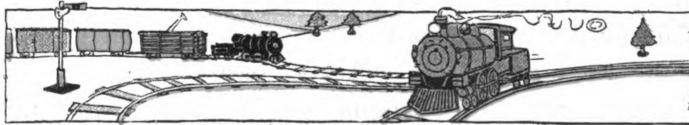
"O Big, Big Engine!" cried the Train, and every one of her Cars joined in the chorus, "Will you please take us over the mountain? Our engine has broken down, and we're loaded with Christmas toys for the children on the other side. Will you help us, help us, help us, help us?"

But the Big Passenger Engine puffed and snorted and blew off steam angrily.

"It's not my business to pull such a little nobody as you!" he roared. "I pull much finer trains than you! Puff, Puff! Ding, dong! Wheu-eu-eu!" And he switched himself round on a sidetrack, passed the poor little Train-of-Cars and soon left her helpless, far behind.

But the little Train-of-Cars never left off hoping that some one would come to help her.

Pretty soon there came along another great strong Engine, that had just pulled a heavy freight train over the mountain, and was on his way back to the round-house to rest. So the little Train called out to the Freight Engine and every one of her Cars joined in the chorus:



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MY BOOK HOUSE

"O Big, Big Engine, will you please take us over the mountain? Our engine has broken down, and we're loaded with Christmas toys for the children on the other side. Will you help us, help us, help us?"

But the Big Freight Engine puffed and snorted more angrily than the other, and sent up out of his smokestack a shower of angry sparks.

"I've done enough work for today! Yes-s-s S-s-sir-ee!" he hissed, "I've done enough, done enough, done enough, done enough, done enough, done enough!" And he switched himself round on the sidetrack, passed the poor little Train-of-Cars, and soon left her helpless, far behind!

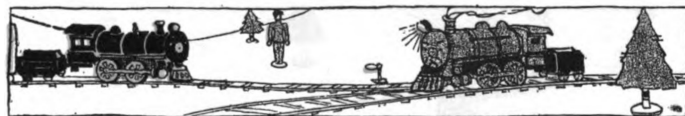
But the little Train-of-Cars never left off hoping that some one would come to help her.

Pretty soon there came along a smaller Engine, just about the size of the one that had been pulling the Train. He looked dingy and rusty and dusty, and he didn't puff at all. He just sighed, and groaned, and grunted, and rumbled, and grumbled! But the little Train called out to him and every one of her Cars joined in the chorus:

"O Engine, Engine, will you please take us over the mountain? Our engine has broken down and

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we're loaded with Christmas toys for the children on the other side? Will you help us, help us, help us?"

Then the Dingy, Dusty, Rusty Engine groaned, and grunted, and rumbled, and grumbled:

"I never could pull you over the mountain! I haven't the strength! I never—could! I never—could! I never—could! I never could! I never could! I never could!" And he dragged himself round on the sidetrack, passed the poor little Train-of-Cars and soon left her helpless, far behind!

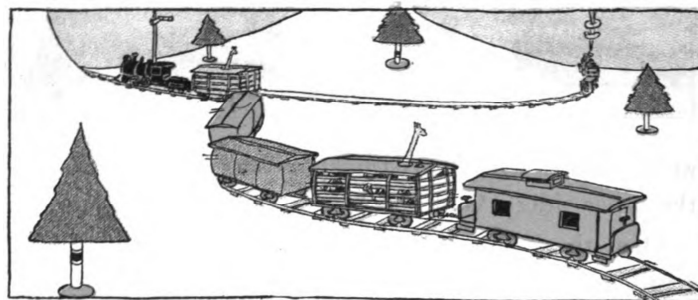
Still the little Train-of-Cars never left off hoping that some one would come to help her.

After a long, long time, along came a Little, Small Engine. It seemed quite useless to ask this Little, Small Engine for help, yet the Little, Small Engine had one very bright, lively eye in her head, and she was humming and hurrying along, whistling and ringing her bell in the very liveliest fashion.

So the little Train cried out, and every one of her Cars joined in the chorus:

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MY BOOK HOUSE



"Little Engine, could you take us over the mountain? Our engine has broken down, and we're loaded with Christmas toys for the children on the other side. Can you help us, help us, help us?"

Now the Little, Small Engine had never been far away from the freight yard, where she had spent all her days in switching, but she did not mean to let those children go without their Christmas toys if she could possibly help it, so she answered:

"I think I can! I think I can! I think I can!"

Then she came straight up to the Train, caught hold of her, and began to tug and pull. Pretty soon, Ding, dong! ding, dong! Puff, puff, puff! Chug, chug, chug! The Train-of-Cars began to move, slowly, slowly. And the Little, Small Engine as she toiled, kept puffing:

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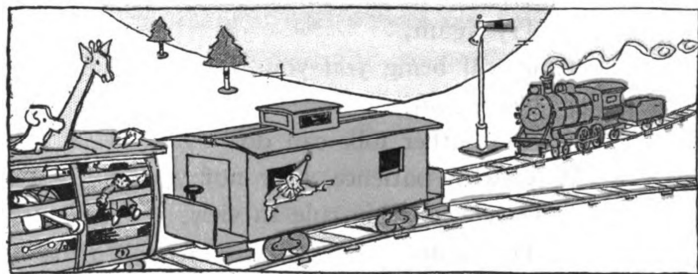
IN THE NURSERY

"I — think — I — can! I — think — I — can! I — think — I — can!" Slowly, steadily, she gained speed. "I — think — I can! I — think — I — can! I — think — I — can!" Now she ran steadily up the track. "I think I can! I think I can! I think I can! I think I can! I think I can! I think I can! I think I can!"

At last she reached the top of the mountain and then she puffed out joyously, "*I THOUGHT I COULD!*"

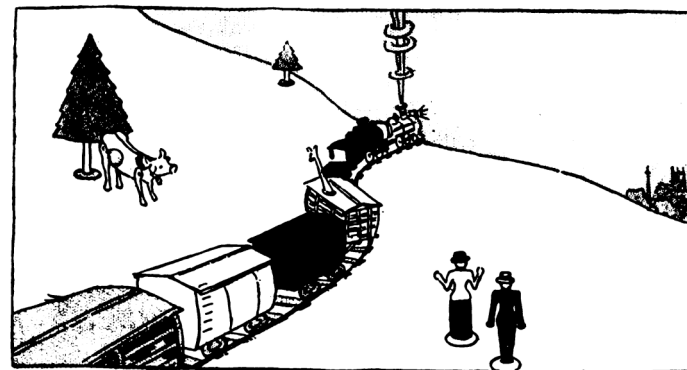
There, below on the other side lay a great, big city, the city where the children lived to whom she was bearing the Christmas toys.

Down she started, sliding faster, faster, faster, and as she went she sang merrily, "I thought I could! I thought I could! I thought I could! I thought I could! I thought I could! I thought I could! I thought I could!"



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I could! I thought I could! I thought I could! I thought I could, I thought I could, I thought I could!"

And so the children got their Christmas toys.

TRY AGAIN

If you find your task is hard,

Try again;

Time will bring you your reward,

Try again;

All that other folk can do,

Why, with patience, may not you?

Only keep this rule in view,

Try again.

—William E. Hickson.

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IN THE NURSERY

WEE ROBIN'S CHRISTMAS SONG

A Scotch Folk Tale

There was once an old gray Pussy, and she went for a walk one Christmas morning to see what she could see. As she was walking by the water-side, she saw a wee, wee Robin Redbreast hopping about on a bush.

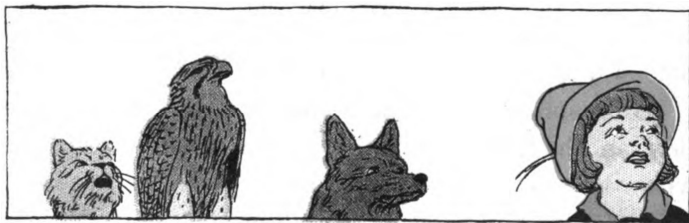
"Good morning, Robin Redbreast," said she. "Where are you going on this cold and frosty morning?"

"I'm going to the King," answered the wee Robin, "to sing him a song on this merry Christmas morning."

"Oh, but wait before you go," said the Pussy. "Just hop down to me a minute and I'll show you a bonny white ring that I have around my neck."

But Robin looked down on Pussy with a twinkle in his eye.

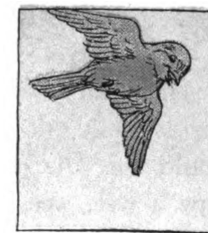
"Ha! Ha! gray Pussy," said he, "you may show your white ring to the little gray mouse, but I'll not



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wait to let you show it to me! I'll go straight on to the King!"

So he spread his wings and flew away. And he flew, and he flew, and he flew, till he came to a fence where sat a greedy old Hawk who was looking about for breakfast.



"Good morning, Robin Redbreast," cried the greedy old Hawk, "where are you going on this cold and frosty morning?"

"I'm going to the King," answered the wee Robin, "to sing him a song on this merry Christmas morning."

"Oh, but wait before you go," said the greedy old Hawk, "and I will show you a bonny green feather I have in my wing."

But the wee Robin did not like the look in the eye of the greedy old Hawk.

"Ha! Ha! old Hawk," said he, "I saw you peck at the tiny birds, but I'll not wait to let you peck at me. I'll go straight on to the King!"

So he spread his wings and flew away. And he flew, and he flew, and he flew, till he came to a hillside where he saw a sly old Fox looking out of his hole.

"Good morning, Robin Redbreast," said the sly

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old Fox. "Where are you going on this cold and frosty morning?"

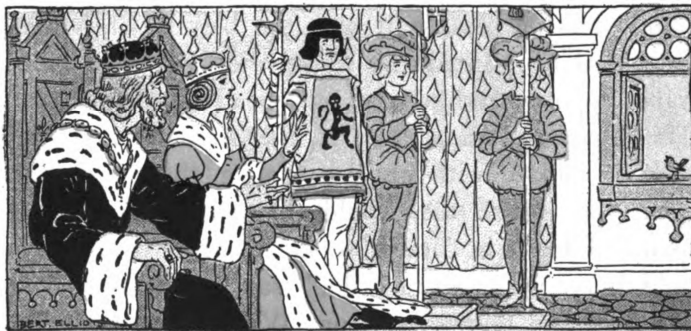
"I'm going to the King," answered the wee Robin, "to sing him a song on this merry Christmas morning."

"Oh, but wait before you go," said the sly old Fox, "and let me show you a queer black spot I have on the end of my tail."

"Ha! Ha! sly Fox," said the Robin, "I saw you worry the wee lambie, and I'll not wait to see the spot on your tail. I'll go straight on to the King."

So the Robin flew away once more, and never rested till he came to a rosy-cheeked boy, who sat on a log and ate a big piece of bread and butter. Then he perched on a branch and watched him.

"Good morning, Robin Redbreast," said the boy.

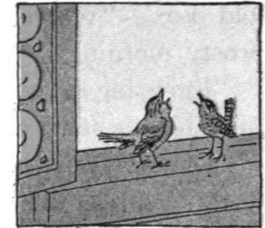


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"Where are you going on this cold and frosty morning?"

"I'm going to the King," answered the wee Robin, "to sing him a song on this merry Christmas morning."



"Come a bit nearer," said the boy, "and I'll give you some crumbs from my bread."

"Nay, nay, my wee man," chirped the Robin. "I saw you catch the goldfinch, and I'll not wait for your crumbs. I'll go straight on to the King."

So, no matter who begged him to stop and wait, the wee Robin flew straight on to the King. And he lit on the window-sill of the palace. There he sat and sang the sweetest song he knew. So happy was he because it was the blessed Christmas-tide, that he wanted the whole wide world to be as happy as he. And he sang, and he sang, and he sang. The King and Queen sat at the window, and they were so pleased with his cheery song that they asked each other what they could do to pay him for his loving thought in coming so far to greet them.

"I know what we can do," said the Queen; "we can give him bonny wee Jenny Wren for his mate."

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Then the King clapped his hands and called for
Jenny Wren, and the wee, wee Robin and the wee,
wee Wren sat side by side on the window-sill, and
they sang, and they sang, and
they sang on that merry Christ-
mas morning.

SING, LITTLE BIRD

Sing, little bird,
when the skies are blue;
Sing, for the world
has need of you;
Sing when the skies
are overcast;
Sing when the rain
is falling fast.
Sing, happy heart,
when the sun is warm;
Sing in the winter's
coldest storm;
Sing little songs,
O heart so true;
Sing, for the world
has need of you.

