



PLODDING
TURTLE'S
STORY

By AMY PRENTICE

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Aunt Amy's Animal Stories

By AMY PRENTICE

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By **AMY PRENTICE**

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A. L. BURT COMPANY
PUBLISHERS **NEW YORK**



Down came Mr. Eagle and picked up Plodding Turtle
in his claws.

Plodding Turtle's Story.

Aunt Amy's Animal Stories

PLODDING TURTLE'S STORY

By **AMY PRENTICE**



With **Thirty Illustrations**
and a **Frontispiece in Colors**
BY **J. WATSON DAVIS**



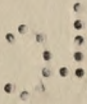
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By Amy Prentice

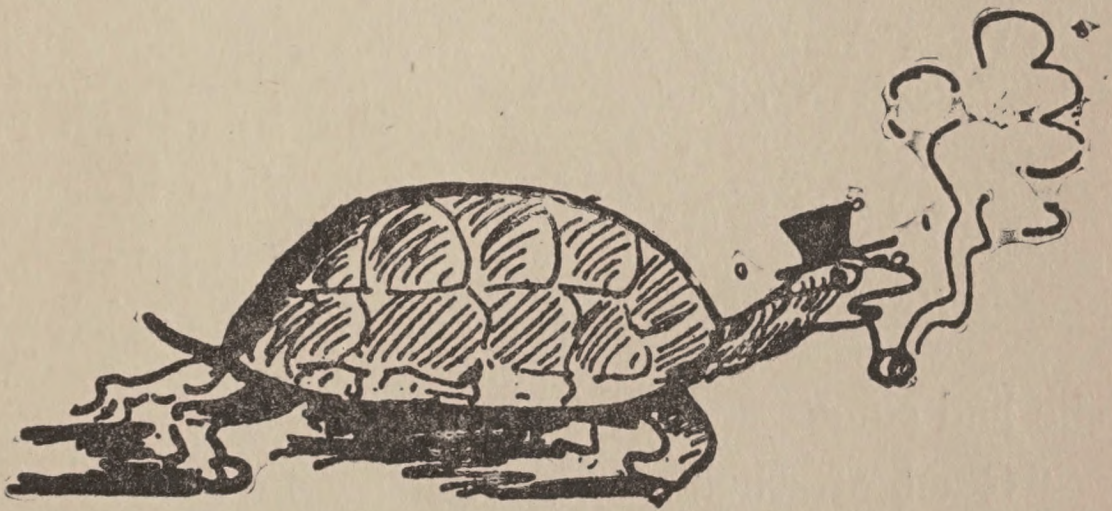




PLODDING TURTLE'S STORY.

By AMY PRENTICE.

WHEN your Aunt Amy went down to her favorite seat by the side of the pond one day last week, she felt almost lonely, for neither bird nor animal was to be seen.



Mr. Plodding Turtle.

Usually she meets Frisky Squirrel, Bunny Rabbit, or Mr. Crow some time before arriving at her resting-place near an old log; but on this afternoon it was as if the neighborhood had been de-

Plodding Turtle's Story.

serted, and not even the chirping of a bird could be heard.

At first your Aunt Amy thought she would go back home without delay, because she had come to the pond only in order to talk with her bird or animal friends; but the day was so warm, and the breeze which came over the water so refreshing,



Mr. Croaky Frog.

that she lingered, and was actually falling asleep when a loud splashing of the water caused her to look around quickly, when she saw on the edge of the bank, Mr. Croaky Frog, his eyes gleaming brightly as if he was asking why

she had come.

“Good afternoon, Mr. Frog,” your Aunt Amy said. “Can you tell me why there is no one save yourself to be seen around here this pleasant day?”

“I guess everybody, except old Mr. Plodding Turtle, has gone over to the big oak to hear Mr. Crow tell about the monkey who went to sea on

a fish. Mr. Crow claims that he was well acquainted with the monkey; but I ain't the kind of a fellow to swallow such yarns."



Mr. Crow.

"Then you don't believe all that Mr. Crow tells about what he has seen on his travels?" your Aunt Amy asked.

WHY THE GIRAFFES HAVE LONG NECKS.

"I used to, till he told the story of how the giraffes' necks happened to be so long, and then I just had to stop putting any faith in what he said," Mr. Frog replied.

"I supposed that giraffes always had long necks," your Aunt Amy said in surprise, and Mr. Frog winked one eye slowly as he began in a manner which told very plainly that he had a story to tell.

Plodding Turtle's Story.

“According to what Mr. Crow says, when the giraffes first came into this world their necks were of the proper length, and they were looked upon as very nice animals, although some said that the



Mrs. Giraffe Discovers a Treasure.

first Mrs. Giraffe was a good deal more inclined to pry into her neighbors' affairs than was pleasant.

“Well, the way Mr. Crow tells it is this, one day when Mrs. Giraffe and her husband were out

looking for a good place in which to set up house-keeping, she stumbled upon a box that had been thrown up on the shore by the sea, and nothing would satisfy her but that she must know what was inside.

“‘Come here,’ she called in great glee to her husband, who was lying in the shade resting himself after his long tramp at house-hunting. ‘Come and see what I have found,’ and she kicked the cover off the box. ‘It’s a lovely lot of marsh-mallows all done up in silver paper, and must have been lost overboard from some steamer. They will last us a month at the very least, and we won’t have to pay a cent for them.’

“‘But surely you are not going to eat what doesn’t belong to you, my dear,’ her husband said, and she replied quite sharply :

“‘Of course I am, and you are going to have your share.’

“Now it so happened that instead of being marsh-mallows which Mrs. Giraffe had found, it was a box of yeast cakes, and she never discovered the difference even after eating half a dozen, although I suppose it must have puzzled her to make out why they tasted so queerly.

“Well, it wasn’t long afterward that both the

giraffes grew very thirsty, and, with plenty of water near at hand, it was only natural they should drink all they wanted. Of course you can fancy what happened! The yeast began to work, and raised their heads higher and higher until their necks were stretched out as we see them now. Mr. Crow says he don't know what might have happened if they'd eaten more of the yeast cakes—perhaps their heads would have run out over their necks. At any rate, Mr. Crow thinks it should teach us not to meddle with other people's property, and, above all, never to eat anything that we find lying around loose."

"Then you don't believe the story to be true, Mr. Frog?" your Aunt Amy asked, and before it was possible for him to answer the question, Mr. Turtle's head suddenly appeared from beneath a lily pad.

"I thought I heard voices," he said as he clambered slowly ashore, taking a seat on the log where the sun's rays would fall directly upon him, and as he spoke Mr. Frog leaped into the water, saying in adieu:

"Ker-chug, ker-chune, I'll see you soon."

"What has he been saying about me?" Mr. Turtle asked suspiciously. "He's always ready

to tell stories about other people, till somebody makes a fuss, and then he's just as big a coward as Jim Bug."

HOW THE BUTTERFLIES FRIGHTENED MR. BUG.

It seemed only natural for your Aunt Amy to ask who Mr. Bug was, and Mr. Turtle replied promptly :

"He lives over yonder near that old stump, and he's frightened of his own shadow, although you never knew him to miss a chance of spreading the news if somebody else was scared, or had had a trick played on them. The other day a lot of butterflies got him behind the raspberry vines, and said that policemen were hunting for him.

" 'Why should they hunt after me?' Jim Bug asked, beginning to tremble terribly.

" 'Farmer Jones claims you climbed over his fence and bit a big piece out of one of his apples,' the butterflies said, and there wasn't any need to make up more of a story in order to scare him.

" Mr. Bug ran home as fast as his legs would carry him, and burst into the kitchen where his

wife was frying doughnuts, with the tears running down his cheeks, as he cried :



Mr. Bug is Badly Frightened.

“The policemen are after me! The policemen are after me! Oh, hide me somewhere, my dear, and hide me quick!”

“ ‘Why, what is the matter, James?’ Mrs. Bug asked as soon as he gave her a chance to speak, and he repeated what the butterflies had told him.

“ ‘I am ashamed of you, James Bug,’ his wife said, angry-like. ‘Don’t you know that Farmer Jones hasn’t a single fence on his place, and, what’s more, he never owned an apple tree. If you hadn’t been so frightened you’d known the butterflies were fooling you.’

“ ‘And that’s the way with Croaky Frog,’ Mr. Turtle said, shaking his head disapprovingly, while your Aunt Amy, not caring to hear about Mr. Frog’s faults or cowardice, asked why Mr. Turtle didn’t go to hear Mr. Crow’s story.

WHEN MR. MONKEY WENT TO SEA.

“ ‘Because I knew all about it before ever Mr. Crow was born,’ Mr. Turtle replied quite snappishly. “ ‘It was the same Thomas Ape that made the trousers for Mr. Lion, who went to sea, and I was acquainted with him long before he turned tailor.

“ ‘You see, Mr. Ape, when he was quite a young fellow, ran away from home to go to sea, thinking

anybody would be glad to hire him for a sailor even though he'd never so much as seen the ocean. Well, I can tell you that he was awfully seasick before he got very far from the farm; but he didn't have the courage to go back and take the whipping he knew his father would give him, so he swallowed the big lump that kept coming up in his throat whenever he thought of his mother, and followed his nose.

“When he came to the ocean he found that the Mr. Men who owned vessels weren't so very anxious to hire him, and he walked around on the beach wishing he was at home once more, when a monstrous big Mr. Dolphin swam up, and asked him what the matter was.

“Tommy told him all about it, and Mr. Dolphin said, as if he wanted to be friendly:

“‘I'll take you to sea with me, and I guess one voyage will be enough.’

“So young Mr. Ape got on Mr. Dolphin's back, and off they started. It seemed a good deal like fun to Tommy, until they were way out in the ocean where lots of birds were flying around, and Mr. Dolphin asked him if he didn't intend to work his passage.

“‘What can I do?’ young Mr. Ape asked in a



Thomas Ape goes to sea with Mr. Dolphin. Page 12.
Plodding Turtle

very faint voice, for he was beginning to feel queer in his stomach.

“‘Catch one of those birds, and cook it for supper,’ Mr. Dolphin said angry-like.

“‘But I don’t know how,’ Tommy whined, and the tears began to roll down his cheeks. ‘I never cooked a thing in my life.’

“‘Well, what can you do for a living?’ Mr. Dolphin asked.

“‘I only know how to pick cocoanuts,’ young Mr. Ape said, meek as milk.

“‘Cocoanuts don’t grow on the water,’ and now Mr. Dolphin began to shake himself till Tommy thought surely he’d fall off. ‘I can’t for the life of me understand why you wanted to come to sea, when you’re good for nothing except on land.’

“When he said this Mr. Dolphin shook Tommy off into the water, and because there wasn’t any Mrs. Giraffe near-by, he’d been drowned if he hadn’t happened to catch hold of the legs of a bird that was flying close around, and she dragged him ashore.”

“What did you mean by saying there was no Mrs. Giraffe near?” Aunt Amy asked, and Mr. Turtle replied as he tried to scratch his nose with one of his front flippers:

AN ODD LIFE-SAVING CREW.

“That's in a song which Mr. Crow made up, and if you'd like, I'll tell you how it goes.”



Saving the Monkey.

Then, without delay, Mr. Turtle repeated the following verses :

A wise and sagacious old monk
Fell into the water kerplunk,

But monks cannot swim, and alas for poor him,
He cried out for help as he sunk.

A crocodile nipped at his nose,
Another one nipped at his toes—
A giraff' who was strong, with a neck that was long,
Came up, and now what do you s'pose?

He jerked out the monkey so quick,
So nice and so proper and slick;
Then with a gay laugh, said this kindly giraff':
"I am one of the life-saving click."

The monkeys all gathered around
Their brother who rolled on the ground,
Who cried, "Thanks to you, and your life-saving crew,
I'm a live monk instead of a drowned."

"Perhaps you don't like that?" Mr. Turtle said
as he finished the lines, and your Aunt Amy was
forced to confess that she did not greatly admire
Mr. Crow's poetry.

"Well," Mr. Turtle said thoughtfully, as he
moved a little further up on the log in order to
get the full benefit of the sun's rays, "he may not
be so terribly good at that sort of thing; but he
does know how to tell a story. Now, he's got
one about a grasshopper--Look! Look there!"

Plodding Turtle's Story.

he cried excitedly, and pointing with his flipper to the other side of the pond. "There's Croaky Frog in his nice new hat starting off to meet Mr. Rat, and the two of them will go down to old Mrs. Mouse's, just the same as their grandfathers did before them!"



Mr. Frog out for a Stroll.

Your Aunt Amy had already seen the same frog; but was at a loss to know why he was dressed in such a fashion until Mr. Turtle spoke, and then the words of the nursery jingle came into her mind, of the Frog Who Would a Wooing Go.

Mr. Turtle watched eagerly until his friend disappeared behind a

clump of bulrushes, and then he said with a sigh, as if he envied Mr. Frog the pleasure he would have:

I was going to say, when Croaky came in sight, that Mr. Crow's story about the grasshopper is worth hearing."

“Then suppose you tell it, Mr. Turtle,” your Aunt Amy said, and he began at once.

THE JUMPING GRASSHOPPER.

“Once upon a time a grasshopper who lived in a potato field grew very proud because he had won a jumping match from a cricket, and began to believe he could do something very wonderful, so he went to Mr. Bull Frog and boasted of his skill.

“‘I can jump’ farther and higher than any member of the frog family,’ he said proudly, and when Mr. Frog claimed that it was all a mistake, Mr. Grasshopper dared him to jump a match on the next Saturday afternoon.

“The frog agreed, and during all that week Mr. Grasshopper worked very hard at taking exercise. He would run a mile or two, jump rope, fly over fences, and hop up and down until he was really the greatest jumper that had been seen in the field for many years.

“At last, Saturday afternoon came, and all the neighbors for fifty yards around were gathered to see the sport. Mr. Frog stood up to the mark as

if he expected to do great things, singing all the while :

“ ‘ Watch me jump ! Watch me jump ! Watch me jump ! ’

“ Then he sucked in his breath, and leaped six feet or more.

“ ‘ That's only tadpole's play for me, ’ Mr. Grasshopper said scornfully. ‘ I told you that I was the greatest jumper on earth, and I want all the frogs and grasshoppers here to see me prove it. After this I intend to go with the circus, and surprise people. ’

“ Then, instead of looking around to see where he might be going, he threw out his legs in one grand leap, and would certainly have won the match, if he hadn't jumped right down the throat of Mr. Turkey Gobbler, who was watching the sport.”

“ Do you live near here, Mr. Turtle ? ” your Aunt Amy asked, when the old fellow was at the end of his story.

“ Well, I've been staying around this pond quite a long while, and shan't probably leave until we have a very dry spell, for it is only at such times that we Turtles make a change.”

“ Where is your home ? ” and your Aunt Amy

was really curious to know something about the habits of turtles.

“I don't have any one particular place, as those foolish squirrels and rabbits do. I just hang around wherever it is the most pleasant, and when



Mr. Grasshopper Jumped Down Mr. Gobbler's Throat.

winter comes it doesn't make any great difference whether I burrow into the mud on this side of the pond, or the other. Now for example, I spent the cold season last year at the upper end of the pond,

where I got acquainted with some of the nicest fishes I have met for many years.

THE GREEDY FISH.

“And that reminds me of something which you ought to hear, if for no other reason than because it teaches one how unwise, to say the least, it is to be greedy. There was a family of chubs, the nicest fishes you ever saw, who had adopted a poor little orphan perch, and were doing their best to bring him up in the way a fish should go; but it seemed as if he thought of nothing but his stomach. Croaky Frog used to say that he had seen young Perch going around with a plate held



Greedy Mr. Perch.

on his tail, so that he would be ready for dinner if any food happened to come his way.

“Of course I don't claim that is true, for Mr. Frog often says things in sport that sound much like wrong stories; but little Perch really was wickedly greedy. Mrs. Chub often told him that he would regret giving way in such a degree



The sad fate of Sonny Perch. Page 21.

Plodding Turtle

to his appetite ; but he always said that he didn't care what happened so that he could eat all he wanted, though I feel sure he changed his mind at the last.

“One day Mr. Man's boy let down into the water a big, fat worm, and the end of a hook could be seen sticking out through it as plain as the nose on your face.

“ ‘Don't go near that, Sonny Perch,’ Mrs. Chub whispered as she swam around to make sure it was only a bait to catch foolish fish ; but young Perch didn't pay any attention to what she said. He believed he knew as much as his elders, and said as he darted toward the worm :

“ ‘These old people always think they know everything, and I'll show them that they are way behind the times.’

“Then he swallowed the worm, and the next thing we knew Mr. Man's boy pulled him up out of our sight.

“If he had listened to Mrs. Chub he might yet be in this pond,” your Aunt Amy said, and Mr. Turtle added, shaking his head sadly :

“The trouble is that young people won't listen to those who have lived a long while in this world, and should know best about everything ; and,

again, there are those old enough to understand better, who make quite as big fools of themselves, the same as Mr. Crane did when he believed he was a stork."

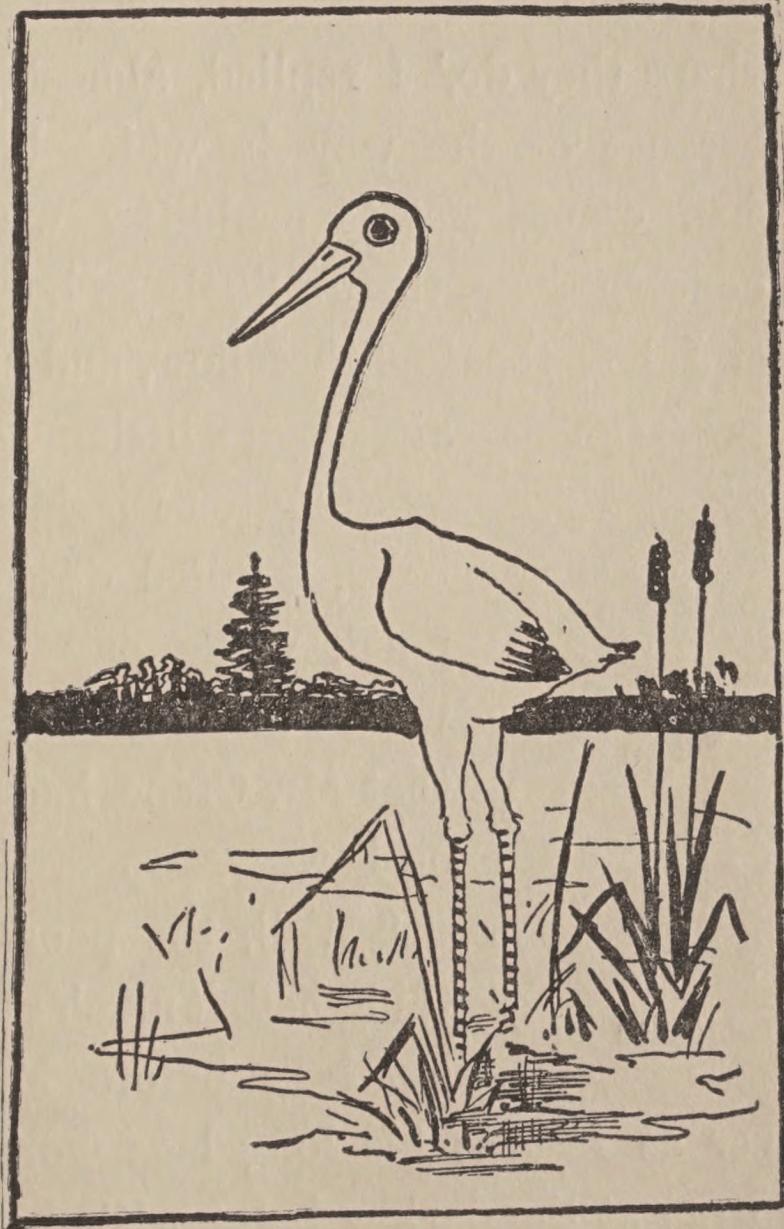
WHEN MR. CRANE THOUGHT HE WAS A STORK.

"What is the story, Mr. Turtle?" your Aunt Amy asked, and the old fellow scratched his nose against the log as if to bring the matter to mind more clearly, after which he began :

"It happened right here in this pond not so many years ago. There was a crane who lived over on the other bank, and because his bill was a few inches longer than some of his friends could boast of, he got the idea that he must be a stork, and from that moment the foolish fellow refused to have anything to do with the rest of the family ; but waded around alone, with his head held high.

"Now he knew that it is the business of the storks to carry babies from one place to another, and, except when hunting for food, he stood on the bank watching for a baby, so that he could take it over to Mr. Man who lives on the farm yonder.

“More than once I talked with Mr. Crane, trying to show him why he wasn't a stork, and telling him he'd get into trouble if he tried to change the babies of the neighborhood from one house to another; but he wouldn't even listen to me.



Foolish Mr. Crane.

“ ‘ I know I'm a stork, else my bill wouldn't be the longest in the family, and if I am a stork, of

course I know all about babies,' he said whenever I tried to persuade him that he was acting foolishly. 'Because you're so old, you think you know everything, Mr. Turtle; but I'll show the people around this pond that storks do the right thing every time.'

" 'Perhaps they do,' I replied, almost growing angry because of the way in which he spoke; 'but when cranes get to meddling with what doesn't concern them, there's likely to be trouble.'

"Then I left the foolish fellow, and that very afternoon little Martha Washington Black, a colored baby, toddled down to the pond, while any one who wasn't blind could have seen that Mr. Crane had his eye on her.



Martha Washington Black.

"Well, the poor little thing hadn't much more than got here before Mr. Crane came over as fast as his long legs would carry him, and ran at the darkey baby with his mouth wide open, intending to carry her right over to Mr. Man's. Of course Martha Washington was frightened, and, oh me, oh my, how she did

scream! I never knew before that anything of her size could make so much noise!

“Of course Mr. Crane didn't know how to take up babies properly, and while he was fooling around, trying to get her into his mouth, Mrs. Black came with a big stick. She struck the foolish Crane one blow across his long neck, and broke it short off, which put an end to his trying to be a stork, for he died, the same as anybody would who had a broken neck. You may be sure that the rest of the cranes around here won't try to change babies for other folks.”

“Have I not heard, Mr. Turtle, that Mr. Eagle once carried you high up in the air?” your Aunt Amy asked.

WHEN MR. TURTLE SAW THE WORLD.

“Well, he did it, whether you've heard about it or not,” Mr. Turtle replied with what was very like a laugh. “Some people think I was frightened, and perhaps I was; but there's no real need of speaking about that part of it.

“You see it was Mr. Eagle who made the mistake, and since I came out of the scrape with a whole shell, it seems to me that the joke was on

him. The truth is that I was sunning myself on this very log, and Mr. Croaky Frog sat beside me telling what fun he and Mr. Rat had down at old Mrs. Mouse's, when Mr. Eagle spied us.

“He was hungry, and thought a fat frog would do him a world of good, so down he swooped. I had just drawn my head into my shell, and didn't see him coming; but Mr. Frog was wide awake, and, without giving me the least little bit of a warning, he slipped into the water so softly and quickly that Mr. Eagle neither saw nor heard him.

“Down he came, thinking I was the frog, picked me up in his big claws, and not until we were high in the air did he discover his mistake.

“‘Hello, Plodding Turtle, what are you doing here?’ he asked in surprise, and I, never letting on about being frightened, replied:

“‘Just off on an excursion; but I forgot to get my ticket before we started.’

“‘Where is Croaky Frog?’ Mr. Eagle asked.

“Down there under his lily pad, I guess,’ was what I said, and the words were hardly out of my mouth before Mr. Eagle, mad as the maddest hatter that ever lived, let me drop, saying as he did so:

“‘You have no right up here, deceiving us Eagles.’”



Plodding Turtle off on an excursion. Page 26.

Plodding Turtle

"I might have said something sharp in reply if there had been any time; but just then I was wondering how much it would hurt me when I struck the ground.

"Of course I pulled in my legs and head, and the next thing I knew I was in the pond, way down at the bottom. I'd had the good fortune to fall in the water, and no great harm was done, except that I had to swim a long distance before getting back to this place. I'm hoping Mr. Eagle was very hungry that day."

"That was a very narrow escape from death," your Aunt Amy said, and Mr. Turtle replied with a sigh:

"Indeed it was. The shock to my nerves was so great that I didn't really feel like myself for a week. Mr. Crow was very kind during that time. He did everything he could to cheer me, and sat up in that tree hours at a time telling stories and repeating poetry. Here is what he wrote about a party he was invited to during his travels:

A PINK TEA IN THE JUNGLE.

They are seated at the table,
 All the creatures of the show;
 For the monkey gave a banquet
 To the animals, you know.

Plodding Turtle's Story.

The elephant has tartlets,
 He is stowing them away ;
 They're garnished with red cabbages,
 And stuffed with clover hay.



The Monkey's Party.

The lion is delighted
 With a joint that's very sweet ;
 "Thanks!" he says to Mr. Monkey—
 "Just a little more of meat."

The leopard's gaily flirting
 With the camel on the sly,

While the monkey's sweetly smiling
As he passes berry pie.

It's a very funny banquet
Mister Monkey gave, you know,
To the animals who gathered
In the tented-sawdust show.

“I have heard of Mr. Crow's poetry very often, and think that some of it is very silly,” your Aunt Amy said when Mr. Turtle had finished reciting the verses, and he said thoughtfully :

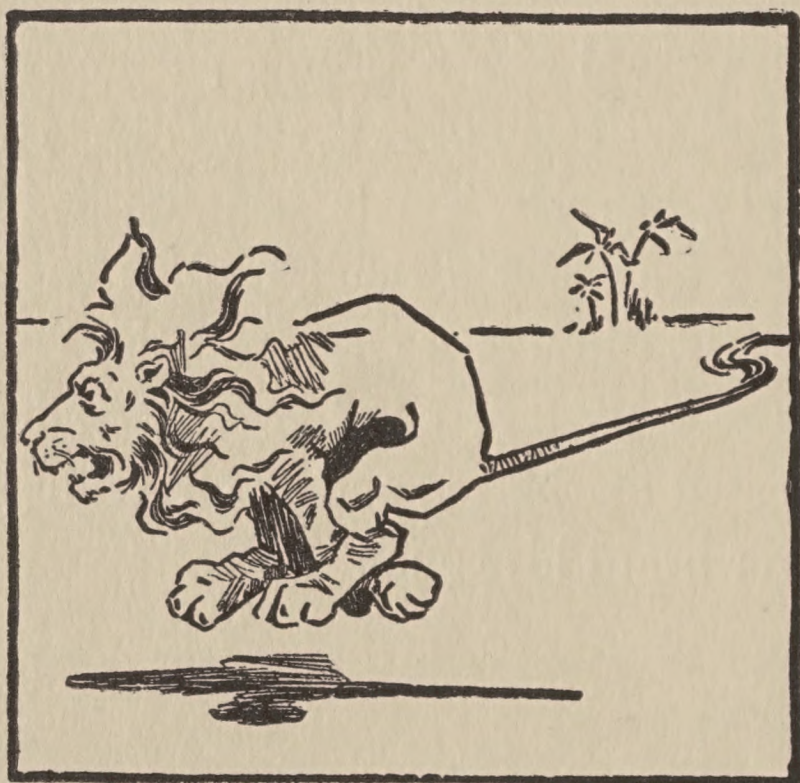
“I really suppose there are others who can write as good poetry ; but I have never heard any that pleased me better, and as for telling stories, I've never heard his equal.

THE DISCONTENTED LION.

“While I was so feeble, owing to the shock of of being dropped by the eagle, Mr. Crow told me about a lion he knew, who belonged to a circus, and was kept in a cage which wasn't more than half as big as it should have been in order to give him a chance to turn around. One day he said to himself :

Blodding Turtle's Story.

“ ‘Here I am caged up with only half enough to eat, and a lot of strangers staring at me, while Mr. Man who owns the circus is making all the money and doing just as he pleases. I'm tired of it, and intend to escape at the very first opportunity. I'll find a partner, and go into business for myself.’



Old Mr. Lion Running Away.

“ So one morning when Mr. Man opened the door to feed Mr. Lion, the old fellow gave one spring, knocked over everybody who stood near, and did not stop running until he was far out in the country, tired, thirsty and hungry.

“ The next morning he started out to look for partners, but no sooner did any of the other ani-

mals see him than they ran away, fearing he wanted to eat them, and of course he didn't get a chance to tell about his wonderful plans.

"I have been told by those who claim to know, for it is hard word to coax Mr. Lion into telling anything about his excursion, that he didn't get a bite to eat for three days, and then, when he went toward a farm-house intending to ask the farmer's wife for any kind of food she could spare, the farmer and his sons came out with guns to shoot him.

"He couldn't do anything but run away again, and he thought he was very lucky in coming upon the circus-tent just when he was so tired, that it seemed as if he couldn't take another step. He was glad enough to promise Mr. Man he would stay right there all the time, with never another thought of going into business for himself, and since then he has acted as if he was the most contented lion in the world.

"Mr. Crow thinks the story should teach us that one trouble is never so great but that we may find another greater, unless we have a pretty good idea of where we are going before starting off to better ourselves. It was at that same circus Mr. Little Jumbo Elephant gave the clown a lesson he

needed, and I'd like to tell the story, if you've got time to hear it."

THE CLOWN'S LESSON.

Of course your Aunt Amy told him that she would be pleased to hear any story he had to tell, and Mr. Turtle began:

"You must know that Mr. Little Jumbo shows himself at the circus in company with the clown, and one day when the two had finished their act, the clown said, as if he believed he was the only performer worth looking at:

"'Didn't I do well to-day?'

"'Perhaps you mean, didn't *we* do well,' Mr. Little Jumbo said just a bit sharply.

"'Well, I like that!' the clown cried with a laugh. 'How did you get the idea into your thick head that the people pay any particular attention to what *you* do? *I* was the one who taught you the tricks, and if I don't keep prodding you with this iron hook to show you which way to turn, you never know what to do.'

"Now of course it was very rude for the clown to speak in such a way to an animal like Mr. Elephant," old Mr. Turtle said in a tone of dis-

pleasure; "but Mr. Little Jumbo wasn't so ill-bred as to quarrel, therefore he remained silent, and nothing was said regarding the matter until it was time for the next day's performance to begin. Then, when the two were ready to go into the ring, the clown said to Mr. Hippo:

"'Now keep your eye on me, and you'll see something fine!'

"'Keep your eye on *us*, Hippy dear,' Mr. Little Jumbo whispered as he marched into the ring behind the clown.

"The big fellow did all his tricks in fine style, paying no attention to the airs and graces of the clown, until the time came for the last part of the performance, when Mr. Little Jumbo stood with his front feet on a tub while the clown ran out on Mr. Elephant's trunk, and stayed there a minute or two bowing to the people.

"'Ladies and gentlemen,' the clown began. 'This is my greatest act——'

"'Say *our* greatest act,' Mr. Little Jumbo whispered.

"'This is *my* greatest——' the clown said sharply, believing he could do as he pleased with Mr. Elephant.

"He didn't have time to finish what he was

saying, for just then Mr. Little Jumbo lowered his trunk quickly, and Mr. Clown fell sprawling on his back in the sawdust, while the people laughed and clapped their hands at the sport.



When Pride Had a Fall.

“Will you remember to say *we* after this?” Mr. Elephant whispered, and the clown was glad to promise. Then the big fellow helped him up on his trunk again, and the two went out of the ring good friends. From that time Mr. Clown

never tried to take all the credit of the performance to himself.

“Yes,” Mr. Turtle said in reply to a remark by your Aunt Amy, “we have no right to take all the credit to ourselves when another shares in the labor, and we ought always listen to others who are wiser. Take the case of Mr. Crow's wife, who might have been alive now, if she had been taught some such lesson in time.”

HOW MRS. CROW STRANGLED HERSELF.

“What happened to Mrs. Crow, Mr. Turtle?” your Aunt Amy asked, and the old fellow turned around that the other side of his shell might be warmed by the sun, as he said:

“All this happened a long time ago, when Mr. Crow was young, and his wife hadn't seen very much of the world. It seems that the Crows went to the seashore to spend a few days during the hot weather, and while there amused themselves much as other people do who go to such a place. Mr. Crow tried to show his wife everything which was strange or new to her, and took her everywhere, no matter how much it cost.

“One day when they were down on the rocks, he pointed out to her a mussel and a star-fish, which had come out from the sea to sun themselves, and she pounced upon the mussel before he had time to explain to her what it really was.

“‘Wait a moment, my dear,’ he said sweetly. ‘That creature lives in a shell, and not until his house has been broken open can he be eaten.’

“‘You surely wouldn’t think of spending your time breaking what I know is very good to eat just as it is,’ Mrs. Crow said, as she picked up the mussel with her beak.

“‘Don’t try to swallow it, my dear!’ Mr. Crow cried as his wife twisted and squirmed to get the big shell into her mouth. ‘He is much too large for your delicate throat, and I’ll break the shell if you will wait a moment.’

“Just then Mrs. Crow got the mussel into her mouth, and, without giving any heed to Mr. Crow’s words, she turned and tossed the shell until the pointed end was inside her beak. Then, while her husband scolded and coaxed, she struggled until the thing was stuck firmly in her throat.

“‘Cough!’ Mr. Crow cried. ‘Cough, and you may be able to throw it out!’

“But Mrs. Crow’s beak was held open so wide



Mrs. Crow trying to swallow the mussel. Page 36.

Plodding Turtle

by the mussel that she couldn't do the least little thing toward helping herself, and before Mr. Crow had time to get a doctor she was strangled to death, all of which needn't have happened if she had stopped to listen to one who was wiser than herself."

Your Aunt Amy failed to see how the sad fate of Mrs. Crow was in any way like the experience of Mr. Clown with Mr. Elephant; but Mr. Turtle seemed to be so sure the two stories taught the same lesson, that she remained silent, and after a few moments the old fellow said suddenly, as if he had just awakened :

HUNTING FOR OIL.

"Speaking of Mr. Crow reminds me that he has just made up some new verses, and all the animals around here think they are very funny. You don't seem to have much of anything to do, and I'm going to repeat them."

One morning in the jungle,
 Young Amos Quito bold,
 Was out prospecting early,
 In search of oil or gold.

Plodding Turtle's Story.

He saw a hill and liked it,
 And said, "The ground looks cheap;"
 Then called for his assistants
 To sink an oil well deep.

They bored and tugged for hours,
 But could not move the soil;
 They could not understand it—
 The surface looked like oil.



The "Oil Well" shows Itself.

Young Amos broke his stinger,
 His foreman broke his, too,
 But could not pierce the surface;
 Now, what else could they do?

They walked around, surveying,
Said Amos, " Say, we might
Blow up the claim entirely
With sticks of dynamite."

" What's that ? " said a Rhinoceros ;
" What will you try to blow ?
My back is not an oil well,
I'll have you all to know."

Up got old Rhiny, grunting,
And shook his mighty frame.
Off flew the young prospectors,
Without their great oil claim.

" What kind of a lesson does that teach, Mr. Turtle ? " your Aunt Amy asked with a smile, and the old fellow replied as if half ashamed :

" I haven't claimed that all of Mr. Crow's poetry has in it a lesson, for, as he himself says, a good deal is only nonsense jingle ; but here's a story to show that it isn't well to get the idea that a fellow is of too much importance in this world :

THE PIG WHO WAS PROUD OF HIMSELF.

" Once upon a time Mr. Clown taught Mr. Pig very many funny tricks, and went with a circus to

show him off; but the people praised Mr. Pig so much that he began to think he ought to have all the credit for the performance. Then, because everybody didn't say that the tricks would show off better if Mr. Clown wasn't in the ring at all, Mr. Pig got real sulky.

“‘I want you to give me a year's vacation,’ he said, speaking very impolitely.

“‘What for?’ Mr. Clown asked in surprise.

“‘So that I can go back to Pigtown and tell my cousins and friends what a great fellow I am,’ Mr. Pig replied pertly.

“Then the clown said with a laugh:

“‘That's not reason enough; I can't give you a vacation on that account.’

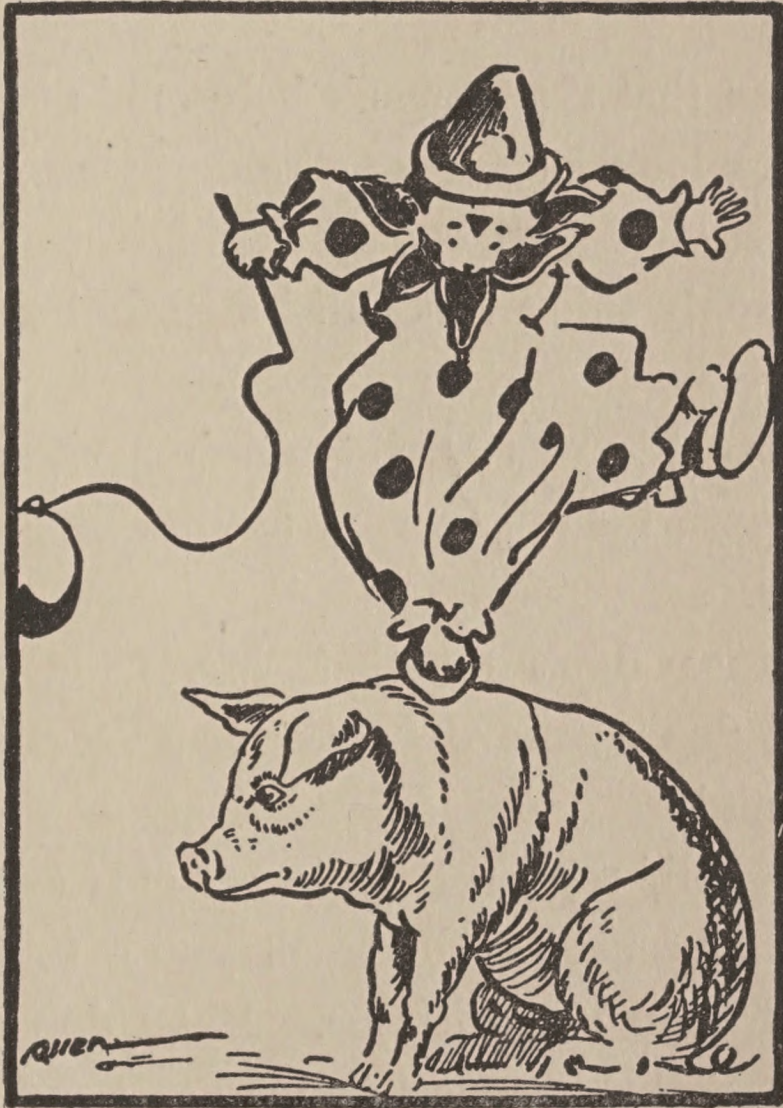
“‘Then I won't do any more tricks for you,’ Mr. Pig said, and he curled his tail as if to show that he could get along very well, even if Mr. Clown went away from the circus.

“‘All right,’ and Mr. Clown laughed as if the thought of Mr. Pig's going away didn't make him feel very badly. ‘After you have gone I shall get another pig, and teach him the tricks.’

“‘That'll be great,’ and Mr. Pig laughed till the tears rolled down his fat cheeks. ‘While you are teaching him the tricks I will be having the vaca-

tion I want, and can go straight away to my cousin's.

“ ‘Yes,’ the clown said with a grin, ‘you’ll have the vacation, and it will be longer than you now fancy. I shall never ask you to do any more of



“ This will be the last time.”

your funny tricks. You will never have to work again.’

“ ‘Why?’ Mr. Pig asked in surprise, beginning to think that perhaps there was more to the vaca-

tion business than he had realized. 'Won't you ever want to stand on my back again?'

"'This will be the last time,' Mr. Clown said as he leaped nimbly up on Piggy's shoulders.

"'What do you mean?' Mr. Pig asked in alarm.

"'I mean that if you won't help me in the ring, you will no longer be of any value to me, and of no more service than one of the ignorant pigs. Then the only thing left will be to kill and eat you.'

"Poor Mr. Pig was terribly frightened, and he trembled until his tail twirled around like a spinning-wheel.

"'O please don't do that, Mr. Clown!' he cried. 'I don't believe I care for a vacation, indeed I don't!'

"'Very well,' replied the Clown. 'If you have come to your senses I will teach you a few more tricks, and keep you with me. But I don't want you to forget this lesson. As long as you have a good home, and are treated right, be contented with what you have, and don't think of going off to show your friends what a wonder you are.'

"Do you know how Mr. Pig behaved after that?" your Aunt Amy asked.

“Mr. Crow says he has been just as good as sweet-apple pie,” Mr. Turtle said with a laugh.

Then it was that your Aunt Amy remembered a remark which Mr. Turtle had made earlier in the afternoon, and she asked :

“What did you mean when you spoke of Mr. Ape's making a pair of trousers for Mr. Lion?”

WHEN MR. APE WAS A TAILOR.

“Why, the last business that Mr. Thomas Ape ever tried was being a tailor, and of course this happened after he ran away to sea, because Mr. Lion ate him a little while after the trousers were made.

“He had a shop under a palm tree, and so many animals bought clothes of him that he began to think he was the only person in the world who knew how to carry on such a business. One day he made a pair of blue trousers for Mr. Lion, and they didn't seem to be just the kind a king should wear, because they were large enough for two lions.

“The king was very angry when he tried them on, so he went to Mr. Ape, and said with a terrible roar :

Blodding Turtle's Story.

“‘You’re the worst tailor I ever had! Just look at these trousers you made me last week! I wore them down here to-day to show you how miserably they don’t fit. Why, they are big enough around the waist to put another fellow in just my size. Do you expect me to look like a king in such things as these?’

“Mr. Ape didn’t even get up when he answered the king; but said careless-like, as if he knew more about trousers than any lion who ever lived:

“‘Oh, that’s all right. You see I know what a great appetite you’ve got, and so I made them large enough to fit after you’d had dinner.’

“The king thought the matter over a moment, and it seemed as if he believed the explanation was a good one, for he finally said with a laugh:

“‘You’re a clever tailor; I never looked at the matter in that light before, and I believe there’s considerably more to it than you have stated.’

“Then off he walked, and Mr. Ape chuckled until it looked as if he was going to have a fit, as he said to little Miss Squeaky Mouse:

“‘Of course that was a big lie I told the king; but some folks are so simple that all you have to do is to fool them a little, in order to have everything go along as slick as grease.’

“Then he began to sing, “Under the Bamboo Tree,” as he stitched up another pair of trousers that probably wouldn't fit any better than those he had sent the king.



The King Thought the Matter Over.

“Five minutes later the king came back looking wondrous wise, and after winking at Miss Mouse, he said to the tailor :

“ ‘ Look here, according to your story you made these trousers too large in order to give room for my dinner. It has just come into my mind that in such case you ought to furnish the dinner, that I may see if they really fit after I have eaten a good meal.’

“Then, without waiting for any discussion, he ate up Mr. Ape, and it was seen that the trousers didn't fit much better than before ; but the tailor had got his pay for telling a lie, which, some people think, was exactly what he deserved.”

Mr. Turtle looked up at your Aunt Amy, much as if to say he thought the story he had just told was a very good one, and after saying that she liked it better than some of the poetry he had repeated, she asked him how old he was.

“Dear me, I can't tell you that because I don't know,” he replied thoughtfully. “My family live a long while, and we never try to keep a record of our ages. I might be more than an hundred years old for all I can tell; but I wouldn't dare to say. At any rate, I was alive when the snake made love to the crab.”

WHEN THE SNAKE TRIED TO CHARM THE CRAB.

“When was that, Mr. Turtle?” your Aunt Amy asked in surprise, for she had never heard of any such thing.

“I can't say when it was,” Mr. Turtle replied as he scratched his nose thoughtfully; “but it

must have been a long while before Mr. Crow's great-grandfather tried to learn how to swim. Of course I'll tell you about it, if you haven't got tired of hearing me talk ; but, not knowing exactly when it happened, I shall have to make it a 'once upon a time' story.

“ Well, Mr. Snake went down to the seashore one summer for his health ; but when he got there it was hard work to get all he wanted to eat, for he was camping out, instead of going to a regular boarding-house. One day he was so very, very hungry that he began to think he'd be forced to swallow some of the rocks, in order to fill his stomach, when he came upon a crab who was sleeping in the sun.

“ Mr. Snake he crept up softly, thinking he would swallow her shell and all ; but after trying two or three times, he found that she was too wide for his mouth, and there was nothing to do but wait till she wakened. You see he thought crabs were like oysters or clams, and that she could open her shell as they did, when he would have a chance to get a mouthful of meat.

“ After a time Miss Crab opened her eyes, and Mr. Snake wriggled around as if he was so much surprised that he couldn't keep still.

Blodding Turtle's Story.

“ ‘What a beautiful creature you are, to be sure!’ he said, darting his long tongue in and out to show her how slender it was.

“ ‘I wish I could say as much for you,’ she replied; ‘but I can’t, for you are altogether too long.’

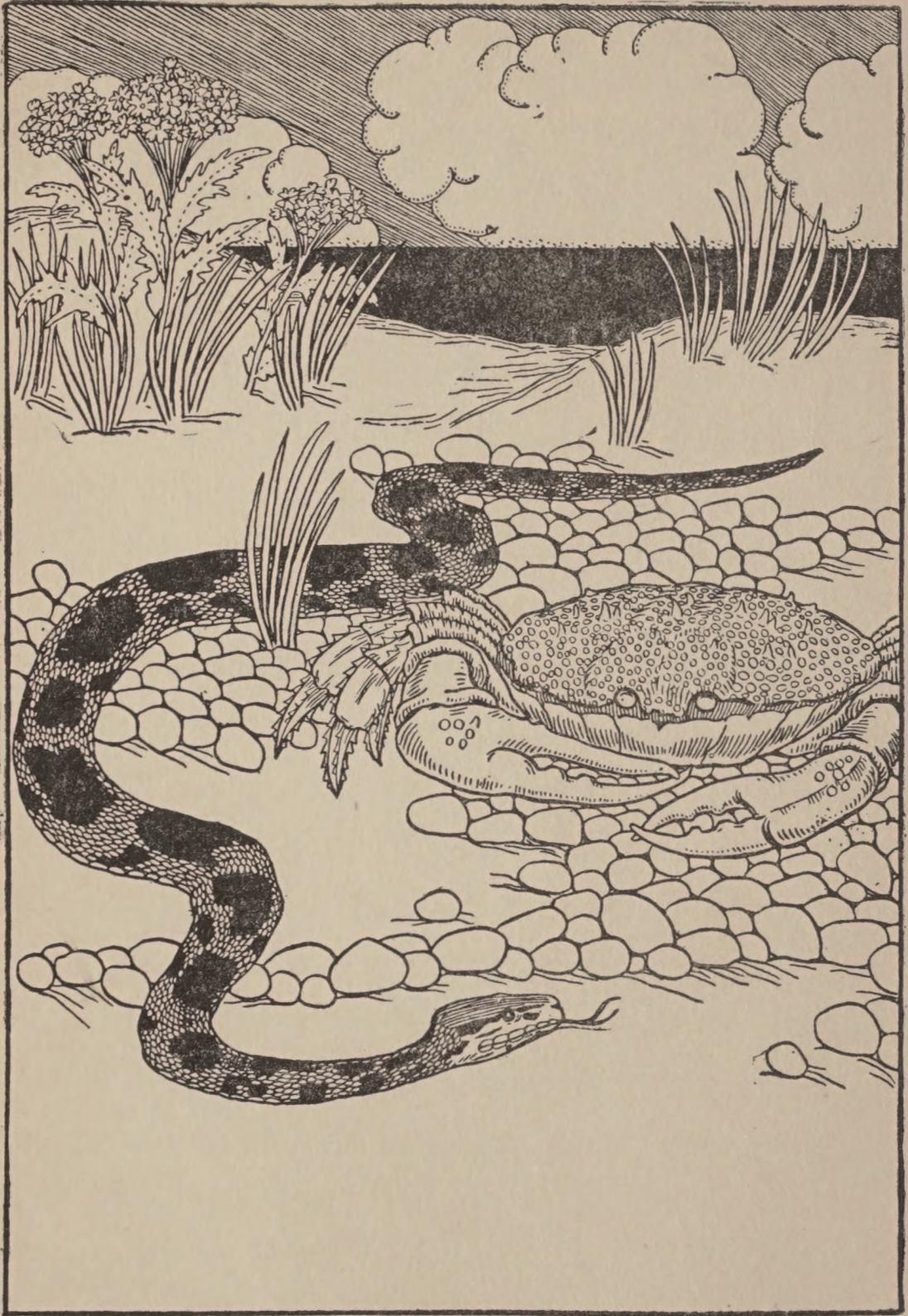
“ ‘But I can coil myself into a very small space,’ Mr. Snake said as he twisted himself into all sorts of shapes; yet he kept his head very near Miss Crab so that he might swallow her the moment she opened her shell.

“ ‘You look too much like an eel, and I never did like those squirmy creatures, except after they are dead, and then they make quite a good breakfast.’

“ ‘A live snake is much better looking than a dead eel,’ Mr. Snake said as he winked his eye. ‘Suppose you come out of your shell, and take a walk with me on the beach?’

“ ‘Dear me, I couldn’t think of such a thing. What do you do with that long tongue?’ and Miss Crab stretched out her claws as if to feel of it.

“ ‘That is what I use to catch flies with,’ Mr. Snake said as he ran his tongue out at full length, and in a jiffy Miss Crab caught hold of it with both her big claws.



Mr. Snake admires Miss Crab. Page 48.

Plodding Turtle

“ Oh me, oh my, what trouble there was then ! Mr. Snake found that Miss Crab wasn't the innocent little thing he had supposed her to be, and did his best to scurry off, believing he could drag her away without much work ; but she set her claws into the sand and between the rocks, scratching all the while to get into the water, as she said :

“ ‘ If you really think I am so beautiful, why don't you come with me ? ’

“ Of course Mr. Snake couldn't say a word because she had hold of his tongue, and I'm told that they pulled and hauled and scratched for nearly a day ; but never once did Miss Crab let go her hold. Then, when Mr. Snake was so tired he couldn't twist his tail, she began to eat him, and Mr. Lobster told me that next morning Miss Crab invited him to a breakfast of fresh snake cutlets.

“ Thinking of Mr. Lobster and Miss Crab eating the snake who had believed he could charm anybody he met, reminds me of a picture Mr. Ape made, and Mr. Crow wrote verses to it. If you'll wait a moment I will get it.”

Plodding Turtle's Story.

A PICNIC PARTY.

Then Mr. Turtle's head disappeared within his shell for a moment, and when he poked it out again he held in his mouth a small sheet of paper,



The Lion and the Lamb at Tea.

on which had been written, with Mr. Crow's quill, the following lines, and the picture was beneath them :

One day the monk his camera
Into the jungle took,

To get some photographs to paste
Within his picture-book.

He took the lion and the lamb
Together at their tea,
Both eating from a pot of jam,
As here you plainly see.

He took the elephant who played
The part of circus clown,
There standing in the jungle shade
On his head upside down.

He took the snake who juggled plates
Upon his tail, you know ;
He took some other funny things
We haven't room to show.

“Of course you know Mr. Ape didn't expect any one would really believe he saw anything of the kind ; but he drew it for a funny picture, and the part about the elephant and snake, Mr. Crow made up in his own head, so as to have it seem like a real picnic. Perhaps you don't like it ?”

Your Aunt Amy was forced to confess that she did not think such things were as interesting as his stories, and the old fellow said quickly :

“Of course what might please us who live here near the pond wouldn't seem funny to you ; but I

believe you'd like to hear about Grandfather Bear and little Bruin.

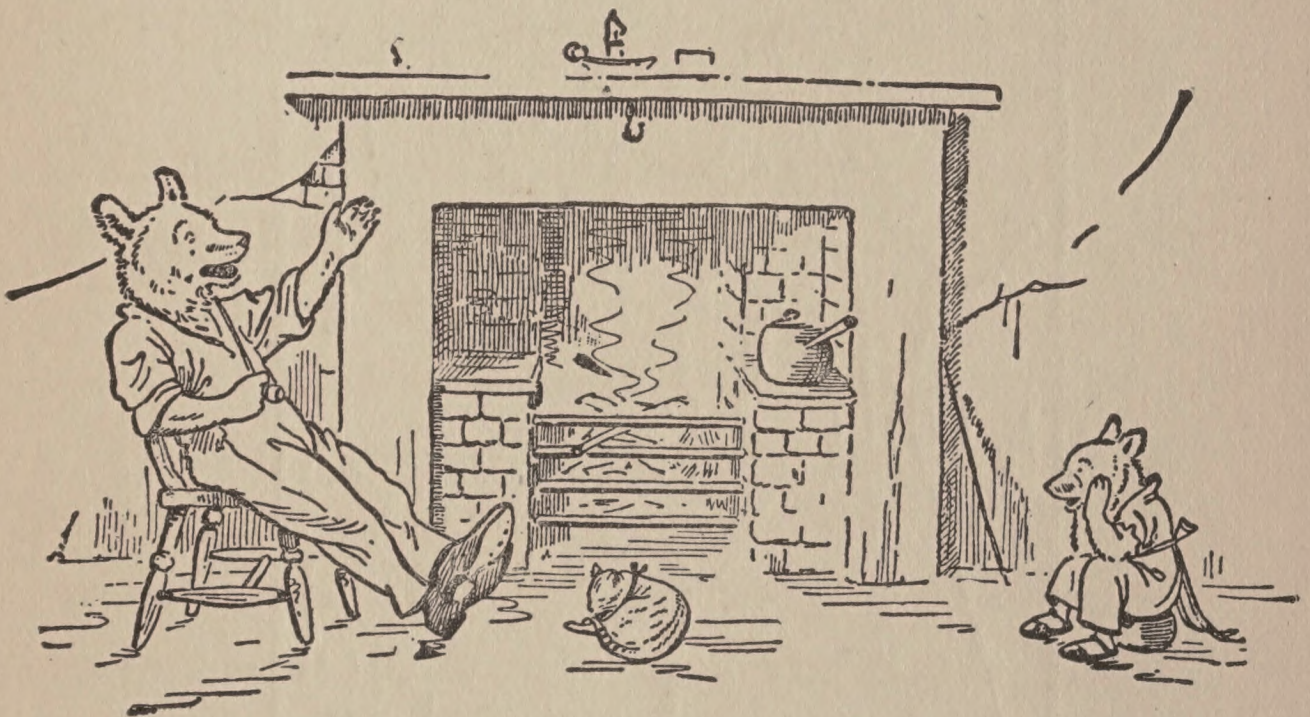
WHEN LITTLE BRUIN WENT HONEY- HUNTING.

“Would you really? Well, I'll tell you all about it, and promise not to repeat any more of Mr. Crow's poetry.

“Once upon a time Little Bruin's grandfather agreed with him that if he was a good bear, and kept his paws clean for a week, he should go with him to gather honey, and if he then worked well, he might have a full jar for his very own.

“Little Bruin at once set about being good, and was so very, very good that his mother came near being afraid that such an unusual fit of goodness might make him sick. He sucked his paws more than half the time, until they were as clean as clean could be, and wouldn't step in the dust for fear of soiling them. Evenings he sat in front of the fire with grandpa, and never once asked to go out with the other bears. Therefore when Saturday afternoon came around, his grandfather told him he had fairly earned the right to go honey-hunting.

“Then off the two started, Grandpa Bear carrying a basket, and Little Bruin with a jar, to find the honey which the bees had put away in a hollow tree. In a short time they came across what they wanted, and then, because Little Bruin had done his full share of the work, the basket and jar were overflowing with what the bees had gathered.



Listening to Grandpa's Stories.

“Of course Grandpa Bear gave Bruin the jar of honey as he had promised, and the little fellow was very happy indeed. Trudging along toward Bearville, he hugged the precious jar to his tiny stomach, and thought of what he would do with all that quantity of sticky sweetness.

Plodding Turtle's Story.

“ ‘ I’ll give some of it to Tiny, and some to Jim, and some to Sweetpaw, and some to mother,’ he said as he peeped into the jar.



Grandpa and Little Bruin.

“ The honey looked so tempting that he lapped just a little, and then smacked his lips, so delicious did it taste.

“ ‘My ! but that was good !’ he said in delight. ‘I guess I’d better sell half of it, and buy some snapping crackers for the Fourth of July.’

“ Then he took another taste, and another, till the thought came that the Fourth of July was so far away there was no real need of making ready for it nearly a year before it came.

“ ‘My ! but I’ve eaten a good deal already. I ought to save the rest for the fair at the Orphan Bears’ Home next week, and if I’m going to do that there can’t be any harm in tasting a little more.’

“ Then his tongue found its way into the jar again, and some more honey went down his throat.

“ When they came to the mile-post near home, his grandpa said :

“ ‘Bruin, you had better let me carry that jar ; you seem to be losing the honey out of it.’

“ ‘Oh, no, Grandpa,’ Little Bruin said eagerly. ‘I can carry it, for we’ve only got one mile more to walk. I’m afraid I haven’t enough left to send to the Orphans’ Fair, so I’ll give some to the lame bear next door, and Tiny and Jim and Sweetpaw shall have the rest.’

“ But somehow, even after he had made this promise to himself, his tongue found its way into

the jar again, and when they got home not a drop of honey was left of all he had taken from the bees.

“‘Dear, dear, but I wish I had that honey again,’ he said, as he scraped the inside of the jar with his paw.

“‘You’ve got it all, but it’s in the wrong place,’ his grandpa said with a laugh, and grandma added as she washed the little fellow’s sticky paws :

“‘You must remember, Bruin, that you can’t eat your cake and have it afterward.’

“It is said that Little Bruin didn’t understand what she meant till the next day, and since then he has been sucking his paws nearly all the time, so that they may be clean in case he gets another chance to go honey-hunting, when he has made up his mind to share with the orphan bears before making a pig of himself.”

“That is a very good story, Mr. Turtle,” your Aunt Amy said, and the old fellow seemed much pleased with the praise. “Now I would like to hear how it happened that the crow wanted to swim.”

WHEN THE CROW TRIED TO SWIM.

“All I know about it is what Mr. Crow has told from time to time,” Mr. Turtle said thoughtfully. “You see it was his great-grandfather who acted so foolishly, and the family don't speak of it as freely as when they are talking about other birds who have been silly.

“Of course it all happened a long time ago, when the swans thought they owned the whole of this pond, and wouldn't let a duck or a goose so much as put his foot on the shore. Old Mr. Crow spent the greater portion of his time on the big oak, much as our Mr. Crow does; but the swans never went up there to visit him, because they claimed to be way above him in society.

“Old Mr. Crow didn't have an idea that the swans thought he wasn't stylish enough to go around with them; but came to believe they never returned his calls because he couldn't swim, so he went to old Mr. Frog, and asked him if he thought it would be possible for him to take lessons in swimming.

“‘You'll have to wait, as I did, till you get feet that are webbed, and then it will come easy

enough,' Mr. Frog said. 'The time was when I had a tail, but never the sign of a foot; but I waited and waited, living in the water all the while, and at last I grew to be as I am now.'

"'But I should drown in the water,' Mr. Crow said. 'Do you know it often makes me seasick to see the swan family sailing around day after day?'

"'You'll get over that in time,' Mr. Frog said as if he knew all about such things. 'My advice is that you give over roosting on this oak tree, and stay near the water as much as possible; the dampness should bring your feet around all right after a while.'

"Well, old Mr. Crow was so eager to learn how to swim that he hardly gave himself time to get his meals regularly, but perched on a dead branch that hung out over the pond, and watched the swans from morning until night. He grew real thin in body because of not eating enough; but there were no signs of his toes growing together like those of the birds who could swim.

"After a very long time the swans got tired of having him around so much, listening to every word they said, and old Mr. Swan asked whether he had ever tried to swim.

"'I never did,' old Mr. Crow replied. 'I've



Mr. Crow wants to learn how to swim. Page 58.

Plodding Turtle

been told that birds whose feet are not webbed will drown if they get in the water.'

"'You'll never know till you try,' Mr. Swan said as he sailed away to catch a frog who had just hopped up on a lily pad, and Mr. Crow decided to make one big try to do as fashionable people did.

"Down he jumped into the water, with his wings spread out wide, and there he floundered and screamed, but never a stroke could he swim.

"His wings kept him on top of the water for a while ; but his feathers were getting soaked, and he'd have been a dead crow very soon if old Mr. Swan hadn't dragged him up among the bulrushes where, after a time, he contrived to scramble ashore.

"'You have found out that you can't swim,' Mr. Swan said, speaking very sharply, when Mr. Crow came down on the dead branch next day looking rather feeble, 'and my advice is that you strive to be contented in that walk of life which nature intended for you. Don't make a fool of yourself trying to be what you are not ; but make up your mind, as Mr. Elephant and Miss Giraffe did a long while ago, that you are not so badly off after all, even if you can't swim.'

“Since then the whole Crow family have stayed away from the water, and it isn't safe to ask any of them about their feet.”

“What about the elephant and the giraffe, Mr. Turtle?” your Aunt Amy asked. “Do you know that story?”

THE ANIMALS WHO FOUND FAULT WITH THEMSELVES.

“Oh yes indeed; every one knows that. It seems the giraffe and the elephant met on a plain by the side of the river Nile. It was a warm day, and they were both rather out of sorts and inclined to be discontented.

“‘I agree with you,’ Miss Giraffe said angrily. ‘We are both ridiculous. Why we were not made better looking I can't understand. See my neck; it's so long and ugly that I feel ashamed whenever any one looks at me. Why, I can't find a place in all Egypt where I can get a collar to fit me, and even if I should be so fortunate, I couldn't scrape money enough together to pay for having it washed. I don't see why I couldn't have been made right, instead of with a neck like a flag-pole.’

“‘It is only too true,’ Mr. Elephant said sadly. ‘Just see what a fright I am! It’s bad enough to be covered with a hide like leather, all wrinkled and ugly, without having a tail put on my front as well as my rear. What a nuisance it is to have to carry one’s trunk around, even when at home! I can’t understand why we were allowed to be such frights!’



Not Made so Badly After All.

“Just then it was dinner-time, and both were hungry. Miss Giraffe reached gracefully up with her long neck, and took a mouthful of sweet palm-leaves.

“‘Couldn’t have done that without your long neck,’ Mr. Elephant said with a wink, and then he reached down, got a wisp of rich grass, and put it into his little mouth.

“ ‘ Couldn't have done that without your trunk,’ Miss Giraffe said with a smile.

“ ‘ True,’ replied Mr. Elephant as he winked his eye again. ‘ When you come to look us over from all points, I guess you'll find that we weren't made so badly after all.’

“ I reckon we're all made about right, though perhaps some of us haven't found it out,” Mr. Turtle said as he came to an end of his story. “ The Big-Horn sheep is the only one that ever contrived to change himself, and he'd never have done it but for trying to help others.”

“ What do you mean by that, Mr. Turtle ?” your Aunt Amy asked, and without further invitation the old fellow continued his story-telling :

HOW THE ROCKY MOUNTAIN SHEEP GOT HIS BIG HORNS.

“ Once upon a time the little Princess, daughter of the King of the Forest, fell down overcome by the heat in the middle of a sandy plain, where there was not even the smallest bush to give her shade, and her mother cried out to all the animals of the woods to come and help her take care of the child.

“Now it so happened that nobody heard her except a Rocky Mountain Sheep, and until that time he didn't have any horns. He stood by the side of the little girl so that the sun might not fall directly upon her; but his body was so warm and his hair so thick that he did not dare get too near lest he might do more harm than good.

“‘Oh, if you only had long horns, so that I could spread my veil over them and shade her!’ the mother of the little Princess cried.

“Then the sheep stood there patiently and wished for long horns. He wished for them more than he had ever wished for anything, and suddenly a beautiful pair sprouted right out of his forehead, growing and growing until they stretched out over the sleeping girl. Then the mother spread her veil upon them, and thus made her a little tent.

“When the Princess was better, and they went home to the King of the Forest, the poor sheep followed with his head hanging as if he felt very badly.

“‘See,’ he bleated, ‘I cannot get my nose down to the grass; I cannot even get my mouth to the water on account of these long horns which reach under my chin, and I must starve to death.’

“‘Oh, that is easily mended,’ the King of the



When the Big-Horn was in Distress.

Forest said, and with his brown hand he smoothed the poor sheep's horns back as one would a child's hair. From that time the Rocky Mountain sheep has been called the Big-Horn, because of his beautiful backward-sweeping horns, finer than those of any other animal of

his size.”

“That also is a very pretty story, Mr. Turtle,” your Aunt Amy said, and it was as if the praise encouraged him, for he said promptly:

THE PIGS WHO WAITED FOR THE BUTTERMILK.

“I know a good many of that kind, and here is one Mr. Crow believes is best of all, though perhaps you won't think the same way :

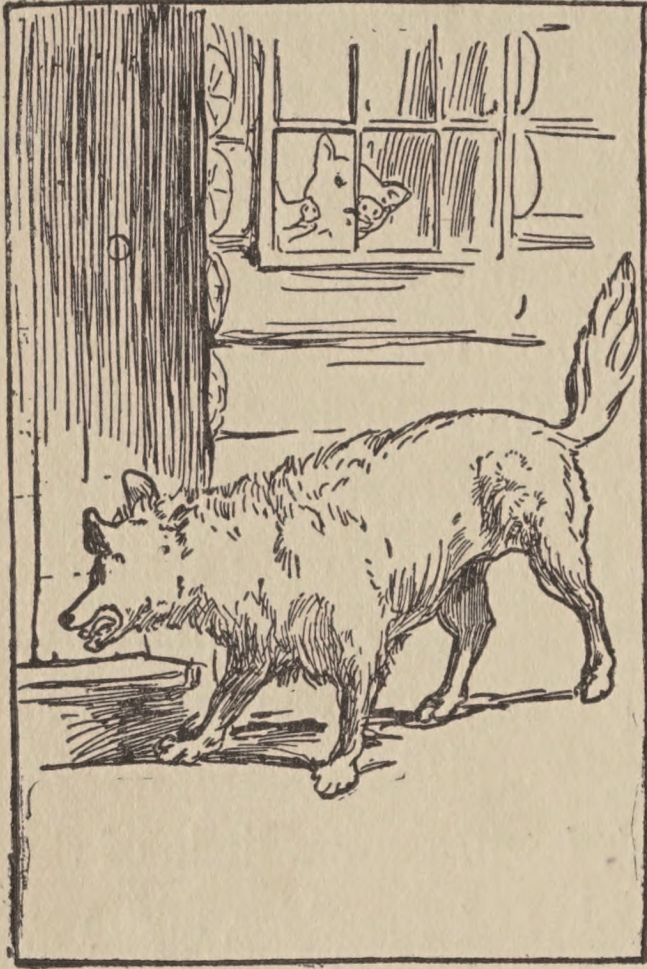
“Once upon a time there was an old pig who had five young ones, and they all lived very happily in a house not far away from here. Every day old Mrs. Pig went to the farmer's to get a jug of buttermilk, and she always told her children to bar the door, and keep it fastened while she was gone.

“ ‘When I come back I will pour a little of the buttermilk under the edge of the door, and you may know me by that,’ she said. ‘Don't open the door for your life's sake, till you see the buttermilk coming under.’

“One day, while the old pig was gone, as usual, Mr. Wolf came to the door and sniffed around trying to get in ; but of course he couldn't because the little pigs kept the door barred as their mother had told them. In a little while he found that it wasn't any use for him to try to break in, and he crept close up to the threshold where he whispered, trying to make his voice sound like old Mrs. Pig's :

Blodding Turtle's Story.

“ ‘ Let me in, children. Be quick and let me in !’



Mr. Wolf Whispering to the Pigs.

“ ‘ Who are you ?’

one of the little pigs asked, and Mr. Wolf whispered so as to make it seem as if Mrs. Pig was talking :

“ ‘ Why, don't you know me, children ? I'm your mother.'

“ ‘ No indeed, you're not our mother. We have a sign that we know our mother by,' the

oldest pig grunted.

“ ‘ Tell me what that sign is, dear, please do,' old Mr. Wolf coaxed.

“ ‘ Indeed we'll not tell you anything of the kind,' the second pig said with a laugh. ‘ You must think we are foolish, to suppose we'd do anything of the kind.'

“ Just then old Mrs. Pig came up with her jug of buttermilk, and Mr. Wolf, who by this time

was very angry because he hadn't been able to get into the house, tried to eat her.

“‘Let me in, children!’ she screamed. ‘Let me in before Mr. Wolf bites my ear off!’”

“‘We want to see the sign first,’ the fourth little pig squealed. ‘We promised not to open the door till we’d seen the sign.’”

“But poor Mrs. Pig couldn’t pour the buttermilk under the door because Mr. Wolf had hold of her ear with his sharp teeth, and nobody knows what might have happened if she had not, while trying to get away from the wicked old fellow, kicked over the jug of buttermilk.

“As it ran under the door the fifth little pig let the bar down, while his mother rolled over and over till she was inside the house safe away from Mr. Wolf’s cruel jaws, and all five of the little fellows fastened the bar in place once more.”

When Mr. Turtle had finished his story he looked up at your Aunt Amy as if to learn what she thought of it, and, seeing that she did not appear very well pleased, he asked:

“Well, what do you think of it?”

“Mr. Wolf was very wicked; but I think the pigs were foolish not to know their mother’s voice when she spoke.”

"They had been told not to open the door until they saw the buttermilk," Mr. Turtle said sharply, "and it was only right they should do as she bade them."

"But when they knew she couldn't pour the buttermilk in because Mr. Wolf had hold of her ear, I don't believe they should have held out for the sign," your Aunt Amy insisted. "It was right and proper they should refuse to do anything of the kind before; but after they had good proof that the poor pig was in the clutches of the wolf, they ought to have done all they could to help her, without waiting for a sign."

"But they had promised," Mr. Turtle repeated angrily, and it is very probable he would have entered into a long argument had it not been that just then he heard, from the other side of the pond, a hoarse voice singing:

"Ker-chug, ker-chune, I've seen you soon!"

Looking up, both Mr. Turtle and your Aunt Amy saw Mr. Frog on the opposite shore, bowing very politely, hat in hand, and Mr. Turtle said hurriedly:

"You'll have to excuse me now. Mr. Frog has come back, as you see, and I must hear his account of what has happened at Mrs. Mouse's this after-

noon. I am sure something went wrong, else he wouldn't have been home so early."

Then Mr. Turtle waddled into the water, and as he swam away your Aunt Amy watched the



Mr. Frog Returns Home.

tiny black ball which she knew to be his head, until the lily pads hid it from view, after which she went home.

THE END.

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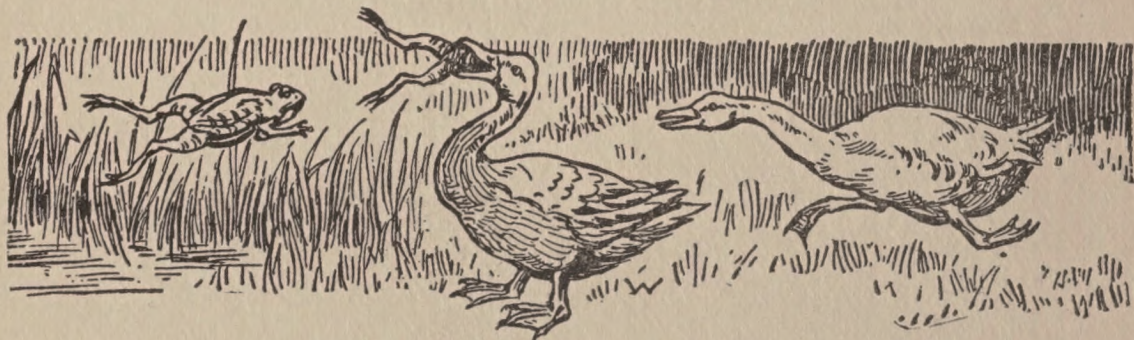
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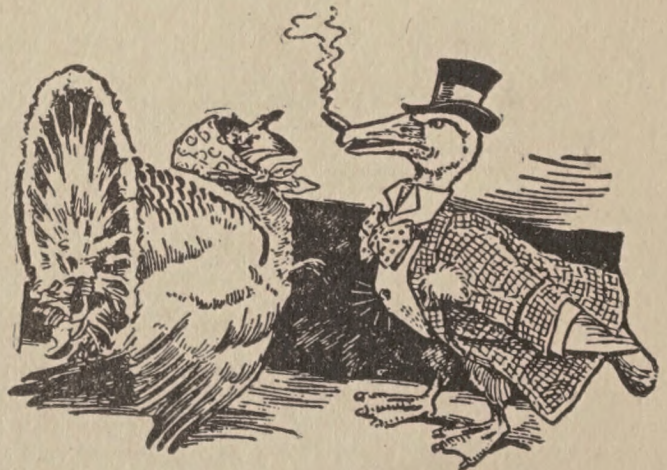
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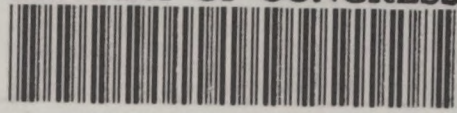
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