AMONG THE FOREST PEOPLE

CLARA D. PIERSON

ILLUSTRATED

F. C. GORDON

AMONG THE FOREST PEOPLE

THE HOME IN THE FOREST. *Frontispiece*

AMONG THE FOREST PEOPLE

BY

CLARA DILLINGHAM PIERSON

AUTHOR OF "AMONG THE MEADOW PEOPLE"

Illustrated by F. C. GORDON

NEW YORK

E. P. DUTTON & COMPANY

31 WEST TWENTY-THIRD STREET

1898

The Knickerbocker Press, New York

TO THE CHILDREN.

Dear Little Friends :

Since I told my stories of the meadow people a year ago, so many children have been asking me questions about them that I thought it might be well to send you a letter with these tales of the forest folk.

I have been asked if I am acquainted with the little creatures about whom I tell you, and I want you to know that I am very well acquainted indeed. Perhaps the Ground Hog is my oldest friend among the forest people, just as the Tree Frog is among those of the meadow. Some of the things about which I shall tell you, I have seen for myself, and the other stories have come to me in another

way. I was there when the swaggering Crow drove the Hens off the barnyard fence, and I was quite as much worried about the Mourning Doves' nest as were Mrs. Goldfinch and Mrs. Oriole.

I have had a letter from one little boy who wants to know if the meadow people really talk to each other. Of course they do. And so do all the people in these stories. They do not talk in the same way as you and I, but they have their own language, which they understand just as well as we do English. You know not even all children speak alike. If you and I were to meet early some sunshiny day, we would say to each other, "Good morning," but if a little German boy should join us, he would say, "Guten Morgen," and a tiny French maiden would call out, "Bon jour," when she meant the same thing.

These stories had to be written in the English language, so that you could un-

derstand. If I were to tell them in the Woodpecker, the Rabbit, or the Rattlesnake language, all of which are understood in the forest, they might be very fine stories, but I am afraid you would not know exactly what they meant!

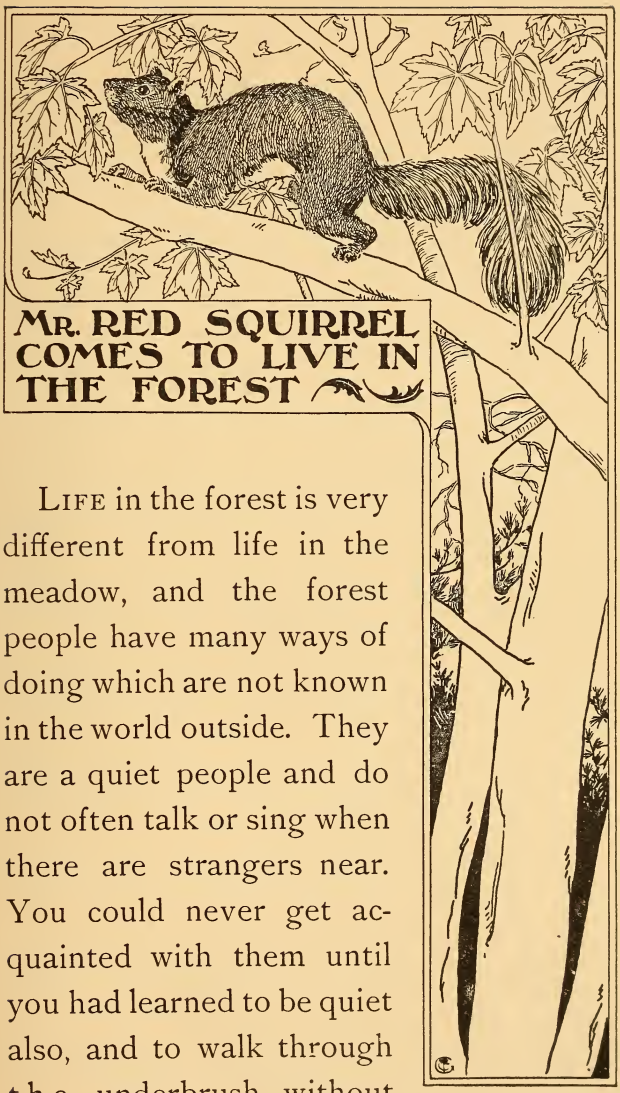
I hope you will enjoy hearing about my forest friends. They are delightful people to know, and you must get acquainted with them as soon as you can. I should like to have you in little chairs just opposite my own and talk of these things quite as we used to do in my kindergarten. But that cannot be, so I have written you this letter, and think that perhaps some of you will write to me, telling which story you like best, and why you like it.

Your friend,

Clara Dillingham Pierson.

Stanton, Michigan,
April 15, 1898.

CONTENTS.



MR. RED SQUIRREL COMES TO LIVE IN THE FOREST

LIFE in the forest is very different from life in the meadow, and the forest people have many ways of doing which are not known in the world outside. They are a quiet people and do not often talk or sing when there are strangers near. You could never get acquainted with them until you had learned to be quiet also, and to walk through the underbrush without

snapping twigs at every step. Then, if you were to live among them and speak their language, you would find that there are many things about which it is not polite to talk. And there is a reason for all this.

In the meadow, although they have their quarrels and their own troubles, they always make it up again and are friendly, but in the forest there are some people who can never get along well together, and who do not go to the same parties or call upon each other. It is not because they are cross, or selfish, or bad. It is just because of the way in which they have to live and hunt, and they cannot help it any more than you could help having eyes of a certain color.

These are things which are all understood in the forest, and the people there are careful what they say and do, so they get on very well indeed, and have many

happy times in that quiet, dusky place. When people are born there, they learn these things without thinking about it, but when they come there from some other place it is very hard, for everybody thinks it stupid in strangers to ask about such simple matters.

When Mr. Red Squirrel first came to the forest, he knew nothing of the way in which they do, and he afterward said that learning forest manners was even harder than running away from his old home. You see, Mr. Red Squirrel was born in the forest, but was carried away from there when he was only a baby. From that time until he was grown, he had never set claw upon a tree, and all he could see of the world he had seen by peeping through the bars of a cage. His cousins in the forest learned to frisk along the fence-tops and to jump from one swaying branch to another, but when this poor little fellow longed for a scamper he

could only run around and around in a wire wheel that hummed as it turned, and this made him very dizzy.

He used to wonder if there were nothing better in life, for he had been taken from his woodland home when he was too young to remember about it. One day he saw another Squirrel outside, a dainty little one who looked as though she had never a sad thought. That made him care more than ever to be free, and when he curled down in his cotton nest that night he dreamed about her, and that they were eating acorns together in a tall oak tree.

The next day Mr. Red Squirrel pretended to be sick. He would not run in the wheel or taste the food in his cage. When his master came to look at him, he moaned pitifully and would not move one leg. His master thought that the leg was broken, and took limp little Mr. Red Squirrel in his hand to the window to see

what was the matter. The window was up, and when he saw his chance, Mr. Red Squirrel leaped into the open air and was away to the forest. His poor legs were weak from living in such a small cage, but how he ran! His heart thumped wildly under the soft fur of his chest, and his breath came in quick gasps, and still he ran, leaping, scrambling, and sometimes falling, but always nearer the great green trees of his birthplace.

At last he was safe and sat trembling on the lowest branch of a beech-tree. The forest was a new world to him and he asked many questions of a fat, old Gray Squirrel. The Gray Squirrel was one of those people who know a great deal and think that they know a great, great deal, and want others to think so too. He was so very knowing and important that, although he answered all of Mr. Red Squirrel's questions, he really did not tell him any of the things which

he most wanted to know, and this is the way in which they talked :

"What is the name of this place?" asked Mr. Red Squirrel.

"This? Why this is the forest, of course," answered the Gray Squirrel. "We have no other name for it. It is possible that there are other forests in the world, but they cannot be so fine as this, so we call ours 'the forest.'"

"Are there pleasant neighbors here?" asked Mr. Red Squirrel.

"Very good, very good. My wife and I do not call on many of them, but still they are good enough people, I think."

"Then why don't you call?"

"Why? Why? Because they are not in our set. It would never do." And the Gray Squirrel sat up very straight indeed.

"Who is that gliding fellow on the ground below?" asked the newcomer. "Is he one of your friends?"

"That? That is the Rattlesnake. We never speak to each other. There has always been trouble between our families."

"Who lives in that hollow tree yonder?"

"Sh, sh! That is where the Great Horned Owl has his home. He is asleep now and must not be awakened, for Squirrels and Owls cannot be friendly."

"Why not?"

"Because. It has always been so."

"And who is that bird just laying an egg in her nest above us?"

"Speak softly, please. That is the Cowbird, and it is not her nest. You will get into trouble if you talk such things aloud. She can't help it. She has to lay her eggs in other birds' nests, but they don't like it."

Mr. Red Squirrel tried very hard to find out the reason for this, but there are always some things for which no reason can be given; and there are many questions which can never be answered, even

if one were to ask, "Why? why? why?" all day long. So Mr. Red Squirrel, being a wise little fellow, stopped asking, and thought by using his eyes and ears he would in time learn all that he needed to know. He had good eyes and keen ears, and he learned very fast without making many mistakes. He had a very happy life among the forest people, and perhaps that was one reason. He learned not to say things which made his friends feel badly, and he did not ask needless questions. And after all, you know, it would have been very foolish to ask questions which nobody could answer, and worse than foolish to ask about matters which he could find out for himself.

It is in the forest as in the world outside. We can know that many things are, but we never know why they are.

WHY Mr GREAT HORNED OWL HATCHED THE EGGS

If the Rattlesnake is the king of the forest in the daytime, the Great Horned Owl is the king at night. Indeed, he is much the more powerful of the two, for he is king of air and earth alike and can go wherever he wishes, while the snake can only rule over those who live near the ground or who are so careless as to come to him there.

There was but one pair of Great

Horned Owls in the forest, and they lived in the deepest shade, having their great clumsy nest in the hollow of a tall tree. You might have walked past it a hundred times and never have guessed that any Owls lived there, if you did not notice the round pellets of bone and hair on the grass. They are such hungry fellows that they swallow their food with the bones in it. Then their tough little stomachs go to work, rolling all the pieces of bone and hair into balls and sending them back to be cast out of the Owls' mouths to the ground.

The Great Horned Owl was a very large bird. His whole body was covered with brown, dull yellow, and white feathers. Even his feet and legs were covered, and all that you could see besides were his black claws and his black hooked bill. Yes, at night you could see his eyes, too, and they were wonderful great eyes that could see in the dark, but they

were shut in the daytime when he was resting. His wife, who was the queen of the forest at night, looked exactly like him, only she was larger than he. And that is the way among Owls,—the wife is always larger than her husband.

Every night when the sun had gone down, the Great Horned Owl and his wife would come out of their hollow tree and sit blinking on a branch near by, waiting until it got dark enough for them to see quite plainly. As the light faded, the little black spots in their eyes would grow bigger and bigger, and then off they would go on their great soft, noiseless wings, hunting in the grass and among the branches for the supper which they called breakfast.

Mrs. Owl could not be gone very long at a time, for there were two large round white eggs in the nest which must not get cold. Her husband was on the wing most of the night, and he often flew home

with some tender morsel for her. He was really a kind-hearted fellow, although you could never have made the small birds think so. Sometimes his wife would sigh and tell how tired she was of sitting still, and how glad she would be when the eggs were hatched and she could go more with him. When she began to speak of that, the Great Horned Owl would get ready for another flight and go off saying: "It is *too* bad. I am *so* sorry for you. But then, one would never have young Owlets if one did n't stick to the nest." He was always proud of his children, and he thought himself a very good husband. Perhaps he was; still he had never taken his place on the nest while his wife went hunting.

One night, after they had both been flying through forest and over field, he came back to the hollow tree to rest. He expected to find Mrs. Owl, for she had started home before he did. She

was not there and he grew quite impatient. "I should like to know what keeps her so long," he said, fretfully. After a while he looked into the nest and saw the two big white eggs. "It is a shame," he said. "Our beautiful eggs will be chilled, and it will be all her fault if we have no Owlets this summer."

You see, even then he did not seem to think that he could do anything to keep them warm. But the next time he looked in, he put one feathered foot on the round eggs and was surprised to find how cool they were.

It fairly made his head feathers stand on end to think of it, and he was so frightened that he forgot to be cross, and stepped right in and covered them with his own breast. What if they had already been left too long, and the Owlets within would never hatch? Would Mrs. Owl ever forgive him for being so stupid? He began to wonder if any of the other

fellows would see him. He thought it so absurd for the king of the forest to be hatching out a couple of eggs, instead of swooping around in the dark and frightening the smaller birds.

The night seemed so long, too. It had always been short enough before, and he had often disliked to have daylight come, for then he had to go to bed. He was very much upset, and it is no wonder that when he heard a doleful wail from a neighboring tree, and knew that his cousin, the Screech Owl, was near, he raised his head and called loudly, "Hoo-hoo-oooo! Waugh-hoo!"

The Screech Owl heard him and flew at once to a branch beside the nest hollow. He was a jolly little fellow in spite of his doleful call, and before he could talk at all he had to bend his body, look behind him, nod his head, and shake himself, as Screech Owls always do when they alight. Then he looked into the

tree and saw his big cousin, the Great Horned Owl, the night king of the forest, sitting on the eggs and looking very, very grumpy. How he did laugh! "What is the matter?" said he. "Did n't you like your wife's way of brooding over the eggs? Or did she get tired of staying at home and make you help tend the nest?"

"Matter enough," grumbled the Great Horned Owl. "We went hunting together at twilight and she has n't come home yet. I did n't get into the nest until I had to, but it was growing very cold and I would n't miss having our eggs hatch for anything. Ugh-whoo! How my legs do ache!"

"Well," said his cousin, "you are having a hard time. Are you hungry?"

The Great Horned Owl said that he was, so the Screech Owl went hunting and brought him food. "I will look in every night," he said, "and bring you a

lunch. I 'm afraid something has happened to your wife and that she will not be back."

As he flew away he called out, "It is *too* bad. I am *very* sorry for you. But then, I suppose you would never have the Owlets if you did n't stick to the nest."

This last remark made the Great Horned Owl quite angry. "Much he knows about it," he said. "I guess if he had ever tried it he would be a little more sorry for me." And then he began to think, "Who have I heard say those very words before? Who? Who? Who?"

All at once the Great Horned Owl remembered how many times he had said just that to his patient wife, and he began to feel very uncomfortable. His ears tingled and he felt a queer hot feeling under his face feathers. Perhaps he had n't been acting very well after all! He knew that even when he told her

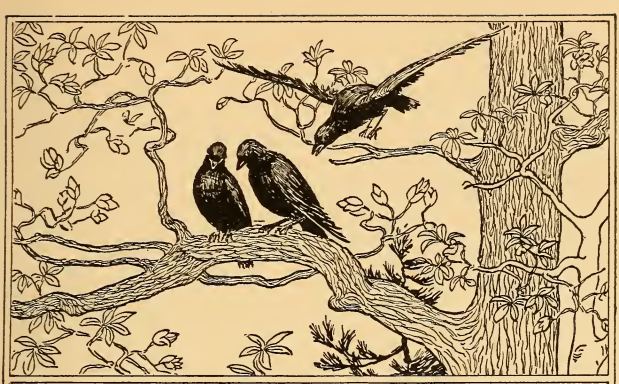
he was sorry, he had been thinking she made a great fuss. Well, if she would only come back now, that should all be changed, and he shifted his weight and wriggled around into a more comfortable position.

Now, if this were just a story, one could say that Mrs. Owl came back and that they were all happy together; but the truth is she never did come, and nobody ever knew what became of her. So her husband, the night king of the forest, had to keep the eggs warm and rear his own Owlets. You can imagine how glad he was on the night when he first heard them tapping on the inside of their shells, for then he knew that he would soon be free to hunt.

A finer pair of children were never hatched, and their father thought them far ahead of all his other broods. "If only Mrs. Owl were here to see them, how lovely it would be!" he said. Yet if she

had been there he would never have had the pleasure of hearing their first faint cheeps, and of covering them with his soft breast feathers as he did each day. He forgot now all the weary time when he sat with aching legs, wishing that his cousin would happen along with something to eat. For that is always the way,—when we work for those we love, the weariness is soon forgotten and only happiness remains.

It is said that the Screech Owl was more thoughtful of his wife after his cousin had to hatch the eggs, and it is too bad that some of the other forest people could not have learned the same lesson ; but the Great Horned Owl never told, and the Screech Owl kept his secret, and to this day there are many people in the forest who know nothing whatever about it.



THE SWAGGERING CROW

When the Crows who have been away for the winter return to the forest, all their relatives gather on the tree-tops to welcome them and tell the news. Those who have been away have also much to say, and it sometimes seems as though they were all talking at once. They spend many days in visiting before they begin nest-building. Perhaps if they would

take turns and not interrupt each other, they would get the news more quickly, for when people are interrupted they can never talk well. Sometimes, too, one hungry fellow will fly off for a few mouthfuls of grain, and get back just in time to hear the end of a story. Then he will want to hear the first part of it, and make such a fuss that they have to tell it all over again just for him.

At this time in the spring, you can hear their chatter and laughter, even when you are far away; and the song-birds of the forest look at each other and say, "Dear me! The Crows are back." They have very good reasons for disliking the Crows, as any Robin will tell you.

There was one great shining black Crow who had the loudest voice of all, and who was not at all afraid to use it. This spring he looked very lean and lank, for it had been a long, cold winter, and he had found but little to eat, acorns, the seeds of

the wild plants, and once in a great while a frozen apple that hung from its branch in some lonely orchard.

He said that he felt as though he could reach around his body with one claw, and when a Crow says that he feels exceedingly thin. But now spring was here, and his sisters and his cousins and his aunts, yes, and his brothers and his uncles, too, had returned to the forest to live. He had found two good dinners already, all that he could eat and more too, and he began to feel happy and bold. The purple gloss on his feathers grew brighter every day, and he was glad to see this. He wanted to look so handsome that a certain Miss Crow, a sister of one of his friends, would like him better than she did any of the others.

That was all very well, if he had been at all polite about it. But one day he saw her visiting with another Crow, and he lost his temper, and flew at him, and pecked

him about the head and shoulders, and tore the long fourth feather from one of his wings, besides rumpling the rest of his coat. Then he went away. He had beaten him by coming upon him from behind, like the sneak that he was, and he was afraid that if he waited he might yet get the drubbing he deserved. So he flew off to the top of a hemlock-tree where the other Crows were, and told them how he had fought and beaten. You should have seen him swagger around when he told it. Each time it was a bigger story, until at last he made them think that the other Crow had n't a tail feather left.

The next day, a number of Crows went to a farm not far from the forest. Miss Crow was in the party. On their way they stopped in a field where there stood a figure of a man with a dreadful stick in his hand. Everybody was frightened except Mr. Crow. He wanted to show how much courage he had, so he flew right up to it.

They all thought him very brave. They did n't know that down in his heart he was a great coward. He was n't afraid of this figure because he knew all about it. He had seen it put up the day before, and he knew that there was no man under the big straw hat and the flapping coat. He knew that, instead of a thinking, breathing person, there was only a stick nailed to a pole. He knew that, instead of having two good legs with which to run, this figure had only the end of a pole stuck into the ground.

Of course, he might have told them all, and then they could have gathered corn from the broken ground around, but he did n't want to do that. Instead, he said, "Do you see that terrible great creature with a stick in his hand? He is here just to drive us away, but he dares not touch me. He knows I would beat him if he did." Then he flew down, and ate corn close beside the figure, while the other

Crows stood back and cawed with wonder.

When he went back to them, he said to Miss Crow, "You see how brave I am. If I were taking care of anybody, nothing could ever harm her." And he looked tenderly at her with his little round eyes. But she pretended not to understand what he meant, for she did not wish to give up her pleasant life with the flock and begin nest-building just yet.

When they reached the barn-yard, there was rich picking, and Mr. Crow made such a clatter that you would have thought he owned it all and that the others were only his guests. He flew down on the fence beside a couple of harmless Hens, and he flapped his wings and swaggered around until they began to sidle away. Then he grew bolder (you know bullies always do if they find that people are scared), and edged up to them until they fluttered off, squawking with alarm.

Next he walked into the Hen-house, saying to the other Crows, "You might have a good time, too, if you were not such cowards." He had no more than gotten the words out of his bill, when the door of the Hen-house blew shut and caught there. It was a grated door and he scrambled wildly to get through the openings. While he was trying, he heard the hoarse voice of the Crow whom he had beaten the day before, saying, "Thank you, we are having a fairly good time as it is"; and he saw Miss Crow picking daintily at some corn which the speaker had scratched up for her.

At that minute the great Black Brahma Cock came up behind Mr. Crow. He had heard from the Hens how rude Mr. Crow had been, and he thought that as the head of the house he ought to see about it. Well! one cannot say very much about what happened next, but the Black Brahma Cock did see about it quite thoroughly,

and when the Hen-house door swung open, it was a limp, ragged, and meek-looking Crow who came out, leaving many of his feathers inside.

The next morning Mr. Crow flew over the forest and far away. He did not want to go back there again. He heard voices as he passed a tall tree by the edge of the forest. Miss Crow was out with the Crow whom he had beaten, and they were looking for a good place in which to build. "I don't think they will know me if they see me," said Mr. Crow, "and I am sure that I don't want them to."

THE RED-HEADED WOOD PECKER CHILDREN

Mrs. Red-headed Woodpecker bent her handsome head down and listened. "Yes, it is! It certainly is!" she cried, as she heard for a second time the faint "tap-tap-tap" of a tiny beak rapping on the inside of an egg shell. She hopped to one side of her nest and stood looking at the four white eggs that lay there. Soon the rapping was heard again and she saw one of them move a bit on its bed of chips.

"So it is that one," she cried. "I thought it would be. I was certain that I laid that one first." And she arched her neck proudly, as the beak of her eldest child came through a crack in the shell. Now nobody else could have told one egg from another, but mothers have a way of remembering such things, and it may be because they love their children so that sometimes their sight is a little sharper, and their hearing a little keener than anybody else's.

However that may be, she stood watching while the tiny bird chipped away the shell and squeezed out of the opening he had made. She did not even touch a piece of the shell until he was well out of it, for she knew that it is always better for children to help themselves when they can. It makes them strong and fits them for life. When the little Red-headed Woodpecker had struggled free, she took the broken pieces in her beak and carried

them far from the nest before dropping them to the ground. If she had done the easiest thing and let them fall by the foot of the hollow tree where she lived, any prowling Weasel or Blue Jay might have seen them and watched for a chance to reach her babies. And that would have been very sad for the babies.

The newly hatched bird was a tired little fellow, and the first thing he did was to take a nap. He was cold, too, although the weather was fine and sunshiny. His down was all wet from the moisture inside the egg, and you can imagine how he felt, after growing for so long inside a warm, snug shell, to suddenly be without it and know that he could never again have it around him. Even if it had been whole once more, he could not have been packed into it, for he had been stretching and growing every minute since he left it. It is for this reason that the barn-yard people have a wise saying: "A

hatched chicken never returns to his shell."

When Mrs. Red-headed Woodpecker came back, she covered her shivering little one with her downy breast, and there he slept, while she watched for her husband's coming, and thought how pleased and proud he would be to see the baby. They were a young couple, and this was their first child.

But who can tell what the other three children, who had not cracked the shell, were thinking? Could they remember the time when they began to be? Could they dream of what would happen after they were hatched? Could they think at all? They were tiny, weak creatures, curled up within their shells, with food packed all around them. There had been a time when they were only streaks in the yellow liquid of the eggs. Now they were almost ready to leave this for a fuller, freer life, where they could open their bills

and flutter their wings, and stretch their legs and necks. It had been a quiet, sheltered time in the shell; why should they leave it? Ah, but they must leave it, for they were healthy and growing, and when they had done so, they would forget all about it. By the time they could talk, and that would be very soon, they would have forgotten all that happened before they were hatched. That is why you can never get a bird to tell you what he thought about while in the egg.

After the young Woodpecker's three sisters reached the outside world, the father and mother were kept busy hunting food for them, and they were alone much of the time. It was not long before they knew their parents' voices, although, once in a while, before they got their eyes open, they mistook the call of the Tree Frog below for that of the Woodpeckers. And this was not strange, for each says, "Ker-r-ruck! Ker-r-ruck!" and when the

Tree Frog was singing in his home at the foot of the tree, the four Woodpecker children, in their nest-hollow far above his head, would be opening their bills and stretching their necks, and wondering why no juicy and delicious morsel was dropped down their throats.

When they had their eyes open there was much to be seen. At least, they thought so. Was there not the hollow in their dear, dry old tree, a hollow four or five times as high as they could reach? Their mother had told them how their father and she had dug it out with their sharp, strong bills, making it roomy at the bottom, and leaving a doorway at the top just large enough for them to pass through. Part of the chips they had taken away, as the mother had taken the broken shells, and part had been left in the bottom of the hollow for the children to lie on. "I don't believe in grass, hair, and down, as a bed for children," their

father had said. "Nice soft chips are far better."

And the Woodpecker children liked the chips, and played with them, and pretended that they were grubs to be caught with their long and bony tongues; only of course they never swallowed them.

It was an exciting time when their feathers began to grow. Until then they had been clothed in down; but now the tiny quills came pricking through their skin, and it was not so pleasant to snuggle up to each other as it had once been. Now, too, the eldest of the family began to show a great fault. He was very vain. You can imagine how sorry his parents were.

Every morning when he awakened he looked first of all at his feathers. Those on his breast were white, and he had a white band on his wings. His tail and back and nearly the whole of his wings were blue-black. His head, neck, and throat were crimson. To be sure, while

the feathers were growing, the colors were not very bright, for the down was mixed with them, and the quills showed so plainly that the young birds looked rather streaked.

The sisters were getting their new suits at the same time, and there was just as much reason why they should be vain, but they were not. They were glad (as who would not be?) and they often said to each other: "How pretty you are growing!" They looked exactly like their brother, for it is not with the Woodpeckers as with many other birds,—the sons and daughters are dressed in precisely the same way.

As for the vain young Woodpecker, he had many troubles. He was not contented to let his feathers grow as the grass and the leaves grow, without watching. No indeed! He looked at each one every day and a great many times every day. Then, if he thought they were not grow-

ing as fast as they should, he worried about it. He wanted to hurry them along, and sometimes, when his sisters did not seem to be looking, he took hold of them with his bill and pulled. Of course this did not make them grow any faster and it did make his skin very sore, but how was he to know? He had not been out of the shell long enough to be wise.

It troubled him, too, because he could not see his red feathers. He twisted his head this way and that, and strained his eyes until they ached, trying to see his own head and neck. It was very annoying. He thought it would have been much nicer to have the brightest feathers in a fellow's tail, where he could see them, or at any rate on his breast; and he asked his mother why it could n't be so.

"I once knew a young Woodpecker," she said, "who thought of very little but his own beauty. I am afraid that if he had been allowed to wear his red feathers in

his tail, he would never have seen anything else in this wonderful great world, but just his own poor little tail." She looked out of the doorway as she spoke, but he knew that she meant him.

Things went on in this way until the children were ready to fly. Then there were daily lessons in flying, alighting, clinging to branches, and tapping for food on the bark of trees. They learned, too, how to support themselves with their stiff tails when they were walking up trees or stopping to eat with their claws hooked into the bark. Then Mrs. Red-headed Woodpecker taught them how to tell the ripest and sweetest fruit on the trees before they tasted it. That is something many people would like to know, but it is a forest secret, and no bird will tell anyone who cannot fly.

It was on his way back from an orchard one day, that the vain young Woodpecker stopped to talk with an old Gray Squirrel.

It may be that the Gray Squirrel's sight was not good, and so he mistook the Woodpecker for quite another fellow. He was speaking of an old tree where he had spent the last winter. "I believe a family of Red-headed Woodpeckers live there now," he said. "I have met them once or twice. The father and mother are fine people, and they have charming daughters, but their son must be a great trial to them. He is one of these silly fellows who see the world through their own feathers."

As the young Red-headed Woodpecker flew away, he repeated this to himself: "A silly fellow, a silly fellow, who sees the world through his own feathers." And he said to his father, "Whose feathers must I look through?"

This puzzled his father. "Whose feathers should you look through?" said he. "What do you mean?"

"Well," answered the son, "somebody said that I saw the world through my own

feathers, and I don't see how I can get anybody else's."

How his father did laugh! "I don't see why you should look through any feathers," said he. "What he meant was that you thought so much of your own plumage that you did not care for anything else; and it is so. If it were intended you should look at yourself all the time, your eyes would have been one under your chin and the other in the back of your head. No! They are placed right for you to look at other people, and are where they help you hunt for food."

"How often may I look at my own feathers?" asked the young Woodpecker. He was wondering at that minute how his tail looked, but he was determined not to turn his head.

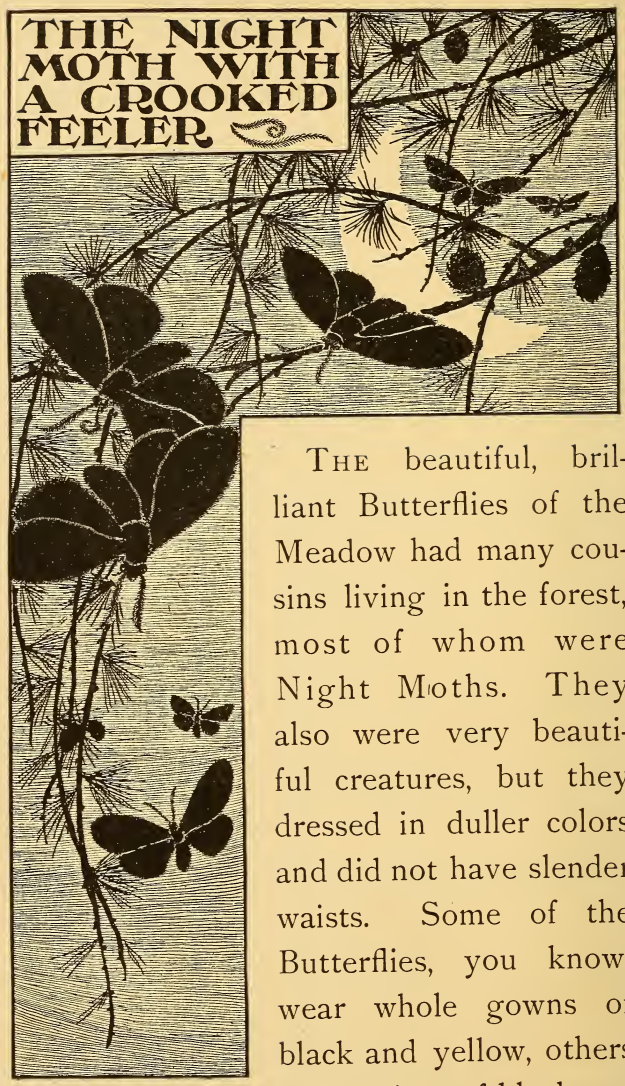
The old Woodpecker's eyes twinkled. "I should think," he said, "that since you are young and have no family to look after, you might preen your feathers in the

morning and in the afternoon and when you go to sleep. Then, of course, when it is stormy, you will have to take your waterproof out of the pocket under your tail, and put it on one feather at a time, as all birds do. That would be often enough unless something happened to rumple them."

"I will not look at them any oftener," said the young Red-headed Woodpecker, firmly. "I will *not* be called a silly fellow." And he was as good as his word.

His mother sighed when she heard of the change. "I am very glad," said she. "But is n't that always the way? His father and I have talked and talked, and it made no difference; but let somebody else say he is silly and vain, and behold!"

THE NIGHT MOTH WITH A CROOKED FEELER



THE beautiful, brilliant Butterflies of the Meadow had many cousins living in the forest, most of whom were Night Moths. They also were very beautiful creatures, but they dressed in duller colors and did not have slender waists. Some of the Butterflies, you know, wear whole gowns of black and yellow, others have stripes of black and

white, while some have clear yellow with only a bit of black trimming the edges of the wings.

The Moths usually wear brown and have it brightened with touches of buff or dull blue. If they do wear bright colors, it is only on the back pair of wings, and when the Moth alights, he slides his front pair of wings over these and covers all the brightness. They do not rest with their wings folded over their heads like the Butterflies, but leave them flat. All the day long, when the sun is shining, the Moths have to rest on trees and dead leaves. If they were dressed in yellow or red, any passing bird would see them, and there is no telling what might happen. As it is, their brown wings are so nearly the color of dead leaves or bark that you might often look right at them without seeing them.

Yet even among Moths there are some more brightly colored than others, and

when you find part of the family quietly dressed you can know it is because they have to lay the eggs. Moths are safer in dull colors, and the egg-layers should always be the safest of all. If anything happened to them, you know, there would be no Caterpillar babies.

One day a fine-looking Cecropia Moth came out of her chrysalis and clung to the nearest twig while her wings grew and dried and flattened. At first they had looked like tiny brown leaves all drenched with rain and wrinkled by somebody's stepping on them. The fur on her fat body was matted and wet, and even her feelers were damp and stuck to her head. Her six beautiful legs were weak and trembling, and she moved her body restlessly while she tried again and again to raise her crumpled wings.

She had not been there so very long before she noticed another Cecropia Moth near her, clinging to the under side of a

leaf. He was also just out of the chrysalis and was drying himself. "Good morning!" he cried. "I think I knew you when we were Caterpillars. Fine day to break the chrysalis, is n't it?"

"Lovely," she answered. "I remember you very well. You were the Caterpillar who showed me where to find food last summer when the hot weather had withered so many of the plants."

"I thought you would recall me," he said. "And when we were spinning our chrysalides we visited together. Do you remember that also?"

Miss Cecropia did. She had been thinking of that when she first spoke, but she hoped he had forgotten. To tell the truth, he had been rather fond of her the fall before, and she, thinking him the handsomest Caterpillar of her acquaintance, had smiled upon him and suggested that they spin their cocoons near together. During the long winter she had regretted

this. "I was very foolish," she thought, "to encourage him. When I get my wings I may meet people who are better off than he. Now I shall have to be polite to him for the sake of old friendship. I only hope that he will make other acquaintances and leave me free. I must get into the best society."

All this time her neighbor was thinking, "I am so glad to see her again, so glad, so glad! When my wings are dry I will fly over to her and we will go through the forest together." He was a kind, warm-hearted fellow, who cared more for friendship than for beauty or family.

Meanwhile their wings were growing fast, and drying, and flattening, so that by noon they could begin to raise them above their heads. They were very large Moths and their wings were of a soft dust color with little clear, transparent places in them and touches of the most beautiful blue, quite the shade worn by the Peacock, who

lived on the farm. There was a brown and white border to their wings, and on their bodies and legs the fur was white and dark orange. When the Cecropias rest, they spread their wings out flat, and do not slide the front pair over the others as their cousins, the Sphinxes, do. The most wonderful of all, though, are their feelers.

The Butterflies have stiff feelers on their heads with little knobs on the ends, or sometimes with part of them thick like tiny clubs. The Night Moths have many kinds of feelers, most of them being curved, and those of the Cecropias look like reddish-brown feathers pointed at the end.

Miss Cecropia's feelers were perfect, and she waved them happily to and fro. Those of her friend, she was troubled to see, were not what they should have been. One of them was all right, the other was small and crooked. "Oh dear," she said to herself, "how that does look! I hope he

will not try to be attentive to me." He did not mind it much. He thought about other things than looks.

As night came, a Polyphemus Moth fluttered past. "Good evening!" cried he. "Are you just out? There are a lot of Cecropias coming out to-day."

Miss Cecropia felt quite agitated when she heard this, and wondered if she looked all right. Her friend flew over to her just as she raised her wings for flight. "Let me go with you," he said.

While she was wondering how she could answer him, several other Cecropias came along. They were all more brightly colered than she. "Hullo!" cried one of them, as he alighted beside her. "First-rate night, is n't it?"

He was a handsome fellow, and his feelers were perfect; but Miss Cecropia did not like his ways, and she drew away from him just as her friend knocked him off the branch. While they were fighting, an-

other of the strangers flew to her. "May I sit here?" he asked.

"Yes," she murmured, thinking her chance had come to get into society.

"I must say that it served the fellow right for his rudeness to you," said the stranger, in his sweetest way; "but who is the Moth who is punishing him—that queer-looking one with a crooked feeler?"

"Sir," said she, moving farther from him, "he is a friend of mine, and I do not think it matters to you if he is queer-looking."

"Oh!" said the stranger. "Oh! oh! oh! You have a bad temper, have n't you? But you are very good-looking in spite of that." There is no telling what he would have said next, for at this minute Miss Cecropia's friend heard the mean things he was saying, and flew against him.

It was not long before this stranger also was punished, and then the Moth with the crooked feeler turned to the others. "Do

any of you want to try it?" he said. "You must understand that you cannot be rude before her." And he pointed his right fore leg at Miss Cecropia as she sat trembling on the branch.

"Her!" they cried mockingly, as they flew away. "There are prettier Moths than she. We don't care anything for her."

Miss Crecropia's friend would have gone after them to punish them for this impoliteness, but she clung to him and begged him not to. "You will be killed, I know you will," she sobbed. "And then what will become of me?"

"Would you miss me?" he asked, as he felt of one of his wings, now broken and bare.

"Yes," she cried. "You are the best friend I have. Please don't go."

"But I am such a homely fellow," he said. "I don't see how you can like me since I broke my wing."

"Well, I do like you," she said. "Your wing is n't much broken after all, and I *like* your crooked feeler. It is so different from anybody else's." Miss Cecropia looked very happy as she spoke, and she quite forgot how she once decided to go away from him. There are some people, you know, who can change their minds in such a sweet and easy way that we almost love them the better for it. One certainly could love Miss Cecropia for this, because it showed that she had learned to care more for a warm heart and courage than for whole wings and straight feelers.

Mr. Cecropia did not live long after this, unfortunately, but they were very, very happy together, and she often said to her friends, as she laid her eggs in the best places, "I only hope that when my Caterpillar babies are grown and have come out of their chrysalides, they may be as good and as brave as their father was."

THE BEES AND THE KINGBIRD

THERE was in the forest a great hollow tree where for years a swarm of Bees had made their home. To look at it in winter, one would never guess what a store of honey was sealed up within, but in summer the Bees were always passing in and out, and it was indeed a busy place. Then the Workers had to gather honey and build the cells and look

out for the Queen-Mother's many babies. The Queen-Mother had so much care of her eggs that she could really do nothing but attend to them. After they were ready in their cells, the Workers took care of them, and tucked in a lot of bread for the babies to eat when they were hatched. Then there was the bread-making to be done also, and all the Workers helped bring the pollen, or flower-dust, out of which it was made.

The Drones did n't do anything, not a thing, not a single thing, unless it were taking care of the Queen when she flew away from the tree. They had done that once, but it was long ago, before she had laid an egg and while she was still quite young. They were handsome great fellows, all black and gold, and if you did n't know about them, you might have thought them the pleasantest Bees in the tree. Of course you would not care for them after finding how lazy they were, for

people are never liked just because they are fine-looking.

The Drones always found some excuse for being idle, and like many other lazy people they wanted the busy ones to stop and visit with them. "What is the hurry?" they would say. "There will be more honey that you can get to-morrow. Stop a while now."

But the Workers would shake their brown heads and buzz impatiently as they answered, "We can get to-morrow's honey when to-morrow comes, but to-day's honey must be gathered to-day."

Then the Drones would grumble and say that they did n't see the sense of storing up so much honey anyway. That also was like lazy people the world over, for however much they scold about getting the food, they are sure to eat just as much as anybody else. Sometimes lazy people eat even more than others, and pick for the best too.

On cloudy days, the Workers did stay at home in the tree, but not to play. They clung to the walls and to each other and made wax. It took much patience to make wax. When they were gathering honey there was so much that was interesting to be seen, and so many friends to meet, that it was really quite exciting; but when they made wax they had to hang for a long, long time, until the wax gathered in flakes over their bodies. Then it was ready to scrape off and shape into six-sided cells to hold honey or to be homes for the babies.

One sunshiny morning the Queen-Mother stopped laying her eggs and cried: "Listen! did you hear that?"

"What?" asked the Workers, crowding around her.

"Why, that noise," she said. "It sounded like a bird calling 'Kyrie! K-y-rie!' and I thought I heard a Worker buzzing outside a minute ago, but no one

has come in. I am afraid—" and here she stopped.

"Of what are you afraid!" asked the Drones, who, having nothing to do but eat and sleep, were always ready to talk about anything and everything. The great trouble with them was that if you once began to talk they did not like to have you leave and go to work.

"Why," said the Queen-Mother, "I don't want to alarm you, but I thought it was a Kingbird."

"Well, what if it was?" said a big Drone. "There is only one of him and there are a great many of us."

"Yes," said the Queen-Mother, "but there may not be so many of us very long if he begins to watch the tree. I have lived much longer than you and I know how Kingbirds act."

This was true, for Queens live to be very old, and Drones never live long because they are so lazy.

"Well," said the big Drone, "we must find out about this. Just fly around and see if it is a Kingbird," he said to a Worker. "We must know about things before we act."

"Suppose you should go," she replied. "I have my leg-pockets full of pollen, and it ought to be made into bread at once. I never saw Larvæ so hungry as these last ones are."

"I only wish that I could go," said the big Drone, limping as he got out of her way; "but my fifth foot just stepped on my third foot, and I can hardly move."

When he said this, all the Workers smiled, and even the Queen-Mother had to turn away her head. The Drones looked as solemn as possible. It would not do for them to laugh at their brother. They did not want him to laugh at them when they made excuses for staying at home. They even pretended not to hear one of the Workers when she said that it

was funny how some people could n't use their wings if one of their feet hurt them.

"Yes," said another Worker, "and it is funny, too, how some people can get along very well on three legs when they have to, while others are too helpless to do anything unless they can use the whole six."

The Drones began to talk together. "I think that the whole swarm should fly at the Kingbird and sting him and drive him away," said one. "There is no sense in allowing him to perch outside our home and catch us as we pass in and out. *I* say that we should make war upon him!" He looked very fierce as he spoke, buzzing and twitching his feelers at every step.

"Exactly!" cried another Drone. "If I had a sting, I would lead the attack. As it is, I may be useful in guarding the comb. It is a great pity that Drones have no stings." You would have thought, to hear him speak, that if he had been given a sting like those of the Workers,

not all the Bees in the tree could keep him from fighting.

While the Drones were talking about war, some of the Workers sent to their Queen for advice. "Tell us," they said, "how to drive away the Kingbird. Should we try to sting him? You know it kills a Bee to sting anybody, and we don't want to if we can help it, yet we will if you say so."

The Queen-Mother shook her head. "You must not bother me about such things," she said. "I have all that I can do to get the eggs ready, and you must look after the swarm. Nobody else can do my work, and I have no time to do yours." As she spoke, she finished the one hundred and seventeenth egg of that day's lot, and before night came she would probably have laid more than a thousand, so you can see she was quite right when she said she had no time for other things.

This left the Workers to plan for themselves, and they agreed that a number of them should fly out together and see where the Kingbird was. Then they could decide about attacking him later. When one gave the signal, they dashed out as nearly together as possible.

After the Workers returned with honey and pollen, the Drones crowded around them, asking questions. "Where is he? What does he look like? Did he try to catch you?" The Workers would not answer them, and said: "Go and find out for yourself. We all came back alive." Then they went about their work as usual.

"I don't see how they dared to go," said a very young Bee who was just out of her cocoon and was still too weak to fly.

"Pooh!" said the big Drone. "You would n't see me hanging around this tree if I were not lame."

"There is no use in stopping work even if you are scared," said one of the Workers. She smiled as she spoke, and whispered something to the Queen-Mother as she passed her. The Queen-Mother smiled also.

"Why don't you Drones go for honey?" she said. "You must be getting very hungry."

"We don't feel very well," they answered. "Perhaps it would be better for our health if we were to keep quiet for a while and save our strength. We will lunch off some of the honey in the comb if we need food."

"Not a bit of it!" exclaimed the Workers. "Stay in the tree if you want to for your health, but don't you dare touch the honey we have gathered for winter, when the day is clear and bright like this." And whenever a Drone tried to get food from the comb they drove him away.

The poor Drones had a hard day of it,

and at night they were so hungry they could hardly sleep. The next morning they peeped out, and then rushed away to the flowers for their breakfast. They stayed out all day, and when they returned at night they rushed swiftly into the tree again.

"There!" they said; "we escaped the Kingbird."

"What Kingbird?" asked a Worker.

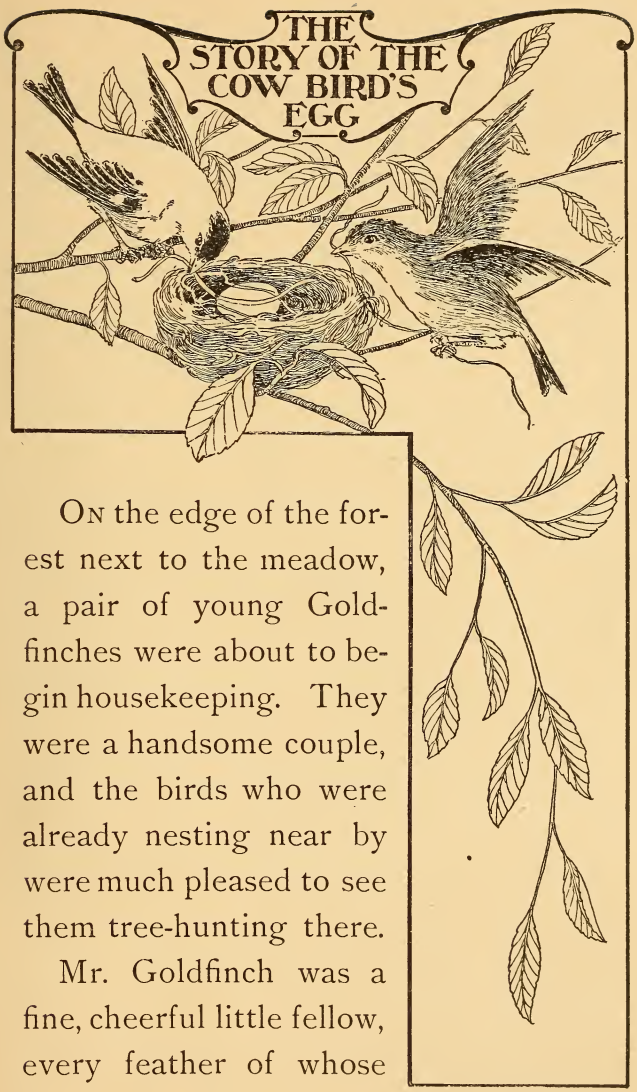
"The one who was there yesterday," answered the Drones. "Has he been back to-day?"

"There was no Kingbird near the tree yesterday," said the Worker.

"What!" cried the Drones.

"No," said the Queen-Mother, "I was mistaken when I thought I heard him. The Workers told me after they had been out for honey. Perhaps they forgot to tell you."

But her eyes twinkled as she spoke, and all the Workers smiled, and for some reason the Drones did not know what to say.



On the edge of the forest next to the meadow, a pair of young Goldfinches were about to begin housekeeping. They were a handsome couple, and the birds who were already nesting near by were much pleased to see them tree-hunting there.

Mr. Goldfinch was a fine, cheerful little fellow, every feather of whose black and yellow coat was always well oiled

and lying in its proper place. His wife was dressed in a dull, greenish brown with a touch of yellow on her breast. "Bright yellow and black does very well for Mr. Goldfinch," she would say, "but for one who has to sit on the nest as long as I shall have to, it would never do. People would see me among the leaves and know just where to find my eggs."

Mr. Goldfinch thought that there was never a bird who had a prettier, dearer, or harder-working little wife than he, and he would wonder how he was ever happy before he knew her. That is a way that people have of forgetting the days that are past; and the truth is that Mr. Goldfinch had made fun of the Robins and other birds all spring, because they had to build nests and hunt worms for their babies, while he had nothing to do but sing and sleep and feed himself. In those days the Robins used to call after him as he flew away,

"Silly fellow! Silly fellow! Silly!" They knew that there is something sweeter in life than just taking good care of one's self.

One afternoon Mr. Goldfinch saw a tiny green-brown bird on a sweetbriar bush, and as he watched her he thought her the most beautiful creature he had ever seen. She had such a dainty way of picking out the seeds, and gave such graceful hops from one twig to another. Then Mr. Goldfinch fluffed up his feathers and swelled out his throat and sang her such songs as he had never sung before. He did not want her to speak to anybody else, and yet he could not help her doing so, for Goldfinches always go together in crowds until they have homes of their own, and at this time they were having concerts every morning. He showed her where the finest dandelion seeds could be found, and one bright and sunshiny day she became Mrs. Goldfinch,

and they went together to find a place for their home.

They began one nest and had it nearly done, when Mr. Goldfinch said it was not in a good place, and tore it all to pieces. Mrs. Goldfinch felt very badly about this and talked it over with some of her Goldfinch neighbors. They told her not to mind it at all, that their husbands often did the same thing, and that sometimes they came to like the new place much better than the old. At any rate, there was no use in getting cross about it, because that was something she would have to expect.

Mr. Goldfinch was sure that they had built too near the ground, and he had chosen a crotch above. Toward this he was dragging the bits of grape-vine and cedar-bark which were woven into their first nest. He said they could also use some of the grasses and mosses which they had gotten together, and he even

told his wife of some fine thistle-down which he could bring for the inside, where the eggs were to be laid. Mrs. Goldfinch watched him tugging with bill and both feet to loosen the bits of bark, and she said to herself: "Dear fellow! what a helper he is! I won't mind rebuilding if it makes him happy," and she went to work with a will.

When the sun went down in the west the next night the second nest was done, and it was the last thing at which the Goldfinches looked before tucking their heads under their wings and going to sleep. It was the first thing that they saw the next morning, too, and they hopped all around it and twittered with pride, and gave it little tweaks here and little pokes there before they flew away to get breakfast.

While they were gone, Mrs. Cowbird came walking over the grass and dry leaves to the foot of the tree. She wagged her

head at every step, and put on as many airs as though she were showily dressed, instead of wearing, as she always does, a robe of dull brownish gray. She had seen the Goldfinches fly away, and she was looking for their home. She was a lazy creature in spite of her stirring ways, and she wished to find a nice little nest in which to lay an egg. You know Cowbirds never think of building nests. They want all of their time to take care of themselves, which is a very foolish way of living; but then, you could never make a Cowbird think so!

"That nest is exactly right," said Mrs. Cowbird. "I will lay my egg there at once, and when Mrs. Goldfinch has laid hers she will have to hatch them all together and take care of my baby for me. What an easy way this is to bring up one's family! It is really no work at all! And I am sure that my children will get along well, because I am always careful to choose

the nests of small birds for them. Then they are larger and stronger than the other babies, and can get more than their share of food."

So she laid a big white egg with gray and brown spots on it in the Goldfinches' new home, and then she flew off to the Cowbird flock, as gay and careless as you please. When the Goldfinches came back, they saw the egg in their nest and called all their neighbors to talk it over. "What shall I ever do?" said Mrs. Goldfinch. "I wanted my nest for my own eggs, and I meant to lay them to-morrow. I suppose I shall have to sit on this one too, but it won't be at all comfortable."

"I would n't," said one of her neighbors, a Yellow Warbler. "I left my nest once when such a thing happened to me, and built a new one for my own eggs."

"Oh dear!" cried Mrs. Goldfinch, "we have built two already, and I cannot build another."

"Well, whatever you do," said a Vireo, "don't hatch the big egg out with your own. I did once, and such a time as I had! The young Cowbird pushed two of my little Vireos out onto the ground, and ate so much that I was quite worn out by the work of hunting for him."

"My dear," said Mr. Goldfinch, "I have an excellent plan. We will put another floor in our nest, right over this egg, and then by adding a bit all around the sides we can have plenty of room for our own children. It will be much less work than beginning all over again, and then the Cowbird's egg will be too cool to hatch."

Everybody called this a most clever plan, and Mr. Goldfinch was very proud to have thought of it. They went to work once more, and it was not so very long before the new floor was done and the new walls raised. Then, oh, wonder of wonders! there were soon four tiny, pearly

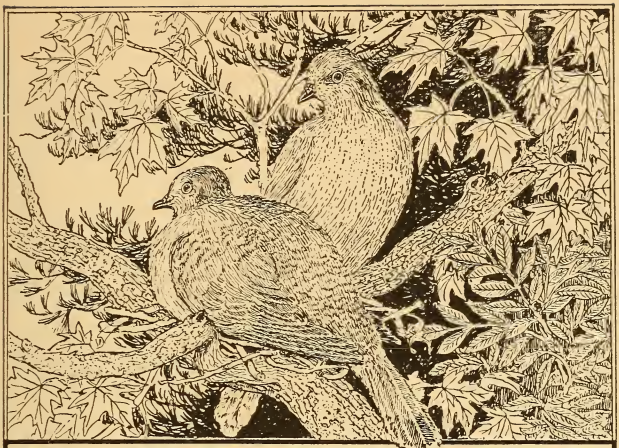
eggs of their own lying on the thistle-down lining of the nest.

Mrs. Goldfinch had to stay very closely at home now, but her husband went off with his friends a great deal. He bathed and sang and preened his feathers and talked about his queer nest and his bright little wife, after the manner of Goldfinches everywhere.

His friends laughed at him for helping so much about the nest, for, you know, Goldfinches do not often help their wives about home. He cocked his handsome head on one side and answered : " My wife seemed to need me then. She is not so very strong. And I do not know what she would ever have done about the strange egg, if I had not been there to advise her."

When he got back to his home that night, Mrs. Goldfinch said : " I have been wondering why we did not roll the Cowbird's egg out on the ground, instead of going to all that trouble of building around it."

And Mr. Goldfinch declared that he believed she was the only bird who had ever thought of such a thing. "It could have been done just as well as not," he said. "I must tell that to the other birds in the morning. How lucky I am to have such a bright wife! It would be dreadful if such a clever fellow as I had a dull mate!"



MRS. MOURNING DOVE'S HOUSEKEEPING

STRANGE as it may seem, there had never been any Mourning Doves in the forest until this year, and when a pair came there to live, the people were much excited. They talked about the Doves' song, so sweet and sad, and about their soft coats of brown and gray, and they wondered very much what kind of home they would build. Would it be a swinging pocket of hairs, strings, and down, like that of the Orioles? Would it be stout and heavy like the nests of the Robins? Or would

it be a ball of leaves and grasses on the ground, with a tiny doorway in one side, like that of the Ovenbird?

You can see that the forest people were really very much interested in the Mourning Doves, and so, perhaps, it is not strange that, when the new couple built their nest in the lower branches of a spruce tree, everybody watched it and talked about it.

"Really," said one of the Blackbirds, who had flown over from the swamp near by, "I never should think of calling that thing a nest! It is nothing but a few twigs and sticks laid together. It is just as flat as a maple-leaf, and what is to keep those poor little Doves from tumbling to the ground I can't see."

"I would n't worry about the little Doves yet," said a Warbler. "I don't think there will ever be any little Doves in that nest. The eggs will roll off of it long before they are ready to hatch, and

the nest will blow to pieces in the first storm we have."

"Well," said the Blackbird, as she started for home, "I shall want to know how the Mourning Doves get on. If any of you are over my way, stop and tell me the news."

Some days after this, a Quail, passing under the Doves' home, happened to look up and see two white eggs in the nest. It was so very thin that she could see them quite plainly through the openings between the twigs. Later in the day, she spoke of this to a Grouse, saying, "I came by the Mourning Doves' nest and saw two white eggs through the bottom."

After she went away, the Grouse said to a wild Rabbit: "The Quail told me that the Mourning Dove's eggs went right through the bottom of her nest, and I don't wonder. It was n't strong enough to hold anything."

At sunset, the Rabbit had a short visit

with Mrs. Goldfinch, as she pulled a great thistle-head to pieces and made her supper from its seeds. He told her he had heard that the Mourning Dove's eggs had fallen through the bottom of the nest and broken on the ground, and Mrs. Goldfinch said: "Oh, that poor Mrs. Mourning Dove! I must go to see her in the morning." Then she fled home to her own four pearly treasures.

Now, of course the Rabbit was mistaken when he said anybody had told him that those two eggs were broken; just as much mistaken as the Grouse was when she said somebody had told her that the eggs had fallen. They both thought they were right, but they were careless listeners and careless talkers, and so each one had changed it a bit in the telling.

The next day it rained, and the next, and the next. Mrs. Goldfinch did not dare leave her nest to make calls, lest the cold raindrops should chill and hurt the

four tiny birds that lay curled up in their shells. At last the weather was warm and sunshiny, and Mrs. Goldfinch and some of her bird neighbors went to call on Mrs. Mourning Dove. They found her just coming from a wheat-field, where she had been to get grain. "Oh, you poor creature!" they cried. "We have heard all about it. Your poor babies! How sorry we are for you!"

Mrs. Mourning Dove looked from one to another as though she did not know what to make of it. "What do you mean?" she cooed. "My babies are well and doing finely. Won't you come to see them?"

Then it was the turn of the other birds to be surprised. "Why," they chirped, "we heard that your eggs had fallen through your nest and had broken and killed the tiny Dove babies inside. Is it true?"

"Not a word of it," answered Mrs.

Mourning Dove. "The nest is all right, and the eggs were not broken until my two little darlings broke them with their sharp beaks."

"Here they are," she added, fondly. "Did you ever see such pretty ones? See him open his bill, the dear! And did you ever see such a neck as she has? Mr. Mourning Dove thinks there never were such children."

"But do you feel perfectly safe to leave them in that nest?" asked the Oriole politely. "My babies are so restless that I should be afraid to trust them in it."

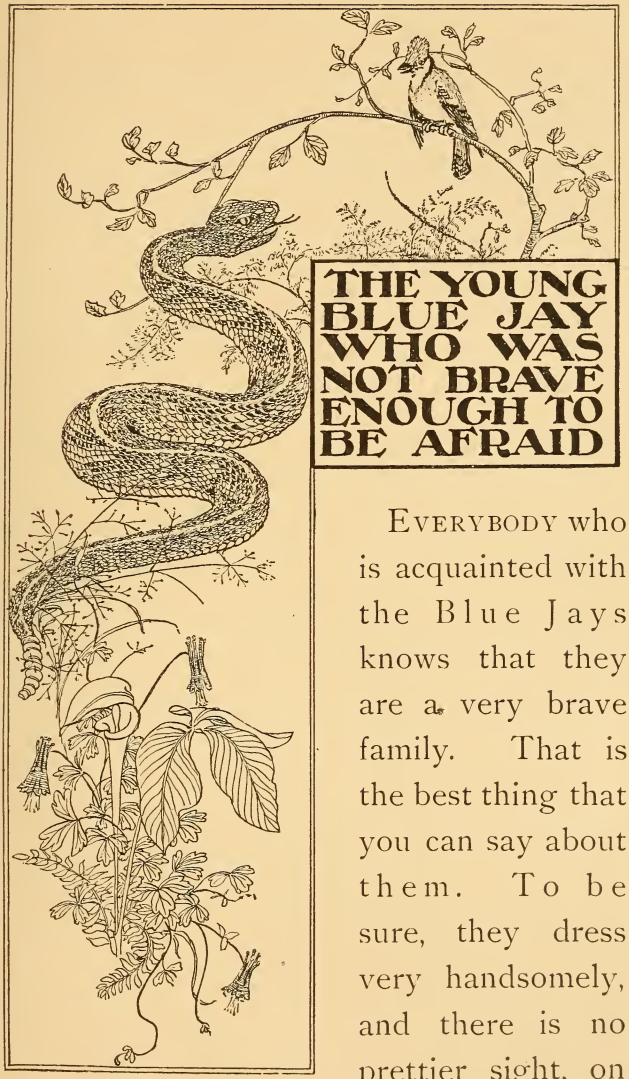
"That is what people always say," answered Mrs. Mourning Dove, with a happy coo, "and I fear that I am a rather poor housekeeper, but it runs in our family. Mr. Mourning Dove and I have raised many pairs of children, and they never rolled out, or tumbled through, or blew away, and I do not worry about

these. I shall never be thrifty like you good builders, perhaps, but I 'm sure you cannot love your little ones any more than I do mine. It was very kind of you to be so sorry for me when you heard I was in trouble. I think I have the best neighbors in the world."

When her callers went away, they could not say enough about Mrs. Mourning Dove's pleasant ways, and her gentle, well-behaved children. "It is too bad she is such a poor nest-maker," the Vireo said, "and I understand now what she meant when she told me that they sometimes used old Robins' nests for their young. She said they flattened them out and added a few twigs, and that they did finely. I thought it very queer in them to do so, but perhaps if I had not been a good builder I should have done the same thing."

"Perhaps we all would," the others agreed. "She certainly is a very pleasant

bird, and she is bringing up her children well. Mr. Mourning Dove seems to think her perfect. We won't worry any more about her."



THE YOUNG BLUE JAY WHO WAS NOT BRAVE ENOUGH TO BE AFRAID

EVERYBODY who is acquainted with the Blue Jays knows that they are a very brave family. That is the best thing that you can say about them. To be sure, they dress very handsomely, and there is no prettier sight, on

a fine winter morning, than a flock of Blue Jays flitting from branch to branch, dining off the acorns on the oak trees, and cocking their crested heads on one side as they look over the country. They are great talkers then, and are always telling each other just what to do; yet none of them ever do what they are told to, so they might just as well stop giving advice.

The other people of the forest do not like the Blue Jays at all, and if one of them gets into trouble they will not help him out. This always has been so, and it always will be so. If it could be winter all the time, the Blue Jays could be liked well enough, for in cold weather they eat seeds and nuts and do not quarrel so much with others. It is in the summer that they become bad neighbors. Then they live in the thickest part of the woods and raise families of tiny, fuzzy babies in their great coarse nests. It is then, too, that they change their beautiful coats, and while

the old feathers are dropping off and the new ones are growing they are not at all pretty. Oh, then is the time to beware of the Blue Jays!

They do very little talking during the summer, and the forest people do not know when they are coming, unless they see a flutter of blue wings among the branches. The Blue Jays have a reason for keeping still then. They are doing sly things, and they do not want to be found out.

The wee babies grow fast and their mouths are always open for more food. Father and Mother Blue Jay spend all their time in marketing, and they are not content with seeds and berries. They visit the nests of their bird neighbors, and then something very sad happens. When the Blue Jays go to a nest there may be four eggs in it; but when they go away there will not be any left, nothing but pieces of broken egg-shell. It is very, very sad,

but this is another of the things which will always be so, and all that the other birds can do is to watch and drive the Jays away.

There was once a young Blue Jay in the forest who was larger than his brothers and sisters, and kept crowding them toward the edge of the nest. When their father came with a bit of food for them, he would stretch his legs and flutter his wings and reach up for the first bite. And because he was the largest and the strongest, he usually got it. Sometimes, too, the first bite was so big that there was nothing left for anyone else to bite at. He was a very greedy fellow, and he had no right to take more than his share, just because he happened to be the first of the family to break open the shell, or because he grew fast.

This same young Blue Jay used to brag about what he would do when he got out of the nest, and his mother told

him that he would get into trouble if he were not careful. She said that even Blue Jays had to look out for danger.

"Huh!" said the young Blue Jay; "who 's afraid?"

"Now you talk like a bully," said Mother Blue Jay, "for people who are really brave are always willing to be careful."

But the young Blue Jay only crowded his brothers and sisters more than usual, and thought, inside his foolish little pin-feathery head, that when he got a chance, he 'd show them what courage was.

After a while his chance came. All the small birds had learned to flutter from branch to branch, and to hop quite briskly over the ground. One afternoon they went to a part of the forest where the ground was damp and all was strange. The father and mother told their children to keep close together and they would take care of them; but the foolish young

Blue Jay wanted a chance to go alone, so he hid behind a tree until the others were far ahead, and then he started off another way. It was great fun for a time, and when the feathered folk looked down at him he raised his crest higher than ever and thought how he would scare them when he was a little older.

The young Blue Jay was just thinking about this when he saw something long and shining lying in the pathway ahead. He remembered what his father had said about snakes, and about one kind that wore rattles on their tails. He wondered if this one had a rattle, and he made up his mind to see how it was fastened on. "I am a Blue Jay," he said to himself, "and I was never yet afraid of anything."

The Rattlesnake, for it was he, raised his head to look at the bird. The young Blue Jay saw that his eyes were very bright. He looked right into them, and

could see little pictures of himself upon their shining surfaces. He stood still to look, and the Rattlesnake came nearer. Then the young Blue Jay tried to see his tail, but he could n't look away from the Rattlesnake's eyes, though he tried ever so hard.

The Rattlesnake now coiled up his body, flattened out his head, and showed his teeth, while all the time his queer forked tongue ran in and out of his mouth. Then the young Blue Jay tried to move and found that he could n't. All he could do was to stand there and watch those glowing eyes and listen to the song which the Rattlesnake began to sing:

" Through grass and fern,
With many a turn,
My shining body I draw.
In woodland shade
My home is made,
For this is the Forest Law.

"Whoever tries
To look in my eyes
Comes near to my poisoned jaw;
And birds o'erbold
I charm and hold,
For this is the Forest Law."

The Rattlesnake drew nearer and nearer, and the young Blue Jay was shaking with fright, when there was a rustle of wings, and his father and mother flew down and around the Rattlesnake, screaming loudly to all the other Jays, and making the Snake turn away from the helpless little bird he had been about to strike. It was a long time before the forest was quiet again, and when it was, the Blue Jay family were safely in their nest, and the Rattlesnake had gone home without his supper.

After the young Blue Jay got over his fright, he began to complain because he had not seen the Rattlesnake's tail. Then, indeed, his patient mother gave him such

a scolding as he had never had in all his life, and his father said that he deserved a sound pecking for his foolishness.

When the young Blue Jay showed that he was sorry for all the trouble that he had made, his parents let him have some supper and go to bed; but not until he had learned two sayings which he was always to remember. And these were the sayings: "A really brave bird dares to be afraid of some things," and, "If you go near enough to see the tail of a danger, you may be struck by its head."

THE RED SQUIRRELS BEGIN HOUSEKEEPING

THE first thing that Mr. Red Squirrel did after coming to the forest and meeting the Gray Squirrel was to look for something to eat. It was not a good season for a stranger who had no hidden store of nuts and seeds to draw upon. The apples and corn were not ripe, and last year's seeds and acorns were nearly gone. What few remained here and there had lost their sweet and

wholesome taste. Poor Mr. Red Squirrel began to wish that he had eaten breakfast before he ran away. He even went to the edge of the forest and looked over toward the farmhouse, where his open cage hung in the sunshine. He knew that there were nuts and a fresh bit of fruit inside of it, and his mouth watered at the thought of them, but he was a sensible young fellow, and he knew that if he went back to eat, the cage door would be snapped shut, and he would never again be free to scamper in the beautiful trees.

"I will starve first!" he said to himself, and he was so much in earnest that he spoke quite loudly.

The words were hardly out of his mouth when "Pft!" a fat acorn came down at his feet. He caught it up with his forepaws before looking around. It was smooth and glossy, not at all as though it had passed a long winter on an oak branch. He took a good nibble at it

and then looked up to see if there were more on the tree above him. You can think how surprised he was to find himself sitting beneath a maple, for in all the years since the world began no maple has ever borne acorns.

"There are no more to come," he said. "I must take small bites and make it last as long as I can." And he turned it around and around, clutching it tightly with his long, crooked claws, so that not the tiniest bit could be lost. At last it was all eaten, not a crumb was left, and then "Pft!" down came a walnut. This hit him squarely on the back, but he was too hungry to mind, and he ate it all, just stopping long enough to say: "If this maple bears such fruit as acorns and walnuts, I should like to live in a maple grove."

Next came a hazelnut, then a butternut, and last of all a fat kernel of yellow corn. He knew now that some friend was hidden in the branches above, so he

tucked the corn in one of his cheek-pockets, and scampered up the maple trunk to find out who it was. He saw a whisking reddish-brown tail, and knew that some other Red Squirrel was there. But whoever it was did not mean to be caught, and such a chase as he had! Just as he thought he had overtaken his unknown friend, he could see nothing more of her, and he was almost vexed to think how careless he must have been to miss her. He ran up and down the tree on which he last saw her, and found a little hollow in one of its large branches. He looked in, and there she was, the same dainty creature whom he had so often watched from his cage. He could see that she was breathless from running so fast, yet she pretended to be surprised at seeing him. Perhaps she now thought that she had been too bold in giving him food, and so wanted him to think that it had been somebody else.

"Good morning!" said he. "Thank you very much for your kindness."

"What do you mean?" said she.

"As though you didn't know!" he answered. "I never heard of a maple tree that bore acorns, nuts, and corn, and that in the springtime."

"Oh, well," said she, tossing her pretty head, "you have lived in a cage and may not know what our forest trees can do."

That was a rather saucy thing to say, but Mr. Red Squirrel knew her kind heart and that she said it only in mischief. "How do you know I have lived in a cage?" he asked.

"I—I thought you looked like the Squirrel at the farmhouse," she said; and then forgetting herself, she added, "You did look so surprised when that walnut hit you."

"Where were you then?" he asked quickly.

"Oh! I was on a branch above

you," she answered, seeing that he now knew all about it. "You looked so hungry, and I had plenty of food stored away. You may have some whenever you wish. It must have been dreadful in that cage."

Now Mr. Red Squirrel had loved his little friend ever since the first time he saw her on the rail fence, but he had never thought she would care for him—a tired, discouraged fellow, who had passed such a sorrowful life in prison. Yet when he heard her pitying words, and saw the light in her tender eyes, he wondered if he could win her for his wife.

"I shall never be able to do anything for you," said he. "You are young and beautiful and know the forest ways. I am a stranger and saddened by my hard life. I wish I could help you."

"The Blue Jays! The Blue Jays!" she cried, starting up. "They have found my hidden acorns and are eating them."

And sure enough, a pair of those handsome robbers were pulling acorn after acorn out of a tree-hollow near by, and eating them as fast as they could. You should have seen Mr. Red Squirrel then! He leaped from branch to branch until he reached the Blue Jays; then he stood by the hole where the acorns were stored, and scolded them. "Chickaree-chickaree-quilch-quilch-chickaree-chickaree!" he said; and that in the Red Squirrel language is a *very* severe scolding. He jumped about with his head down and his tail jerking, while his eyes gleamed like coals of fire. The Blue Jays made a great fuss and called "Jay! Jay!" at him, and made fun of him for being a stranger, but they left at last, and Mr. Red Squirrel turned to his friend.

"What would I have done without your help?" she said. "I was so dreadfully frightened. Don't you see how my paws are shaking still?" And she held

out the prettiest little paws imaginable for him to see.

Then Mr. Red Squirrel's heart began to thump very fast and hard beneath the white fur of his chest, and he sighed softly. "I wish I might always help you and protect you," he said; "but I suppose there are better fellows than I who want to do that." And he sighed again.

"Yes, they might want to," she said, looking away from him and acting as though she saw another Blue Jay coming.

"You would n't be my little wife, would you?" he asked, coming nearer to her.

"Why—I—might!" she answered, with a saucy flirt of her tail, and she scampered away as fast as she could. Do you think Mr. Red Squirrel stopped then to eat his fat kernel of yellow corn? Or do you think he waited to see whether the Blue Jays were around? No, indeed! He followed as fast as his legs could carry

him from tree to tree, from branch to branch, and it was not until he had reached the top of a tall beech that he overtook his little sweetheart. They were still there when the Gray Squirrel happened along in the afternoon.

"Ah!" said he, squinting at Mr. Red Squirrel, for his eyes were poor. "You are getting acquainted, are you? Pleasant society here. The Squirrel set is very select. You must meet some of our young people. Suppose you will begin housekeeping one of these days?"

"I have done so already, sir," answered Mr. Red Squirrel, although his wife was nudging him with one paw and motioning him to keep quiet. "Mrs. Red Squirrel and I will build our round home in the top fork of this tree. We shall be pleased to have you call when we are settled."

"Is that so?" exclaimed the Gray Squirrel. "I did not know that you were

married. I thought you came alone to the forest."

"This is my wife, sir," said Mr. Red Squirrel, and the Gray Squirrel made his very best bow and looked at her as sharply as his poor eyes would let him.

"I think I must have seen you somewhere," he said; "your face is very familiar." And he scratched his poor old puzzled head with one claw.

"Why, Cousin Gray Squirrel, don't you know Bushy-tail?" she cried. "You lived the next tree to mine all winter."

"To be sure!" he exclaimed. "But is n't your marriage rather sudden?"

"No," she said, blushing under her fur. "We have always liked each other, although we never spoke until this morning. I used to scamper along the rail fence to see Mr. Red Squirrel in his cage."

"Did you truly come for that?" asked her husband, after their caller had gone.

"I truly did," she answered, "but I never expected anybody to know it. You poor fellow! I felt so sorry for you. I would have given every nut I had to set you free."

They were a very happy couple, and the next fall the Gray Squirrel watched them and their children gathering nuts for their winter stores. Mr. Red Squirrel, as the head of the family, planned the work, yet each did his share. The nuts were not yet ripe, and they gnawed off the stems, then came to the ground, filled their cheek-pockets with the fallen nuts, and scampered off to hide them in many places. They were stored in tree-hollows, under the rustling leaves which strewed the ground, in the cracks of old logs, beneath brush-heaps, and in holes in the ground.

"Don't stop to think how many you need," said the little mother to her children. "Get every nut you can. It may be a very long winter."

"And if you don't eat them all," said their hard-working father with a twinkle in his eyes, "you may want to drop a few down to some poor fellow who has none. That was your mother's way."

"When was it her way? What makes you smile when you say it? Mother, what does he mean?" cried the young Red Squirrels all in a breath.

"I gave some nuts to a hungry Squirrel once," she said, "and he was so grateful that he drove the Blue Jays away when they tried to rob me." But she looked so happy as she spoke that the children knew there was more to the story. They dared not tease her to tell, so they whispered among themselves and wondered what their father meant.

As they gathered nuts near the Gray Squirrel, he motioned them to come close. "S-sh!" said he. "Don't tell it from me, but I think the poor hungry fellow was your father, and it was a lucky thing

for you that she had enough to give away."

"Do you suppose that was it?" the young Red Squirrels whispered to each other. "Do you really suppose so?"

THE BIGGEST LITTLE RABBIT LEARNS TO SEE

SEVEN little Rabbits lay on their nest at the bottom of the burrow, and wriggled and squirmed and pushed their soft noses against each other all day long. Life was very easy for them, and they were contented. The first thing that they remembered was lying on their bed of fur, hay, and dried leaves, and feeling a great,

warm, soft Something close beside them. After a while they learned that this Something was their Mamma Rabbit. It was she who had gotten the nest ready for them and lined it with fur that she tore from her own breast. She did n't care so much about looking beautiful as she did about making her babies comfortable.

It was their Mamma Rabbit, too, who fed them with warm milk from her own body until they should be old enough to go out of the burrow. Then they would nibble bark and tender young shoots from the roots of the trees, and all the fresh, green, growing things that Rabbits like. She used to tell them about this food, and they wondered and wondered how it would taste. They began to feel very big and strong now. The soft fur was growing on their naked little bodies and covering even the soles of their feet. It was growing inside their cheeks, too, and that made them feel important, for

Papa Rabbit said that he did not know any other animals that had fur inside their cheeks. He said it was something to be very proud of, so they were very proud, although why one should want fur inside of one's cheeks it would be hard to say.

What tangles they did get into! Each little Rabbit had four legs, two short ones in front, and two long ones behind to help him take long jumps from one place to another. So, you see, there were twenty-eight legs there, pushing, catching in the hay, kicking, and sometimes just waving in the air when their tiny owners chanced to roll over on their backs and could n't get right side up again. Then Mamma Rabbit would come and poke them this way and that, never hurting any of them, but getting the nest in order.

"It is a great deal of work to pick up after children," she would say with a tired

little sigh, "but it will not be long before they have homes of their own and are doing the same thing."

Mamma Rabbit was quite right when she said that, for all of their people set up housekeeping when very young, and then the cares of life begin.

One fine morning when the children were alone in their burrow, the biggest little Rabbit had a queer feeling in his face, below and in front of his long ears, and above his eager little nose. It almost scared him at first, for he had never before felt anything at all like it. Then he guessed what it meant. There were two bunchy places on his face, that Mamma Rabbit had told him were eyes. "When you are older," she had said to him, "these eyes will open, and then you will see." For the Rabbit children are always blind when they are babies.

When his mother told him that, the biggest little Rabbit had said, "What do

you mean when you say I shall 'see'? Is it anything like eating?"

And Mamma Rabbit said, "No, you cannot taste things until you touch them, but you can see them when they are far away."

"Then it is like smelling," said the biggest little Rabbit.

"No, it is not like smelling, either, for there are many things, like stones, which one cannot smell and yet can see."

"Then it surely is like hearing," said the biggest little Rabbit.

"Oh dear!" exclaimed his mother, who was tired of having questions asked which could not be answered. "It is not a bit like hearing. You could never hear a black cloud coming across the sky, but you could see it if you were outside your burrow. Nobody can make you understand what seeing is until your eyes are open, and then you will find out for yourself without asking."

This made the biggest little Rabbit lie still for a while, and then he said: "What is a black cloud, and why does it come across the sky? And what is the sky, and why does it let the cloud come? And what is—" But he did not get any answer, for his mother ran out of the burrow as fast as she could.

And now his eyes were surely opening and he should see! His tiny heart thumped hard with excitement, and he rubbed his face with his forepaws to make his eyes open faster. Ah! There it was; something round and bright at the other end of the burrow, and some queer, slender things were waving across it. He wondered if it were good to eat, but he dared not crawl toward it to see. He did not know that the round, bright thing was just a bit of sky which he saw through the end of the burrow, and that the slender, waving ones were the branches of a dead tree tossing in the wind. Then he looked

at his brothers and sisters as they lay beside him. He would not have known what they were if he had not felt of them at the same time.

"I can see!" he cried. "I can see everything that there is to see! I 'm ahead of you! Don't you wish that you could see, too?"

That was not a very kind thing to say, but in a minute more his brothers and sisters had reason to be glad that they could n't see. Even while he was speaking and looking toward the light, he saw a brown head with two round eyes look in at him, and then a great creature that he thought must surely be a dog ran in toward him. How frightened he was then! He pushed his nose in among his blind brothers and sisters and tried to hide himself among them. He thought something dreadful was about to happen.

"I wish Mamma Rabbit would come," he squeaked, shutting his eyes as closely

as he could. "I wish Mamma Rabbit would come."

"Why, here I am," she answered. "What are you afraid of?"

The biggest little Rabbit opened his eyes, and there was the creature who had frightened him so, and it was his own mother! You can imagine how glad she was to see that one of her children had his eyes open.

"I will call in some of my Rabbit friends," she said, "and let you see them, if you will promise not to be afraid."

The next day four of the other little Rabbits had their eyes open, and the day after that they all could see each other and the shining piece of sky at the end of the burrow. It was not so very long afterward that the Rabbit family went out to dine in the forest, and this was the first time that the children had seen their father. Often when their mother left them alone in the burrow she had pulled

grass and leaves over the opening to hide it from him, for Rabbit fathers do not love their children until they are old enough to go out into the great world, and it would never do for them to know where their babies are kept. Then their father taught them how to gnaw tough bark to wear their teeth down, for Rabbits' teeth grow all the time, and if they were to eat only soft food, their teeth would get too long. He taught them, too, how to move their ears in the right way for keen hearing, and told them that when chased they must run for the burrow or the nearest thicket. "Then crouch down on some leaves that are the color of your fur," he said, "and you may not be seen at all."

"Why should we run?" said the biggest little Rabbit.

"Because you might be caught if you did n't."

"What might catch us?" asked the biggest little Rabbit.

"Oh, a Hawk, perhaps, or a Weasel."

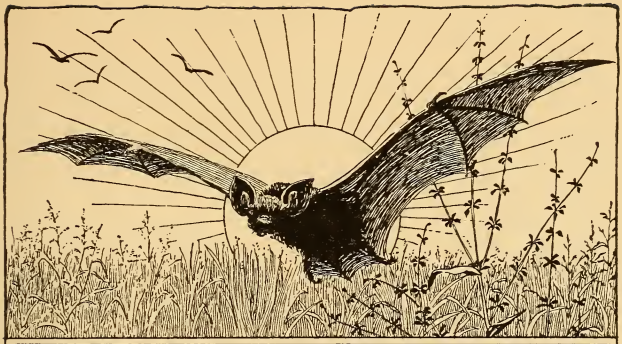
"What does a Hawk look like?"

"Like a great bird floating in the sky," said Papa Rabbit. "Now, don't ask me a single question more."

"Does a Hawk look like that bird above us?" asked the biggest little Rabbit.

His father gave one look upward. "Yes!" he said. "Run!"

And just as the Hawk swooped down toward the ground, he saw nine white-tipped tails disappear into a burrow near by.



THE LITTLE BAT WHO WOULDN'T GO TO BED

"COME," said Mamma Bat, flying toward her home in the cave, "it is time that you children went to bed. The eastern sky is growing bright, and I can see the fleecy clouds blush rosy red as the sun looks at them."

The little Bats flitted along after her, and Papa Bat came behind them. They had been flying through the starlit forest

all night, chasing the many small insects that come out after the sun has gone down, and passing in and out of the tangled branches without ever touching one. Indeed, Mamma Bat would have been ashamed if children of hers flew against anything in the dark. There might be some excuse for such a mistake in the daytime, for Bats' eyes do not see well then, but in the night-time! She would have scolded them well, and they would have deserved it, for Bats have the most wonderful way of feeling things before they touch them, and there are no other people in the forest who can do that. There are no other people who can tell by the feeling of the air when something is near, and the Bats made much fun of their friend, the Screech Owl, once, when he flew against a tree and fell to the ground.

And now the night was over and their mother had called them to go home. One of the little Bats hung back with a very

cross look on his face, and twice his father had to tell him to fly faster. He was thinking how he would like to see the forest in the daytime. He had never seen the sun rise, and he wanted to do that. He had never seen any of the day-birds or the animals that awaken in the morning. He thought it was pretty mean to make poor little Bats go off to bed the minute the stars began to fade. He did n't believe what his father and mother said, that he would n't have a good time if he did stay up. He had coaxed and coaxed and teased and teased, but it had n't made a bit of difference. Every morning he had to fold his wings and go to sleep in a dark crack in the rock of the cave, hanging, head downward, close to the rest of the family. Their father said that there never was a better place to sleep than in this same crack, and it certainly was easy to catch on with the hooks at the lower ends of their wings when they

hung themselves up for the day. But now he just would n't go to bed, so there!

"It is your turn next," said Mamma Bat to him, when the rest of the children had hung themselves up.

"I 'm not going to bed," the little Bat answered.

"Not going to bed!" said his father. "Are you crazy?"

"No," said the little Bat, "I 'm *not*."

"I don't believe the child is well," said Mamma Bat. "He never acted like this before. I 'm afraid he has overeaten." And she looked very anxious.

"I *am* well, and I *have n't* eaten too much," said the little Bat. "I think you might let a fellow have some fun once in a while. I 've never seen the sun in my life, and there are whole lots of birds and animals in the forest that I 've only heard about."

Papa and Mamma Bat looked at each other without speaking.

"I *won't* go to bed!" said the little Bat.

"Very well," said his father. "I shall not try to make you. Fly away at once and let us go to sleep."

After he had gone, Mamma Bat said, "I suppose you did right to let him go, but it seems too bad that children have to find out for themselves the trouble that comes from disobedience."

The little Bat flew away feeling very brave. He guessed he knew how to take care of himself, even in daylight. He felt sorry for his brothers who were in the cave, but he made up his mind that he would tell them all about it the next night.

The eastern sky grew brighter and brighter. It hurt his eyes to look at it, and he blinked and turned away. Then the song-birds awakened and began to sing. It was very interesting, but he thought they sang too loudly. The forest

at night is a quiet place, and he did n't see the sense of shouting so, even if the sun were coming up. The night-birds never made such a fuss over the moon, and he guessed the moon was as good as the sun.

Somebody went scampering over the grass, kicking up his heels as he ran. "That must be a Rabbit," thought the little Bat. "The Screech Owl told me that Rabbits run in that way. I wish I could see him more plainly. I don't know what is the matter with my eyes."

Just then a sunbeam came slanting through the forest and fell on his furry coat as he clung to a branch. "Ow!" he cried. "Ow! How warm it is! I don't like that. The moonbeams do not feel so. I must fly to a shady corner." He started to fly. Just what was the matter, he never knew. It may have been because he could n't see well, it may have been because he was getting very tired,

or it may have been because the strangeness of it all was beginning to frighten him; but at all events, he went down, down, down until he found himself pitching and tumbling around in the grass.

A Crow had seen him fall, and cried loudly, "Come! Come! Come!" to his friends. The Rabbits, who were feeding near by, came scampering along, making great leaps in their haste to see what was the matter. The Goldfinches, the Robins, the Orioles, the Woodpeckers, and many other birds came fluttering up. Even a Blue Jay sat on a branch above the Bat and shrieked, "Jay! Jay! Jay!" to add to the excitement. And last of all, the Ground Hog appeared, coming slowly and with dignity, as a person who can remember his grandfather should do.

"What is the cause of all this commotion?" he asked. He might have said, "What is the matter?" and then they would have understood him at once, but

he was too haughty for that. He thought he had to use big words once in a while to show that he could. If people did n't understand them, he was willing to explain what he meant.

"We 've found such a queer bird, sir," said the biggest little Rabbit, without waiting to find out what a "commotion" was. "Just see him tumble around!"

"Bird? That is no bird," said a Woodpecker. "Look at his ears and his nose. He has n't even a bill."

"Well, he flies," said the biggest little Rabbit, "because I saw him, so he must be a bird."

"Humph!" said a Chipmunk. "So does my cousin, the Flying Squirrel, in a way, yet he is no more bird than I am."

"And this fellow has n't a feather to his skin!" cried an Oriole.

"I don't say that my son is right," said Papa Rabbit, "but this creature has wings." And he gave the Bat a

poke that made him flutter wildly for a minute.

"Yes, but what kind of wings?" asked the Goldfinch. "A pair of skinny things that grow on to his legs and have hooks on both ends."

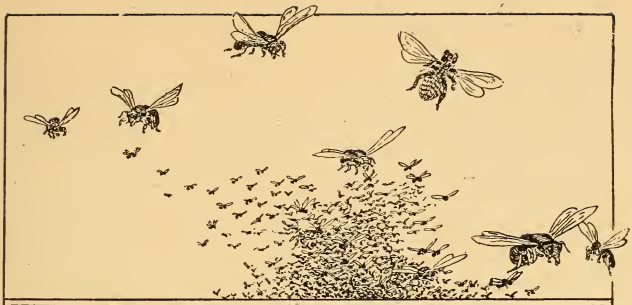
"He must be a very stupid fellow, at all events," said the Ground Hog. "He does n't talk, or walk, or eat, or even fly well. He must come of a very common family. For my part, I am not interested in persons of that kind." And he walked away with his nose in the air.

Now the other forest people would have liked to watch the Bat longer, but after the Ground Hog had gone off in this way, they thought it would show too much curiosity if they stayed. So one after another went away, and the little Bat was left alone. He fluttered around until he reached the branch where the Blue Jay had been, and there he hung himself up to wait until night.

"Oh dear!" he said, "I wonder how long a day is. I am hot and blind and sleepy, and if any more of the forest people come and talk about me, I don't know what I shall do. They don't think me good-looking because my wings grow to my legs. I only wish I could see what they look like. I believe they are *just* as homely."

And then, because he was a very tired little Bat, and cross, as people always are when they have done wrong, he began to blame somebody else for all his trouble.

"If my father and mother had cared very much about me," he said, "they would never have let me stay up all day. Guess if I were a big Bat and had little Bats of my own, I 'd take better care of them!" But that is always the way, and when, long afterward, he was a big Bat with little Bats of his own, he was a much wiser person.



A SWARM LEAVES THE BEE TREE

THE old Bee tree was becoming very crowded and the Queen-Mother grew restless. There were many things to make her so. In the tree were thousands of cells made ready for her eggs, and she had been busy for days putting one in each. In the larger cells she laid eggs that would hatch out Drones, and in the smaller ones she laid

Worker eggs. She never laid any Queen eggs. Perhaps she did not want any Queens among her children, for there can never be two Queens in one swarm, and when a new one is hatched, the Queen-Mother has to go away and find another home. That is a law among the Bees.

The Workers, however, knew that there must be young Queens growing up all the time. Supposing something should happen to the Queen-Mother, what would become of the swarm if there were nobody to lay eggs? So after she had laid several thousand Worker eggs, and it was time for the young ones to hatch, they decided to change some of the babies into young Queens. And this was easy enough. When they were out for honey, they filled the pockets on their hind legs with pollen, the yellow dust that is found in flowers. This was to be mixed with honey and water and made into bread for the babies, who were now awake, and

looked like tiny white worms in the bottom of their cells. Then they made some that was almost like sour jelly, and put it in a few of the Worker cells for the tiny white worms, or Larvæ, to eat. The Larvæ that eat this jelly grow up to be Queens, and can lay eggs. Those that eat the common bread are either Drones or Workers, whichever their mother had planned them to be.

After the Larvæ were five or six days old, the Workers shut them up in their cells and stopped feeding them. That was because the Larvæ had other things to do than eat. They had to spin their cocoons, and lie in them until they were grown and ready to come out among the older Bees. When a Larva, or Bee baby, has finished its cocoon, and is lying inside, it is called a Pupa, and when a Pupa is full grown and has torn its way out of the cocoon and wax, it is called a Drone, or a Worker, or a Queen.

Now the Queen-Mother was restless. She could hear the young Queens piping in their cells, and she knew that they wanted to come out and drive her away. She wanted to get to them and stop their piping, but the Workers stood in her way and prevented her. They knew it would not be well for the Queen-Mother to meet her royal children, and when these children tried to come out the Workers covered the doors of their cells with another layer of wax, leaving little holes where they could put out their tongues and be fed.

This made the Queen-Mother more restless than ever. "If I cannot do as I wish to with my own children," she said, "I will leave the tree." And she began walking back and forth as fast as she could, and talked a great deal, and acted almost wild with impatience. The Workers saw how she felt, and part of them decided to go with her. When a Worker

made up her mind to go with the Queen-Mother, she showed it by also acting wild and walking back and forth, and talking a great deal, sometimes fluttering her wings very fast. Then she would go for honey, because when Bees are about to swarm they fill their honey-pockets just as full as they can. At times the Queen-Mother would be quiet, and you might almost think that she had given up going. Then suddenly she would grow restless again, and all the Workers who were going with her would act as she did, and they would get so warm with excitement that the air in the tree became quite hot.

At last the Queen-Mother thought it time to start, and her followers came around her in the tree, and were very still for a minute. Several of the Workers had been flying in circles around the tree, and now they came to the doorway and called. Then all came out, and hovered in the air a few minutes before stopping

to rest on a bush near by. When they rested, the first Bee held on to the bush, the next Bee held on to her, and that was the way they did until they were all clinging tightly together in a squirming, dark-brown mass.

Ah, then the Queen-Mother was happy! She felt that she was young again, and she thought, "How they love me, these dear Workers!" She stroked her body with her legs to make herself as fine as possible, and she noticed, with pleasure, how slender she was growing. "I had thought I should never fly again," she said, "yet this is delightful. I believe I will go off by myself for a little while."

So she flew off by herself and was talking rather airily to a Butterfly when two of the Workers came after her.

"You may return to the rest," she said in a queenly way, as she motioned to them with her feelers. "I will come by and by."

"No," said they, "you must come at once or we shall all go back to the Bee tree. You must stay with us. You must do your part as it should be done." And she had to go, for she knew in her heart that Queens have to obey the law as well as other people.

After she had hung with the Workers on the bush for some time, the ones who had gone ahead to find a new home for the swarm came back and gave the signal for the rest to follow. They went to an old log near the river-bank, and here they began the real work. Crawling through an opening at one end, they found a roomy place within, and commenced to clean house at once.

"If there is anything I do like," said a Worker, as she dropped a splinter of rotten wood outside the door, "it is house-cleaning."

"So do I," said her sister. "But what a fuss the Drones always make when we

try to do anything of the sort! A pretty-looking home we 'd have if they took care of it!"

"I 'm glad none of them came with us to this place," said the first Worker. "I guess they knew they were not wanted."

"There, there!" said the Queen-Mother, coming up to where they were; "you must not talk in that way. It may be that you would rather do without Drones, and perhaps they would rather do without you; but I need you both and I will not have any quarreling." When she said this she walked away with her head in the air, and the Workers did not scold any more. They knew that she was right, and, after all, she was their Queen, even if she did have to obey the laws.

Next they got varnish from the buds of poplar trees and varnished over all the cracks and little holes in the walls of their home, leaving open only the place where

they were to go in and out. They also covered with varnish a few heavy fragments of wood that lay on the floor of their home, and when this task was done it was all in order and ready for the furniture, that is, the comb.

You know how the comb looks, and you know how they get the wax from which to make it, but unless you are acquainted with the Bees, and have seen them at work, you have no idea what busy creatures they are. The Queen-Mother, as soon as the cells were ready and she could begin laying eggs again, was as contented and happy as ever.

One day, when she was walking around a corner of the comb, she ran against a sad and discouraged-looking Worker. "Why, what is the matter?" said she, kindly. "Are you sick?"

"No," answered the Worker. "I 'm not sick and I 'm not tired, only I want to get through."

"Through with what?" asked the Queen.

"With work! It is clean house, varnish the walls, make wax, build combs, get honey, make bread and jelly, and feed the babies. And when they get old enough they 'll have to clean house, varnish the walls, make wax, build combs, get honey, make bread and jelly, and feed the babies. I want to know when it is going to stop, and Bees can spend their time in play."

"Never," said the Queen-Mother; and she spoke very gently, for she saw that the Worker was crazy. "It will never stop. If you had nothing to do but play all your life you would soon want to die, and you ought to, for there is no place in this world for idlers. You know that after a while the Drones die because they do nothing, and it is right they should."

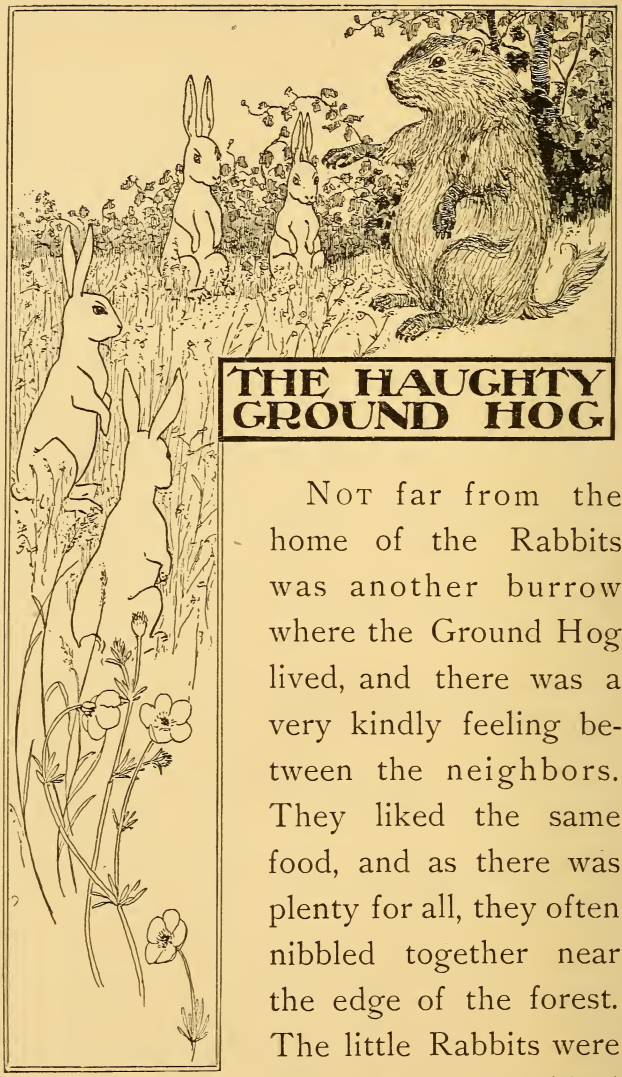
"Don't you ever get tired of your eggs?" asked the Worker.

"No," answered the Queen-Mother,

"I don't. You see, I have so much to think about, and happy thoughts make tasks light. And then, you know, it is not always the same kind of egg, and that makes a pleasant change for me. I will give you a motto to remember: 'As long as a Bee is well, work is pleasant when done faithfully.'"

"Perhaps that is the matter with me," said the Worker, raising her drooping head. "I have been careless lately when I thought nobody was looking. I will try your way."

When she had gone, the Queen-Mother smiled to herself and said: "Poor child! When work is no longer a pleasure, life is indeed sad. But any Larva should know better than to work carelessly when she is not watched."



THE HAUGHTY GROUND HOG

Not far from the home of the Rabbits was another burrow where the Ground Hog lived, and there was a very kindly feeling between the neighbors. They liked the same food, and as there was plenty for all, they often nibbled together near the edge of the forest. The little Rabbits were fond of him and liked

to listen to his stories. Once the biggest little Rabbit had run into the Ground Hog's burrow by mistake when he was frightened, and that was the beginning of a great friendship between them.

They were a queer-looking couple, for the Rabbit was small and quick and dainty, while the Ground Hog, with his stout body covered with thick, reddish fur, his broad, flat head, and his short legs, was a clumsy fellow. To be sure, he could get out of sight quickly if he had to, but he never scampered around and kicked up his heels for the fun of it, as the Rabbits did. He was too dignified to do that. He came of an old family and he could remember who his grandfather was. There were but few people in the forest who could do that; so, of course, he could not frisk like his neighbors.

Perhaps if the Ground Hog had not belonged to so old a family, he might

have had a better time. Yet the thought that he could remember his grandfather was a great pleasure to him, and when he was talking he would often remark in the most careless way, "as my grandfather used to say"; or, "That reminds me of something my grandfather once did." Some people said that he did this to show off; but it may be that they were envious.

However that may have been, the Ground Hog was certainly a haughty fellow, and if he had not been so gentle and kind a neighbor people would not have liked him. Only once had he been known to get angry, and that was when a saucy young Chipmunk had spoken of him as a Woodchuck. "Woodchuck! Woodchuck!" he had grunted. "You young Bushy-tail, I am a Ground Hog, and the Ground Hog family lived in this forest long before you ever opened your eyes. People with good manners do not

call us 'Woodchucks.' We do not like the name. My grandfather could not endure it."

It was not very long after this that he told the wondering young Rabbits about his grandfather. When talking, the Ground Hog rested by the edge of his burrow, sitting on his haunches, and waving his queer little forepaws whenever he told anything especially important. And this was the story:

"Perhaps you may have heard me speak of my grandfather. Ah, he was a Ground Hog worth seeing! He was large, and, although when I knew him the black fur on his back was streaked with gray, he was still handsome. He was clever, too. I have often heard my father say that he could dig the deepest and best burrow in the forest. And then he had such fine manners! There was not another Ground Hog in the country around who could eat as noisily as he, and it is said that when he

was courting my grandmother she chose him because of the elegant way in which he sat up on his haunches. I have been told, children, that I am very much like him."

Just here, a Red-headed Woodpecker gave a loud "Rat-a-tat-tat" on the tree above the Ground Hog's head, and there was a look around her bill as though she wanted to laugh. The Ground Hog slowly turned his head to look at her as she flew away. "Quite a good-looking young person," he said, "but badly brought up. She should know better than to disturb those who are talking. What was I saying, children?"

"You were telling how well your grandfather sat up on his haunches," said the smallest little Rabbit.

"So I was! So I was! I must tell you how my grandfather came to know the world so well. When he was only a young fellow, he made his home for a time

by a Hen house, and so heard the talk of the barn-yard people. Once he heard them tell how the farmer watched on a certain winter day to see my grandfather come cut of his burrow. Of course, you children all know how we Ground Hogs do; in the fall we are very fat, and when the cold weather comes we go to sleep in our burrows to wait for spring. Sometimes we awaken and stretch, but we go to sleep again very soon. Then, when spring comes we are slender and have healthy appetites.

"The Hens treated my grandfather with great politeness, and the Black Brahma Cock showed plainly how honored they felt to have him there. They said that they were so glad my grandfather stayed out of his burrow awhile on this winter day when the farmer was watching, because they were in a hurry for warm weather. My grandfather did not know what they meant by that, but he was too

wise to say so, and he found out by asking questions, that if a Ground Hog leaves his burrow on this certain day in winter, and sees his shadow, and goes back again, it will be cold for a long time after that. If he does not see his shadow, and stays out, it will soon be warm.

"You see now, children, how important our family is; and yet we are so modest that we had not even known that we made the weather until the Hens told my grandfather. But that is the way! Really great people often think the least of themselves."

"And do you make the weather?" asked the smallest little Rabbit.

"I suppose we do," said the Ground Hog, with a smile. "It is a great care. I often say to myself: 'Shall I have it warm, or shall I have it cold?' It worries me so that sometimes I can hardly eat."

"And how do you know when the day comes for you to make the weather?" said the smallest little rabbit.

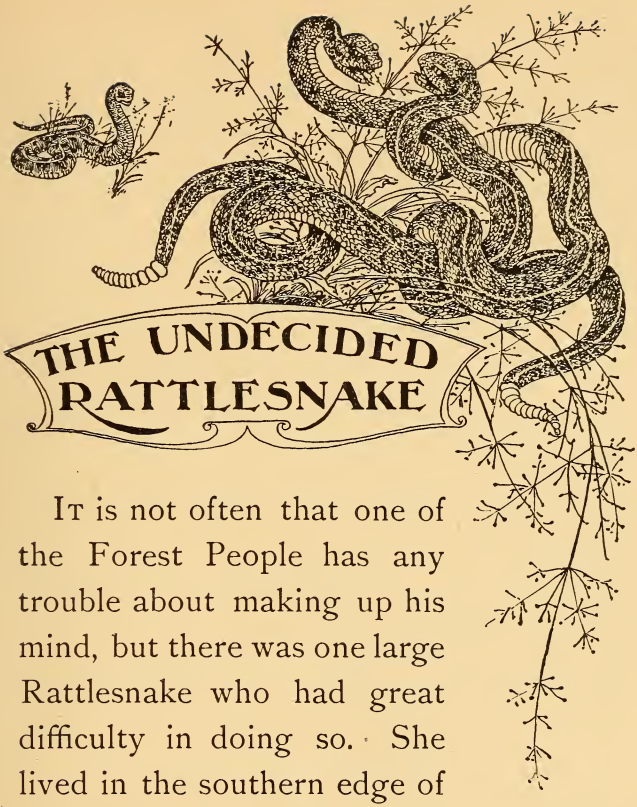
"Ahem! Well-er! I am sorry to say that my grandfather did not find out exactly what day it is that they watch for us, so I have to guess at that. But to think that we Ground Hogs make the weather for all the other people! It is worth a great deal to belong to such a family. I suppose I might have been a Weasel, a Fox, an Owl, or an Oriole. And it is a great thing to have known one's grandfather."

The little Rabbits sat very still, wishing that they had known their grandfather, when suddenly the biggest one said: "If you should stay out of your burrow when that day comes, and another Ground Hog should go back into his burrow, how would the weather know what to do?"

"Children," said the old Ground Hog, "I think your mother is calling to you. You might better go to see. Good-by." And he waved his paw politely.

The seven little Rabbits scampered

away, but their mother was not calling them. She was n't even there, and when they went back they could n't find the Ground Hog. They wondered how he happened to make such a mistake. The Red-headed Woodpecker who came along at about that time, twisted her head on one side and said : " Made-a-mistake ! Rat-a-tat-tat ! Not he ! "



THE UNDECIDED RATTLESNAKE

It is not often that one of the Forest People has any trouble about making up his mind, but there was one large Rattlesnake who had great difficulty in doing so. She lived in the southern edge of the forest, where the sunshine was clear and warm, and there were delightful crevices among the rocks in which she and all her friends and relatives could hide.

It seemed very strange that so old a Snake should be so undecided as she was. It must be that she had a careless mother

who did not bring her up in the right way. If that were so, one should indeed be sorry for her. Still even that would be no real excuse, for was she not old enough now to train herself? She had seven joints in the rattle on her tail and an eighth one growing, so you can see that she was no longer young, although, being healthy, she had grown her new joints and changed her skin oftener than some of her friends. In fact, she had grown children of her own, and if it had not been that they took after their father, they would have been a most helpless family. Fortunately for them, their father was a very decided Snake.

Yes, it was exceedingly lucky for them. It may not have been so good a thing for him. His wife was always glad to have things settled for her, and when he said, "We will do this," she answered, "Yes, dear." When he said, "We will not do that," she murmured, "No, dear." And

when he said, "What shall we do?" she would reply, "Oh, I don't know. What do you think we might better do?" He did not very often ask her opinion, and there were people in the forest who said he would never have talked matters over with her if he had not known that she would leave the decision to him.

Now this is a bad way in which to have things go in any family, and it happened here as it would anywhere. He grew more and more selfish from having his own way all of the time, and his wife became less and less able to take care of herself. Most people thought him a very devoted husband. Perhaps he was. It is easy to be a devoted husband if you always have your own way.

One night Mr. Rattlesnake did not return to their home. Nobody ever knew what had become of him. The Red Squirrel said that Mrs. Goldfinch said that the biggest little Rabbit had told her

that the Ground Hog had overheard Mr. Crow say that he thought he saw somebody that looked like Mr. Rattlesnake chasing a Field Mouse over toward the farm, but that he might have been mistaken. This was all so uncertain that Mrs. Rattlesnake knew no more than she had known before. It was very trying.

"If I only knew positively," she said to her friend, Mrs. Striped Snake, "I could do something, although I am sure I don't know what it would be."

Mrs. Striped Snake tried to help her. "Why not have one of your children come home to live with you?" she said pleasantly, for this year's children were now old enough to shift for themselves.

"I 've thought of that," answered Mrs. Rattlesnake, "but I like a quiet life, and you know how it is. Young Snakes will be young Snakes. Besides, I don't think they would want to come back."

"Well, why not be alone, then?"

"Oh, it is so lonely," replied Mrs. Rattlesnake, with a sigh. "Everything reminds me so of my husband, and that makes me sad. If I lived somewhere else it would be different."

"Then why not move?" said Mrs. Striped Snake, briskly. "I would do that. Find a nice crack in the rock just big enough for one, or make a cosy little hole in the ground somewhere near here. Then if he comes back he can find you easily. I would do that. I certainly would."

She spoke so firmly that Mrs. Rattlesnake said she would, she would to-morrow. And her friend went home thinking it was all settled. That shows how little she really knew Mrs. Rattlesnake.

The more Mrs. Rattlesnake thought it over that night, the more she dreaded moving. "If he does not come back,"

she sighed, "I may marry again in the spring, and then I might have to move once more. I believe I will ask somebody else what I ought to do."

So in the morning she began to consult her friends. They all told her to move, and she decided to do it. Then she could not make up her mind whether to take a rock-crevice or make a hole in the ground. It took another day of visiting to settle that it should be a hole in the ground. A fourth day was spent in finding just the right place for her home, and on the fifth day she began work.

By the time the sun was over the tree-tops, she wished she had chosen some other place, and thought best to stop and talk to some of her friends about it. When she returned she found herself obliged to cast her skin, which had been growing tight and dry for some time. This was hard work, and she was too tired to go on with her home-making, so

she lay in the sunshine and admired her beautiful, long, and shining body of reddish brown spotted with black. Her rattle had eight joints now, for when a Rattlesnake casts the old skin a new joint is always uncovered at the end of the tail. She waved it quickly to see how an eight-jointed rattle would sound. "Lovely!" she said. "Lovely! Like the seeds of the wild cucumber shaking around in their dry and prickly case."

One could not tell all the things that happened that fall, or how very, very, very tired her friends became of having her ask their advice. She changed her mind more times than there are seeds in a milkweed pod, and the only thing of which she was always sure was eating. When there was food in sight she did not stop for anybody's advice. She ate it as fast as she could, and if she had any doubts about the wisdom of doing so, she kept them to herself.

When winter came she had just got her new home ready, and after all she went when invited to spend the winter with a cave party of other Snakes. They coiled themselves together in a great mass and slept there until spring. As the weather grew warmer, they began to stir, wriggling and twisting themselves free.

Two bachelor Snakes asked her to marry. One was a fine old fellow with a twelve-jointed rattle. The other was just her own age.

"To be sure I will," she cried, and the pits between her nostrils and her ears looked more like dimples than ever. "Only you must wait until I can make up my mind which one to marry."

"Oh, no," they answered, "don't go to all that trouble. We will fight and decide it for you."

It was a long fight, and the older of the two Snakes had a couple of joints broken off from his rattle before it was over.

Still he beat the other one and drove him away. When he came back for his bride he found her crying. "What is the matter?" said he, quite sternly.

"Oh, that p-poor other b-bachelor!" she sobbed. "I b-believe I will g-go after him. I think p-perhaps I l-love him the b-better."

"No, you don't, Mrs. Rattlesnake," said the fine old fellow who had just won the fight. "You will do no such thing. You will marry me and never speak to him again. When I have lost two joints of my rattle in fighting for you, I intend to have you myself, and *I* say that you love me very dearly. Do you hear?"

"Yes, darling," she answered, as she wiped her eyes on the grass, "very dearly." And they lived most happily together.

"He reminds me so much of the first Mr. Rattlesnake," she said to her friends. "So strong, so firm, so quick to decide!"

And the friends said to each other, "Well, let us be thankful he is. We have been bothered enough by her coming to us for advice which she never followed."

THE QUARRELSOME MOLE

When the first hillock of fresh brown earth was thrown up in the edge of the Forest, the People who lived there said to each other. "Can it be that we have a new neighbor?"

Perhaps the Rabbits, the Ground Hogs, and the Snakes cared the most, for they also made their homes in the ground; yet even the Orioles wanted to know all about it. None of them had ever been acquainted with a Mole. They had seen the ridges in the meadows beneath which the Moles had their runways, and they knew that

when the Moles were making these long streets under ground, they had to cut an opening through the grass once in a while and throw the loose earth out. This new mound in the forest looked exactly like those in the meadow, so they decided there must be a Mole in the neighborhood.

If that were so, somebody should call upon him and get acquainted; but how could they call? Mrs. Red Squirrel said: "Why can't some of you people who are so clever at digging, burrow down and find him?"

"Yes indeed," twittered the birds; "that is a good plan."

But Mr. Red Squirrel smiled at his wife and said: "I am afraid, Bushy-tail (that was his pet name for her) that none of our friends here could overtake the Mole. You know he is a very fast runner. If they were following they could never catch him."

"Let them burrow down ahead of the place where he is working, then," said she.

"And the Mole would turn and go another way, not knowing it was a friend looking for him."

"Well, why not make an opening into one of his runways and go into it, hunting until he is found?" said Mrs. Red Squirrel, who was like some other people in not wishing to give up her own ideas.

"Yes," cried a mischievous young Woodpecker; "let the Ground Hog go. You surely don't think him too fat?"

Now there was no denying that the Ground Hog was getting too stout to look well, and people thought he would be angry at this. Perhaps he was angry. The little Rabbits were sure of it. They said they knew by the expression of his tail. Still, you know, the Ground Hog came of a good family, and well-bred people do not say mean things even if they are annoyed. He combed the fur on his

face with both paws, and answered with a polite bow: "If I had the slender and graceful form of my charming friend, Mrs. Red Squirrel, I should be delighted to do as she suggests."

That was really a very clever thing for Mr. Ground Hog to say. It was much more agreeable than if he had grunted out, "Much she knows about it! We burrowing people are all too large." And now Mrs. Red Squirrel was pleased and happy although her plan was not used.

That night Mrs. Ground Hog said to her husband: "I did n't know you admired Mrs. Red Squirrel so much." And he answered: "Pooh! Admire her? She is a very good-looking person for one of her family, and I want to be polite to her for her husband's sake. He and I have business together. But for my part I prefer more flesh. I could never have married a slender wife, and I am pleased to see, my dear, that you are stouter than

you were." And this also shows how clever a fellow Mr. Ground Hog was.

The very next night, as luck would have it, the Mole came out of his runway for a scamper on the grass. Mr. Ground Hog saw him and made his acquaintance. "We are glad to have you come," said he. "You will find it a pleasant neighborhood. People are very friendly."

"Well, I 'm glad of that," answered the Mole. "I don't see any sense in people being disagreeable, myself, but in the meadow which I have just left there were the worst neighbors in the world. I stood it just as long as I could, and then I moved."

"I am sorry to hear that," said the Ground Hog, gently. "I had always supposed it a pleasant place to live in." He began to wonder what kind of fellow the Mole was. He did not like to hear him say such unkind things before a new acquaintance. Sometimes unpleasant things have to be said, but it was not so now.

"Umph!" said the Mole. "You have to live with people to know them. Of course, we Moles had no friends among the insects. We are always glad to meet them in the ground, but they do not seem so glad to meet us. That is easily understood when you remember what hungry people Moles are. Friendship is all very well, but when a fellow's stomach is empty, he can't let that stand in the way of a good dinner. There was no such reason why the Tree Frog or the Garter Snake should dislike me."

"Are you sure they did dislike you?"

"Certain of it. I remember how one night I wanted to talk with the Garter Snake, and asked him to come out of his hole for a visit in the moonlight. He would n't come."

"What did he say?" asked the Ground Hog.

"Not a word! And that was the worst of it. Think how provoking it was for

me to stand there and call and call and not get any reply."

"Perhaps he was not at home," suggested the Ground Hog.

"That 's what he said when I spoke to him. Said he was spending the night down by the river. As though I 'd be likely to believe that! I guess he saw that he could n't fool me, though, for after I told him what I thought of him he wriggled away without saying a word."

"Still he is not so disagreeable as the Tree Frog," said the Mole, after a pause in which the Ground Hog had been trying not to laugh. The Ground Hog said afterward that it was the funniest sight imaginable to see the stout little Mole scampering back and forth in the moonlight, and stopping every few minutes to scold about the Meadow People. The twitching of his tiny tail and the jerky motions of his large, pink-palmed digging hands, showed how angry he grew in

thinking of them, and his pink snout fairly quivered with rage.

"I will tell you about the Tree Frog," said the Mole. "He is one of these fellows who are always just so good-natured and polite. I can't endure them. I say it 's putting on airs to act that way. I was telling him what I thought of the Garter Snake, and what should he do but draw himself up and say: 'Excuse me, but the Garter Snake is a particular friend of mine, and I do not care to hear him spoken of in that way.' I guess I taught him one good lesson, though. I told him he was just the kind of person I should expect the Garter Snake to like, and that I wished them much joy together, but that I did n't want anything to do with them.

"It was only a short time after this that I had such trouble about making my fort. Whenever I started to dig in a place I would find some other Mole there ahead of me."

"And then you would have to go somewhere else, of course?" said the Ground Hog.

"I 'd like to know why!" said the Mole, with his glossy silver-brown fur on end. "No indeed! I had a perfect right to dig wherever I wished, and I would tell them so, and they would have to go elsewhere. One Mole was bad-tempered enough to say that he had as much right in the meadow as anybody, and I had to tussle with him and bite him many times before he saw his mistake. . . . They are disagreeable people over there,—but why are you going so soon? I thought we would have a good visit together."

"I promised to meet Mrs. Ground Hog," said her husband, "and must go. Good-night!" and he trotted away.

Not long afterward this highly respectable couple were feeding together in the moonlight. "What do you think of the Mole?" said she.

"Well,—er—ahem," answered her husband. "You know, my dear, that I do not like to talk against people, and I might better not tell you exactly what I think of him. He is a queer-looking fellow, and I always distrust anyone who will not look me in the eye. Perhaps that is not his fault, for the fur hides his eyes and he wears his ears inside of his head; but I must say that a fiercer or more disagreeable-looking snout I never saw. He has had trouble with all his old neighbors, and a fellow who cannot get along peaceably in one place will not in another. He is always talking about his rights and what he thinks——"

"You have told me enough," said Mrs. Ground Hog, interrupting him. "Nobody ever liked a person who insists on his 'rights' every time. And such a person never enjoys life. What a pity it is!" and she gave a sigh that shook her fat sides. "Now, I had it all planned that he

should marry and set up housekeeping, and that I should have another pleasant neighbor soon."

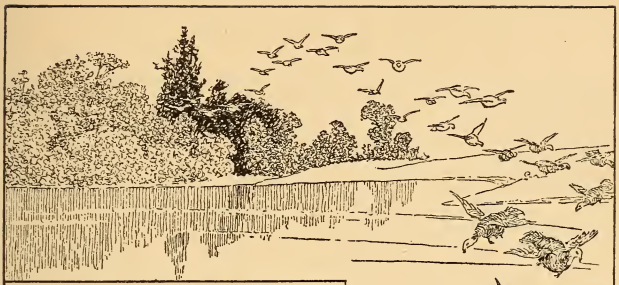
"Ah! Mrs. Ground Hog," said her husband teasingly, "I knew you would be thinking of that. You are a born match-maker. Now I think we could stand a few bachelors around here,—fine young fellows who have nothing to do but enjoy life." And his eyes twinkled as he said it.

"As though you did not enjoy life!" answered his wife. "Still, I could not wish any young Mole such a husband as this fellow. It is a great undertaking to marry a grumpy bachelor and teach him the happiness of living for others." And she looked very solemn.

"I suppose you found it so?" said Mr. Ground Hog, sidling up toward her.

"What a tease you are!" said his wife. "You know that I am happy." And really, of all the couples on whom the

moon looked that night, there was not a happier one than this pair of Ground Hogs; and there was not a lonelier or more miserable person than the Mole, who guarded his own rights and told people what he thought of them. But it is always so.



THE WILD TURKEYS COME

THE Wild Turkeys are a wandering people, and stay in one place only long enough to rear their young. One could hardly say that they lived in the Forest, but every year when the acorns and beechnuts were ripe, they came for a visit. It is always an exciting time when the Turkeys are seen

gathering on the farther side of the river and making ready to fly over. Some of the Forest People have started for the warmer country in the South, and those who still remain are either talking over their plans for flight, or working hard, if they are to spend the winter in the North, to get their stores of food ready.

It was so this year. One morning a Red-headed Woodpecker brought the news that the Turkeys were gathering. The Ground Hog heard of it just as he was going to sleep after a night of feeding and rambling in the edge of the meadow. One of the young Rabbits told him, and coaxed him to stay up to see the newcomers.

"I've never seen Turkeys in my life," said the young Rabbit, "and they say it is great fun to watch them. Oh, please come with me to the river-bank and see the Turkeys cross over. Please do!"

"Ah-h-h," yawned the Ground Hog. "You might better ask somebody who has

not been up all night. I am too sleepy."

"You won't be sleepy when you reach the river-bank," said the Rabbit. "Beside, I think there should be someone there to meet them."

At this, the Ground Hog raised his drooping head, opened his blinking eyes, and answered with great dignity: "There should indeed be someone. I will go at once."

When they reached the river-bank there was a sight well worth seeing. On the farther side of the water were a great many Turkeys. Old Gobblers were there, and the mother Turkeys with their broods of children, all looking as fine as you please, in their shining black coats. When they stood in the shadow, one might think that they wore no color but the brilliant red of their heads and necks, where there were no feathers to cover their wrinkled skin. When they walked out into the sunshine, however, their feathers showed gleams of

beautiful purple and green, and the Rabbit thought them the most wonderful great creatures he had ever seen.

"Look at them now!" he cried. "Why do those largest ones walk up and down in front of the rest and scold them?"

"They are the Gobblers," answered the Ground Hog, "and they are doing that to show that they are not afraid to cross the river. They strut and gobble, and strut and gobble, and say: 'Who 's-afraid? Who 's-afraid?' until the rest are ready to fly over."

"Now the others are doing the same thing," said the Rabbit, as the mothers and young Turkeys began to strut back and forth.

"That shows that they are willing to cross," answered the Ground Hog. "Now they will fly up to the very tops of the trees on the hill and visit there for a time. It is always so. They start from the highest point they can find. It will be

some time before they come over, and I will take a short nap. Be sure to awaken me when they start. I want to welcome them to the Forest." And the Ground Hog curled himself up beside a log and went to sleep.

The Rabbit wandered around and ate all the good things he could find. Then he fell to wondering how it would feel to be a bird. He thought it would be great fun to fly. To pass so swiftly through the air must be delightful, and then to sweep grandly down and alight softly on the ground without having people know that you were coming!

He had a good mind to try it. There was nobody to watch him, and he crept up the trunk of a fallen tree which leaned over against its neighbors. It was a foolish thing to do, and he knew it, but young Rabbits are too full of mischief to always be wise.

"I will hold my hind legs very still," he

thought, "and flap my forelegs for wings." With that he jumped off and came crashing down upon the dry leaves. He felt weak and dizzy, and as he picked himself up and looked around he hoped that nobody had seen him. "It may be a great deal of fun to fly," he said, "but it is no fun alighting from your flight unless you have real feather wings. It is too bumpy when you fly with your legs."

At this minute he heard an old Gobbler call out, and saw the flock of Turkeys coming toward him. "Wake up! Wake up!" he cried to the Ground Hog. But the Ground Hog never moved.

Still the Turkeys came nearer. The Rabbit could see that the fat old ones were getting ahead of the others, and that here and there a young or weak Turkey had to drop into the river and swim, because his wings were tired. They got so near that he could see the queer little tufts of wiry feathers which the Gobblers wear

hanging from their breast, and could see the swaying scarlet wattles under their beaks. He called again to the Ground Hog, and getting no answer, poked him three times with his head.

The Ground Hog turned over, stretched, yawned, moved his jaws a few times as though he dreamed of eating fresh spring grass, and then fell asleep once more. After that the Rabbit left him alone.

The first to alight were the Gobblers, and they began at once to strut and chatter. Next came the mother Turkeys and their young, and last of all came the weak ones who swam across. It was a fine sight to see them come in. The swimmers spread their tails, folded their wings tightly, stretched their necks, and struck out swiftly and strongly with their feet.

The young Rabbit could hear a group of mothers talking together. "The Gobblers are growing quite fond of the children," said one.

"Yes," said another; "my husband told me yesterday that he was very proud of our little ones."

"Well, it is the season for them to begin to walk together," said the first speaker; "but I never in my life had such a time as I had this spring. I thought my husband would break every egg I laid."

"I had a hard time too," said the other. "None of my eggs were broken, but after my chicks were hatched I had to hurry them out of their father's sight a dozen times a day."

"It is very trying," said a third mother Turkey with a sigh; "but that is always the way with the Gobblers. I suppose the dear fellows can't help it;" and she looked lovingly over at her husband as he strutted around with his friends. You would not have believed if you had seen her fond looks, and heard her husband's tender "Gobble," that they had hardly spoken to each other all summer. To be

sure, it was not now as it had been in the springtime. Then he would have beaten any other Gobbler who came near her, he loved her so; still, the Rabbit could see as he watched them that when he found some very large and fine acorns, this Gobbler would not eat them all, but called his wife to come and share with him; and he knew that they were happy together in their own Turkey way of being happy.

At this minute the Ground Hog opened his eyes and staggered to his feet. The loud talking had awakened him. He did not look very dignified just now. His fur was rumpled, and he blinked often from sleepiness. There was a dry leaf caught on one of his ears, too, that made him look very odd. The Rabbit wanted to laugh, but he did not dare to do so. The Ground Hog walked toward the Gobblers, and raised himself on his haunches.

"Good-evening, good-evening," said

he (it was really morning, you know). "We are very glad to welcome you to the forest. Make yourselves perfectly at home. The grass is not so tender as it was a while ago, yet I think that you will find good feeding," and he waved his paws politely.

"Thank-you,—thank-you!" answered the Gobblers, while the mothers and young Turkeys came crowding up to look at the Ground Hog. "We came for the acorns and nuts. We shall certainly enjoy ourselves."

"That is right," said the Ground Hog heartily. "We have a very fine forest here. You will pardon me for remarking it. The Pond People have a saying that is very true: 'It 's a mighty poor Frog that won't croak for his own puddle.' And my grandfather used to say that if a Ground Hog did n't love his own home he was a very poor Hog indeed. Good-night, my friends, good-night." And he

trotted happily away, followed by the Rabbit.

When he was gone, the Turkeys said: "How very kind of him!" and "What fine manners!" And the young Rabbit thought to himself: "It is queer. He was sleepy and his fur was rumpled, and that leaf bobbed around his ear when he talked. He said 'evening' instead of 'morning,' and spoke as though Turkeys came here to eat grass. And yet they all liked him, and were pleased by what he said."

You see the young Rabbit had not yet learned that the power of fine manners is more than that of looks; and that people could not think of the Ground Hog's mistakes in speaking because they knew his kindness of heart.

One night a maple tree, the very one under which Mr. Red Squirrel sat when he first came to the forest, dreamed of her winter resting-time, and when she awakened early in the morning she found that her leaves were turning yellow. They were not all brightly colored, but on each was an edging, or a tip, or a splash of gold. You may be sure that the Forest People noticed it at once.

"I told you so," chirruped a Robin to

her mate. "The Orioles went long ago, and the Bobolinks start to-day. We must think about our trip to the South." When she said this, she hopped restlessly from twig to twig with an air of being exceedingly busy.

Her husband did not answer, but began to arrange his new coat of feathers. Perhaps he was used to her fussy ways and thought it just as well to keep still. He knew that none of the Robins would start South until the weather became much colder, and he did not think it necessary to talk about it yet. Perhaps, too, Mr. Robin was a trifle contrary and was all the more slow and quiet because his wife was uneasy. In that case one could hardly blame her for talking over the family plans with the neighbors.

Later in the day, a Bobolink came up from the marsh to say good-by. He had on his travelling suit of striped brown, and you would never have known him for the

same gay fellow who during the spring and early summer wore black and buff and sang so heartily and sweetly. Now he did not sing at all, and slipped silently from bush to bush, only speaking when he had to. He was a good fellow and everyone disliked to have him go.

Mrs. Cowbird came up while they were talking. Now that she did not care to lay any more eggs, the other birds were quite friendly with her. They began to talk over the summer that was past, and said how finely the young birds were coming on. "By the way," said she, in the most careless manner possible, "I ought to have a few children round here somewhere. Can anybody tell me where they are?"

Mrs. Goldfinch looked at her husband and he looked at the sky. The Warblers and the Vireos, who had known about the strange egg in the Goldfinches' nest, had already left for the winter, and there

seemed to be no use in telling their secret now or quarrelling over what was past. Some of the other birds might have told Mrs. Cowbird a few things, but they also kept still.

"It is a shame," she said. "I never laid a finer lot of eggs in my life, and I was very careful where I put them. I wish I knew how many there were, but I forgot to count. I have been watching and watching for my little birds to join our flock; I was sure I should know them if I saw them. Mothers have such fine feelings, you know, in regard to their children." (As though she had any right to say that!)

The Mourning Doves were there with their young son and daughter, and you could see by looking at them that they were an affectionate family. "We shall be the last to go South," they cooed. "We always mean to come North in the very early spring and stay as late as possible.

This year we came much later than usual, but it could not be helped." They had spoken so before, and rather sadly. It was said that they could tell a sorrowful story if they would; but they did not wish to sadden others by it, and bore their troubles together bravely and lovingly.

"How do the new feathers work?" asked a Crow, flying up at this minute and looking blacker than ever in his fall coat. Then all the birds began to talk about dress. As soon as their broods were raised, you know, their feathers had begun to drop out, and they had kept on moulting until all of the old ones were gone and the new ones on. When birds are moulting they never feel well, and when it is over they are both happy and proud.

"I changed later than usual this year," said the Crow, "and I feel that I have the very latest fashions." This was a joke which he must have picked up among the

Barnyard People, and nobody knows where they got it. Fashions never change in the Forest.

"I think," remarked a Red-headed Woodpecker, "that I have the best wing feathers now that I ever had. They seem to be a little longer, and they hook together so well. I almost wish I were going South to try them on a long journey."

"Mr. Woodpecker's wing feathers are certainly excellent," said his wife, who was always glad to see him well dressed. "I am sure that the strongest wind will never part them. I don't see how the Owls can stand it to wear their feathers unhooked so that some of the air passes through their wings each time they flap them. It must make flying hard."

"Well, if you were an Owl you would understand," chuckled the Crow. "If their great wings were like ours, the noise of their flying would scare every creature

within hearing, and there would not be much fun in hunting."

And so they chatted on, while from the meadow came the sound of the happy insects piping in the sunshine. It was chilly now at night and in the early morning, and they could give concerts only at noonday. The next day the Wild Turkeys came and there was great excitement in the forest. The Squirrels were busier than ever storing up all the acorns that they could before the newcomers reached the oak trees; and the Blue Jays were so jealous of the Turkeys that they overate every day for fear there would not be enough to go around. As though there were any danger!

The Ground Hog was getting so sleepy now that he would doze off while people were talking to him, and then he would suddenly straighten up and say: "Yes, yes, yes! Don't think that I was asleep, please. The colors of the trees are so

bright that they tire my eyes and I sometimes close them." The dear old fellow really never knew how he had been nodding.

The Snakes, too, were growing dull and slow of motion, while the Bats talked freely of hanging themselves up for the winter. The Grouse and Quail made daily trips to the edges of the grain-fields, and found rich picking among the stubble. You could almost fancy that they came home each night fatter than when they went away in the morning.

Life went on in this way for many days, and the birds had all stopped singing. There were no more happy concerts at sunrise and no more carols at evening; only chirrupings and twitterings as the feathered people hopped restlessly from one perch to another. All could see that they were busily thinking and had no time for music. The truth was that each bird who was not to spend the winter in

the Forest felt as though something were drawing—drawing—drawing him southward. It was something they could not see or hear, and yet it was drawing—drawing—drawing all day and all night. They spoke of it often to each other, and the older birds told the young ones how, before long, they would all start South, and fly over land and water until they reached their winter home.

"How do we know where to go?" asked the children.

"All that you have to do," the older ones said, "is to follow us."

"And how do you know?" they asked.

"Why, we have been there before," they answered; "and we can see the places over which we pass. But perhaps that is not the real reason, for sometimes we fly over such great stretches of water that we can see nothing else and it all looks alike. Then we cannot see which way to go, but still we feel that we are

drawn South, and we only have to think about that and fly onward. The fathers and sons can fly the faster and will reach there first. The mothers and daughters come a few days later. We never make a mistake."

"It is wonderful, wonderful," thought a young Rabbit on the grass below. "I must watch them when they go."

The very next morning the Forest People awakened to find a silvery frost on the grass and feel the still air stirred by the soft dropping of damp red, brown, and yellow leaves from the trees. Over the river and all the lowland near it hung a heavy veil of white mist.

"It is time!" whispered the Robins to each other.

"It is time!" cooed the Mourning Doves.

"It is time!" cried the Cowbirds in their hoarse voices.

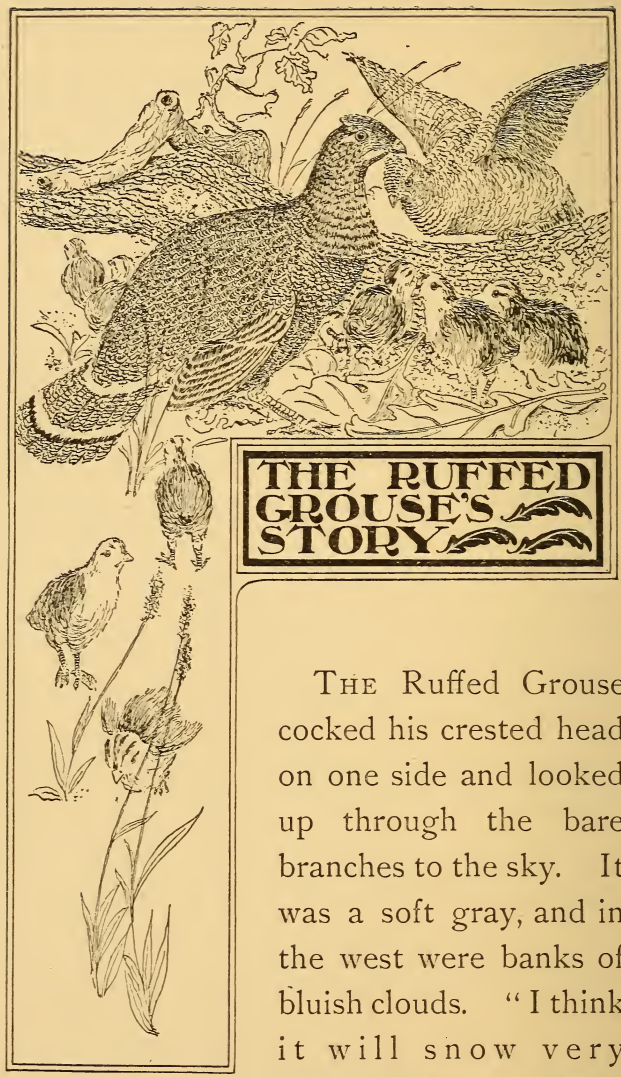
All through the forest there was restlessness and quiet haste. The Juncoes

had already come from the cold northland and were resting from their long flight. The Ground Hogs, the Rabbits, and the Squirrels were out to say good-by. The Owls peeped from their hollow trees, shading their eyes from the strong light of the sun. And then the travellers went. The Robins started in family parties. The Mourning Doves slipped quietly away. The Cowbirds went in a dashing crowd. And the Crows, after much talking and disputing on the tree-tops, took a noisy farewell of the few members of the flock who were to remain behind, and, joining other flocks from the North, flew off in a great company which darkened the sky and caused a shadow to pass over the stubble-field almost like that of a summer cloud.

"They are gone!" sighed the Ground Hog and his wife. "We shall miss them sadly. Well, we can dream about them, and that will be a comfort."

"Jay! Jay!" shrieked a handsome-crested fellow from the tree above. "What if they are gone? They will be back in the spring, and we have plenty to eat. What is the use of feeling sad? Jay! Jay!"

But all people are not so heartless as the hungry Blue Jays, and the song-birds had many loving friends who missed them and longed for their return.



THE RUFFED GROUSE'S STORY

The Ruffed Grouse cocked his crested head on one side and looked up through the bare branches to the sky. It was a soft gray, and in the west were banks of bluish clouds. "I think it will snow very soon," said he. "Mrs.

Grouse, are the children all ready for cold weather?"

"All ready," answered his cheerful little wife. "They have had their thickest feathers on for quite a while. The Rabbits were saying the other day that they had never seen a plumper or better clothed flock than ours." And her beautiful golden-brown eyes shone with pride as she spoke.

Indeed, the young Ruffed Grouse were a family of whom she might well be proud. Twelve healthy and obedient children do not fall to the lot of every Forest mother, and she wished with a sad little sigh that her other two eggs had hatched. She often thought of them with longing. How lovely it would have been to have fourteen children! But at that moment her brood came crowding around her in fright.

"Some cold white things," they said, "came tumbling down upon us and scared us. The white things did n't say a word,

but they came so fast that we think they must be alive. Tell us what to do. Must we hide?"

"Why, that is snow!" exclaimed their mother. "It drops from the clouds up yonder quite as the leaves drop from the trees in the fall. It will not hurt you, but we must find shelter."

"What did I tell you, Mrs Grouse?" asked her husband. "I was certain that it would snow before night. I felt it in my quills." And Mr. Grouse strutted with importance. It always makes one feel so very knowing when he has told his wife exactly what will happen.

"How did you feel it in your quills?" asked one of his children. "Shall I feel it in my quills when I am as old as you are?"

"Perhaps," was the answer. "But until you do feel it you can never understand it, for it is not like any other feeling that there is."

Then they all started for a low clump of bushes to find shelter from the storm. Once they were frightened by seeing a great creature come tramping through the woods towards them. "A man!" said Mr. Grouse. "Hide!" said Mrs. Grouse, and each little Grouse hid under the leaves so quickly that nobody could see how it was done. One might almost think that a strong wind had blown them away. The mother pretended that she had a broken wing, and hopped away, making such pitiful sounds that the man followed to pick her up. When she had led him far from her children, she, too, made a quick run and hid herself; and although the man hunted everywhere, he could not find a single bird.

You know that is always the way in Grouse families, and even if the man's foot had stirred the leaves under which a little one was hiding, the Grouse would not have moved or made a sound. The

children are brought up to mind without asking any questions. When their mother says, "Hide!" they do it, and never once ask "Why?" or answer, "As soon as I have swallowed this berry." It is no wonder that the older ones are proud of their children. Any mother would be made happy by having one child obey like that, and think of having twelve!

At last, the whole family reached the bushes where they were to stay, and then they began to feed near by. "Eat all you can," said Mr. Grouse, "before the snow gets deep. You may not have another such good chance for many days." So they ate until their little stomachs would not hold one more seed or evergreen bud.

All this time the snowflakes were falling, but the Grouse children were no longer afraid of them. Sometimes they even chased and snapped at them as they would at a fly in summer-time. It

was then, too, that they learned to use snow-shoes. The oldest child had made a great fuss when he found a fringe of hard points growing around his toes in the fall, and had run peeping to his mother to ask her what was the matter. She had shown him her own feet, and had told him how all the Ruffed Grouse have snow-shoes of that kind grow on their feet every winter.

"We do not have to bother about them at all," she said. "They put themselves on when the weather gets cold in the fall, and they take themselves off when spring comes. We each have a new pair every year, and when they are grown we can walk easily over the soft snow. Without them we should sink through and flounder."

When night came they all huddled under the bushes, lying close together to keep each other warm. The next day they burrowed into a snow-drift and made a snug place there which was even better

than the one they left; the soft white coverlet kept the wind out so well. It was hard for the little ones to keep quiet long, and to amuse them Mr. Grouse told how he first met their mother in the spring.

"It was a fine, sunshiny day," he said, "and everybody was happy. I had for some time been learning to drum, and now I felt that I was as good a drummer as there was in the forest. So I found a log (every Ruffed Grouse has to have his own place, you know) and I jumped up on it and strutted back and forth with my head high in the air. It was a dusky part of the forest and I could not see far, yet I knew that a beautiful young Grouse was somewhere near, and I hoped that if I drummed very well she might come to me."

"I know!" interrupted one of the little Grouse. "It was our mother."

"Well, it was n't your mother then, my chick," said Mr. Grouse," for that was long, long before you were hatched."

"She was our mother afterwards, anyway," cried the young Grouse. "I just know she was!"

Mr. Grouse's eyes twinkled, but he went gravely on. "At last I flapped my wings hard and fast, and the soft drumming sound could be heard far and near. 'Thump-thump-thump-thump-thump; thump-thump-rup-rup-rup-rup-r-r-r-r-r-r-r-r-r.' I waited, but nobody came. Then I drummed again, and after that I was sure that I heard a rustling in the leaves. I drummed a third time, and then, children, there came the beautiful young Grouse, breaking her way through the thicket and trying to look as though she did n't know that I was there."

"Did she know?" cried the little Grouse.

"You must ask your mother that," he answered, "for it was she who came. Ah, what happy days we had together all spring! We wandered all through this

great Forest and even made some journeys into the edge of the Meadow. Still, there was no place we loved as we did the dusky hollow by the old log where we first met. One day your mother told me that she must begin housekeeping and that I must keep out of the way while she was busy. So I had to go off with a crowd of other Ruffed Grouse while she fixed her nest, laid her eggs, and hatched out you youngsters. It was rather hard to be driven off in that way, but you know it is the custom among Grouse. We poor fellows had to amuse ourselves and each other until our wives called us home to help take care of the children. We've been at that work ever since."

"Oh!" said one of the young Grouse. "Oh, I am so glad that you drummed, and that she came when she heard you. Who would we have had to take care of us if it had n't happened just so?"

That made them all feel very solemn,

and Mr. Grouse could n't answer, and Mrs. Grouse could n't answer, and none of the little Grouse could answer because, you see, it is one of the questions that has n't any answer. Still, they were all there and happy, so they did n't bother their crested heads about it very long.

A MILD DAY IN WINTER

It had been a cold and windy winter. Day after day the storm-clouds had piled up in the northwest and spread slowly over the sky, dropping great ragged flakes of snow down to the shivering earth. Then the forest trees were clothed in fleecy white garments, and the branches of the evergreens drooped under their heavy cloak.

Then there had

been other days, when a strong wind stripped the trees of their covering, and brought with it thousands of small, hard flakes. These flakes were drier than the ragged ones had been, and did not cling so lovingly to everything they touched. They would rather frolic on the ground, rising again and again from their resting-places to dance around with the wind, and help make great drifts and over-hanging ledges of snow in the edge of the Forest, where there was more open ground.

It is true that not all the winter had been cold and stormy. There were times when the drifts melted slowly into the earth, and the grass, which last summer had been so tender and green, showed brown and matted on the ground. Still the Great Horned Owl and his wife could not find enough to eat. "We do not mean to complain," said he with dignity, as he scratched one ear with his feathered

right foot, "but neither of us has had a meal hearty enough for a healthy Robin, since the first heavy snow came."

This was when he was talking to his cousin, the Screech Owl. "Hearty enough for a Robin!" exclaimed Mrs. Great Horned Owl. "I should say we had n't. I don't think I have had enough for a Goldfinch, and that is pretty hard for a bird of my size. I am so thin that my feathers feel loose."

"Have you been so hungry that you dreamed about food?" asked the Screech Owl.

"N-no, I can't say that I have," said the Great Horned Owl, while his wife shook her head solemnly.

"Ah, that is dreadful," said the Screech Owl. "I have done that several times. Only yesterday, while I lay in my nest-hollow, I dreamed that I was hunting. There was food everywhere, but just as I flew down to eat, it turned into pieces of

ice. When I awakened I was almost starved and so cold that my beak chattered."

It was only a few days after the Screech Owl's call upon his cousins that he awakened one night to find the weather milder, and the ground covered with only a thin coating of soft snow. The beautiful round moon was shining down upon him, and in the western sky the clouds were still red from the rays of the setting sun.

Somewhere, far beyond the fields and forests of this part of the world, day-birds were beginning to stir, and thousands of downy heads were drawn from under sheltering wings, while in the barnyards the Cocks were calling their welcome to the sun. But the Screech Owl did not think of this. He aroused his wife and they went hunting. When they came back they did not dream about food. They had eaten all that they could, and the Great Horned Owl and his wife had

made a meal hearty enough for a dozen Robins, and a whole flock of Goldfinches. It was a good thing for the day-birds that this was so, for it is said that sometimes, when food is very scarce, Owls have been known to hunt by daylight.

When morning came and it was the moon's turn to sink out of sight in the west, the Owls went to bed in their hollow trees, and Crows, Blue Jays, Woodpeckers, Chickadees, Grouse, Quail, Squirrels, and Rabbits came out. The Goldfinches were there too, but you would never have known the husbands and fathers of the flock, unless you had seen them before in their winter clothing, which is like that worn by the wives and children. Here, too, were the winter visitors, the Snow Buntings and the Juncos, brimming over with happiness and news of their northern homes. This warm day made them think of the coming springtime, and they were already planning their flight.

"I wish you would stay with us all summer," said a friendly Goldfinch, as he flirted the snow off from a tall brown weed and began to pick out and eat the seeds.

"Stay all summer!" exclaimed a jolly little Snow Bunting. "Why should we want to stay? Perhaps if you would promise to keep the snow and ice we might."

"Why not ask the Goldfinches to come north with us?" suggested a Junco. "That would be much more sensible, for they can stand the cold weather as well as we, but we cannot stand warm days, such as I hear they have in this part of the country after the ice melts."

Then the older people of the group began to talk of the cares of life and many other things which did not interest their children, so the younger ones wandered away from them.

"I say," called a young Junco to a young Snow Bunting, "would n't you like

to show some of these playmates of ours the countries where we were born?"

"Yes indeed," answered the Snow Bunting. "Would n't they open their eyes, though? I 'd like to have them see the rocks up there."

"And the animals," said the Junco.

"Yes! Would n't they stare at the Bears, though!"

"Humph," said a Blue Jay. "I would n't care very much about seeing Bears, would you?" And he turned to a Crow near by.

"No," said the Crow. "I don't think very much of Bears anyway." He said this as though he had seen them all his life, but the Chickadees say that he never saw even a Cub.

"They have n't any big animals here," said the Junco to the Snow Bunting.

"Have n't we, though?" replied the Blue Jay. "Guess you would n't say that if you saw the Ground Hog. Would he say that?" he asked, turning to the young

Grouse, Quail, Woodpeckers, Goldfinches, Chickadees, Squirrels, and Rabbits who stood around listening.

"No indeed!" they answered, for they wanted their visitors to understand that the Forest was a most wonderful place, and they really thought the Ground Hog very large.

"I don't believe he is as big as a Bear," said the Snow Bunting, with his bill in the air.

"How big is he?" asked the Junco.

Now the Blue Jay was afraid that the birds from the north were getting the better of him, and he felt very sure that they would leave before the Ground Hog had finished his winter sleep, so he did what no honest bird would have even thought of doing. He held his crested head very high and said, "He is bigger than that rock, *a great deal bigger*."

The Crow looked at the rock and gave a hoarse chuckle, for it was a hundred

times larger than the Ground Hog. The Grouse, Quail, Woodpeckers, Goldfinches, Chickadees, Squirrels, and Rabbits looked at each other without saying a word. They knew how the Blue Jay had lied, and it made them ashamed. The Grouse pretended to fix their snow-shoes. They did not want to look at the birds from the north.

The Snow Buntings and Juncos felt that it would not do to talk about Bears to people who had such a great creature as the Ground Hog living among them. "He must be wonderful," they said. "Where does he sleep?"

"In the Bats' cave," answered the Blue Jay, who having told one lie, now had to tell another to cover it up. "He sleeps in the middle and there is just room left around the edges for the Bats."

Now at this very time the Ground Hog was awake in his burrow. He could feel that it was warmer and he wanted room

to stretch. He thought it would seem good to have an early spring after such a cold winter, so he decided to take a walk and make the weather, as his grandfather had done. When he came out of his burrow he heard a great chattering and went to see what was the matter. That was how it happened that soon after the Blue Jay had told about the Bats' cave, one wide-awake young Junco saw a reddish-brown animal trotting over the grass toward them. "Who is that?" he cried.

The Grouse, Quail, Woodpeckers, Goldfinches, Chickadees, Squirrels, and Rabbits gave one look. "Oh, there is the Ground Hog!" they cried. Then they remembered and were ashamed again because of what the Blue Jay had said.

"Oh!" said the Snow Buntings and the Juncos. "So that is the Ground Hog! Big as that rock, is he? And you don't think much of Bears?"

The Crow pointed one claw at the Blue Jay. "I never said he was as big as that rock. *He* is the fellow that said it."

"I don't care," said the Blue Jay; "I was only fooling. I meant to tell you after a while. It 's a good joke on you." But he had a sneaky look around the bill as he spoke, and nobody believed him. Before long, he and the Crow were glad enough to get away from the rest and go away together. Yet even then they were not happy, for each began to blame the other, and they had a most dreadful fight.

When the Ground Hog was told about it he said, "What foolishness it is to want to tell the biggest story! My grandfather told us once that a lie was always a lie, and that calling it a joke did n't make it any better. I think he was right."

And the Snow Buntings and Juncos, who are bright and honest, nodded their dainty little heads and said, "Nobody in our own

dear north country ever spoke a truer word than that." So they became firm friends of the Ground Hog, even if he were not so large as the rock.

THE END.

"Many a mother and teacher will accord a vote of thanks to the author."

Among the Meadow People.

STORIES OF FIELD LIFE, WRITTEN FOR THE LITTLE ONES.

By CLARA D. PIERSON.

Illustrated by F. C. GORDON.

12mo, 127 pages, cloth, gilt top - $1.25.

"One of the daintiest and in many ways most attractive of the many books of nature study which the past year has brought forth."—*Boston Advertiser.*

"They are like Mrs. Gatty's well-known 'Parables from Nature,' written in the best of English, as fascinating as fairy tales, and yet 'really true,' a quality which we all know appeals to the childish mind."—*N. Y. Evangelist.*

"We have seen nothing better for its purpose, and hope many a teacher of kindergartens and many a mother may avail herself of the privilege of using these little tales."—*N. Y. Christian Advocate.*

"It will be a great advance in the work of education in the school and the home when such books are more generally utilized."—*Zion's Herald.*

"These charming stories of field life will delight many a child of kindergarten age; and it is safe to say that older brothers and sisters will also want to claim a share in them."—*Christian Register.*

Sent by mail, post-paid, on receipt of price.

E. P. DUTTON & CO., Publishers,

31 West 23d Street - - - - - New York.