

LITTLE MEN AND WOMEN DORIES

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By CAROLYN SHERWIN BAILEY

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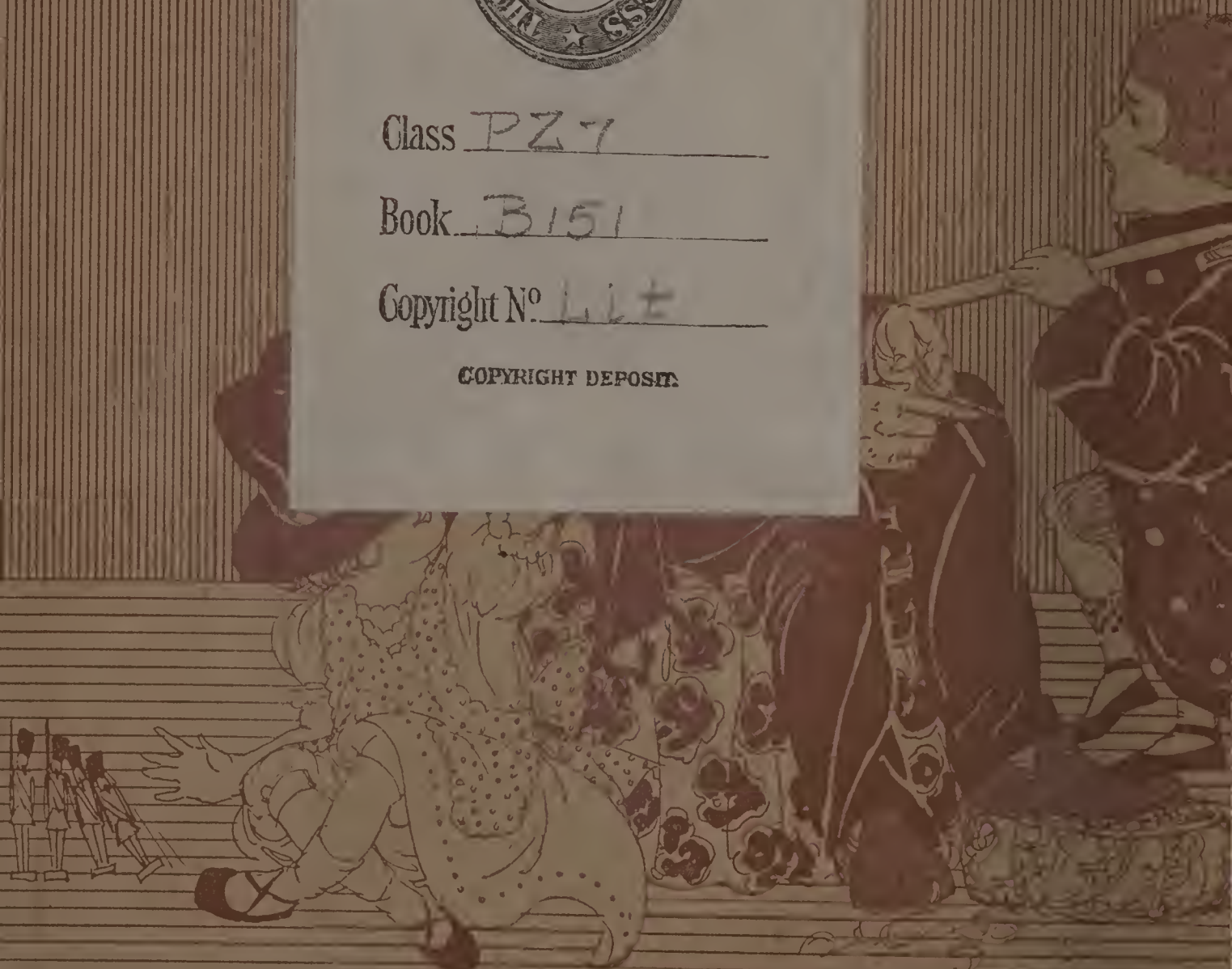


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LITTLE MEN AND WOMEN STORIES



From Story—*In Care of the Conductor*



From Story—*Easter Garden*

LITTLE MEN AND WOMEN STORIES

By CAROLYN SHERWIN BAILEY

The famous story lady's big books

LINCOLN TIME STORIES, SURPRISE
STORIES and READING TIME STORIES



FULLY ILLUSTRATED



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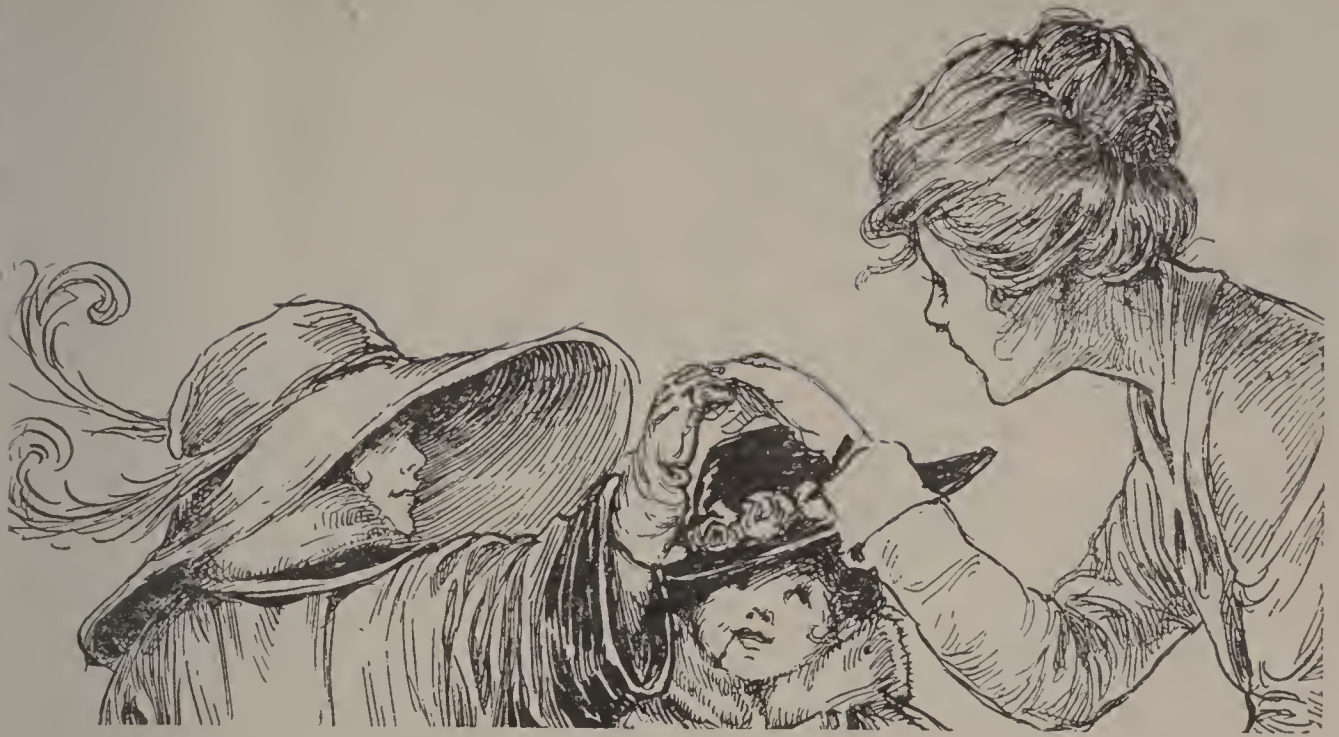
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Molly's strong, firm little hand on his bridle

LITTLE MEN AND WOMEN STORIES



She went down the lane

WHEN DOBBIN RAN AWAY

Molly had a secret. It was a secret which she had to keep locked up in her heart. Molly was afraid of horses.

She was more afraid of even a slow old horse than she wanted anyone to know. When the big dray horses had waited so quietly in front of the cellar door last week as the winter's supply of coal was unloaded, Molly had stayed at the front of the house, not going toward the back once.

So, fancy how Molly felt when mother said to her one morning when the kitchen was full of the spicy smell of the fall canning and preserving,

“I need another basket of tomatoes and some green peppers and some very small pickling cucumbers, Molly. Like a good child, go to the corner

and stop Tony, the vegetable man, when he comes along with his horse and wagon. Tell him to drive down this way.”

Molly did as mother asked her to. She went down the lane in front of their house and as far as the corner where Elm street and Washington street came together. All the way she could smell the sweet odors of the canning and preserving in other kitchens. And when she reached the corner she could see Tony's vegetable wagon standing outside of a house at the end of the block. How interesting and bright it was, full to the very sides

with round, rosy tomatoes, green cucumbers, small russet pears, dark red and green cabbages and crimson apples.

But Tony, the vegetable man, was not in sight. He must be in some back yard, Molly thought, weighing out potatoes or beets. And suddenly Tony's white horse, Dobbin, who drew the vegetable wagon, began to walk all by himself! Dobbin walked so fast that it was almost a trot straight toward Molly. It was frightful, and the worst of it was that Dobbin was headed toward Elm street, the street of the town that had automobiles and

swiftly moving trucks and trolley cars, because it was so wide. Dobbin would run away when he reached Elm street, Molly knew.

Molly thought of a great many things in the short space of time it took the vegetable wagon and Dobbin to reach her. She thought how cold her hands felt and how her teeth chattered. She thought, too, of all the ginger pear and the spiced tomatoes and the sweet pickle that would be spoiled if Dobbin ran away so far and fast that he tipped over the wagon. And Molly thought how many times Dobbin had brought good things to eat right to their back

fence, in all kinds of weather, patiently.

Suddenly Molly decided to forget her fears. She stepped to the edge of the street down which Dobbin came, and she took a firm hold of his bridle.

Nothing dreadful at all happened. Dobbin did not throw his heels in the air or do anything that a runaway horse is supposed to do. Instead, it seemed to be a comfort to him to feel Molly's strong, firm little hand on his bridle. He stood still, looking down at her with kind eyes.

And something strange happened to Molly also. With her hold on the horse she lost her fear. She felt as

brave as a fireman, or a circus rider, or the man on the motorcycle who belonged to the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to animals. "Come on, Dobbin," Molly said, leading him with the loaded vegetable wagon down their lane. "Come right along with me. Mother is waiting for some tomatoes and pickles."

Dobbin followed, slowly and carefully, with his head close to the little girl's shoulder. Once he stopped and put his nose down in the pocket of her apron. Molly laughed gaily. Why, Dobbin was just like an overgrown baby. He had smelled the fat

lump of brown sugar that mother had given Molly from the sugar crock. Molly fed it to the horse and they went on again until they came to the gate of Molly's back fence.

There was mother, waiting to fill her vegetable basket, and so surprised to see who had brought the wagon, one little girl and one gentle old horse. Then Tony came, all breathless, for he had thought that Dobbin had ran away and upset the vegetables in front of the trolley cars on Elm street.

“Oh, no, Tony,” Molly said. “I am not in the least afraid of horses. I saved Dobbin.”

And how thankful Molly was, as Tony gave her his largest, rosiest apple, that she had kept the secret of her fear locked up tightly in her own little heart!



THE SKIPPER OF THE MOLLY L.



When Edward reached the dock that he had built of stones on the bank of the brook there was no toy sail boat there. The Molly L. was gone. Edward sat down on a log to think it over. If he had not been a plucky seven-year-old boy he would have cried.

“She was the finest little boat a boy ever had,” he said to himself. “Old



Edward sat down on a log to think it over

Captain Newton down in the village made her for me, with a deck and a hold and wide sails, and painted in stripes with her name on one side, The Molly L., after his last fishing boat. Now she has gone.”

Edward stood up at last and looked at the broken string which had held the Molly L. to the dock. It was a wet spring; there had been a heavy rain the night before and the brook was high and rough. The water pouring down from a spring up in the woods had swept away part of the dock as well as tearing the toy ship loose. The brook went on, winding in and out of

the village, a long way. Although the little boy followed the bank as far as he could where his father's land lay, he could find no trace of her.

“I was going to load the Molly L. today,” he thought sadly. “I had some black pebbles for coal, a lot of little boards cut from shingles and some empty spools for barrels of oil. She was going to make the trip to that play city I built below the dock. I had made a big warehouse of blocks and a mill. Now the fun is all spoiled. I wish I had a boy to play with. Some girl has moved into the old house on the place next to ours and girls don't know how to play anyway.”

So Edward felt unhappy all day, although in the afternoon the sun came out and the water of the brook sparkled like a real little river. But Edward didn't go down to the brook for several days. It was Saturday before he went.

He went to bring home the carpenter's blocks with which he had built his little city, for using in his sand pile, but he found a surprse. A tall pine tree grew beside the brook. Pinned to the pine tree was a note. Edward took it and read the words that were printed on it in pencil:

“May be back tomorrow,
“Molly L.”

That was odd. It seemed to be a message from a toy ship that had no skipper. And there was not a trace of the Molly L. at the little stone dock, although Edward looked with sharp eyes up and down the brook. He went home and dreamed about the wonder. He was down at the brook the first thing Monday morning.

But still the toy ship was not there. Pinned to the tree was another note, stranger than the first one:

“I can’t dock today, for I am having a new suit made.

“The Skipper.”

Odder and odder! Edward felt as if he were the hero of a nice adventure story. He went to the brook as soon as he could the next day and the next, but not until Saturday did anything happen. But on Saturday morning there was the Molly L. tied to the little stone dock with a fresh length of twine. She carried a load. Seated on her deck was the skipper.

He was a funny black rubber doll, but he had been newly dressed, very

neatly, for his position. Beside the skipper of the Molly L. was his cargo. Such a welcome cargo as the skipper of the Molly L. had brought and was guarding for his owner. It was a small tin barrel of gingersnaps!

“Oh, Molly L.,” Edward shouted, for he always talked to his ship as if she were alive.

“Here I am!” said a voice that Edward thought at first must come from the skipper. But just then a little girl of Edward’s own age, seven, stepped out from behind the pine tree. She looked like a nice girl to play with, in

a frock that would not tear, with bright eyes and a smiling mouth.

“My name is Molly Lewis,” she told Edward. “Your toy ship drifted down to our place when the brook rose so high and father caught it just in time to save it from being wrecked. I knew it was your ship, for I have watched you playing ever since we moved to the place next yours and so I knew I must give it back to you. But, first, I had a cold and father carried the first note and pinned it to your tree so you wouldn’t be worried. Then mother and I dressed my rubber doll to be the skipper. He can swim very well and



Stepped out from behind the pine tree

he never did agree with the other dolls. And grandmother baked you the gingersnaps.”

“Thank you.” That was all Edward could say at first. Then, “I was sure you wouldn’t know how to play with me,” he finished honestly.

“Oh, but I do!” said Molly L. the girl.

“You shall unload the cargo,” Edward said. “Then we will eat it, and after that we will own the ship on shares.”





The boys saw him

FATHER MOLE'S NEW HOUSE

Father Mole took his slow way across the green grass beside the path.

Watching very quietly, the boys saw him, although Father Mole did not know that. He had gathered a little

dried moss that he was pushing along in front of him with his funny pointed nose and his long, flat fore paws. The moss was for making beds in the house that Father Mole had just finished in the deep earth of the lawn. He, himself, looked very fine in a new gray velvet coat. He wore no gloves for this occasion of moving into a new house, for he needed his paws for digging. But Father Mole was going to have a long summer's rest now while Mother Mole did the housekeeping.

How he had worked to build his new house! Father Mole was an architect, a mason, a road builder, a plumber

and an engineer all in one, with no tools except his shovel-like paws and his wriggling little nose.

He had raised first a mound-like roof that could be seen only as a small bump in the grass. It was the roof of a cozy, round room like a gallery, and under this and connecting with it was another room. Mother Mole was going to live in a large house. Father Mole had put in a water system, too. He had dug several wells near the lower room so set that they would catch the dew and the summer rains.

And there was the danger of robbers! But the little house in the earth

was protected from them. Father Mole had dug a long underground road along which he and his family could make their escape if anyone stepped on it or a beetle came down or it was flooded. And he had also dug five subways that went out in different directions from his cellar and each had an entrance right there at the cellar. His family would be able to take the subway whenever they wanted to without buying a ticket.

It had taken a long time, planning and measuring and digging all by himself, for the little gray man to build this house. He had worked without

rest, burrowing with his nose and throwing up the earth with the strong flat nails of his front paws for three hours at a time. Then he had rested for three hours, just as if he wore a watch and could tell the time, but always listening. A beetle wearing armor might burrow down in the earth, or a fat earth worm dig down to try and live in the room he was building for Mother Mole's sitting room.

Now, though, it was all finished. Father Mole hurried as he learned by the feeling of the ground there beside the path that he was close to his front door. What did it matter if it was

only a dark, tunneled kind of place? It was a moles' house and as well built as those of the rest of the family as far back as his many times great grandfather.

He had come to the door. But where was the house that Father Mole had built? He nosed about for it in the grass and then he burrowed down underneath. It had been ruined. When the children came by that way they had kicked it there in the grass and stones had gone down inside it. The two floors, the wells, the road away from robbers and the subways were gone.

Did Father Mole feel discouraged and give up his plan of having a new house? No indeed! None of Mother Nature's boys give up as easily as that. He knew what a patient, faithful little creature Mother Mole was. She would wait for him all summer to finish another house.

So Father Mole once more measured and dug. He raised a new roof, dug two more floors, made another secret road and five more subways. It took him a long time, working three hours without stopping and then resting for three hours as he watched for tramps.

If a beetle, an earthworm, or a child had spoiled his second house, Father Mole would have begun on a third one.

So the house was finished at last, as fine and wonderful as it had been before it was stepped on, and Father Mole went to get Mother Mole. He walked slowly, feeling his way at every step, but happy and contented. Why did he feel his way?

Father Mole is blind. So were his father and his grandfather and his many times great grandfathers. Mother Mole is blind. But they work with such patience and skill that they are among the wonders Mother Na-



Mother Nature will show any child

ture will show any child who loves a garden and likes to watch what is going on there. Spiders, ants, moles, birds—they know so much that we have to be taught to do with our hands.

IN THE CITY OF PLAY



There was a high white wall all around the City of Play and the gate was locked so that the children on the outside could not go inside. They had peeped through the key hole, though, and, oh, the wonders that they saw!

The dolls who lived in the City all had curling hair and eyes that opened and closed. Toy soldiers in smart red



There was a city of toy wild animals

and gold uniforms and hats with plumes marched up and down the streets, which were shaded by Christmas trees. Within the City of Play there was a zoo of toy wild animals that could prowl and roar; bears, lions, tigers, and monkeys. There were toy farms with barns and tools and woolly lambs and mooing cows.

Along all the lanes of the City were picnic tables spread with jam sandwiches and plates of taffy and piles of candy sticks. But almost the best part of the place was the heaps of building blocks and the piles of white sand and the banks of moulding clay of so many

bright colors. There was no kind of happy play a child might not enjoy in this magical City.

“How many boys and girls there are inside the City of Play!” the children on the outside said longingly. “Why shouldn’t we be inside too? There are toys enough for all, why not for us as well as the others?”

“I am going into the City!” Peter decided.

Peter’s father had a fine large farm just outside of the City of Play and there was a great deal that a strong boy eight years old, as Peter was, could do to help. He could gather apples

and weed the garden and go for the cows, but, no, Peter must wait at the wall of the City, wishing to have the toys for his own.

“How will you get in?” asked the children.

“I shall break down the gate. Come and watch me!” said Peter.

So all the children watched. Peter pounded on the gate. He kicked it. He shouted in a gruff, surly voice, “Let me in, I say. I am coming in to play as much as I like.”

Suddenly the gate opened softly, all of itself, and Peter went in.

“Here I am, come and play with me,”

Peter shouted to the children of the City, but none seemed to hear him. No one turned or answered him. Each boy or girl there was busy playing at farming or building or keeping house. They only waited for boisterous Peter to pass by.

“Well, I shall play by myself, and with whatever toys I chose,” Peter said as he plunged into the toy zoo.

But stranger things happened there. The toy lion that he snatched crumpled up into paper in his hands. A toy soldier who had walked toward Peter was not able to stand up alone when the little boy touched him.

“I will have a bunch of Christmas trees,” Peter decided, not discouraged. “I will carry them home all lighted.”

With that Peter tore up several of the beautiful little green trees by their roots, but when he reached the gate of the City of Play, the candles had gone out. The trees were old and black.

“What is the reason that I can’t have a good time here?” Peter asked then of another boy who was watching him.

The boy smiled. “You came in by the wrong gate,” he told Peter. “Go out again and follow the path you will find until you come to the other gate.”

Peter did as the boy told him and



The candles had gone out. The trees were old and black

he was surprised to find a path he had never noticed before. All kinds of weeds and stones and dusty things had to be taken out of it before he could walk along it at all. Then it suddenly led to his own orchard where there were many apples to be picked up and put in barrels. After that it was just the old farm path down to the cow pasture.

“This must be a mistake,” Peter thought as he gathered apples and then started the bell cow leading the others home, but, oh, what a surprise came to him! The path ended in a gate. It looked for all the world like



the one he had kicked before, but now it opened without his touching it. Inside, the City with all its treasures lay before him.

But this time the children of the City held out their hands to him. The toys marched, and roared, and banged, and whistled a welcome to Peter.

Peter raised his hands as he stood in the City square and called to the boys and girls on the outside.

“Come in!” he shouted. “I have found the way. Do your work first, and play afterward. That’s the way into this City.”



She had real hair and eyes

IN CARE OF THE CONDUCTOR

Eunice dreaded very much the trip on the train to visit Great-aunt Eunice.

It was going to be beautiful after she reached Feeding Hills where Great-aunt Eunice lived, the big white house

with its garden and orchard and swing and a full cooky jar and, oh, so many other nice things that the little girl could not count them. The trouble, though, was the going there.

Mother was ill. Father was away. If Eunice went to Feeding Hills for a long, pleasant visit she must go alone, in the care of the conductor. And Eunice was afraid of conductors and noisy, whirling-along trains.

She knew that she must not tell anyone of her fear. Her small trunk was packed with plenty of gingham play frocks and a white dress for best and her own little sewing basket and a

book for Great-aunt Eunice. The hired girl took Eunice down to the noisy, busy station, bought her ticket, and before she hardly knew it, there she was climbing up the steps of the train and the conductor in his blue suit with shiny gold buttons was saying to the hired girl:

“All right. Feeding Hills station. Yes, I’ll see that the little girl gets off there safely.”

All alone, with her heart going pit-a-pat, Eunice followed the conductor down the aisle of the long car and sat down in the seat to which he led her. The hired girl left the station

almost at once, for she had work to do at home. But even if she had been there at the station, Eunice would not have been able to see her. Her only friend, the strange conductor, had left her almost at once and Eunice could not see out of the window, because her eyes were full of homesick tears. The train started. Oh, it was a very sad trip! Eunice snuggled down as far as she could in the seat, so that no one would see that she was crying.

“Mama!” Why, what was that?

No wonder the doll who was occupying the other half of Eunice’s seat had spoken. She, too, was all alone

and Eunice had not seen her. Eunice had only leaned on her so hard that she had made her cry. Eunice dried her eyes and looked in happy wonder at the doll. She was dressed as Eunice was, in her traveling things. She, too, seemed to be going somewhere alone in the care of the conductor. At least there was no other little girl the entire length of the car to whom she might belong. But the doll had the happiest face Eunice had almost ever seen. She wasn't afraid of a thing, no, indeed.

The doll could talk; that Eunice had proved. You had only to press her on her pretty ribbon sash and she said,

“Mama,” as nicely as you please. She had real hair and her eyes would open and close. Eunice could not resist taking the all-alone doll in her arms and rocking her to and fro in time to the motion of the swiftly moving train. The doll closed her eyes and was asleep in no time. She did not even awaken when Eunice was startled by a voice at her elbow,

“Tickets, please.” There was the conductor, right beside them.

Eunice found her ticket in her red purse and the conductor punched it. Then he looked down through his spectacles at the doll. He even

frowned. "How old is your daughter?" asked the conductor. "She looks old enough to pay half fare."

Eunice did not know what to think, what to say. The doll was not a baby. Anyone could tell that, for she wore short clothes. But Eunice could not tell how old she was, and she certainly had no ticket for her. But the conductor seemed to understand. All at once his frown softened into smile wrinkles. He laughed and patted Eunice on her head.

"I guess we'll let her travel on a pass," he said. "And how would you like to take her to Feeding Hills with

you? You see, a little girl about your age was traveling from Boston with two or three dolls and her mother and a lot of luggage. A few stations back they all got off and the little girl forgot one of her dolls. I just telephoned back about it, but they had left word at the station that it didn't matter about the doll."

"Well, I guess it does matter about her!" Eunice found herself talking without any trouble to the kind conductor who knew how to joke. "I guess I can adopt her and bring her up as my own."

“Right!” said the conductor. “That is why I put you in her seat.”

“Feeding Hills!” The door opened and the brakeman poked his head in to call out the station. The conductor helped Eunice and her new daughter out. There, waiting for them, was Great-aunt Eunice in her automobile. How delightful a trip it had been, and how nice to travel in care of the conductor!

BY AIR MAIL



Although her wings were tired, Pink-Toes, the pigeon, kept right on flying. She had been on her way for several days now with many obstacles as she went, but she was not going to let anything stop her.

“Rest a while with me and look down on all the sights of the town,” a gilt weathercock high on a steeple



So Pink-Toes flew on

had creaked to Pink-Toes one windy day. But the pigeon had only called back in her soft voice as she hurried by the weathercock, "Coo-roo, coo-roo. You would never do." The weathercock looked too hard and bright to be a friend to a lost pigeon.

So Pink-Toes flew on, although she was not quite sure where she was going, and she met a very large kite with a long tail of colored paper streaming behind it up there in the sky.

"Fly along with me," said the kite, for it had a mouth painted on its paper face, "and we will never go near a child again. I am flying away from

one. See him standing like a small dot on that hill!"

But Pink-Toes stretched her wings and left the kite, for she did not like the appearance of the kite's long tail. It might get tangled in her feathers, thought Pink-Toes, and then she would have to go just where the wild kite pleased. "Coo-roo, coo-roo. I don't like you," called back the pigeon as she flew faster. Somewhere, she hoped, she would find a home before long.

And presently she came, tired and hungry, to a town with many roofs and she stopped to rest on a red chimney.

Then an old black bat, awakened by the flapping of Pink-Toes wings, came out of the chimney and spoke to her in a squeaking voice like the voice of a mouse.

“Live here with me in this chimney,” urged the bat. “It is full of thick, warm soot and one can sleep all day and fly at night among the stars.” As he spoke, the bat came closer to Pink-Toes and scattered soot on her white feathers. Dear me, all her family had been clean, she thought. She hurried to the edge of the roof and started off again on her tired wings, only stopping to tell the black bat what she

thought of him. “Coo-roo, coo-roo, if I were you I’d take a bath, that’s what I’d do!” But the bat paid no attention and only went to sleep in his chimney again.

And it seemed to Pink-Toes that she could not fly any farther, but she kept on. After a while, she seemed to know where she was. There was an apple orchard and beyond it a barn with a dove cote on the roof. She could see a garden with a rose vine and hear the voices of children. On flew tired Pink-Toes until she dropped right there in the garden as if that had been the place for which she had started.

“A pigeon, a carrier pigeon with a letter under her wing! It is just as if we had a letter here in our new home by air mail. How wonderful!” Pink-Toes heard the children cry as they took her carefully in their arms and untied the letter she was carrying.

“I was sorry to leave the farm, but here is one of my pigeons come back to welcome you,” the children were reading Pink-Toes’ letter. “She was not happy here in a cage in the city so I am sending her home to you. She will not stop until she reaches you.

“Your friend,

“Bobby.”



Margaret
Flower Dixon

“How wonderful!” Pink-Toes heard the children cry

Yes, now Pink-Toes remembered why she had flown so far and not stopped with the weathercock, the kite or the bat. She was a carrier pigeon, sent to welcome some strange children come to live in her old home. The boy who had left the farm had given her back. There would be corn now and a place in her old dove cote to doze in the sun. Pink-Toes was glad that she had kept on flying.



EASTER IN THE GARDEN



The Garden was all ready for Easter. Each flower there had been given a new dress or a pretty new hat.

The Lily wore white with ruffles around the edge of her skirt. The Tulip children had gay green dresses and bonnets of many different colors, red, and pink, and gold. There were the Daisies that lived in the Garden, and they had been given wide hats

with white brims and yellow crowns. Even the young Crocuses who lived in the grass of the lawn wore bright Easter caps, purple, and orange, and white with stripes.

The sky was blue and the sun shining and the Garden should have been very happy indeed on Easter morning, but it was not. It had heard the voices of the Children on the eve before.

“Tomorrow you shall be picked!” the Children had said, as if the flowers would be pleased to know that. But the Garden did not want to lose its flowers. The flowers themselves did not want to be picked.

“The Lily says that no Child knows how to hold her long, slim stem,” buzzed an early Bumble Bee who had been feasting inside her cup of sweets. “She says that Children break the stems of flowers.”

“The Tulip says that a Child would crush her bonnet in its large, fat hand,” chirped a song sparrow who had just arrived in the tulip bed. “All the Tulips have been given beautiful new bonnets this spring and they want to keep them looking fresh for Easter.”

“The Daisies are full of dew drop tears,” croaked the Garden Toad, who had lived so many years under the

stone beside the path that he was very wise. “And I know why they are crying. Children always pull the Daisies’ white hat rims off to see if someone loves them. They ought to know that everybody loves a good child. The Daisies are right in not wishing to have their hats taken off.”

So the morning that should have been the happiest one of the whole year for a Garden that has come up in all its colors through the brown earth, was sad. And shortly after breakfast out came the Children with the gardening shears. Yes, they were picking the flowers.



The daisies are full of dew drop tears croaked the Garden Toad

“Of what use are my Easter ruffles!” breathed the Lily as the oldest Child held her by her long green stalk. “Why did I wear them today?”

“Now I shall be pulled to pieces while this Boy counts my petals,” sighed each Easter Daisy.

And the Tulips, held in a bunch in the warm hand of the youngest Child, nodded their bonnets sadly. “We might just as well have stayed underground,” they thought. “Where are we going, and who will see our new garments?”

And the flowers held in the Children’s hands left the garden and went

down the lane. But there was a Robin in the apple tree in the lane who sang to them.

“Cheer-up, cheer-up!” sang the Robin on Easter morning.

And there was a great bell at the end of the lane. It hung high in its steeple and as soon as it saw the flowers it began to sing too.

“Ding-a-ling. Bells shall ring,
Children in their arms shall bring
Flowers, promise of the spring.”

That was the message of the church bell that welcomed the Children, and

as they went up the steps of the church the flowers were suddenly glad that they had been picked. The church was full of other Children waiting for them. There must be flowers on Easter Day, picked flowers, to tell that beauty will come from the deep darkness of the earth. And the Children had carried them so carefully. The Lily, the Tulips and the Daisies were now as happy as if they had enjoyed their new dresses only in the Garden.





The children carried them carefully

WHEN COMPANY CAME



“Oh, dear,” sighed Mother-Dear,” how I do hope that I shall not have company today. I love visitors, but there is so much to do on Saturday.” And Mother-Dear went upstairs to make the beds with fresh and snowy linen.

Janet and Sister were planning to have a whole long Saturday of play, but they watched Mother-Dear as she



*Janet and Sister were planning to have a whole long Saturday
of play*

hurried up the stairs. Then Janet whispered to Sister. It was a secret that she whispered, but when Mother-Dear came downstairs again and went to the kitchen to begin the Saturday baking, she found that something had happened there. Some of her work was done. The vegetables were washed, the peas shelled, and the carrots cut up in little orange cubes. The raisins were seeded. The breakfast dishes were washed and shining, but there was no one in the kitchen.

When the raisin pie was baked and standing in all its crusty best on the pantry shelf, Mother-Dear hurried into

the living room with her brush and duster to make it spotless for Sunday. But when she came to the living room she found that something had happened there as well.

There was not a speck of dust anywhere. The furniture was bright in its polish. The goldfish jar was shining. There were daisies in the bowl on the large table and pansies in the bowl on the small table. All the books and magazines lay in neat piles. And this was strange, for there was no one in the living room.

But there was still plenty of Saturday work to be done. Mother-Dear

knew that very well. She went up to the sewing room. Miss Needles-and-Pins, the seamstress, had been there all the week cutting out and stitching up gay play dresses of gingham and linen for Janet and Sister. And Miss Needles-and-Pins never picked up her pins or her pieces of cloth. All day long she sewed and snipped fast, but she left the sewing room for Mother-Dear to put in order again.

But a most surprising thing had happened in the sewing room. Mother-Dear had nothing to do, for it was in order. The pins and needles stood like soldiers in their pin cushion.

The pieces of gingham and linen were rolled up, ready to be made into doll's clothes. All the spools of thread were neatly wound and set in rows in the drawer of the sewing machine.

Mother-Dear was very, very much puzzled. "It looks as if there had been company in our house," she said to herself, "very helpful visitors," but she could not see anyone, although she looked in all the rooms.

Just before supper time, Mother-Dear heard a rustling in the living room and she went in to see what it was. There, sitting very primly, side by side, on the couch were two strange

ladies. They were very stylishly dressed, one in a wide hat with a feather like Mother-Dear's last year hat, and the other in an evening cape with a fur collar, like Aunt Molly's old cape.

Mother-Dear had never seen the two ladies before, but she knew at once who they must be. They were the strange company which had been helping her with the Saturday work, and doing it so quietly that she had not seen them. Their calling clothes looked a little like the things that hung in the attic, but of course Mother-Dear could not be sure of this.



Marjorie
Howe Dixon

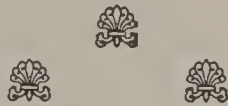
They were very stylishly dressed

“I am so glad to see you,” Mother-Dear told the two ladies. “I never knew before how welcome company could be on Saturday. I hope you will call again!” She shook hands with the two as they went out of the room, their trains sweeping behind them.

Wouldn't Mother-Dear have been surprised if she had known that the two ladies were Janet and Sister, who had never been such a help on Saturday before!



THE CAT WHO TALKED



“Tabby is the only one in the house who knows and she won’t tell,” Sister said to Jimmy-Boy as they washed the candy kettle very clean and polished the big preserving spoon.

“And the molasses pop-corn is all eaten and the plate is perfectly empty and washed,” added Jimmy-Boy as if to make his own little heart feel at rest. But Sister’s heart would not keep

still. Pat, pat, pat, it went. "Mother trusted you and Jimmy-Boy and you have not kept her trust." That was what Sister's heart was saying, and Jimmy-Boy's was beating to the same tune.

"Thump, thump, thump; a boy ought to keep his word and you have not." That was what Jimmy-Boy's heart said.

The two were not feeling as cheerful as a little boy and girl who have just popped a whole popper full of corn and then made molasses balls of it and eaten them ought to feel. Mother had gone to see Aunt Edith, who had such



As they washed the candy kettle clean

a cold that she had to stay in bed. And Mother had said to Sister and Jimmy-Boy just before she left, "Sister will straighten out the playroom for me, I know, and Jimmy-Boy will fill the fireplace wood basket. Then you can have a good time playing until I come home. Tabby will keep you company."

Tabby was Aunt Edith's cat, older than Sister, and she was staying at their house because Aunt Edith was ill. Tabby had to have her milk warmed for her. She was sleek and white and sleepy as the children made the molasses balls. She certainly did not

look as if she would ever tell what had been going on in Mother's absence.

Still Sister and Jimmy-Boy were not feeling happy. While Mother had not actually forbidden them to make molasses pop-corn, they knew that she would not have liked to know that they were down in the kitchen fussing with the drafts of the stove and cooking. She had not mentioned pop-corn and the molasses jug in the things they were not to touch, for she had never thought of them. That made it all the worse. As the sun dipped down behind the edge of the fringing pines on the lawn, and it was nearing time for

with her face close to the window so that two tears, rolling slowly down her cheeks, would not show.

“You know, Jimmy-Boy,” she said at last, “we just have to tell her that we made molasses pop corn balls without permission.”

Mother to come home, Sister stood

“Then,” said Jimmy-Boy, standing up very straight, “I will tell Mother, because I am a boy. The boy should do the hard things.”

So when Mother came home, all smiles because Aunt Edith was better, two sober children met her. Mother

went right upstairs to leave her hat and coat, and then she went over the house, as she always did after being away, to see if the clocks were all ticking and the rooms all warm and the windows all down. Then, all smiles, Mother came into the living room and she said, "Dearest Dears, where is Tabby?"

"We don't know, Mother," said Sister sadly, "but we want to tell you—"

"No, I am going to tell," broke in Jimmy-Boy bravely, wanting to take the whole blame.

"That we are very sorry—" went on Sister.

Mother began to laugh so merrily that the children laughed too, although there did not seem to be anything amusing. Mother held out her arms to them and Sister and Jimmy-Boy both ran to her. She always seemed to understand things without being told.

“Dearest Dears, I know all about it,” she said, “and it is all right since you tried to tell me, and Jimmy-Boy is a gentleman to want to take the blame.”

“How did you know, Mother?” Sister asked.

“Tabby told me,” Mother said.



She is under a sofa

“She is under a sofa trying to wash molasses pop corn off her white paws. When you dropped it Tabby stepped on it and it stuck very tightly!”

THE MAGIC BIRD



“How I do wish that it were a real bird, a bird that could fly,” Rose-Marie sighed when mother brought her the wicker cage from the toy shop in which a toy bird sat and swung on his gilt perch. Rose-Marie had been shut in the house for more weeks than she could count, and now, although her back was growing stronger every day, the doctor said that she could not go down in the street yet awhile.

So Rose-Marie sat in the window and watched the street almost all day long. It was a city street, not a very happy highway. That was why mother had bought the make-believe bird with such bright feathers. Why, he was a magic bird! If Rose-Marie wound up a spring in his tail he would sing! Only think of that! But after she had made him sing a few times and swing a few more times, Rose-Marie did not pay much attention to the bird. She just looked sadly down into the street, wishing she were well again.

Gray rain, and the little bootblack standing at one corner, and the old



So Rose-Marie sat in the window

apple woman at the other corner, and the quarreling little sparrows fighting on the curbing—that was the street. Rose-Marie looked at it through the sad veil of the rain and wished that something nice and unusual would happen. The little bootblack made the boots he was polishing shine, although the rain dripped from his cap.

All at once he looked up at Rose-Marie's window and his frowning face broke into a wide grin. Suddenly, the bootblack began to whistle in the rain, such a merry tune that people passing stopped to listen to him and smile. What made a hard working little boot-

black whistle, Rose-Marie wondered.

The old apple woman was not selling very many apples on account of the rain. People hurried by without stopping at her stall, and the rain came through the canvas and wet her plaid shawl. Because she had nothing to do, the old woman looked up at Rose-Marie's window. All at once she smiled so cheerfully that Rose-Marie smiled back. Then the apple woman began to hum a gay little tune. Rose-Marie could hear her, because the window was open at the top. Whatever could have made the apple woman sing in the rain, Rose-Marie



Marjorie Flowe Dixon

All at once she smiled so cheerfully

wondered. It almost made Rose-Marie feel happy and she wound up the musical bird in his wicker cage so that he might sing too.

How the little tramp sparrows scolded there on the curbing! A little grain had fallen from a wagon in the road and they were trying to see how much they could take away from one another. They pecked at each other with their sharp bills and their dingy coats were rumped and ragged.

But suddenly one sparrow looked up at Rose-Marie in the window. He cocked his head as if he were listening to something that he liked, but had not

heard in a long time. Then the sparrow flew to a bare branch of a tree where he could look right in the window and he began to sing. He was joined by other sparrows who sang with him. It was not a very sweet song, only the loud chirping of city birds trying to make themselves heard above the traffic, but it sounded like spring. Rose-Marie clapped her hands and laughed. The mechanical bird sang too until it seemed as if he would fall off his gold perch.

“They have seen my bird. They are happy to hear him sing,” Rose-Marie cried. “His bright blue feathers and

his sweet voice make the street gay. They wouldn't have felt that way if he were a real bird shut up here in a cage. I am glad he is not a live bird!"

Mother smiled at Rose-Marie, whose cheeks were pink now with happiness. "Yes," mother said, "but the smiling face of a patient little girl and the singing of her heart that makes her happy are a help. A magic bird in a cage, and another magic song in a little girl's heart—these are making a gray, rainy street bright."



THE PICTURE ANGEL



Although the Picture Angel never moved and never showed the children that she was watching them, still she knew about the other pictures in the house. Ever since she had come to that house, and had been hung on the wall over the mantel piece, the Angel had watched over the family.

There were many other pictures there in the living room and the children seemed to care for them very

much. At least they decorated the other pictures from time to time, and the Picture Angel tried not to feel lonesome. It almost seemed as if they hardly saw her, so bright and shining and pointing with one slender arm toward the blue spring sky.

There was the picture of the children's great, great grandfather, who had been a soldier. When his birthday came, the children brought out a wide flag, starry and silken, which they placed just beneath the picture of this soldier, and they made a wreath of laurel from the woods to place on top of the picture frame.



There was the picture of the children's great, great grandfather

And there was the picture of the Baby asleep in his watchful mother's arms. At Christmas time the children did wonderful things for that Baby. They twined evergreen all about the frame and hung a bunch of holly at one side. Then they set up a small green tree in the center of the living room and covered it with candles. When the birthday of that Baby, Christmas Eve, came, the room was darkened and only the lighted candles burned, making a light that would please Him without hurting His eyes.

This was thoughtful of the children, but each time that they decorated the

living room the Picture Angel hoped that they were going to see her. Flags, and laurel, and greens, and lighted candles, and once there was a bowl of blue violets, because it was the mother's birthday! And each gift was for someone else beside the Angel. So presently she gave up expecting any attention and just kept herself bright and shining with her straight, slim arm pointing toward the blue sky.

And after awhile the sky outside suddenly became as blue as a picture sky and the grass was green and the flowers that had been sleeping in the dark ground all winter awoke and put

on their beautiful colored garments.

“Easter!” said the children.

“Easter Day has come!”

The Picture Angel looked down from her place on the wall when she heard the children’s voices, and what a surprise was there for her! The children had come with her own flower, white lilies, to decorate her. They had found out that this was her birthday. Even the youngest child was there with his bunny and another stalk of tall white lilies.

She was no longer forgotten. Really, had she been forgotten at all? Covered with Easter flowers the Angel

thought how much better they were for her birthday than any other decoration could have been, bright, shining Easter lilies, that had slept so long in the dark ground and yet found the way to the sun in time for Easter Day.



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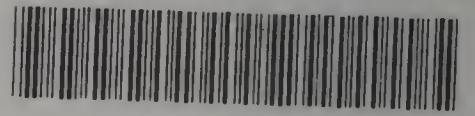
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