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OPEN AIR STORIES

Written by Clara J. Denton



Illustrated by Vera E. Stone
Real stories of birds and animals

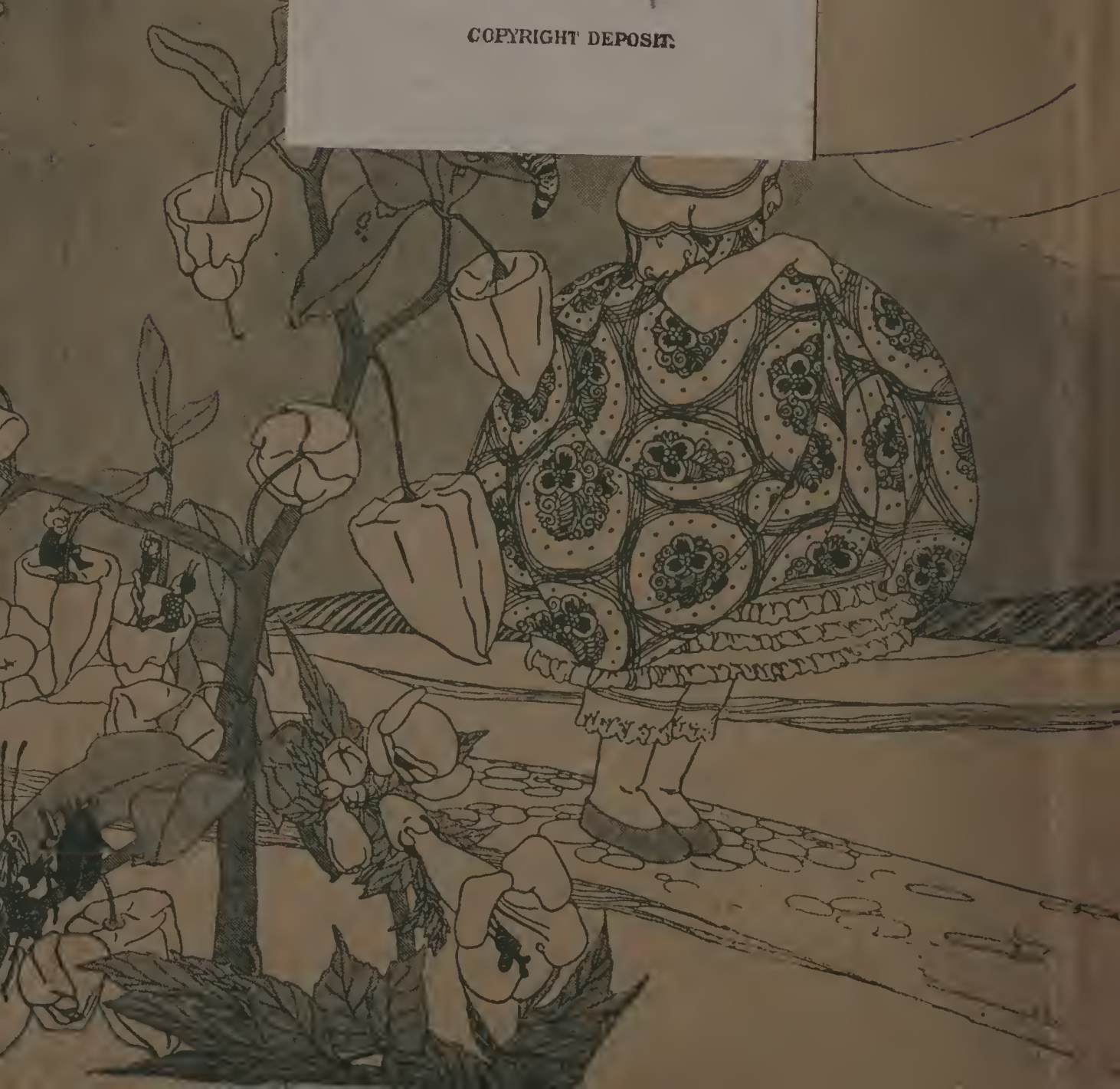


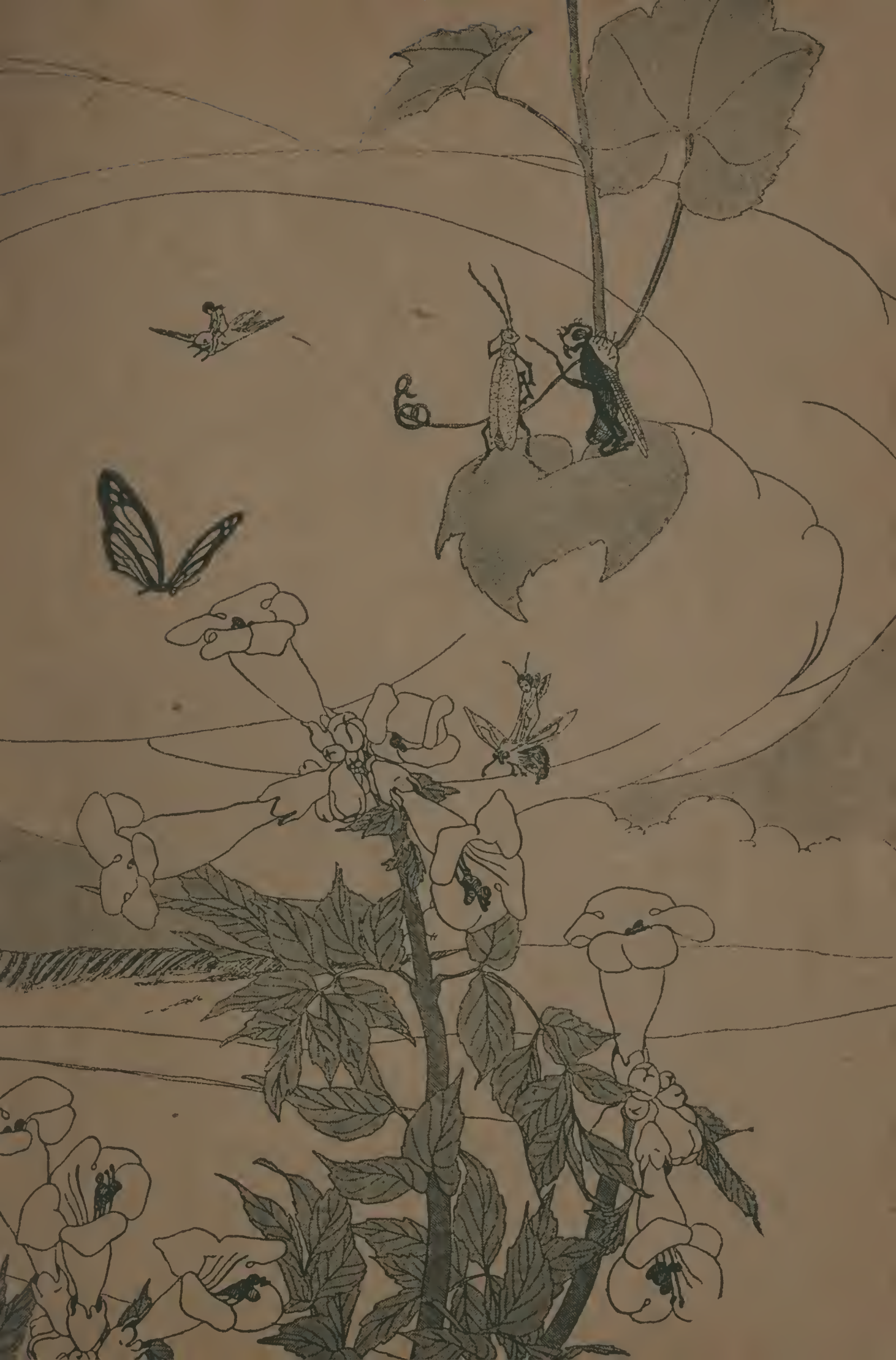
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OPEN AIR STORIES



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The Vegetable and Fruit Children
The Dinner That Was Always There
Six Tiddly Winks and The A to
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Published by

ALBERT WHITMAN & CO.

Chicago, U. S. A.



Four Pairs of Feet Run as Fast as They Can Go

(From "In a Basket")

AUG 11 1923

OPEN AIR STORIES

Real stories of birds and animals
Written by Clara J. Denton
Illustrated by Vera E. Stone



"A JUST RIGHT BOOK"

Published by

ALBERT WHITMAN COMPANY
CHICAGO U.S.A.

OPEN AIR STORIES

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P. 27
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FOREWORD

These stories by Clara J. Denton, the well known writer for children, are something new and unusual in the way of stories for the little folks. They give us real stories of the real doings of live creatures. A class of reading for children which is altogether too uncommon. They are not fairy stories, nor imaginary deeds of imaginary animals, although often even more wonderful than fairy tales, but they recount actual happenings, and in many cases portray unsuspected capabilities in ordinary every day birds, animals and insects. Give them to the children who are persistently asking for "stories about things which really happened," and you will not be disappointed in the children's assimilation of the stories, nor in the wholesome morals which the little ones will unconsciously absorb.

Unlike many stories of this character, they are all vouched for by the author, who has ever been an observer of all living creatures, and has never lost an opportunity to record facts which she has seen with her own observing eyes.

The book should find a place in every home and school library, where it is certain to meet a warm welcome.

There are no dry and uninteresting details in the pages, but everything is told in a bright and attractive manner.

NOTE

The true stories in this book collection, Open Air Stories, which have appeared in print before are here used by permission by the original publisher and thanks is given to each publication as follows:

The Outlook for, "The Adopted Chick"; The Progressive Teacher for, "In a Basket"; Jewel's Magazine for, "The Stolen Bag of Sugar"; Kings Own for, "Tip-toes."



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They Fixed Up a Nice Box for Her

(See Story "Rachel")

Open Air Stories



She and the White Leghorn Talked It Over All Afternoon

THE ADOPTED CHICK

The Minorca rooster, the handsomest fowl in the poultry yard, was sick, and it was whispered about among his friends and relatives that he was going to die.

“Yes,” said the white Leghorn hen, who had scratched her way through five or six summers, “he will not be around here long, for I have noticed when fowls begin to hang their heads they soon slip away somehow and are seen no more.”

However, the white Leghorn, although so very wise, had not yet learned that humans are not all alike. In spite of her long experience, she was much surprised at the things that happened in the next few hours.

In the first place, the sick Minorca was given his food in a separate dish, very tempting food it appeared, too; then, next, the master took him up in his arms and carried him into the warm hen-house where the incubator and the brooder were kept.

After that, when on warm days the door of the hen-house was open, the brood gazed through the wire netting at the forlorn-looking fowl lying on a bunch of straw near the lamp of the incubator. His once beautiful greenish-black feathers had lost their gloss, and his once gay scarlet comb and wattles hung limply about his head in pale pinkness.

The bantam rooster "craw-crawed" softly to himself as he moved along, followed by his troop of dainty little hens, and when he was well out of the Minorca's sight, he gave a proud crow that stretched his handsome little throat to its utmost.

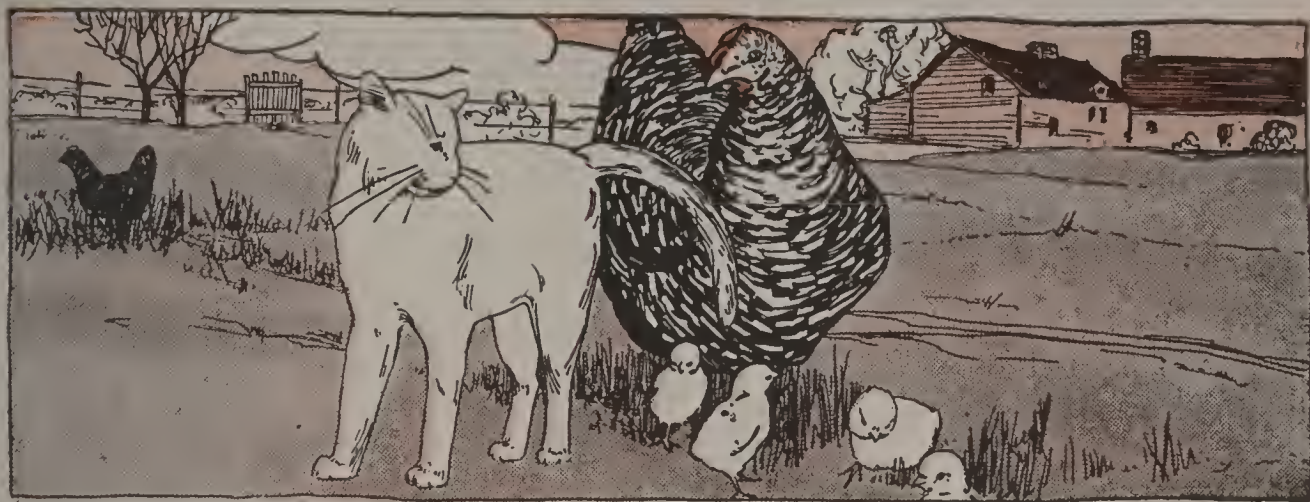
"You see," he said, flying on top of an overturned washtub, "that is what happens to a bird that thinks so much

of himself and gives himself airs," and then he flapped his wings hard and gave three lusty crows.

"But," said the white Leghorn hen, "I can't understand why our master doesn't kill that miserable old Minorca."

"Yes," said the Plymouth Rock, "I should think so too, for Tom, the house-cat, who understands the talk of humans so much better than we do, told me today there are one hundred Minorca eggs in the incubator, and they are expected to hatch tomorrow."

"What in the world do they want of so many Minorcas?" said the Buff Cochin; "they are poor, delicate things at the best," and she gave a sidelong peck at a spruce young Minorca hen who stood near listening to all the talk.



“Tom, the House Cat, Told Me Today——”

The next day the house-cat went strolling around the poultry-yard, and as he went he whispered a strange piece of news through the wire fence:

“Out of the one hundred eggs put into the incubator only twelve chickens were hatched.”

How the hens cackled and clucked and squawked over this terrible failure.

“So much for this proud man, our master,” said first one and then another; “he thinks he and his incubator are of more consequence than all the hens in the poultry-yard put together. Well, he deserves his great disappointment; and now we will see what his ‘brooder’ will do for the little chicks, poor dears! never to be clucked to, never to be scratched for, in all their blessed lives!”

As time went on the mild days became more frequent, and the flock often stood for many minutes at a time watching the little chicks running in and out of the brooder. Meanwhile the Minorca lay in the warmest corner of the hen-house on his clean patch of straw, but never even turned his head to look at his old comrades.

“Just as good as dead,” whispered the bantam rooster one day, and this time he ventured to crow right in the doorway.

But the sharp old white Leghorn hen had been looking very closely at the chicks picking up food in the outer part of the brooder.

“What has become of the chicks?” she whispered to the bantam rooster. “It seems to me that the flock is not nearly so large as it used to be.”

The bantam rooster perked his head on one side, and tried to look wise; but he hadn't a good head for figures, so he said lightly:

“Oh, they are just the same, my dear Mrs. Leghorn—just the same, I assure you.”

But the White Leghorn was not satisfied, and she and the Plymouth Rock talked the matter over all the afternoon.

Well indeed might they wonder, for some strange disease, which their owner did not understand, had carried the poor little chicks off, until there were only four left in the brooder.

But one mild March day the flock stood longer than usual staring through the wire netting, for there before them were two things which they could not well understand; there was only one little lonesome chick feeding in the brooder, and the Minorca rooster was up and walking about!

While they all stood gazing in silent astonishment, "Shoo, shoo!" cried a voice behind them, and they scattered

to a safe distance, where they could still watch their master's movements.

Pretty soon he came out of the hen-house, carrying on his right arm the Minorca rooster, and in his left hand the last lonesome little chick. He put the chicken down on the warm, soft earth, and he at once ran about as happy and gay as a chicken could possibly be. The Minorca was carried to a fenced-in corner of the poultry-yard, and when the master had gone the flock hastened to look the matter up. They found the rooster provided with food and water, and a fine shelter from the rain and the chilly night air.

As the Minorca made no replies to the crowing of the Bantam rooster,

or the cackling of the various hens, they soon all wandered off and left him to himself.

By and by it began to rain hard and fast, and the little chicken who had been so happy ran "yippling" about in a very lonesome way. He tried to share the shelter of the larger fowls, but with many sharp pecks and much squawking they drove him off, the hen-house was closed, and his master seemed to have forgotten him, so there was nothing left for him but to run up and down the poultry-yard crying with all his might.

But in his wild running he came near the fence that shut in the Minorca rooster, and his bright eyes at once spied a little hole in the wire



He Spied a Hole In the Wire Netting

netting; he quickly squeezed himself through the gap and ran to the Minorca's comfortable shelter:

A few minutes after the master of the poultry-yard came wheeling home in great haste. He had remembered the baby chick. But as he failed to find him anywhere in the yard, he made up his mind that he must have gone off into some corner and died.

“Poor little thing! the rain was too much for it,” he thought; “but I’ll look after the Minorca; I don’t want to lose him.”

When he came to the Minorca’s pen, lo! there was the good old fellow sitting flat on the ground, under his snug roof; and under his wing, safe and cozy, was the baby chick chirping away to itself softly and contentedly.

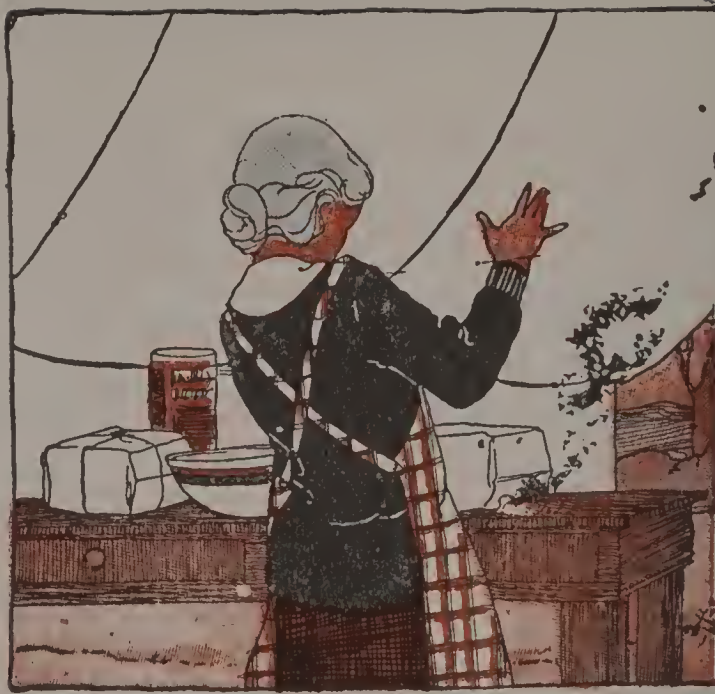
After that the little chick slept under the Minorca’s wing through all the chilly nights, and ran to him also when the days were cold and damp.

When the warm weather came, and the fowls were turned out to roam the meadows, these two kept constantly together; the old rooster scratched for his adopted baby, called

it when he found a choice morsel to eat, and fought for it like a good old motherly hen.

Now, don't you think that rooster was worth saving? The whole family is ready to praise and pet the handsome fellow now, and however hungry they may become for chicken pie, you may rest assured the Minorca rooster's neck is safe.





A Whole Colony of Wasps

THE STOLEN BAG OF SUGAR

The bag of sugar was in a camp and the people who belonged there were off on the lake fishing. It was late when they returned and as they were tired they went at once to bed in another tent.

In the morning when the camper whose turn it was to get breakfast, went into the tent, the first thing she

saw was a black mass of something where the bag of sugar had been. In a second the black mass moved, and a whole colony of wasps flew away. The lady went to the table and found a big hole, not only in the bag, but also in the sugar.

Then she called out to the other campers: "We thought ourselves safe here from thieves, but just come and see what they have done while we have been picnicking and sleeping." Then she showed the bag, and told how it looked when she first came into the tent.

"Thieves!"

"Robbers!"

"Rascals!"

These were the names called one after the other by the angry campers. But

I don't think the wasps deserved any of these hard names, do you?

The rest of the sugar was taken out of the bag and put into a tin box, and though the wasps hung around the camp for several days, the tin box was too much even for their mandibles (or jaws) and so they had no more sugar.

It was all right for the campers, of course, but I couldn't help feeling sorry for the wasps.





TIPTOES

She was a black and white cat, whose four feet were beautifully tipped with white. She and Loa had grown up together and, although cats are not supposed to be so loving as dogs, Tiptoes, when put to the test, showed her love for her mistress.

An old hen was determined to have a nest in the loft over the wood shed, and Loa's mother thought it was bad enough to have Tiptoes and her kittens there, without having a hen's nest there too.

So Loa was sent to get the hen out. The little girl thought it would be an easy matter to head the hen toward the stairs and then to drive her down. The hen, however, had taken a fancy to the woodshed loft and was determined not to be driven down, so she ran in every direction except toward the stairs.

At last, in a great rage, she made a dash for Loa.

Loa was near Tiptoe's box, where she was purring happily with her three cunning babies, but the moment the good old mother cat saw the hen dash at Loa, she tore herself away from her kittens, flew at the hen and threw her paws around her, thus holding her back from Loa. The little girl, fearing that the hen would be killed, tried to



Flew at the Hen and Threw Her Paws Around Her

get her away from the cat, but Tiptoos held on to the poor fowl with all her might.

The hen, in great fright, finally tore herself away from the cat, made a mad plunge for the window, and dashing through the glass, broke it to atoms.

Tiptoos was not discouraged even then, but followed after her. The hen reached the ground first and running off unharmed, hid away.

Tiptoos, catlike, landed safely on her four feet and, not seeing the hen anywhere, she seemed to think the danger was over. It had been a jump of over twelve feet for these two angry creatures, but strange to tell, neither one was hurt. You may be sure that Loa loved Tiptoos more than ever after this and kept her carefully until she died of old age.

IN A BASKET

“I wonder what is the matter with Leona,” said Mrs. Breeze, as she gazed from the window, up the wide country road.

“What is your reason for thinking that there is anything the matter with her?” asked the grandmother, joining her daughter at the window.

“Reason enough, she is bringing home a full lunch basket. She usually comes along swinging it in the air, but, now, you see, she is carrying it very carefully at her side; she must be ill if she did not eat her luncheon.”

“She certainly doesn't look ill,” returned the grandmother; “she is smiling and seems gay and happy as usual.”

Mrs. Breeze, however, continued to watch the child anxiously, until she came through the gate and drew near the house, then a small hole in the side of the basket threw light on the matter.

“Dear me,” exclaimed the mother with a sigh, “there is something alive in that basket! What sort of a pet do you suppose she is bringing home now?”

At that moment Leona bounded into the room.

“Oh, mother!” she exclaimed in joyful tones. “Mr. Douglas gave me the dearest little pig, it is so cute!” and she took from the basket a tiny white pig scarcely a week old.

“A pig!” exclaimed Mrs. Breeze, dropping into a chair. “What on

earth do you want of a pig, Leona? The next thing I know you will be bringing home an elephant.”

“Wish I could,” was Leona’s answer, as she held the pig at arm’s length and then cuddled it up close to her.

“But what in the world do you mean to do, Leona, with that poor, helpless little thing these cold spring nights?” asked the mother.

“Oh, we’ll put it in a box with some straw and blankets; but now, mother, it’s hungry, hear it squeal! Do fix a bottle for it just as you do for baby brother; this is only a baby, you know.”

“No,” said Mrs. Breeze firmly, “this baby cannot have a bottle, that is too much. It must learn to drink like other pigs.”

This was easily said, but Mrs. Breeze soon found that it was not so easily done.

She plunged the pig's pink nose into the warm milk over and over again, but the only result was a great splashing and a loud squealing.

However, after the little creature had fasted fifteen hours it made up its mind to drink. We don't know whether it could have done it sooner or not, but from that time when the baby's milk was warmed every three hours, the milk for the pig was also warmed.

In a little while the four children began to have great fun with their strange pet, to whom they had given the name of "Peggy." They took turns in giving her a daily scrubbing, which treatment she seemed to enjoy



They Gave Her a Daily Scrubbing

hugely, and "As dirty as a pig" became an unused saying in that family.

When Peggy was a few weeks old she began to run out to the gate to meet Leona on her return from school. Then one morning she took it into her head to follow her to school. It took Leona so long to drive her back and shut her up that she was late to school, so after that she was shut up every morning until Leona had been gone a few hours.

But every afternoon about half past four, little Miss Peggy would shove the gate open with her long, slim nose, and making her way straight south she would meet Leona about a quarter of a mile from home. She never made the mistake of going half an hour too

early, or too late, and she never turned north instead of south after passing through the gate.

Peggy is now a fine big pig and she has the run of the barn yard. Three times a day with the regularity of a clock she comes to the barn yard gate and squeals her loudest until she is fed. You may think it has become an old story to feed her by this time, but it has not, and each one of the children is glad when it has become his or her turn to feed Peggy.

They do not allow her in the house yard, because there is no fence between that and the garden and even the best trained pig will root up potatoes if it gets a chance. She has several times shown herself a master hand at that business and, if anyone calls out, "Peg-

gy is in the garden!" four pair of feet run as fast as they can go, to chase her out.

When the children are out-of-doors under the trees that skirt the barn yard fence, Peggy stays as near to them as she can get. When one of the children puts a hand through the fence and pats her on the back she softly grunts her pleasure. I must add right here that she still has a regular bath and is as clean as an animal can be.

Peggy is big enough and fat enough to be made into pork, but do you suppose that any one of those children will ever want a slice of Peggy?

A QUEER PET

It belonged to a little girl ten years old whose name was Maisie. What do you suppose it was? A young but full-grown raccoon. Did you ever see one? He was of a grizzly, gray color with a black streak down the back. He was a little larger than a cat and not quite so large as a dog. His little feet looked exactly as though he were wearing black kid gloves on them.

Maisie soon found that he could do a great many things with those funny little black feet. He would sit up on his hind feet and hold his food in his forepaws just as though they were dainty little hands. When he was given a piece of meat he would wash it before he would put it into his mouth

if he could find any water. If there was no water near he would rub it all over with his little forepaws. He would even wash a lump of sugar, and look very much surprised when it melted away, and did not stay in sight as the meat did when it was washed.

One day Maisie gave Dick, that was her pet's name, some milk to drink, so when she was not looking he jumped on the table, which was set for dinner, and stole a piece of bread. This he dropped in the milk and ate when it was all soaked up.

Another day when Maisie was in the woodshed she heard Dick's light footsteps in the kitchen, so she peeped through the crack in the door to see what he would do. He went straight to the old fashioned safe in which the



He Would Hold His Food In His Hands

pans of milk were kept, stood on his hind feet, and with his forepaws turned the button which held the door fast. Then he reached one of those little paws into the safe, skimmed the cream off of one of the pans with this handy little paw, then drew it out and licked it off as though it was the best he had ever tasted. He put his naughty little paw in again and made another haul of the rich cream. By this time Maisie thought his fun had gone far enough, so she hunted up her mother and told her what was going on in the kitchen. That was the end of Dick's feasting, for the milk was at once put in a safer place. Luckily for Maisie Dick was well-tamed when he was given to her, so she began at once to play with him,

and for this reason she learned something new about him every day.

One evening when it was nice and warm in the house, Maisie thought it would be great fun to take off her shoes and stockings and run around on the soft carpets. She did not notice Dick who was asleep under her Grandfather's chair. In a few minutes he woke up, caught sight of Maisie's little white feet, and started right after them. Maisie was frightened you may be sure, for he had a mouth full of very sharp teeth and the pretty little hands which looked as if they were done up in dainty, kid gloves, hid his cruel claws. So Maisie kept out of his way and they had a merry game all to themselves. After this they kept up this sport every evening

and the grown-ups thought it great fun to watch them. Dick was never quite quick enough to get hold of Maisie's little toes, although he came quite near it several times and Maisie had to jump about very lively to keep out of his way.

Another one of his favorite sports was to catch the cats, of which there were many around, for they all lived on a large farm. The cats slept in a loft over the woodshed and Dick could reach it by climbing a flight of stairs. They could hear him at night racing across the floor of this loft after a cat and then when he had caught one he would hug it with all his might, until it squealed aloud, when he would drop it and chase another one. They had seen him several times in the act of



So Maisie Kept Out of His Way and They Had a Merry Game

hugging a cat, but they never found out why he was so fond of this queer sport. Perhaps it was because raccoons belong to the bear family.

If he grew hungry enough he would not wait to be fed but would steal whatever he could lay his hands, or forepaws, on. One day Maisie found him backing down the steps which led out of the kitchen with a big loaf of bread in his forepaws. Another time she found him in the same place, carrying off in the same way a big butcher knife. Of course she knew very well what he intended to do with the bread, but she never found out what he meant to do with the knife, and she had some trouble to get both the bread and the knife away from him.



Maisie Found Him Backing Down the Steps

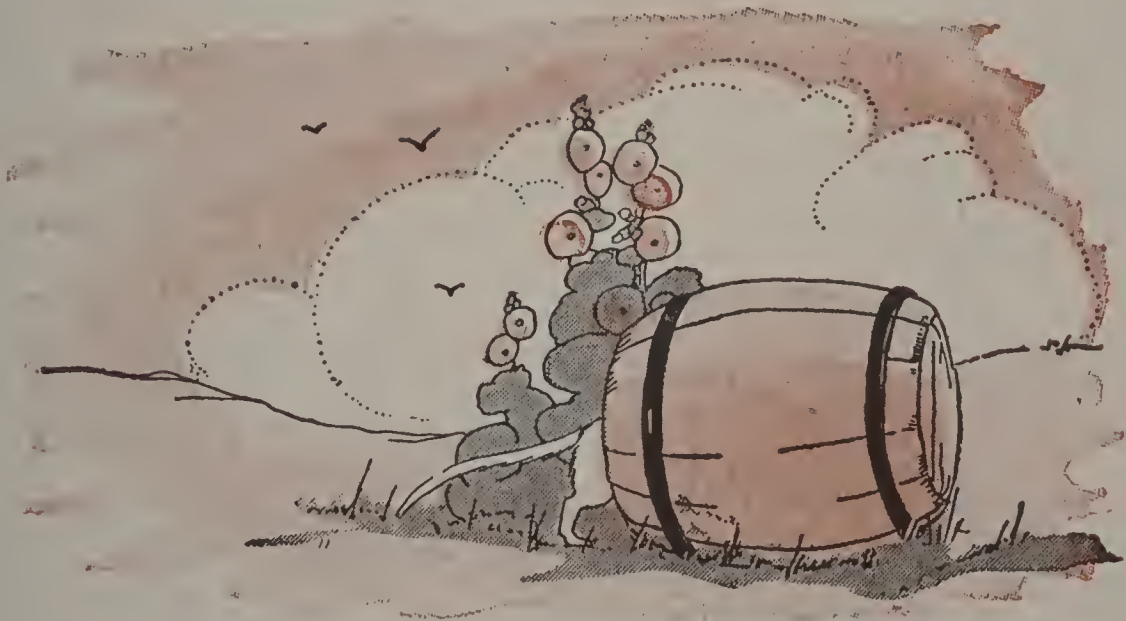
He was very fond of cookies and if the cookie jar was left where he could get at it, he would get the cover off some way, and then climb into the jar, and sitting there eat all the cookies he wanted, purring all the time just like a cat. At such times no one dared take him out of the cookie jar except Maisie and if he was very hungry even she thought it best to put on

heavy gloves, for he would growl and show his teeth so fiercely that even she was a little afraid of him.

Dick had one very good habit; when he wanted to come into the house he sat on the doorstep and cleaned every bit of dirt from his feet with his tongue, then when they were as clean as they could be made he would shake his head, which made the bell on his neck ring softly, and then the door would be opened for him. He would come in, giving his musical whistle. He always either purred or whistled when he was quite happy.

Don't you think he was a nice pet to have even if he did steal his food, now and then? But there was this good thing about him; he never stole anything if he was well fed.

Maisie kept him all winter and grew every day more fond of him, but when warm weather came I suppose he grew lonesome to see some creatures of his own kind, so he wandered off in search of them and Maisie never saw him again. You will know that she missed him very much and often longed for another pet raccoon.



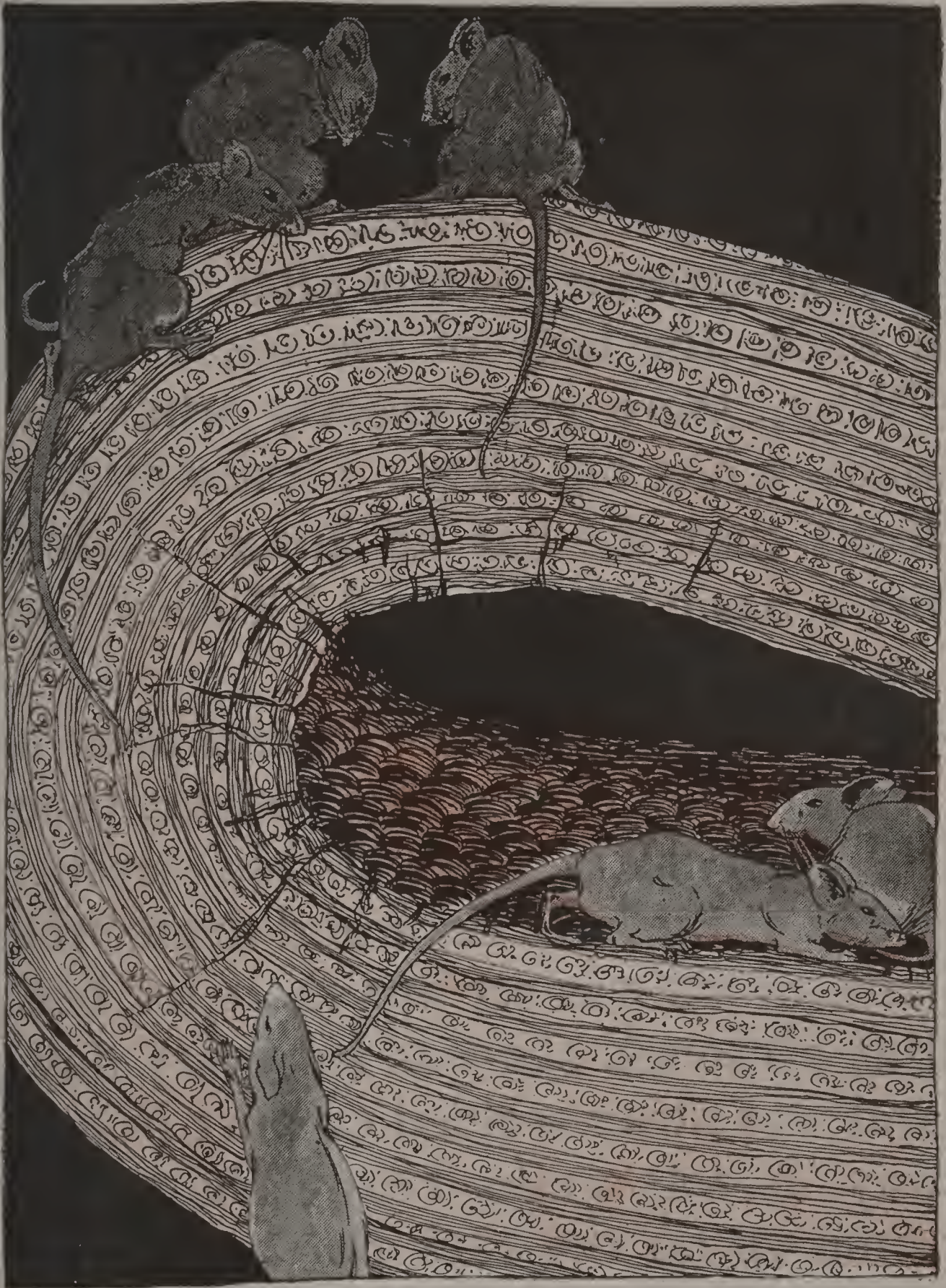
The Barrel Was Turned Over on Its Side

(From "Rachel")

RACHEL

She was a handsome gray and white cat whose home had always been among people who lived in pretty bungalows. They were quite able to feed her well, but because she did not belong to anyone in particular, sometimes she was so completely forgotten by these well fed people that she would have starved to death if gophers and mice had not been quite plentiful in the gardens and barns near where she stayed, but it could hardly be called "living."

Then one day something happened. The people who lived in the prettiest bungalow around there found that the mice had made a nest in one of their clothes presses and had eaten a hole



The Mice Ate a Hole In Their Fine Hair Mattress

in their fine hair mattress. So that day when they saw this nice cat sneaking through the garden as if she expected someone to come after her with a stick, the lady of the house said, "Why, there goes exactly what we want, a nice big kitty. I know by her looks that she has no home. Bring me a basin of milk and I'll coax her up at once."

The milk was brought and after a great deal of calling in a coaxing tone the gray kitty came within several yards of the back door and drank the milk which was set out there for her. But although she was fed every day, and was never scolded or hurt in any way, it was weeks before she would come up on the back porch to drink the milk or eat the dainty bits of meat

which were put out for her. So hard had been her life, poor thing, that even after many months of kind treatment she did not lose the hunted and scared look in her eyes, and even after many months of a happy life she never reached a state where she could purr. Isn't that dreadful to tell? A big, healthy cat who had known so few really good times that she had forgotten how to purr, and did not seem able, in spite of all sorts of good treatment, to learn to purr again. They found her one morning curled up on the cushions of the automobile looking very proud and happy with four beautiful kittens, but even then she did not purr.

Well the folks in the bungalow had, by this time, learned to think a great

deal of Rachel, but they could not let her keep her kittens all the while in the motor car. So they fixed up a nice box for her with cushions in it, making a bed soft enough for a queen, and carried her kittens and put them in it. The first time they went out to the garage, there were the kittens all curled up on the cushions of the car. So they took her out again, and then they covered the car over so carefully that Rachel could not find a place to climb in herself or to carry her kittens in either.

“Now,” said the good folks, “she will have to stay in the box we have put there for her.” Did she? No indeed. When they went out to the garage the next time she and her kittens were nowhere to be seen. After a

long time they found her in an old box which had been put up for a hen's nest in an old chicken house. So they let her stay there, but one morning one of the kittens fell out and cried as if it were very much hurt. That seemed to settle that place. Rachel at once carried the kittens out and laid them on the soft, green grass.

Now this was not a very good place for them, because the dew fell very heavily at night, but it would do no good to find another place for them for Rachel would not stay there. No matter how fine the spot was, there was nothing to do but to go to bed and let them stay on the soft grass.

Well, in the morning there was a great time trying to find Rachel and

her babies. They were nowhere to be seen, everybody hunted high and low, at the same time calling her softly.

In the farthest and darkest corner of the garage, was a big barrel out of which stuck a rake handle. No one had looked in that barrel because they thought there would not be room in the barrel for the cats and a rake, but while they were calling, "Kitty, Kitty," as coaxingly as they could, out of that same barrel jumped Rachel. Then the children ran and looked in the barrel. What do you think was in it? The rake, an old gasoline stove, a big stick of wood, and the four little kittens tucked around in odd corners. While the children were looking at the queer mixture Rachel jumped into the barrel, and they then saw that there was



"What Do You Think Was In It?"

no room in there for her unless she sat up on her hind legs, and she must have passed the whole night in that most cramped position.

You may know that it wasn't long before everything was pulled out of that barrel except the kittens. Then some straw was put in, the barrel was turned over on its side, dragged out of the garage and placed in a nice shady spot, and after all this was done Rachel seemed quite happy with her new quarters, and stayed in them until her babies were grown up and ready to start out for themselves.



"I Poked About In the Straw"

WATCHING THE PIG

"And shall we have a pig?" asked Constance.

"Yes," said her mother.

"A real, live pig?"

"Yes," said her mother again.

So when they arrived at the farm it was a very happy little girl who jumped out of the wagon and without waiting

for her father, for he was going back to the city after another load of goods, ran off to the barn where her father had told her the pig was kept.

Constance was ten years old and she had never seen a real live pig nor heard one squeal and grunt the way her reading books said they did when they felt like it, so you see, she did not mean to lose any time in getting where she could see and hear one for herself.

She did not stay long at the barn, however, but came running back to her mother, her father having already gone, the tears running down her rosy cheeks.

“O, mother,” she called before she reached her mother, “you and father have told me something which is not

true, for there is no pig out there at all. There is a pen there built fast to the barn just as father said, but there is no pig in it at all.”

“O, yes,” said the mother, “there is certainly a pig there but it is such a very little pig that it is hidden in the box under the straw. It is taking a nap, I suspect.”

“No,” said Constance, “I took a long stick and poked about in the straw, and there was not a single thing there, not even a mouse.”

On hearing this news the mother thought it was time for her to visit the pig pen, so the two set off together for the barn, and there sure enough, it was just as Constance had said, the pig pen was empty.

But she also found something else which even the sharp eyes of Constance had not discovered, and that was a hole dug in the soft earth in one corner of the pig pen. She pointed it out to her daughter and then explained that the pig had got away through this hole.

“She has run back to her home where her mother and all her brothers and sisters are because, you see, it is such a little pig, it felt just as you would if somebody came here and took you away from us, only you are not strong enough to run very far, so I am afraid you would not have very good luck in getting back home. Father bought this little pig ten miles away and paid six dollars for it, so tomorrow

your father will have to take the motor and go after it for we cannot afford to lose it.”

So Constance wiped away her tears and began to feel quite happy again, since she knew that the little pig would be brought back to its pen behind the barn.

When they came to the house they found a little boy standing near the door. He began to speak at once in a funny way which Constance could not understand at all, although she listened very carefully. “All right,” said her mother, when the boy at last stopped talking, “when my husband comes home I will tell him about it.” Then the boy turned and ran off as if he was glad to get away.

“What is it, mother?” asked Constance, as soon as the boy was out of hearing.

“He is a Dutch boy and he does not speak very good English, which is why you could not understand him,” explained her mother, “and he said our little pig came to his father’s barn this morning and he shut it up to keep it from running any farther away. Isn’t that fine? So instead of driving off ten miles with the motor car, papa will just have to go down the road to the next neighbor’s.”

When Constance awoke the next morning she found that her father was already up, and before she had time to ask him a single question, he called out, “Well, Constance, Sally is back in

her pen again, and you must see to it now that she doesn't get hungry and run off again."

"Was that what was the matter with her?" asked Constance.

"Yes," was his answer, "and I am very sure she will not dig out again if she has all the food and water she wants, because she has a nice pen in the shade and plenty of nice clean straw to sleep in."

You may be sure Constance took good care of the little pig after that. She loved to hear it squeal and grunt and to see it chase her around the fence of the pen when she brought some bran in a basin for it. It grew very fast and was soon nearly three times as large as it was when her father brought it home. Then one day some-

thing, all of a sudden, was the matter with Sally's hind legs, so that she could not stand up on them. They sent for a man who called himself an animal doctor and he said Sally must be turned out on the soft ground away from the boards and where she could have plenty of green grass to eat. So Sally was turned out of the pen the next day. They were not afraid she would run away because her hind legs were not strong enough to carry her very far. But in a very few days she surprised them all by digging a hole with her fore feet under the fence which ran around the door-yard and crawled under it. Of course they drove her back and stopped up the hole but that did no good, for she made a new hole right away and came crawling

back again. So they made up their minds after awhile they would have to let her stay in the door yard and that Constance would have to keep her away from the door for the yard was a good big one and there was no reason why Sally should want to be so close to the house.

“What will you do when school begins?” asked Constance one day when she had chased the naughty Sally until she was tired out.

“It is several weeks before school begins and we hope Sally will be well enough to stay in her pen by that time,” was her mother’s reply.

But for the present time at least, poor little Constance was kept so busy running after Sally that she wished she had never seen a pig. Finally her

mother found an old carriage whip in the barn, which she took to the house, and whenever Sally came near the door she dashed out quickly and before she could get away she would hit the bad pig a sharp cut across the shoulders. Then Sally would run off, put her sharp nose under the woven wire fence, lift it up and slip under it, but as soon as the mother was safely in the house Sally would run back again into the door yard.

One day when the mother had chased her several times out of the yard, only to have her come right back again, she drove her not only out of the yard but clear behind the barn, then she took up her place at the corner of the barn where she could not be seen by Sally, and waited to see what

the creature would do. Pretty soon the mother heard the pig coming along slowly, grunting softly to herself as she came. When she reached the corner of the barn where the mother was in her sight, she gave just one look, then with a loud squeal and a long jump she ran as fast as she could go until she was in her pen and safe inside her sleeping box.

“Well,” said the mother to herself, “at least she is afraid of me.” After that, if the mother just came out of the door when Sally was in the house yard the bad little pig would start running and would not stop until she was safe under the woven wire fence.

So Constance begged one day that she might carry the whip, and as soon as Sally came too near she brought

the whip down with all her might upon Sally's shoulders, but the naughty pig did not even jump, or give the faintest little squeal.

Constance in telling about it afterwards, seemed not to know whether to laugh or cry, as she said, "I think Sally thought I was trying to pet her with the whip."

Matters went along in this way until Sally's legs were so much better that she was put back into her pen and then she was fed a nice warm mess of bran twice every day.

By this time some chickens which Constance and her mother had raised, were nearly full grown, and as they were allowed to run about where they liked they were soon in the habit of jumping into Sally's pen and eating

out of the trough the nice, warm feed which was given her. As the pig ate very fast the chickens did not rob her of much of her feed. They only picked up the crumbs as it were, and for this reason the chickens were not driven away.

One morning as the mother was feeding the chickens and counting them as usual, she found there were only nineteen in the flock instead of twenty as there should have been. She thought a hawk must have carried off one of them, although they were pretty large chickens for a hawk to catch. The next morning another one was gone, and so it went on for several mornings, until five of the beautiful Rhode Island Reds were gone, yet no one had seen a hawk flying around.

One night the mother did not go away after feeding Sally, but for some reason, which she did not understand herself, she stood watching the chickens picking up the crumbs from Sally's trough when suddenly that bad pig turned like a flash, made one quick grab at the handsome fowl nearest to her, and the next minute it had gone forever down Sally's big throat.

Perhaps you can tell something about how this good mother felt when she thus knew what had become of her beautiful young chickens. Sally was living high, chicken for supper every night.

So the mother called Constance and together they drove the chickens into their roosting place and shut them in so that they could not get to Sally again.

When the father came home he was told the story of Sally's bad deeds.

“Well, that's too bad,” he said, “for nothing can be done with her, now that she has formed that bad habit. She can never be broken of it.”

So the next morning, bright and early, Sally was taken to the butcher and was made into pork and perhaps Constance had some of her fried. But whether she did or not, she and her mother had learned a very sharp lesson, and although they lived on a farm a great many years after that time, they never again allowed chickens to feed in the pen with a young pig.

“All pigs do not eat chickens,” said the father, “but you never can tell when a young pig will get the habit, and as pigs are a great deal like people,

habits once formed are hard to break. We will just watch out and not let the bad habits get hold either of the pigs or the people.”



She Loved to Hear It Squeal



She Heard a Clattering In the Kitchen

A COW IN THE KITCHEN

She was a handsome white cow and she had given them a foaming pail of milk, then she had been turned into the pasture lot which joined the house yard with a gate between. As soon as breakfast was over the father had gone off down town to his business, the children were made ready for school, and then the mother thought she

would take a little time to run around and look at her flowers blooming in the front yard.

The house was built with a basement dining room and kitchen, so that the floors of these two rooms were on a level with the ground of the back yard.

The mother spent more time with her flowers than she had meant to, for there were so many beautiful ones to admire, and also a great many weeds to pull up. But suddenly, as she was bending over a bed of pansies, she heard a great clattering in the kitchen. What in the world could it mean? She straightened up and listened. Yes, there was no mistake, there was a sound of breaking dishes and it came from the kitchen, so she started on a run for the back door. As she ran she

was wondering what could be making all the noise, the children were at school and they didn't keep a dog or cat and neither did the nearest neighbors.

When she finally came to the kitchen door she found she could not get through. What do you suppose kept her out of her own kitchen? That handsome white cow that had given them such fine milk was standing in the doorway and the mother could hear the dishes falling and breaking although she could not see what the cow was doing because her big body hid from sight what was going on in the kitchen. The mother saw at once the only thing to do.

She ran around to the front door, rushed down the stairs, and came at the cow from the front, yelling at her

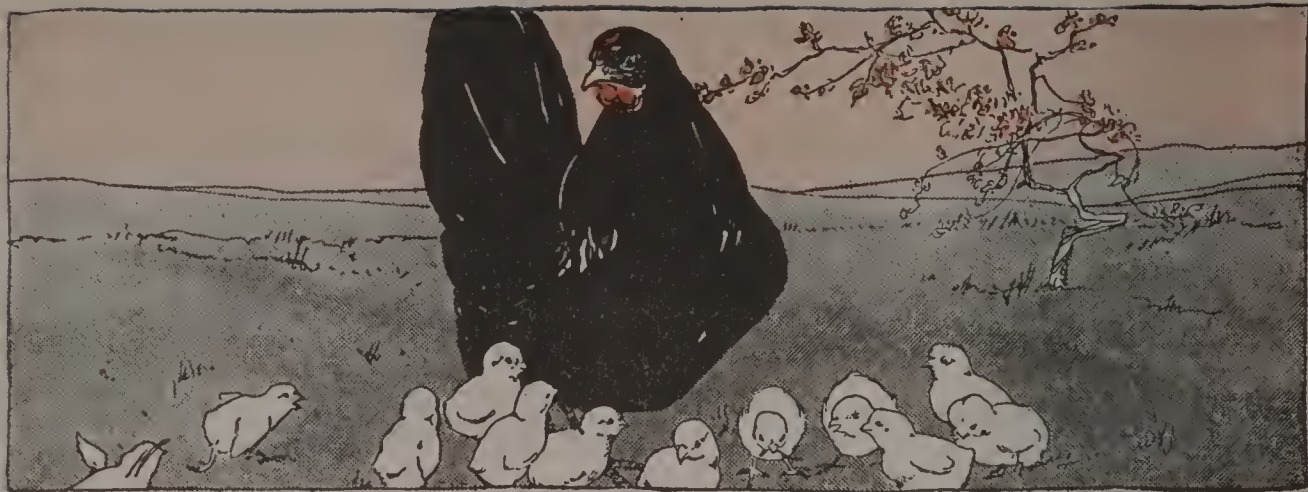
and waving her arms furiously. Bossy was of course dreadfully frightened, and she backed out the door at once. When the mother tried to drive her back into the field she found that she had torn down the big, strong gate.

The mother knew it would not do to let the unruly creature run about just where she pleased, because she would dig up her flower beds and tear down her beautiful shrubs, many of which had been a long time in growing, so she managed, after a long time, to drive her into the barn and then she shut and fastened the heavy doors, which she thought would be too much for Bossy's strength to tear down.

Then the mother went back to the kitchen to see what she had done to the breakfast table, which on that

morning had been set in the kitchen and which the mother in her hurry to see her flowers had not yet cleared. But as soon as she came into the kitchen she saw that the bad cow had saved her that trouble. She had knocked the dishes onto the floor and broken all of them, and the victuals she had put into her own big stomach. A plate full of biscuits, a pat of butter, a piece of beefsteak, all the sugar in the bowl, some oatmeal mush, and even a pitcher full of her own milk, then she had finished up the job by chewing one of the linen napkins.

Perhaps I don't need to tell you that bad unruly cow was soon made into nice fresh red beef. Don't you think that was what she deserved?



She Had Twelve Fluffy White Chicks

THE VISIT NEXT DOOR

She was a big hen as black as a coal and she had twelve fluffy white chickens. They were a pretty sight when they were all feeding together, one big black spot with those tiny white spots around it.

They all lived in a beautiful, grassy back yard with a high board fence all around it so that nothing could come in to harm them. There were sunny

spots where they could go when the air was chilly, and shady places where they could rest when the sun was too hot for comfort. Then there was a nice snug coop into which they could run at night and be shut up safe and sound until morning, so that neither hungry rats nor prowling cats could get at them and harm them.

You would have thought, wouldn't you, that with plenty to eat in this nice, safe place they would have been very happy? And so they were, generally, but one unlucky day as the big black hen was hunting around for bugs, flies, grasshoppers and things of that sort which fowls of all kinds, big and little, love to eat, her sharp eyes found a hole in the tall fence which was built between her home yard and

the garden next door. In a minute she had, with loud cluckings, pushed her way through the break in the boards and her fluffy little babies quickly followed.

I am sure you will see that was a bold thing to do, what a boy or a girl would call an "adventure," because it was going off to a strange place where they knew nothing about what they should see or hear.

The very first thing that came under the old mother hen's eyes was something which she dearly loved and that was a little patch of plowed ground, and she started for it just as fast as her two lively feet could carry her. Do you know why fowls of all kinds love the plowed ground? It is because when the plow turns the ground over,



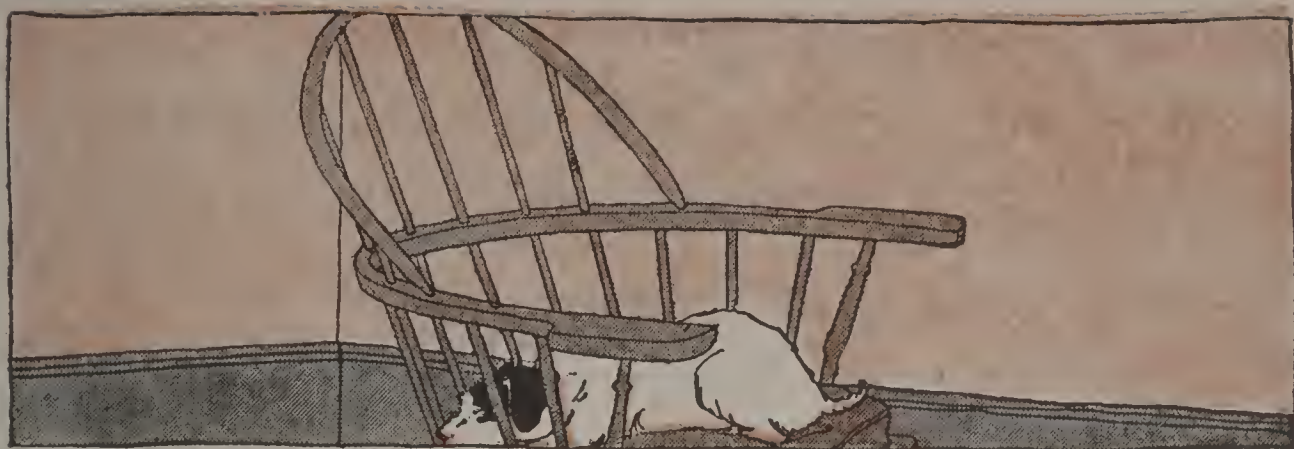
"There Is That Old Black Hen from Next Door"

bugs and worms of all kinds come to the top where the fowls can catch and eat them. What a good time they had right away, for there was no plowed ground in their home yard, nothing but the soft green grass. But in the midst of their fine time some one in the house looked out the window. "O!" was the cry, "there is that old black hen from next door and all her chickens right in the middle of our flower bed. She will soon have all our flower seeds scratched up. Where is Fido. Come Fido, Fido." The door was thrown open and out went Fido. Now Fido was a little dog, not much bigger than the old black hen herself, but he was a dog, and that was quite enough when he came tearing down to the plowed ground.

The old hen flew this way and that and clucked and clucked, but she could not find the place where she had come through, for tall weeds grew all over it on that side of the fence, so there was nothing left for her to do but to spread her heavy black wings and fly over the fence, which she did with many loud cacklings and cluckings. The little baby chicks could not fly so high, and so they ran around looking here and there and everywhere, for little holes where they could crawl through. They yipped so loud and so long that the people in both houses had to come out and hunt around in the grass for them and carry them back. For this reason it was nearly dark before the last one of the twelve was back in its own yard and safe under its mother's big warm

wings. I am sure you will believe me when I tell you that was the last time the old black hen went off to the neighbor's for a visit.





He Was Soon Sound Asleep on the Soft Cushion

TOODLES FOUND A WAY

Toodles was very unhappy. He was shut out of his home and forced to lie either in a ragged old hammock on the front porch or else in a hard wooden chair. Yet all the while, as he well knew, the big chair with its soft cushion was lying unused in the cool sitting room.

He couldn't stand it to lie there on the porch in the hot sun any longer,

so he ran around to the back of the house, hoping he might find a crack somewhere through which he might slip into his favorite resting spot. But it was no use; every place was closed up as tight as a drum and while he stood looking around and wondering where he should go next, he heard a soft voice calling, "Come doggie, doggie."

The voice came from above. He looked up and there was a kind, gentle face looking over the railing and still calling, "Come doggie, come doggie."

Then he noticed there was a long flight of stairs leading up to the spot from where the kind face was watching him. He knew all about stairs and could run up them more easily than some people. So he decided to learn

if he could why this gentle voice kept on calling, "Come doggie." When he had reached the top he was called into the house and given a nice piece of meat.

After he had eaten the meat he looked around as a smart dog should and saw an open door, so he went out the door and found himself in a long hall. He kept on going and soon came to another long flight of stairs, but he went down these instead of up, and when he came to the bottom, O, joy! there he was in the front hall, and the sitting room door was open, so in another minute he had jumped upon the big chair and curled himself down in the soft cushion, and with a deep sigh of content he was soon sound asleep.

When his mistress came home about six o'clock to get her husband's supper she was very much surprised to find Toodles asleep in the easy chair. She went around at once to all the doors and windows, but found everything fastened up tight.

“Well, I am certainly growing forgetful,” thought his mistress, “for I was just sure that I had put that dog out doors.”

A few days afterward, the mistress went away again, and she was just as sure as before that she had put Toodles out doors, but when she came home at night there was the naughty fellow asleep in the easy chair as comfortable as ever.

This went on for many days, and every time it happened the mistress

was more and more worried because she could not remember to put the dog out of the house when she went away. It did not seem possible that she could forget him every single time that way, and yet there he was, always in the big chair when she came home.

Of course Toodles couldn't have told even if he had wanted to, just how he managed to get into the house every time, and the lady up stairs didn't tell because she didn't think it made any difference. Then one day something happened. The mistress put Toodles out and shut the front door about an hour before she left home, thinking in that way she could make no mistake about having made everything all tight.

So Toodles of course thought that his mistress had gone and now was his time to go around in the usual way to find his easy chair. So he set out, but O dear, dear, wasn't it too bad? Just as he was running down the front stairs to get to the sitting room, his mistress was coming through the hall to go out the front door."

"O," she said aloud, "so I've caught you at last, my smart little dog." Then she put him out the front door again, and soon after she went away. When he saw her going up the street he went up stairs and was soon in the hall as usual, but he was surprised to find both the sitting room and parlor doors closed tight. So the only place for him to lie was on the hard polished

floor of the hall. There was not even a rug to console him.

Did he stay there long? No indeed. he thought even the ragged hammock or the hard porch chairs were better than that. And so at last his fun was over. Wasn't that too bad?



A BIG CRUMB AND A LITTLE BIRD

“Let us go to the park, sit by the pond and feed the fishes,” coaxed little Annis Marie in her sweetest tones.

As little Annis Marie and her devoted auntie lived in Los Angeles, it was a very easy matter to carry out the wishes of the little three-year-old, and they set out at once, the child carrying a paper sack full of bread crumbs. The walk was a short one and in a few minutes they were seated near the pond and Annis Marie was eagerly throwing the bread crumbs to the fishes.

Suddenly they heard the joyous song of a bird and the aunt, who was a great bird lover, called out, “O, look



Throwing Bread Crumbs to the Fish

quick, Annis, that is the song of a Western Lark Sparrow. Can you say that long name? It is not very easy for a baby tongue."

Annis thought she could say it and she did.

"But where is it?" she asked, the next minute.

"On the lowest limb of that biggest acacia tree. See, it is that bird of brownish gray, looks something like an English sparrow, the sides of its head are of a chestnut color with black and white streaks on it. See him now, and just hear him sing."

"Yes, I see him," said the child as she threw a piece of bread nearly as large as a hen's egg into the water.

She had come there to "feed the fishes," and she did not mean to have

anything else turn her mind aside from that one subject.

Suddenly, while she was watching the big crumb which she had thrown into the water, down flew the bird from his perch right over the pond and struck the big crumb with his feet then he flew back to the rim of the pond and sung as if he thought he had done something.

When he came to the end of his song he flew at the crumb again, giving it another shove with his feet.

By this time, Annis was so interested in the bird, his song and his funny ways with the crumb, that she seemed for the moment to lose all interest in the fish.

“Auntie,” she said, “don’t you think that bird is trying to get that

nice big crumb away from the fish?"

"Maybe," was the answer, "he seems to be trying to do something with it. But do you care who has it?"

"No," was the answer, as the bird came down for the third time and pushed the crumb farther along, "only I think the bird is working so hard for it, he is really the one that ought to have it."

They sat for several minutes watching the busy little fellow, then, as he kept on coming down to the water, hitting the crumb harder and harder and giving them good measures of song between whiles, Annis said:

"Now, auntie, the bird has pushed the crumb near the shore and I think you ought to help him, because he's sung a whole lot for us."

“So he has,” said the aunt, “and it’s time he collected pay for his concert.”

She went to the spot near the crumb, pulled it to the shore with a short stick, and the little fellow was so tame that he flew down to eat it before she had walked three steps away. Then he flew up singing with all his might.

“I’m going to tell mother about the Western Lark Sparrow with the black spot on his breast, when I get home,” said Annis Marie.

“Yes,” said her auntie, “and tell her too that you can’t see these pretty birds anywhere except in California and other far western states. It is a good little bird, catches insects that eat up the farmer’s wheat, so you must

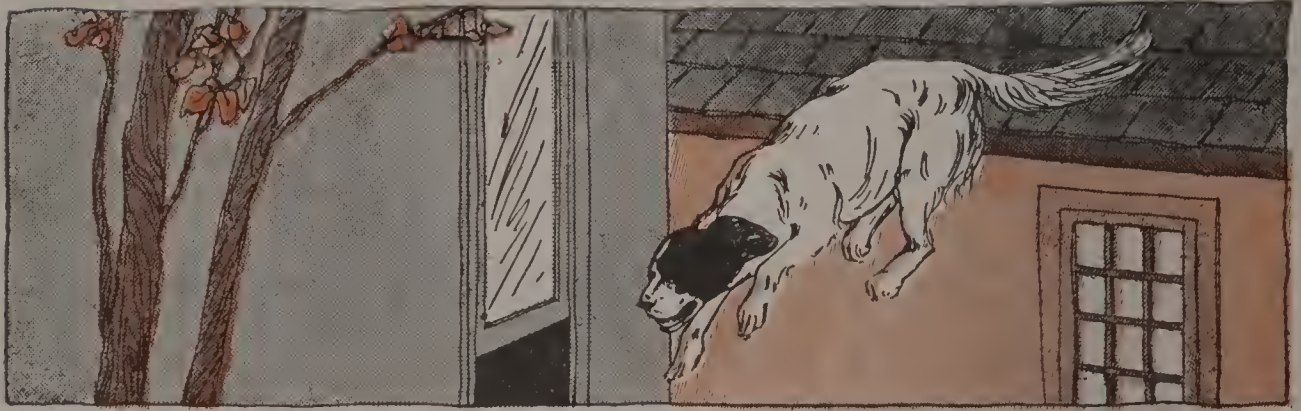
tell everybody never to kill one of the dear, merry little creatures. Can you remember?"

"Yes, I'll remember," she said, nodding her baby head very fast. And she did, for as soon as she reached home she told her mother all about the Western Lark Sparrow, for you must know that this story, like all the rest in this book, is about something which really happened.





"Yes, I'll Remember," She Said, Nodding Her Little Head



This Window Opened on the Roof of a High Porch

HAPPY'S WAY

“We must not let Happy go with us to the office,” decided his master, one bright spring morning. “He is so full of mischief he gets into all sorts of trouble with the raft of dogs that are always running around on Main street.”

So all the doors were closed and locked and, as the windows were screened, there was no possible way for Happy to get out of the house. Therefore his master and mistress went off contented.

They had been gone less than a hour, however, when, on someone coming into the office from outdoors, in walked Happy at the same time, looking just like his name.

No one could have been more surprised to see the pretty fellow than were his master and mistress, and they wondered and wondered, all day, how he had managed to pass the closed doors and the screened windows.

When they reached home at night the very first thing they did was to go the rounds of the house and see if ev-

everything was just as they had left it. They found that the bath-room window was open and also that it was un-screened, a fact which they had forgotten, but this window opened on the roof of a high porch, and if Happy had jumped from that porch he would surely have broken some bones.

So, the next morning, when they were ready to start for the office again, they decided there was nothing to be done but to try the same plan, so they went off leaving the dog safely locked in the house. The queer story was repeated; Happy came to the office early in the forenoon.

They then decided that he must have howled and thus made himself so disagreeable that the neighbors had let him out.

As soon as his mistress reached home at night she called on her next neighbor and asked her about Happy.

“Why,” was the prompt answer, “I didn’t hear a sound from him, but not very long after you went away I saw him running across my lawn, and I wondered where he came from. I’ll watch him tomorrow and perhaps I can tell how he gets out.”

But everything was just the same the next day. The neighbor forgot all about him until she saw him running across her lawn. So it ran on for several days. They went through the motions every day of fastening the smart dog in the house, and he worked himself out in some way, but no one could find out just what his way was.

One morning his mistress stayed at home to do a little piece of work, and she said to herself:

“Now Happy will stay at home where he ought to be.”

But his master had been gone but a few minutes when, as his mistress was washing her hands in the bathroom, Happy ran into the room and jumped out of the window. His mistress quickly put her head out the window to see what he would do. What was her surprise to see him run across the roof, on which he had landed, and jump very quickly into the window of the next neighbor's house.

“Oh,” said the mistress to herself, “now, old fellow, I have found you out. You run down the stairs in the next house and then all you have to

do is to put your forefeet against the unhooked screen door and away you go as free as the wind. But this is the last time you will play that trick on us, for now we'll screen the bathroom window."

The funniest part of this true story is that before the little lady had finished washing and wiping her hands, back came Happy through the window again.

"Ah," said his mistress, greatly pleased, petting the smart dog on the head, "you'd rather stay with your mistress than to go off and leave her."

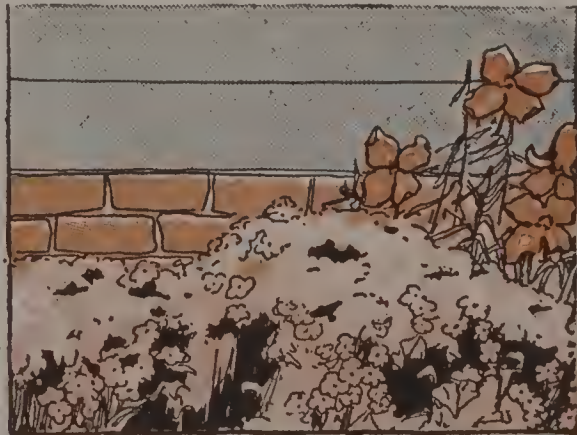
About an hour after Happy's return his mistress was out in her yard and the next neighbor came out in hers.

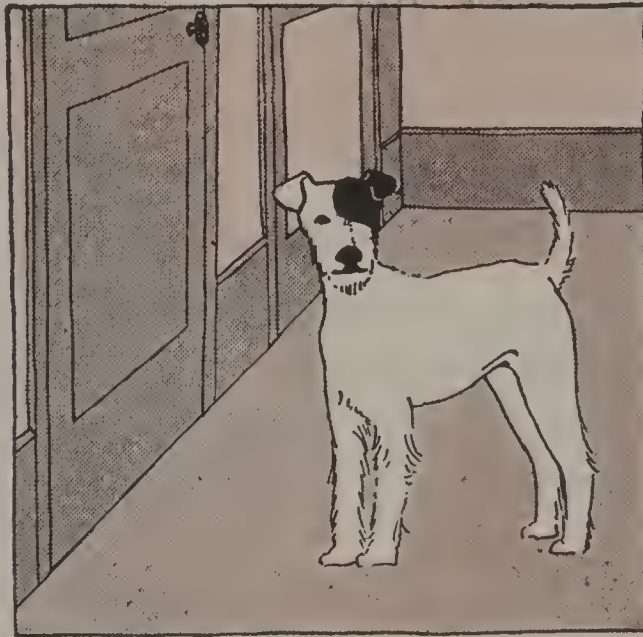
Then the story of Happy's cunning was at once told of over the fence.

“But he didn’t go off this time,” said his mistress at the last, “he came back in a very few minutes. I suppose because——”

“Yes,” interrupted the next neighbor, “because I’ve been away all the morning and the screen door was hooked.”

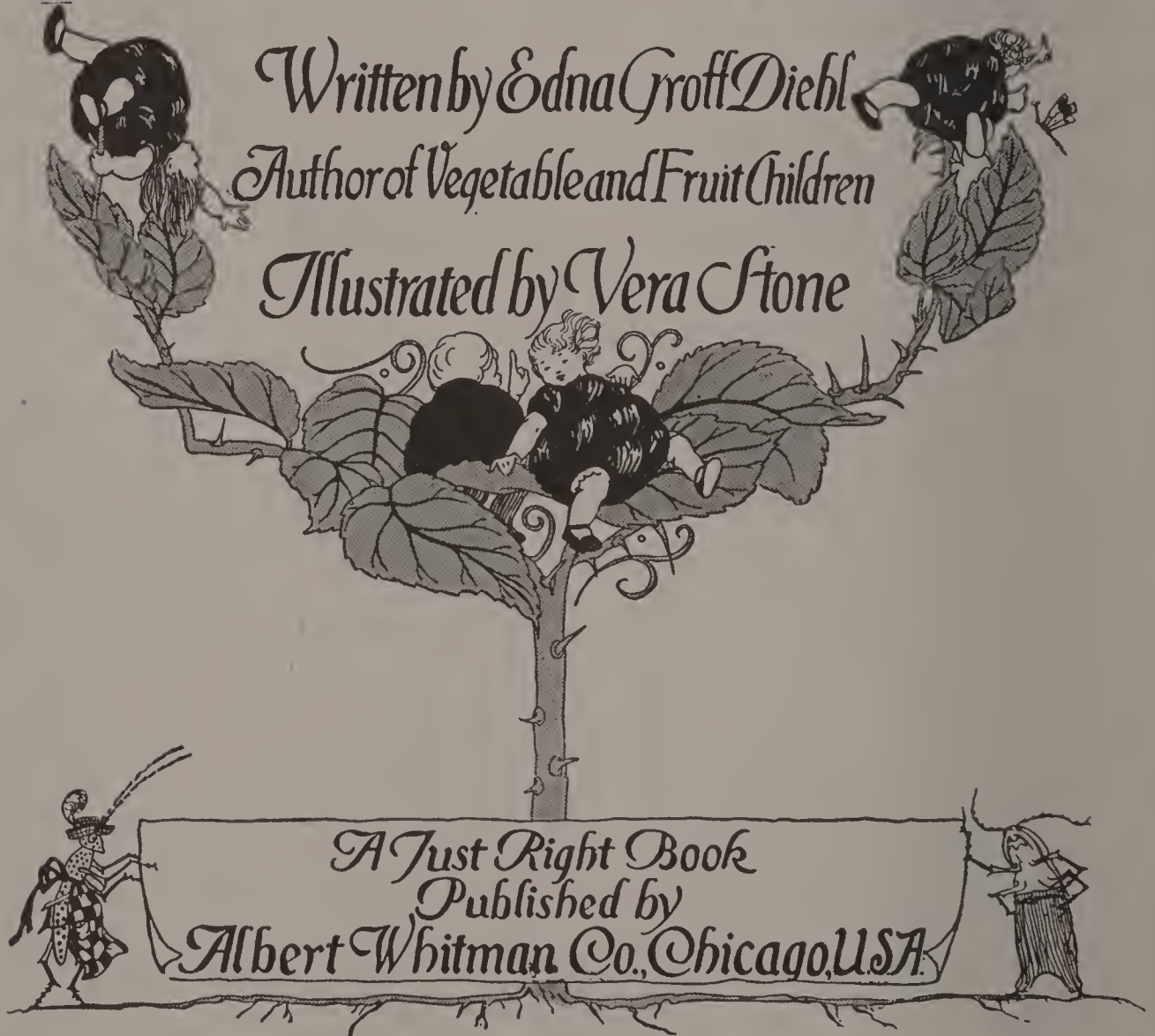
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BY

LAURA DOUNTREE SMITH

AUTHOR OF "THE CHARM TWINS"
"THE LIVELY TWINS," "HAPPY MANNIKIN"
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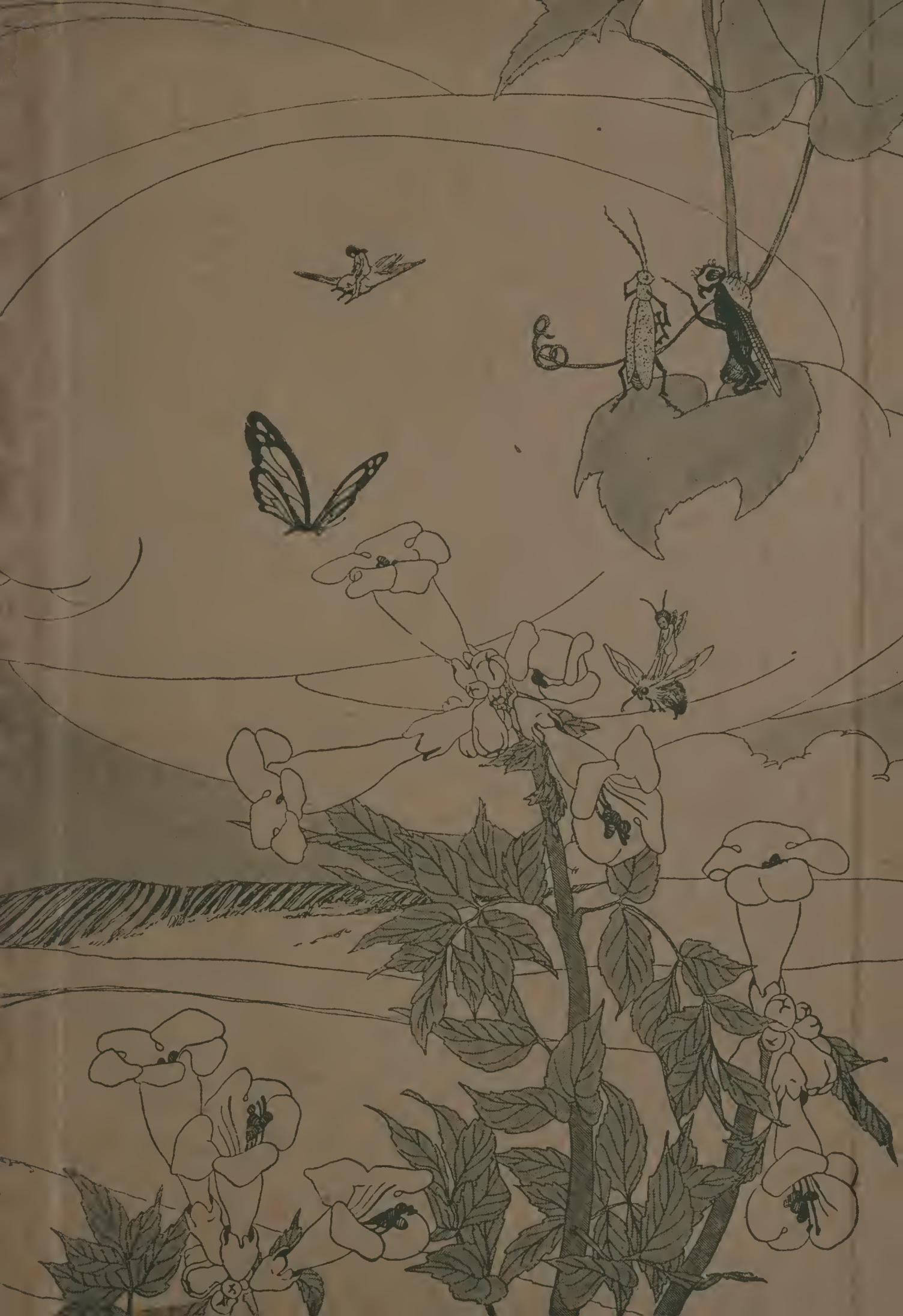
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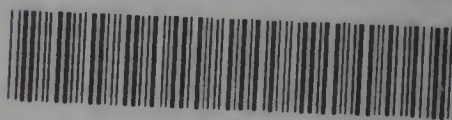
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