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The Great Round World

Natural History
Stories

A SERIES OF TRUE STORIES

BY
JULIA TRUITT BISHOP

PART I

NEW YORK
WILLIAM BEVERLEY HARISON

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BY

WILLIAM BEVERLEY HARISON

PREFACE

THE stories published in this little volume have been issued from time to time in the Philadelphia "Times," and it is at the request of many readers that they now greet the world in more enduring form. They have been written as occasion suggested, during several years; and they commemorate to me many of the friends I have known and loved in the animal world. "Shep" and "Dr. Jim," "Abdallah" and "Brownie," "Little Dryad" and "Peek-a-Boo," I have been fast friends with every one, and have watched them with such loving interest that I know all their ways and can almost read their thoughts. I send them on to other lovers of dumb animals, hoping that the stories of these friends of mine will carry pleasure to young and old.

THE AUTHOR.

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JUNO.



UNO was the cat. We all knew perfectly well that there never had been such a cat as Juno. Not that she was so fine-looking, or so expensive. She would never have taken a prize at a cat show, unless it might have been the booby prize. She was the very plainest kind of a brindled cat, and she wandered into our house from the street during

her early kittenhood and calmly established herself in mother's work-basket.

From that time on Juno had been the friend and playmate of the younger generation. She never seemed like an animal to any of us. Many a time I have heard Ned apologize for having unintentionally hurt Juno, with the exclamation:

“Oh, excuse me, Juno, I didn't mean to do that!”

After which Juno always purred softly, and showed that she had forgiven him.

But the one thing that specially distinguished Juno from all the other cats that I ever knew, was her big-hearted motherhood. If Juno had been a woman, how many desolate orphans she would have cared for! She would have given them summer outings, no doubt, and would have

filled their stockings brimful at Christmas time.

Not being a woman, Juno did her best, nevertheless, to make the world a little easier for all the orphans she knew. What a heart must have beaten under that gray fur! Ned and I often talked of it, and were filled with regret that Juno could not understand our language so that we could talk to her and get her views on the subject.

There was the time when she adopted the chicken, for instance. We knew Juno so well that we felt perfectly certain how she looked at those things, and so when the old yellow hen declined to acknowledge the little black chicken as hers, and pecked its head whenever it went near her, we took the helpless and disowned

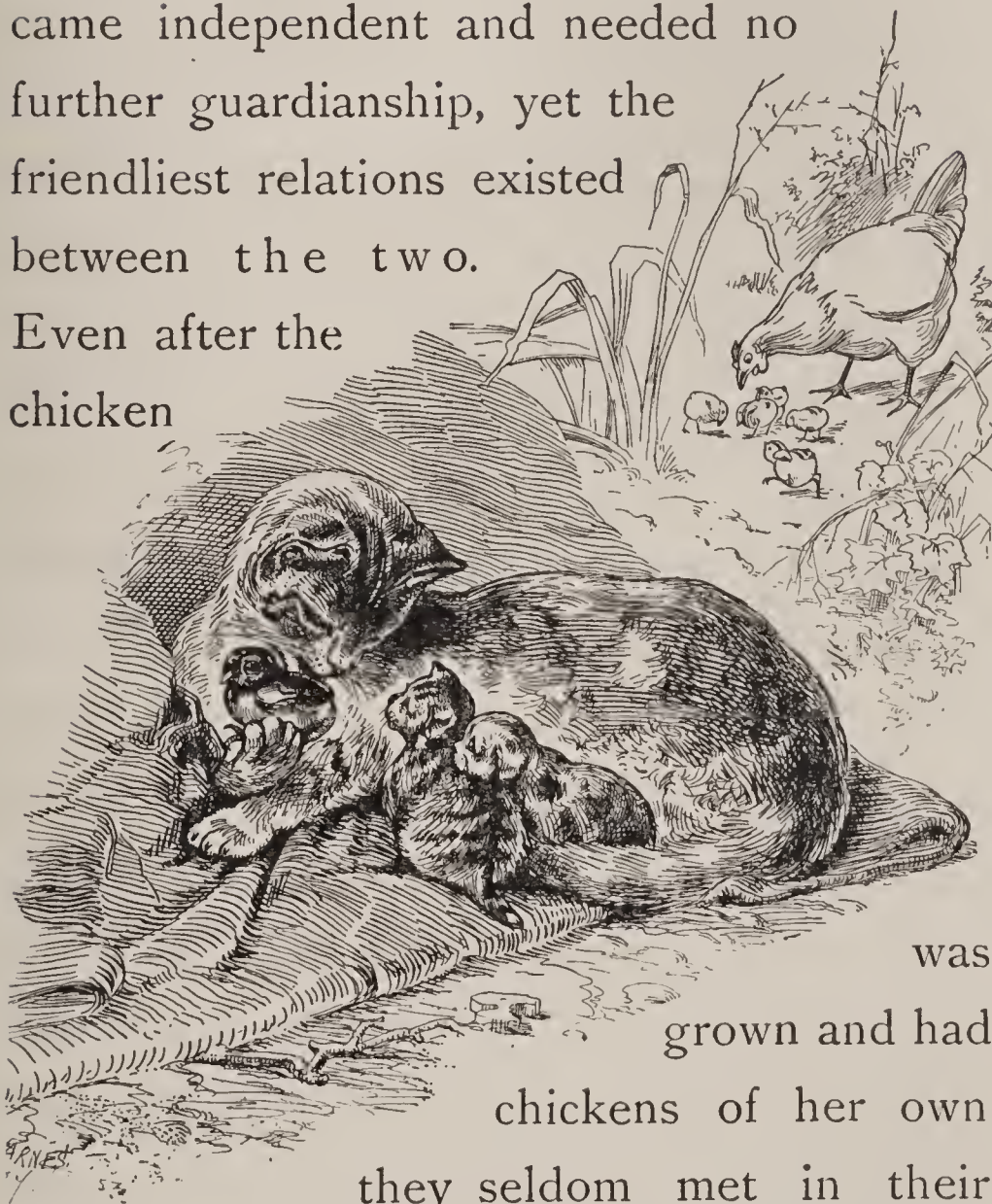
orphan and put it in Juno's bed, between the two kittens.

"There, Juno," said Ned, by way of explanation to her look of astonishment, "there's a child that's been deserted by its unfeeling mother; I wish you'd look after it."

And Juno took the chicken and held it with one paw while she licked it all over, though I am not sure that she liked the taste of the soft down that covered the little stranger. She kept the chicken all that night and every night afterwards until it considered itself big enough to go alone.

How we used to laugh to see Juno walking about the yard with her foster-child chirping after her, or to see the chicken run to her and insist on being hovered!

As time passed the adopted child became independent and needed no further guardianship, yet the friendliest relations existed between the two. Even after the chicken



was grown and had chickens of her own they seldom met in their promenades about the place that Juno did not pause to rub her head affection-

ately against the neck of the orphan that she had brought up.

* * *

Juno was about a year older, I think, when there was a death in her family. The one little kitten that she loved with all her mother heart died and left her desolate. It was a very sad occasion, I remember, but we had a great funeral. We dug the grave at the end of the garden. Johnny's express wagon was the hearse, and Johnny drew it, and was very serious indeed. We borrowed Mrs. Martin's baby carriage, and that was the mourning coach. Juno rode in it, with Ned and Gimps walking one on each side and holding her in. I pushed the coach, while a long procession of the neighbors' children came behind, crying with all their

might. We sung a hymn at the grave, and did everything we could to soothe Juno's grief.

But Juno would not be reconciled. She drooped around and mewed so pitifully for several days that we could not endure it; so we went to a neighbor's cat that had more kittens than she needed, and borrowed one of them for Juno. Dear me, how proud she was of it, and how she took it in her arms and cuddled it up close to her! The whole family came out to look at her, and the Colonel said:

“And this is only a cat! What great tenderness there should be in the human heart when a poor little animal can be like this!”

And the next day Uncle Dick, who was a great favorite with all of us, rode up to the fence and shouted cheerily:

“Hello, boys! Here is a present for you. I killed a mother fox at the mouth of her hole, and here is one of her babies.”

And he reached down into his pocket and drew out a baby fox about as large as an interrogation point, but the funniest and sharpest little thing you ever saw, though its eyes were not open yet.

With one accord we shouted:

“There’s a baby for Juno!” and away we ran with it and laid it beside the new kitten.

Juno arose and looked the little stranger over with evident anxiety. She seemed to be troubled with some haunting suspicion that this was not an orthodox cat. The bushy red tail was a special subject of curiosity. She touched it up with her

paw and looked at it with her head on one side.

For several dreadful minutes we were afraid that Juno was going to leave an orphan on our hands ; but we did not know her, after all. In a few moments she reached the conclusion that the fox was probably a cat of some new and interesting kind, and she lay down again, purring softly, and took the little stranger to her heart.

Such a pair as those two did make ! We named the fox Flash, and he was the pride and the delight of the family. In a few days after his adoption Juno came to look on him as quite the most beautiful creature she had ever seen, and she showed a decided partiality for him. When she moved her family from the

stable to mother's room, which she did systematically every morning, she always carried Flash in first and laid him on the rug with an air of pride impossible to describe.

"No, no, Juno," mother would say, "he is very pretty, but I can't have him here."

But Juno would run back after the kitten, and, having toiled upstairs with it, would lay it on the rug also and lie down beside it, as though she would say:

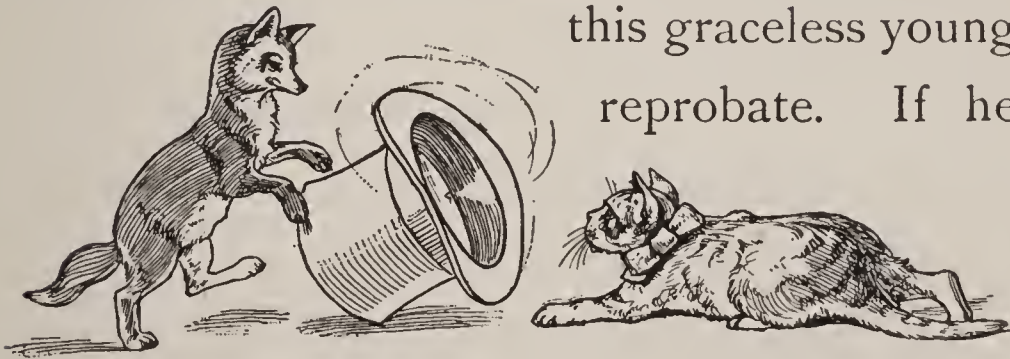
"I'd like to see you move me now!"

Within a month Flash could run everywhere, and he was the brightest, the sharpest, the merriest little fellow that ever kept a respectable cat in trouble with his escapades. That sharp nose of his was everywhere at once, it seemed to me, and those bright eyes were peering

into every corner in search of mischief. He trotted about the house with a swaggering impudence, and went to bed in one of the Colonel's shoes if he liked, or played hide and seek in father's hat when he found it convenient.

As for the life he led poor Juno, we often wondered why she did not turn grayer than ever, having to deal with

this graceless young reprobate. If he



found her trying to sleep a little, he would bite her ears and pull at her tail, bracing himself back on all four of his absurd little feet, and sometimes tumbling over in his excitement ; and he rolled over her and

growled and worried her until she must have been almost on the verge of insomnia! Yet she never boxed his ears once, much as he deserved it.

As the kitten grew older and able to take part in the play, what romps the three used to have! How many times I have seen them rushing through the house in wild pursuit of one another, making as much noise as a drove of horses, mother said, with the fox in the lead, and the cats chasing him, and all the children running to look.

But their favorite playground was in the yard, where the fountain was, with its big circular basin. Around and around this basin they flew, and Flash always gained on his pursuers until he came up with them, vaulted over them, and was in front

again, slipping out of sight like a spirit. I suppose most animals enjoy themselves, but I am sure I never saw animals have a better time than Juno and those two children of hers.

And the good times went on without diminution for many a day. Flash grew to be almost as large as his mother, but if he ever realized that he was not a cat we never knew it. He was as familiar in the house as though he owned it. When Ned and I were going to bed in the dark one night, and put out our hands to turn down the bedclothes, we touched something soft and furry, and we had both tumbled half-way down the stairs before we realized that Juno and Flash had gone to sleep in our bed.

And all the time how Juno loved the

fox! She scarcely ever came near him without stopping to rub her head against him affectionately, or to lick his sharp little ears. She never did grow indifferent to this child of the forest that she had raised as her own. Perhaps it would have been better if she had not cared so much.

One day a strange dog slipped in at the gate while some one was passing out. The fox had never been hurt in his life, and he felt no fear of anything. He trotted up to the dog with his inquisitive nose in the air, and before any one could speak or move, the dog had seized him and was shaking the life out of him.

I never shall forget how we ran from the sight of it, when the dog was beaten away. But when we stole back after a while, Juno was with Flash, and was lick-

ing his face and trying her best to help him. Even the Colonel could not bear to see her, but went away and shut himself up.

As for poor Flash, his day was done, and the merry little heart was still. And a few hours later there was another grave at the foot of the garden.

We tried very hard after that to make Juno forget her loss, but she would not forget. She missed the child that she had loved so tenderly, and broke away from our caresses to go mewling from room to room, or to sit by the fountain, filling the air with disconsolate wails. She would not touch the food we offered her, though we saved her the most tempting morsels.

Of course this could not go on long. One night, a week after the death of Flash, Juno stretched herself out on the

rug and died as quietly as though she had fallen to sleep; and we all cried as though our hearts would break.

“And this is only a cat,” said the Colonel. “Think what human grief must be when a mere animal could grieve like this!”

DR. JIM.



YOU will think, of course, that Dr. Jim was a dignified gentleman, with spectacles, perhaps, and with a little morocco case in his inside pocket containing a thermometer and hypodermic syringe. But you will be very much mistaken. Dr. Jim was not a gentleman at all. He was merely a cat—a big white cat—whose wise and dignified bearing had won him the title of Doctor.

We never knew anything about Dr. Jim's early history. It was doubtless filled with

rough experiences, for when we saw him first he did not look like a favorite of fortune. He came to our door one cold night in November, and set up a plaintive mew-ing, which could not be resisted. We opened the door and invited the wanderer in. "Aunt Patsy," the colored cook, indignantly denounced him as a "gutter-snipe," and commanded him to "take his ugly curkiss offen dissher kyarpet," but the Colonel expostulated mildly.

"Let him stay till he gets warm, Aunt Patsy," he said, coaxingly, "and then maybe he'll want to go."

The dear old Colonel! I can see him yet, as he bent over the unfortunate stray, taking an inventory of his wounds and bruises. Times had been going hard with this cat, for he was covered with the marks

of conflict; one eye was swollen shut, giving him an extremely grotesque appearance, and somebody had evidently made an attempt to cut off his tail, which was wounded and bleeding. Add to this that he was draggled, wet, and dirty, and you may imagine how disreputable he looked.

“And yet, poor fellow,” said the Colonel, tenderly, “perhaps he may be a great deal better than he looks. Let’s give him a chance to start again.”

That was just like the Colonel. He was always saying that about people. Whenever he found a poor fellow that was in a regular bad fix, with everybody down on him, he would say: “Maybe if he could start over again he would do better.” And so he helped him start over again; and I could show you dozens of them that are

good people now, and some of them rich. It helps people sometimes to get a new start ; remember that, Eight O'Clockers.

So the cat sat on the rug and used his tongue to wash the rain and mud from his white fur, and after a while, when he was quite dry and clean, he walked deliberately across the floor, jumped up on the Colonel's knee, turned himself around a time or two to find a good place, and then quietly curled himself down and went to sleep, as though it had been all understood beforehand. Maybe it was, sure enough, for I never did see anybody that could get along with dumb animals as the Colonel could.

Of course, we all knew that settled it about the cat—it was going to stay.

We named the newcomer Jim that night,

when he was muddy and rough-looking. The next day he was so clean and dignified that we added the title, because brother Ned insisted that Jim resembled old Dr. White, who was so neat and prim, and who could never be persuaded to laugh under any circumstances.

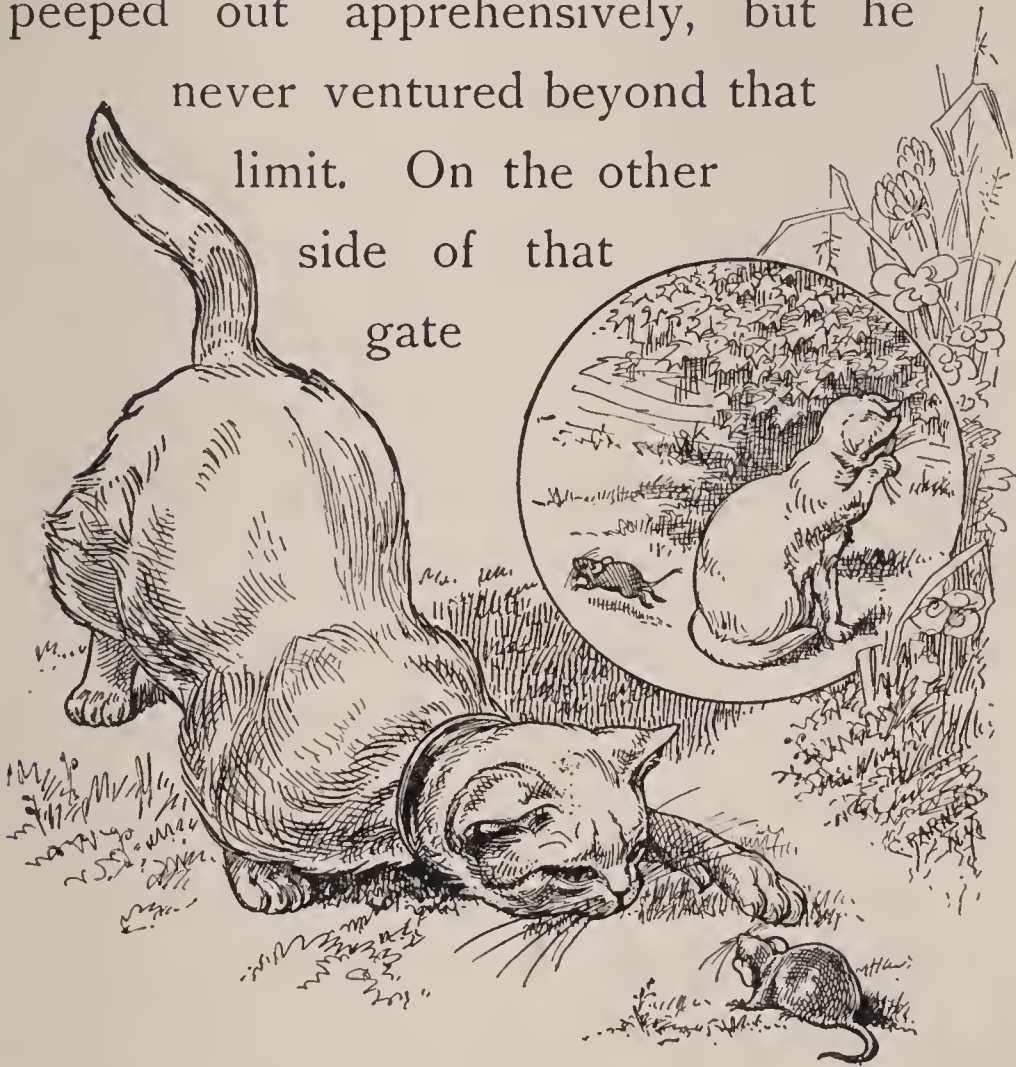
So his past was all blotted out. He had "started over again," as the Colonel said, and from that time on he was Dr. Jim.

And then began one of the most singular friendships I have ever seen. The Colonel, dear old iron-gray philosopher, remarked with emotion that cats were usually suspected of being treacherous, but that this one was evidently warm-hearted and capable of the tenderest gratitude. The Colonel himself, you see, was rather peculiar. Aunt Patsy said he was "sot

in his ways"; and Cousin Richard said the Colonel might fall heir to millions, but he would die a poor man. But the people he helped! That was what I judged him by. I was young then, and would rather have been this soft-hearted Colonel, with his simple ways, than a great and successful man like Cousin Richard, who helped no one except in big charities that were published in all the papers.

We used to laugh when we would see the Colonel and Dr. Jim walking about the yard and the garden; for whenever the Colonel would start, Dr. Jim would follow and beg so earnestly to be carried that the Colonel would take him up in his arms, where he would lie, purring contentedly, and softly spreading and closing his velvet paws.

This was the extent of his outings. He sometimes walked down to the gate and peeped out apprehensively, but he never ventured beyond that limit. On the other side of that gate



lay the great world that had used him so roughly. He preferred the safe asylum within, and the friend that had been will-

ing to give him another chance for respectability.

But it was when the Colonel retired to his study and devoted himself to the great book on "The Old South," which, he always flattered himself, he would finish some day, that Dr. Jim was at his best. Then it was that he sat down among the papers and watched the gliding pen with the eye of a critic, turning his head to one side sometimes with a puzzled look, as though he failed to catch the writer's meaning.

When he was tired he curled himself up on the last page of the Colonel's manuscript and went calmly to sleep. When he awoke he sometimes mounted upon his friend's shoulder, and sat there, curling his tail around the Colonel's neck. When the

tip of the tail made its appearance under the writer's chin, Dr. Jim always failed to recognize it as his own property, and was deceived into grabbing after it.

This was undignified, of course, but even in his undignified moments he was master of himself. Sometimes, when he thought the writing had gone on long enough, Dr. Jim calmly reached down, caught the pen-handle with his teeth, and pulled it away. And to show you what a perfect understanding there was between the two, I have often heard the Colonel remark on such occasions :

“Oh, well, Dr. Jim, no doubt you are right. I will put my work away for this time.”

Dr. Jim always tolerated Aunt Patsy. He did not love her, but he managed to

endure her. There, however, his forbearance stopped. He hated negroes with all his heart. Whenever the gate-latch clicked, Dr. Jim rushed to the window and looked out. If the newcomer were a white person, he yawned and went back to his place on the rug; but if it were a negro, away went Dr. Jim, a mere streak of white cat, and crawled under some sofa or into some other safe retreat, from which came sounds of growling and spitting until the negro had departed.

It was evident that Dr. Jim would mingle with none but the best society. His tastes were all refined, and he held himself aloof from people that he considered his inferiors.

We all laughed one day when an old lady, who believed in making everything

useful, asked us if Dr. Jim was a good "mouser." During all the time that he was with us, Dr. Jim caught but one mouse, and it ran under his very nose, so that he could not well help himself. With an air of pleased surprise he showed it to the Colonel. Then he laid it down on the lawn, and airily touched it up with one paw, turning his head from side to side coquettishly.

After a while he turned his back to his captive, and sat down and washed his face with a look of great absorption. When he looked for the mouse again, there was no mouse to be seen. Dr. Jim's first and last effort to commit murder had failed.

One of Dr. Jim's striking qualities was his honesty. The butcher's boy was in

the habit of leaving the steak on the kitchen table if no one was in. Now it was well known in the family that Dr. Jim had a weakness for steak; yet how many times have we found him standing on the table, anxiously rubbing his head against the edge of the paper in which the meat was wrapped, but never offering to take it without leave.

“He has a conscience, this cat!” was what the Colonel always said of him, and what we always devoutly believed.

For six long years Dr. Jim was an inmate of our family. Those years had left the dear old Colonel older, and grayer, and more bent. Sorrow had touched the loyal heart, and dimmed the kindly eyes. And when, one day, Dr. Jim stretched himself out among the papers on the study-table

and died there, we younger ones walked on tiptoe and spoke in whispers.

When the Colonel came out, after a while, two tears were rolling down his cheeks, but he smiled upon me kindly.

“ Ah, my dear,” he said, “when people are young, friendships are so plentiful ; but when one gets old, and begins going down into the shadows, one misses every friend, even though it be only a cat.”



OUR TIGER

WHICH WAS NOT A TIGER AT ALL, BUT A
LITTLE DOMESTICATED WILDCAT



IT was my good fortune, in the first place, to become very well acquainted with Tiger's mother. I cannot say that the acquaintance was a pleasant one, but it taught me some of the wonders of animal instinct, which I have often been tempted to call reason, so much was it like that higher and nobler faculty.

Some wild animal had been making sad havoc among the chickens and turkeys ;

not only invading the hen-roost at night, but even capturing full-grown fowls by day as they wandered about their usual feeding grounds in the woods. After several days' search we found the tracks of a wildcat in the moist earth suspiciously near to the scattered feathers of a fine "Plymouth Rock," and that settled the question.

"You must get some dogs and go hunting for him, Dallas," said my mother, and, in accordance with that request, I roamed over that whole section for days and days afterward, looking for the wildcat that had so great a fancy for my mother's fowls. I had begun to think that I had frightened him out of the country, when, one night, a young pig was stolen from the pen, and there, close at hand, were the tracks again.

And this time the dog, which I had borrowed for the occasion, "struck the trail" without any difficulty, and away we went down toward the river bottom. And such a chase! Twenty times I thought the dog must be within sight of the wildcat, so eager was the baying that rung through the woods, and yet he lost his quarry at last in the most unaccountable manner.

I was not so well versed in woodland lore then as I am now, and was puzzled beyond expression until the next day. It happened then that I was out on a squirrel hunt alone, when I heard in the distance the excited bark of my "borrowed" dog, and realized instantly that he was out on a hunt on his own account. I was wondering what he was trailing, when I perceived that both he and his game were

heading straight in my direction, and I hid behind the upturned root of a fallen tree, hoping to get a shot at the animal, whatever it might be.

In a minute or two it came, getting over the earth in long bounds—a huge wildcat, the largest I had ever seen. But before I could get my gun to my shoulder, the cat leaped upon the very log beside which I was standing, and ran back and forth along its entire length several times in succession. I was so puzzled that I forgot to fire. If a wildcat could be supposed to have lost its mind, that must certainly be the condition of this one, was what I thought.

Suddenly it jumped from the log to a tangle of grapevines that slanted from the ground to a tree near at hand, and running up the vines and into the tree, it leaped

from that tree to another, and then on to another, finally disappearing altogether.

The dog came on, making the woods resound with his keen yelp, and kept the trail in fine style until he reached the log. There he lost it completely and I saw what the wildcat had meant. It had laid its plans of escape with as much judgment as though it had been gifted with reason, and I had too much respect for the marauder to have killed it if I had had the opportunity.

But the cat was killed by other hands than mine. Uncle Ben, the colored Nimrod of the place, killed her one day at the mouth of the hollow log in which she made her home, and he brought us one of the young ones, a fierce little fellow, all claws and teeth, apparently. We were delighted with the newcomer, and we named him

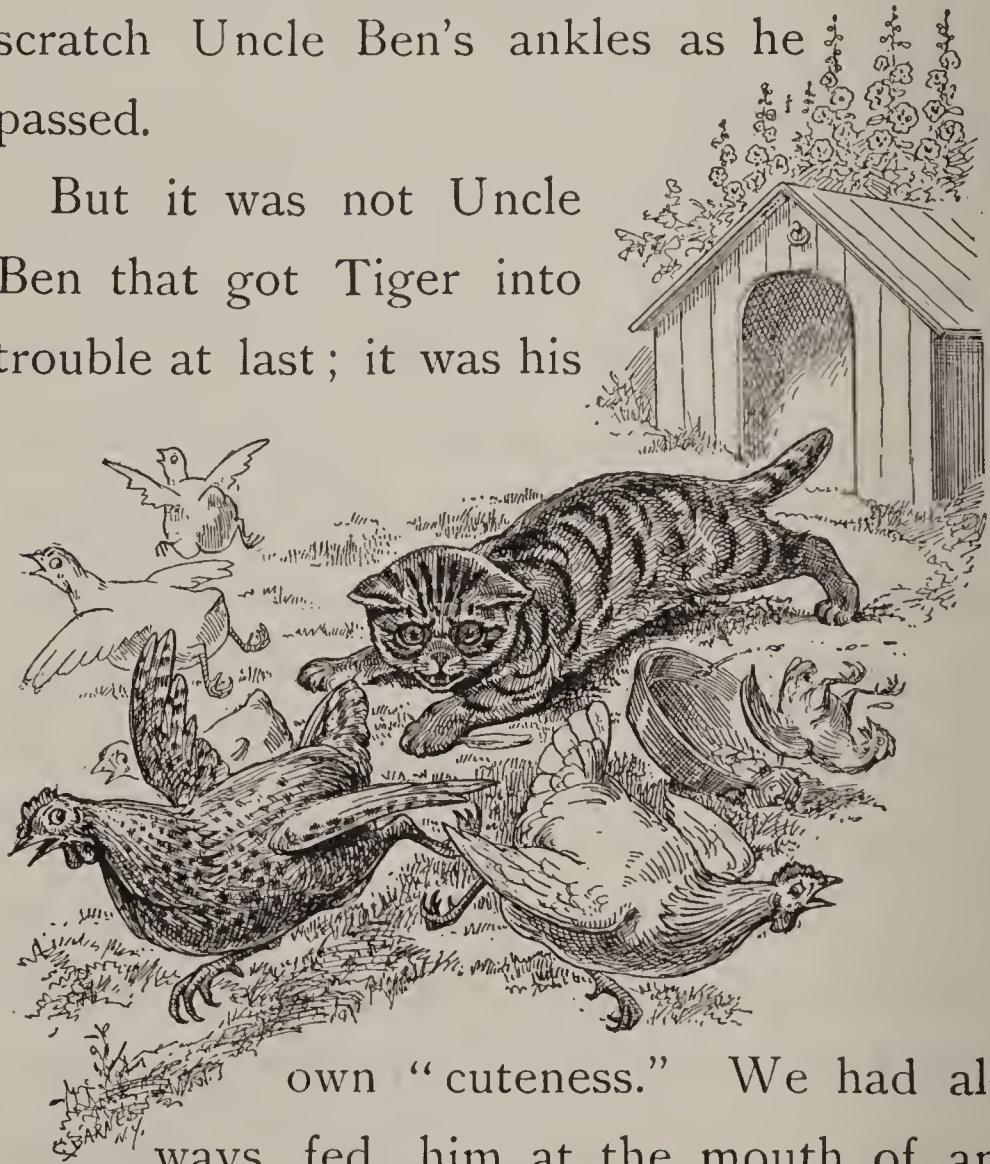
“Tiger,” and made much of him and petted him without delay.

For a long time Tiger was a most vicious and unmanageable little wretch, and whenever we came near him he would arch his back, throw his mouth wide open, and “spit” and claw as though his life depended on it; but after a while kindness had its effect upon him. The time came when he would spring upon my mother’s lap, push her work or her book out of the way, curl himself up and go to sleep as calmly as any petted household kitten.

As for Uncle Ben, Tiger always hated him most cordially. Perhaps he remembered that he owed his orphanage and captivity to the old negro. At any rate, he was never reconciled to him, and was never so happy as when he could hide beneath

a table-cover or under the steps, and could throw out a swift and stealthy paw and scratch Uncle Ben's ankles as he passed.

But it was not Uncle Ben that got Tiger into trouble at last; it was his



own "cuteness." We had always fed him at the mouth of an old unused dog-kennel out in the yard. For a long time the chickens crowded

around him at every meal and helped him eat, in spite of his growling; but one day, by some means, Tiger discovered that chickens were quite palatable. Two or three days in succession Uncle Ben came in and announced that "dat ornary rep-tile out yander done kilt anudder chicken, Miss Sallie."

And then the next day I saw a strange sight. I had just fed Tiger, and had paused a little distance away to watch him. He smelled his food and nibbled at it a little, but it didn't suit him, apparently, and he retired to the depths of the kennel.

As soon as he disappeared the chickens gathered around and began eating his food with songs of triumph and self-gratulation, but all at once that long gray body flashed into the midst of them, scattering them as

with a whirlwind, and there was Tiger complacently devouring a chicken!

We forgave the reprobate yet one time more, but the next day I caught him again deliberately leaving his food out for "bait," and after that "Miss Sallie" would have no more of him. We gave him to a friend in town who admired him, and Uncle Ben carried him off with grins and chuckles of delight.



"I done got red o' dat pizen beast," he said, when he returned, "an' I lay hit'll be de las' one I eber fotches home to torment de life plum outen me, you hear dat, mun!"

SHEP.



HE was the most popular dog, I suppose, that anybody ever knew. He lived in our block, you see; and my window overlooked the house of the people who had the good fortune to own him, or rather to be owned by him. I have often thought that he regarded it in that light himself. He was firmly convinced, no doubt, that he employed this family to work for him, and to provide him with a house and to do his cooking; in return for which he al-

lowed them to live with him, and he even saw that they came to no harm.

I arrived at this conclusion after witnessing his condescending airs toward the master of the house, and the pleasant patronage that he extended to the whole family. There was nothing cringing or servile in his manner when Frank or Dick spoke to him. No, indeed! He came racing up, with that friendly grin of his at its best, and remarked in the plainest English :

“ Well, all right ! What did you say ? ”

And popular ! Well, if any one of us could hope to have as many friends, what a thing that would be ! In the first place, there was the family that took care of this dog. They were firmly convinced that such another dog was not to be found

anywhere. Why, when the master came home, the first thing he said was, "Hello, Shep!" and when the gentle, invalid mother came down to breakfast in the morning, I always heard her ask :

"Susan, have you fed Shep?"

As for Frank and Dick, when they were not at school they were rolling or racing on the lawn with Shep; and their merry shouts of laughter used to bring people to the windows in all the neighboring houses. Old people get very gruff and grim sometimes, but even the gruffest and grimmest of them like to hear genuine childish laughter.

And then there was the little old lady next door. She was a very poor and lonely little old lady, and people laughed at her funny, old-fashioned clothes and

her funny, old-fashioned ways. But Shep didn't laugh! No, indeed! There must have been some tender chivalry in his heart, which would have marked him as a gentleman if he had been a human being instead of a dog; for whenever she went down-town Shep went with her, and protected her and brought her back again. However sound asleep he might be, the click of her gate-latch never failed to rouse him; and he was over the fence in a moment, and walking gravely along by her side. When she went into stores he waited for her at the door; and when she came home he left her at her own gate, with an awkward gambol or two at parting.

“Somehow,” said the little old woman, “the dog knows that I'm kind o' friend-

less an' lonesome-like, with my old man an' the children all gone, an' he's tryin' to make it up to me."

As for the little girls around the corner, it was well understood that they could not play at all without Shep. He was as much at home in their great, shady yard as he was in his own. He played ball with them by the hour, and the screams and laughter of the children mingled pleasantly with Shep's jubilant barking. When they played dolls, Shep sat beside them and held a doll in his mouth when they wanted him to, though I was never sure that he liked the taste of the dolls. When they played lady, Shep was a lady, too, and whether he was calling or receiving calls his manners were elegant beyond description.

Even Mike, the drayman, who lived away down the street, was on the friendliest terms with Shep; and when he passed, morning and evening, he always shouted a cordial "Hillo, Shep!" And there was a great multitude of people who shook hands with him over the fence every day, and whom he greeted with that delighted smile that was more eloquent than words.

Some of us will never forget the time that Shep went to church. All his life had been consistent and well ordered, but somehow he had never gone to church, and no one had thought of such a possibility. Nevertheless, in he walked one Sunday when the church was crowded, and with an air of pleased surprise he promenaded up the main aisle and looked



about him. An usher passed without noticing him, and was back at the door. The minister was reading the last hymn. Shep's whole air showed that he was thinking :

“Well, this is fine! Why have I never seen this before?”

With joyful grins and much wagging of his tail, he recognized one after another of his friends, and insisted on sitting up and shaking hands with them. The little girls tried to choke back a giggle, but it could not be done. They were playing lady, Shep felt sure, so he sat down and played lady a little while, too, until it dawned upon him that the minister must be talking to him. So he went up to the pulpit to investigate.

The whole congregation saw Shep; but

no one could do anything. He looked at the minister's face, and wagged his tail in the friendliest manner, but nothing came of it. Then he looked over the congregation, glancing from face to face with a self-possession that would have been worth gold and diamonds to an orator.

Then the great pipe-organ began, and the choir arose to sing in the gallery back of the pulpit. Shep cast an amazed and horrified look in that direction, and started to retreat; but his emotions overpowered him, and he threw back his head and gave utterance to a howl that was full of despair.

Well, the ushers got him out, and that was the last of Shep's church-going.

Early one morning a sad piece of news went through the neighborhood. The family had been roused during the night

by a savage growl, a scream of pain, oaths, and a wild struggle. In the hall below they found a burglar down on the floor, with Shep's teeth fastened in his throat, and a knife in his hand, red with the dog's blood.

The burglar was secured, but they scarcely waited to see about that,—these people who loved the dog more than anything the burglar could have taken. They were down on the floor around him, trying to check the blood that flowed so fast from his faithful heart. One of the best physicians in the town was sent for, and came, and worked as faithfully with the dog as though he had been a millionaire.

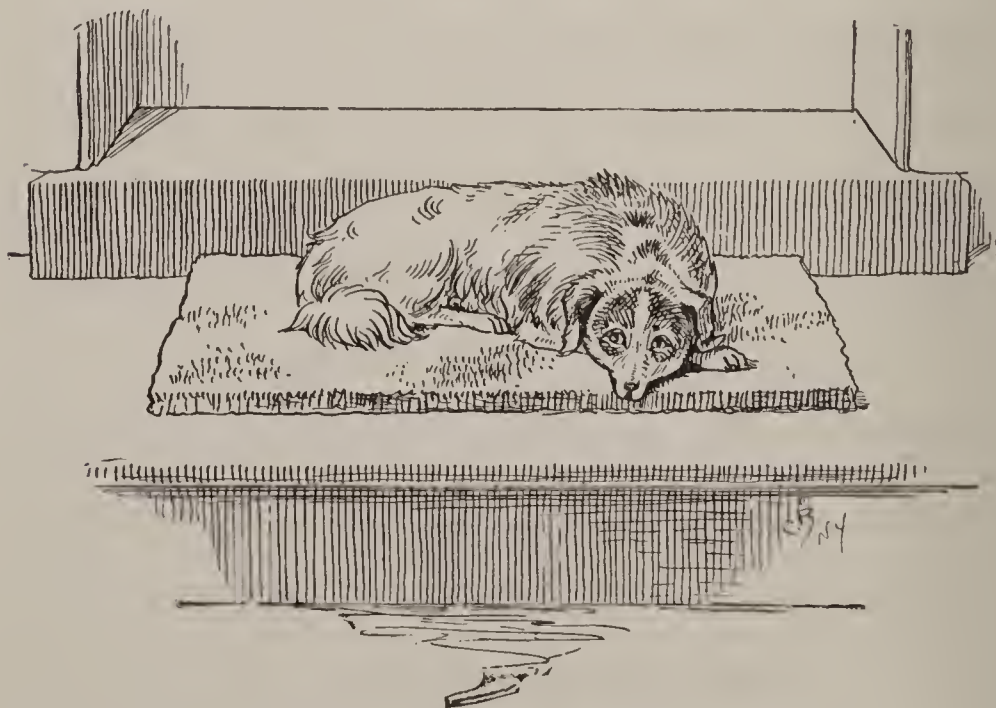
With the first glimpse of day came the little old woman, and then the little girls, and after a while the house was full of

people. Shep looked up at every one, flapped his tail feebly on the floor, and did his best to show them how pleased was he. Doubtless, in his rapidly darkening vision, these familiar faces were pleasant to look upon, and filled his dying dreams with the scenes and the people that he loved.

If he might have lived a little longer, he would have wondered what it meant when tears fell thick and fast upon his silky, yellow hair. He had known so little of what sorrow really was, himself, and here were so many people weeping around him.

“You mustn’t notice if I cry a bit,” said the little old woman. “I’ve had greater sorrows, but I have grown to love this one creature, an’ I’ve been so lonely, an’ I think he understands me.”

His grave is down in a corner of the lawn, where he used to play. It is a green little grave now, but the children still tread softly and speak low when they go near it. I can see it from my window, and every morning, the whole summer long, I see a little old woman lean over the fence and drop a flower upon that mound of green.



MUFF.



PLEASE, sir, is this the pound?"

"This is the dog-pound, Miss Two-Feet-Two. What d'ye want?"

The big policeman looked down at the small girl, and the small girl looked up at the big policeman—nearly tilting over backward as she did so, his face was so high up.

"Oh, please, sir, is there a little dog here named Muff? A little brown dog with one white ear?"

“I can’t say,” replied the policeman, grinning facetiously at the window near him, where a red-whiskered man was looking out. “I neglected to ask ’em their names as they came in ; but if you’ll wait a minute, I’ll go out and inquire if any of ’em’s named Muff.”

The child’s lips began to quiver, and her eyes to grow large and bright.

“Oh, please let me have Muff,” she cried, with a pitiful little break in her voice. “I can’t pay the tax on him, but I won’t let him run out, not a single minute ! Do, please, let me have him back ! You don’t know how he loves mamma and me ! Why, when I’m hungry he won’t hardly eat until he sees whether there’s enough for both of us. He’s been hungry and cold many a time, right by the side o’ me, an’ many

a night when I didn't have cover enough I just cuddled up closer to Muff an' got warm. Oh, please let me have just this one little dog!"

The agony in the child's face was amusing to the men. They both laughed. Then the policeman said:

"Which do you think is the best way to kill dogs, Ned—drownin' 'em, or knockin' 'em in the head?"

The child gave a piercing scream and ran, with her hands over her ears. Big brutality looked after her and laughed again. It was merely a child trying to save her dog, and such things were common.

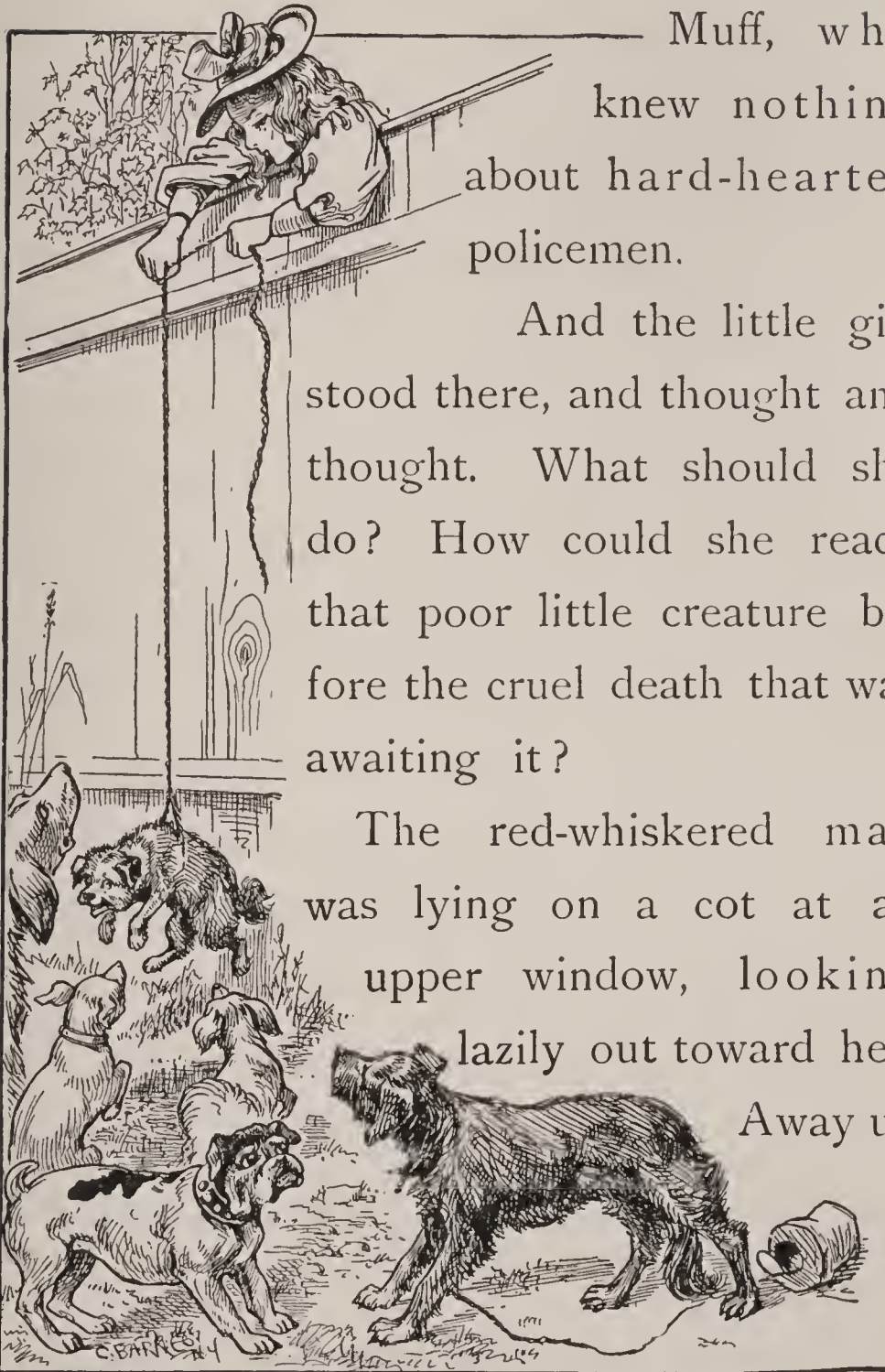
But the child could not stay away. Back of the house was the pound where the dogs were kept, with the high board

fence around it. Sounds of snarling, barking, and fighting came from within.

Pretty soon the tear-stained eyes were glued to a crack in the fence. Such dogs, such an army of dogs as had possession of the place within! Beautiful pet dogs and curs of low degree; small dogs and large dogs; dogs of all colors and forms and sizes; and all of them dejected and unhappy. But among them all was no sign of—

Yes, there he was!

“Muff! Come here, Muff!” shouted the child, and in an instant there he was, almost breaking his neck to get to lick the one little brown finger that was pushed through the crack. And how he whined and jumped and begged to be taken through the crack himself—this foolish



Muff, who knew nothing about hard-hearted policemen.

And the little girl stood there, and thought and thought. What should she do? How could she reach that poor little creature before the cruel death that was awaiting it?

The red-whiskered man was lying on a cot at an upper window, looking lazily out toward her.

Away up

the street some bright and happy children were running across, with their nurse following. Down the other way went a painter with his step-ladder on his shoulder.

“Oh, Mr. Painter! Mr. Painter man! please wait a minute.”

The step-ladder came to a halt, and the painter turned around to look at the very small girl who was panting after him.

“Mr. Painter, won't you please set your step-ladder up against that fence a minute? They've got my little dog in there, and I want to get him out.”

“You kin reckon I will,” exclaimed the painter. “Them ornery rascals took my dog out o' my own yard, and killed 'im, too;—but how're you goin' to git to him, little 'un?”

“Oh, if you can give me a piece of

cord!" panted the trembling child, almost too nervous to talk; and before his slow motions could supply it she had laid hold upon the piece that was dangling from his pocket, had pulled it out, and was making a slip-noose in the end of it.

The red-whiskered man, looking lazily out from the upper window, was amused to see that the ragged little girl he had noticed out in front had climbed to the top of the fence, and was fishing over in the inclosure with a piece of cord, while a little brown dog kept jumping up toward her. He did not think very rapidly, and so he wondered vacantly how the little girl reached the top of that high fence, and why she was fishing in the pound with a cord.

But all at once the cord caught some-

thing, and the little brown dog was pulled up so fast that he hardly knew what had happened to him until he was in his little mistress' arms and she was down on the ground.

"Well, I vow!" exclaimed the red-whiskered man to himself in a tone of amaze.



"Oh, we thank you so much, Muff and I!" cried the child, her face dimpling all over, thin as it was, and the step-ladder went on down the street quite glorified with pleasure.

"And now, Muff," said the child warningly, "I must wrap you up in my apron; and don't you even wag your tail till we get home."

And Muff understood all about it; and


when the little girl went up the street carrying that limp bundle, she met that very big policeman. But he had forgotten about her; and he turned to some one he knew, and said, right in the child's hearing;

“Pretty small kid, that, to be takin' keer of a baby! But they put 'em at it here by the time they can walk!”

And the best of it is that Muff heard it, too; but Muff didn't say a word!

SAM.

A MISCHIEVOUS PET PONY AND HIS WINNING WAYS.

 I WAS spending my first summer at Aunt Ruth's, out on the farm—at least I was just preparing to spend it, and was busily running here and there, inspecting every room in the great farmhouse.

“Run to the milk-room, Helen, and see if the cream is turning,” called Aunt Ruth, who took the greatest delight in my wonder and pleasure over all her surroundings;

and so, followed by the three children, Jack, Ray, and Baby Nell, I went into the milk-room.

Such shining pans of milk! such huge crocks of butter! no wonder I was astonished. And while I stood there, uttering exclamations of delight, I was suddenly startled by something cold and damp that touched the back of my neck. Of course I screamed, and fell up against a shelf and knocked down a pyramid of tin pans, besides deluging myself with the contents of a huge bowl of milk that I overturned; and when I could get the milk out of my eyes enough to see, there were Jack and Aunt Ruth screaming with laughter, while behind me was a pony with its head thrust through the window, making frantic efforts to reach the milk that I had spilled.

Then I laughed with the others, and that was my first introduction to Sam. He had often been given dainty morsels from that window, it seemed, and he never heard any motion in the milk-room without presenting himself at the window and signifying that he was ready for any small offering in the way of a lump of sugar or a tea-cake.

It was the very next day, I think, that, happening to glance out where the children were grouped on the grass under a cherry-tree, I was horrified to see Sam in the very midst of them.

“Oh, Aunt Ruth, the horse! the horse!” I screamed, and Aunt Ruth came running, but stopped and laughed when she saw what it was.

“Oh, that’s only Sam,” she said. “Sam wouldn’t hurt a fly.”

Sure enough, I watched the little group, and twice Sam walked deliberately over Ray, carefully lifting his feet and not even touching him. Baby Nell dropped a little piece of cake she was eating, and instantly



Sam snatched it up; but before he could even taste of it, Nell flew at him, opened his mouth with her hands, took the cake away, and serenely ate it.

“Take ain’t dood for you, Sam,” she observed wisely.

Such a look of surprise and reproach as Sam turned on that baby! And yet he did not make the slightest effort to rebel. No, indeed! He merely walked down toward the pretty fawn-colored Jersey calf that was strolling around on the lower part of the lawn, and when he was near enough he bit the calf on the back. Not enough to hurt it, you understand, but just enough to frighten the little creature, and make it jump and run.

“Oh, Sam always takes his revenge out of some of the other animals,” said Aunt Ruth, when I described the little scene to her. “Sam is quite a character.”

And before the first two weeks of my stay were gone I discovered that Sam had

individuality and was well worthy of study. He had been the children's playmate all his life, and he rather enjoyed a little outing with them. Very often all three of the children rode him at once; Jack in the middle, Ray behind him, and Baby Nell in front, and Sam entered into the spirit of their frolic as no other pony ever could have done. Sometimes, too, they drove him to a funny little cart, and Sam would pick his way as gingerly over the bad places in the road as though he were treading on egg-shells.

But Sam drew the line right there. He was willing to be made a plaything by the children, but he had a constitutional objection to anything that looked like work.

One evening, when Aunt Ruth and I were going out in the phaeton, we found

that the horse she usually drove was lame, and so Sam was put in his place. With ears laid back and head tossing, Sam started off and trotted with all his might for about half a mile. Aunt Ruth was delighted with his speed and spirit, and was saying that she knew just how to manage Sam, when all at once the little rascal stopped.

“Come up, Sam! Come up!” she urged, shaking the lines gently.

But Sam, instead of coming up, lifted one foot and deliberately kicked the front of the phaeton.

“Whoa, Sam! Dear me, what are we going to do?” cried Aunt Ruth. “Come up, Sam! Come up, sir!”

Sam’s only reply was another kick at the phaeton, and then he quietly and calmly turned it around, carefully making a large

circuit, and having reached the road again, he went flying back home with a speed that made the wheels smoke.

“What made you come back so soon?” cried Jack, who met us at the gate.

“Sam wouldn’t go any farther,” answered Aunt Ruth, meekly.

It is unnecessary to say that we didn’t try to drive Sam any more, though Aunt Ruth did declare that he was getting spoiled and that we must break him of it.

It was interesting to watch Sam in the evening, as the feeding-time drew near, and the cows, horses, pigs, and sheep gathered about the barnyard gate, expecting to be turned in and given their supper. The other animals passed the time eagerly watching for the first glimpse of their usual attendant, and were impatient

of anything that came between them and the barnyard.

But as for Sam, the very spirit of mischief possessed him. He carefully placed himself in the way of the others so that they could not see. The cows tossed their heads angrily, the sheep tried to knock him out of the way, and the other horses bit at him; but Sam eluded every attack, and "came up smiling," if one may make such a remark concerning a mere horse.

It was diverting to watch him, as he pretended to be asleep, this joker of the barnyard, and approached gradually nearer and nearer to some one of the party, sometimes taking as much as twenty minutes in getting near enough for a kick. Then, quick as lightning, out flew that agile heel, making a dull thump on

the subject of his joke, and the next instant Sam was twenty yards away, peacefully nibbling the grass, and no doubt laughing prodigiously in his sleeve.

My acquaintance with Sam was a long and pleasant one. It ended about seven years later, when a scrawled and tear-stained letter came to me from Nell:

“Pore Sam is ded. We don’t know what was the mater with him. The last thing he did was to kick the caff, and that helped him sum, but he dide at last.”



PEEK-A-BOO.

AN AMUSING STORY OF A LITTLE MEXI-
CAN BURRO.



HAVE any of you ever seen a Mexican burro? The burros are a burlesque on the donkey tribe. Their diminutive size, their large ears, and their patient demeanor would make them conspicuous as a variety of toy donkey, bearing the same relation to those larger beasts of burden that a lizard is supposed to bear to a crocodile.

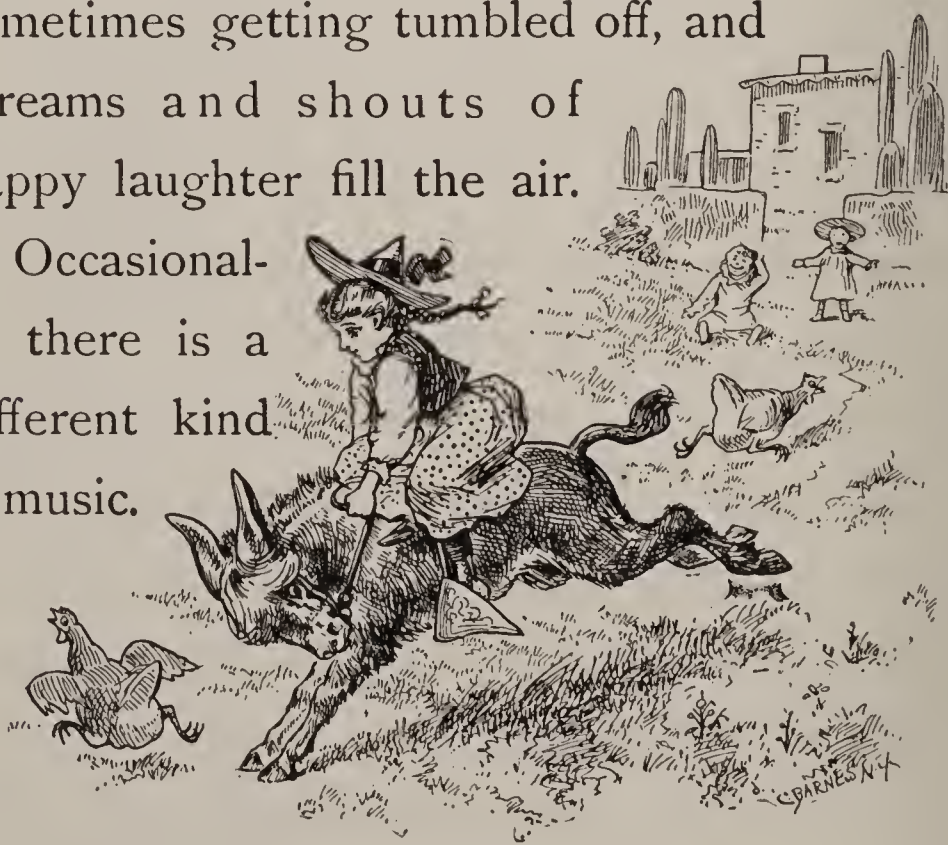
It appears almost incredible that in Mexico the burro performs all the drudgery usually assigned to horses and mules in this country; that they not only carry men on long journeys, lasting for days at a time, but that they are sometimes loaded with wood tied into bundles, and piled up until nothing but the head of the patient little burro is visible.

But a better fate has fallen to the lot of Peek-a-Boo. The few burros that find their way into Texas are eagerly purchased by the heads of families, and are turned over to the children as playthings. That was what happened to Peek-a-Boo. All day long he amuses himself, like the lazy sheep in the old poem, "eating grass and daisies white."

When the sun sinks toward the west-

ern horizon, and the shadows begin to lengthen, the three little girls and Peek-a-Boo, assisted by some of their young companions, assemble on the lawn, and then the fun begins. The burro is but three feet high. The children can spring upon his back from the ground. One after another they go careering about the lawn, sometimes getting tumbled off, and screams and shouts of happy laughter fill the air.

Occasionally there is a different kind of music.



When Peek-a-Boo brays, the children say he is "singing"; and when the children's mamma hears the song she puts her hands over her ears and cries: "Oh, what a nuisance!" It is so loud that you wonder how so small an animal can possibly be strong enough to send it forth; and it is protracted to such a length that you are filled with admiration for his lung power.

When Peek-a-Boo gets ready to sing, everything else stops. He may be carrying some small rider triumphantly about the yard, but he pauses, lifts up his head and sends his song echoing over the hills. The children stand around him with their hands behind their backs, gravely waiting until he shall have finished his solo, or until he is out of breath. Then the play begins where it left off.

Peek-a-Boo is a creature of moods. Sometimes, as one of his small critics expresses it, he is "puffickly angelic." With his ears quietly wagging as he walks, he goes wherever they want him to, and accommodates his speed to their demands. If he always had on his angelic moods I am very much afraid that his playmates would think him tiresome beyond endurance. But it must be confessed that there are times when Peek-a-Boo is no saint.

Some days, doubtless, he gets up feeling "crossways," as the children's grandma expresses it. If a chicken crosses his pathway while he is grazing, he lays back those long ears and dashes after it, his funny little hoofs twinkling over the lawn, and never stops the pursuit until the chicken has flown squawking over the

fence. And when the children come with the bridle, he flourishes those absurd little heels in their faces, and leads them a wild chase about the lawn, and is captured only when all the juveniles in the neighborhood crowd him up into a corner.

And then, what tricks he plays them—this little joker with the long ears and agile heels! No “trick mule” in a circus ever equalled him for inventiveness and originality. When one of the youngsters mounts upon his back, Peek-a-Boo, instead of going forward, whirls around in one place until the rider is dizzy, or turns his head around and playfully bites at the feet hanging down against his side. Such screams of laughter as go up from the burro’s neighborhood!

If the children love Peek-a-Boo when he is

good, they love him ten times as much when he is bad. The neighbors always gather at the windows to look, for they know the burro is having one of his "big days."

Sometimes failing to get his burden off by shaking or biting or whirling around, his burroship suddenly takes a new turn. He runs here and there among the trees, first against one tree trunk and then another, trying to scrape his rider off! But the little eight-year-old clings to his back like a monkey, drawing up her feet when the danger becomes imminent. Then he runs under the overhanging branches of a low tree, but it is altogether useless. These little Texans are riders from their cradles. She throws herself down on his back, with her arms about his neck, and passes under in safety.

And then, as a last resort, Peek-a-Boo dashes under the house, where there is room for him to walk around very conveniently. With a shout the little rider slips to the ground—just in time! Peek-a-boo retires under the house, and is not to be persuaded out without a great deal of coaxing, accompanied by a lump of sugar.

When the children take their lunch to the lawn, there is Peek-a-Boo in the midst of them. He forgets that he was ever cross, or tried to scrape them off or bite their feet. He walks around them, and anxiously reaches over their shoulders, and hints that it is lunch-time for him, too. They divide with him generously. Part of every child's lunch goes into that ever-ready mouth of his. Bread and butter,

fruit, chipped beef—Peek-a-Boo takes it all in, and asks for more.

When one of the children is appointed a committee of one to go back to the house and say, “Mamma, may we have some more lunch? We didn’t have enough,” that wise mamma hands out the lunch, and says with a smile: “Here is a little pan of scraps for Peek-a-Boo. He will like them just as well as bread and butter.”

And the committee of one goes back to the happy family on the lawn, and the feast begins again.



LITTLE DRYAD.

A TRAGIC AND PATHETIC EPISODE OF
WILD ANIMAL LIFE.



FOREST fire had started ;
not a very large one, it
is true, but enough to
call out all the children
from the farm-house, and

to make the men think that they might
have a little work, presently, fighting it.
The “woods-pasture” was burning, and we
were as close as we dared go to the fire,
and thrilled with a kind of frightened
delight as the flames spread and the leaves
scorched and writhed in the fierce heat.

We had been looking and talking for some time, and were so much absorbed that we scarcely noticed a little object drifting down toward us, like a withered leaf until Dick gave a cry of surprise and called out: "Look at the squirrel, will you! Just look at her!"

And then we saw that the little brown leaf was not a leaf, but a flying-squirrel, with one of her baby-squirrels in her mouth, and that she had floated down out of a great oak-tree, whose limbs were even then beginning to toss and writhe in the flames.

Down she went to the top of an old stump, not ten feet from us, and in an instant she had dropped her baby there and was down on the ground, skurrying back to her blazing home. All over the ground in the pasture flames were licking

up the withered leaves, and the heat almost scorched our faces even where we stood. We thought she would turn back when she reached that line of fire—but, no! We saw her plunge straight into it, and then we turned away our heads.

It was Dick that ventured to look around first. What a shout he raised! I can hear it now, with that queer tremor in it as he cried:

“There she comes! She’s alive! She’s alive!”

And when we turned, too, there she came, floating down out of that wild storm of fire with her other rescued baby in her mouth, and in a moment she had dropped it beside the first little one and had fallen near it, writhing with agony.

Such a spectacle as she was! Her hair

was scorched, her tail was bare, her poor little feet were blistered, her eyes were shut. The young ones bore few marks



of their terrible journey; but we thought it was all over with the poor little mother.

“Let me carry her home in my apron,”

said Gwen, whose heart was wrung with grief over the woodland tragedy; and so we laid the squirrel tenderly in the little white apron, and, Dick and I carrying the little ones, we went back to the house. We did not even cast a backward glance at the fire in which we had been so much absorbed. The sublime example of mother-courage had completely blotted out all smaller interests, and we would never be able to think of the fire again without thinking of that little creature darting through the flames to save her young, with a devotion that would have made a human mother immortal.

And that is the story we used to tell when people laughed at Dryad—we were studying mythology then, and, of course, we called the little mother “Dryad.” She

was never pretty after that. There were several patches on her little body where the hair would not grow, and her tail was ragged and disreputable-looking beyond description.

But what did we care for that? Never were three animals so petted and cared for as these three that had drifted to us out of the heart of the fire; and never was any one animal so loved as was this ragged little squirrel-mother.

We had no trouble in training her. She was in agony for several days, and we were doing our best to soothe her; and I think she must have understood it. At any rate, by the time she had recovered she was tame, and would perch on our shoulders or eat from our hands, or even come when we called her.

* * *

I suppose all animals of this kind must love their young with peculiar devotion; but it has always seemed to me that the terrible experience through which Dryad had gone must have given her a passionate devotion to those small objects of her affection. If she heard the least unusual sound, away she would rush to her babies, and stand over them, ready to gather them up and escape to a place of safety. If a stranger came to the house Dryad carried her little ones into the elm-tree in the yard, and she would never venture down with them until the visitor was gone.

We were all so tender with her and watched her so much that we came to believe we could understand all her thoughts. When we had a dreary, rainy day, one

time, mother had made a fire in our play-room to drive away the dampness. At the first flash of the blaze Dryad sprung from my shoulder, mad with terror, caught up one of her babies, and fled from the room. In a moment she was back after the other one.

We did not try to stop her. We knew of what she was thinking. The poor little mother! We found her crouched in the darkest corner of a closet that happened to be standing open, and it was hours before she would venture out again.

* * *

If our acquaintance with Dryad began with a tragedy, how much greater was the tragedy with which it closed! The three squirrels had always slept in a cage

that had once belonged to the family parrot. We had shut them in, carefully, at bedtime, every night, but we allowed them to play about the yard in the dusk as long as possible because it was so pleasant to watch them.

Every evening we sat on the porch, in the summer twilight, and the noiseless little creatures played around us, climbing into the trees near at hand, and then floating down to us like spirits. The two little ones had just begun to make little aerial journeys like their mother, and so the three climbed and flitted about until bedtime came and Dick called them to their cage.

But one evening Dick was taken suddenly ill, and in the midst of our excitement and alarm the squirrels were

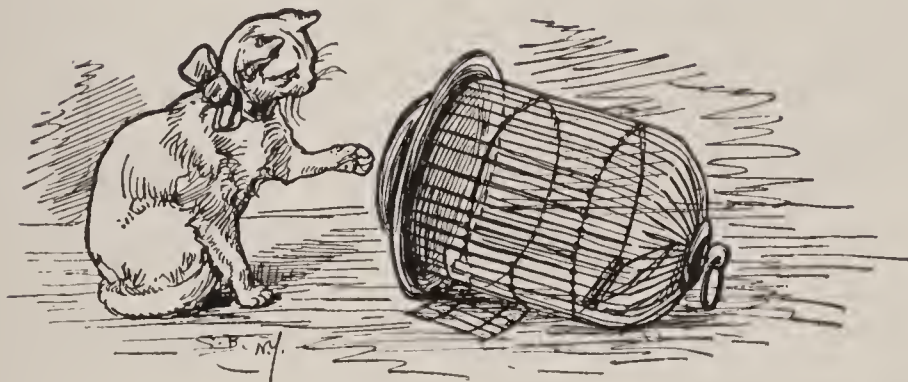
forgotten. Early the next morning we went out to look for them, and found that they had gone into the cage of their own accord.

But there had been no one at hand to close the door, and on the floor of the cage were two little mangled bodies, pitiful to look upon. While across them lay poor Dryad, torn, bleeding, but alive, with her teeth still buried in the neck of an enormous rat.

Yes, she was alive, but she died while we were trying to lift her up and to help her. She had given her life at last to save those beloved little ones, and it has always been a comfort to me that she did not know they were dead.

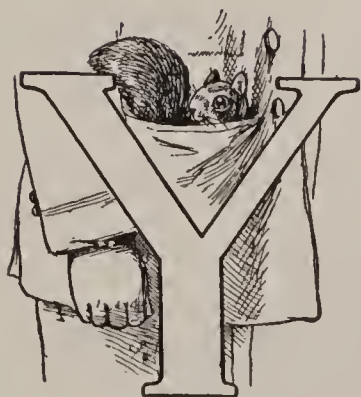
She was a very little thing, but I have always been glad that I knew her, this

little Dryad, that came to us on the wings
of fire and left us amid the throes of
martyrdom !



CLEM.

A MIDNIGHT ADVENTURE IN A LONELY
FARM-HOUSE.



“YOU are pretty late getting home,” said the farmer with some displeasure in his voice. “That’s just the trouble about allowing a boy any privileges. He’s always sure to abuse them. When I was a boy, if I went hunting once a year it was as much as I expected, and you must go every fourth Saturday, and never know when to come back then. What’s that you have in your pocket, sir?”

Jerry slowly and reluctantly drew the little creature out into full view—a young squirrel, so frightened at its strange surroundings that its whole body was quivering.

“Some other squirrels were fighting it,” he said timidly, “and I drove them off and caught it. I thought I would keep it for a pet.”

“Nonsense,” retorted his father, irritably, “Go and dress it for your mother’s supper.”

Now, if Jerry’s mother had been in her room, away at the other side of the house, this story would never have been written; but just then she called, “Jerry! come here!” from behind the honeysuckle-vines that shaded the portico.

“Let me see the squirrel, Jerry,” she said. “Oh, what a pretty little fellow! Why, I never could think of making a

supper on such a bright and active creature as this. I'll speak to your father about it, Jerry. I think he will let you keep the squirrel."

Jerry thanked his mother, and hurried away to his room, his heart beating fast with pleasure.

That night Jerry listened to the conversation between his father and mother, which sounded through the walls at times. He heard Mr. Hodges say that his mother was spoiling the boy and that Jerry was already "a perfect milksop," who would rather stay in the house and do nothing than work in the field with men. In fact, he heard a great many things that wounded him bitterly; but the end of it reconciled him to all humiliations possible, for his father said peevishly:

“Well, let him keep it, then, since you are so set on it; but I tell you right now that I have given the boy up. You can do what you please with him. He is a complete disappointment to me.”

And that was the beginning of the friendship between Jerry and Clem—a friendship as singular as ever existed between a boy and a pet of any kind. The little squirrel was Jerry’s companion every hour of the day. He slept in a box beside Jerry’s bed, and was up on the pillow with the first peep of day, playing all kinds of tricks with Jerry’s hair, and whisking across his face as though that were his favorite playground. When Jerry was about the house, Clem was perched on his shoulder or playing hide-and-seek behind the furniture; and when Jerry went to the field,

Clem pranced up and down the corn-rows after him, or perched on a fence-rail or a stump, where he pretended to be washing his face with those absurd little hands of his, afterward carefully wiping it with his tail.

Jerry had just come in from some outdoor duty, one evening at dusk, when he heard the sound of a horse's feet, and went out into the yard to meet his father, who had been to town. Clem, who was on his shoulder, pretended to be terribly frightened, and went scurrying into Jerry's shirt-sleeve, through which he hastily tunneled, presently poking his inquisitive head out under Jerry's chin and barking with all his might. Mr. Hodges dismounted and came in, looking anxious even in that dim light.

“Jerry,” he said in an undertone, “that money from your Aunt Susan came to-day—\$3,000—and I brought it with me because I wanted to pay for the new ground to-morrow. It’s a great deal of money to have about the house, and I don’t want your mother to know about it. She’s not so well lately, and it would make her nervous.”

“Then we won’t tell her,” said practical Jerry, delighted with his father’s unexpected confidence.

“But here’s the trouble,” Mr. Hodges went on, still in that undertone, as though he feared some one would hear him, though they were so far from any other human habitation: “I don’t know where in the world to hide it. I wish I had an iron safe. I never had much money about

the house before, and it never struck me how much responsibility there was in it.



The bank was full of people when I drew the money. Suppose some of them—”

“I’ll tell you, father! Let’s hide the money in the old well!”

“That will do, I think,” said Mr. Hodges. “No one will ever think of looking there, I know. Come on, and I’ll let you down. You had better take the lantern down with you.”

Within a few minutes Jerry and the lantern were being slowly lowered down into the old well out by the wood-pile. This well was about thirty feet deep, and until within the past few months had furnished the water supply for the farm; but then it had gone dry and was abandoned. The rope and the old-fashioned wooden windlass were still there, because Mr. Hodges cherished the hope that the water-vein would some day break into the well again.

Jerry had taken something else with him besides the lantern. In his pocket,

wrapped in tissue paper, was the package of bills, so awe-inspiring to the boy who had never even seen such a sum in his life. On his shoulder was Clem, barking as though his life depended on it, and down in the bucket was a knife, which he had caught up from the kitchen table as he passed. Jerry had ideas of his own, and they were generally good ones. Instead of throwing his package on the bottom of the well, he stood on tiptoe and dug out a hole in the clay wall just beneath a ledge of rock. Then he slipped the package into the hole and filled up the opening with clay as neatly as he could.

“I don’t think anybody’ll find that,” he said to his father as he came to the surface again, and put the lantern and the knife away in their places; and in truth

both of them felt so serene and unconcerned about it afterward that they not only did not betray the secret to Mrs. Hodges, but both went to bed and to sleep as confidently as though there were not three cents in the house to tempt any possible or probable burglar.

Now everybody knows that boys sleep soundly, and this one was no exception to the rule. He had often been told that anybody could easily come into the house and carry him away while he was asleep, but even this horrible possibility did not disturb him.

Still, even a boy may be waked sometimes. It was Clem that effected it, at last; Clem, who darted out of his box and scrambled across Jerry's face, scratching him with every paw at once; and then

scrambled back again as though to make sure of it. There was no doubt that he succeeded. Jerry not only startled broad awake, but was instantly conscious of a struggle going on in the next room, followed, before he could move, by a heavy fall and a scream.

How the boy got to his mother's room he never knew, but there he was almost before he was conscious of moving; and there was his father, lying on the floor, with a villainous-looking giant bending over him, tying him hand and foot. The lamp was burning, and Jerry saw by its light that his mother had fainted dead away.

The villain had started up as the door opened, and he was on the boy in an instant, had borne him to the floor, and was fishing more cord out of his pocket. Jerry

made no outcry and did not struggle, as he saw how useless it would be.

“Ef you don’t take keer o’ your behavior,” said the robber threateningly, as he drew the cords tight around the boy’s ankles and wrists, “some o’ you’s a-goin’ to git yer heads blowed off. I come after that money, an’ I’m a-goin’ to have it.”

But the robber seemed to think that it was useless to wait on the pleasure of a weak, crying boy. He took up the lamp and went to searching; emptying the drawers of the bureau one by one, looking through the wardrobe from top to bottom, pulling everything out of the trunk in the corner. Then he examined the two prostrate figures on the floor to see that their bonds were all right, after which he

took the lamp and went into the next room and on to the next.

Suddenly, as the boy lay there trembling in the dark, something soft touched his cheek. In his nervousness he came near crying out with fright, but the next moment Clem was rubbing his furry side against his master's face.

Clem ran along Jerry's breast and down to his hands, against which he rubbed his head, seeking for his customary caress.

What was that? Clem had discovered the cords, and was running over and over the boy's hands, nosing at them curiously. The next instant every nerve in Jerry's body was tingling with a new sensation. Clem was gnawing at one of the cords.

The cord was a thick and heavy one,

but the teeth were very sharp. Long as the time seemed to Jerry, it was an incredibly short time after all. The cord fell apart, and his hands were free. Quick as a flash he sat up, found the knot, and unfastened his feet.

And just at that moment he heard the ruffian coming back, muttering and cursing as he came.

With a presence of mind that Jerry himself always wondered at, he twisted the cord about his ankles again and lay down in the same position. The man came in, furious over his ill-success.

“Oh, you’re come to, have you?” he said grimly to Mr. Hodges. “Well, now, you tell me where that money is, an’ you do it mighty quick, too. I don’t want to kill anybody if I kin help it, but I’ll

kill the three of you like you was rabbits if you don't sing it out pretty quick."

And he emphasized his remarks by giving Mr. Hodges a kick.

"You'll never hear it from me. I'll die first," said the man on the floor, looking calmly up into the robber's face.

"I'll tell you where it is," suddenly rang out Jerry's clear voice. "It's in the old well out by the woodpile!"

"Wretched boy!" cried the father angrily, "can I never depend on you? Are you determined to ruin me at every turn? You—"

But Jerry did not hear. Before the words were fairly out of his mouth the robber had darted out of the house and around to the old well. The sound of his footsteps had not died away when Jerry

was up and creeping after him. He sheltered himself behind the big syringa-bush, and saw their midnight visitor lean over and peer down into the sombre depths of the well, and examine the windlass and try the rope. He saw him light a match and drop it and watch its descent. He seemed to hesitate a moment, when he saw how deep the well was, but all at once he seized the rope in a sort of desperation, swung himself clear, and slid down out of sight. Then Jerry sped around the syringa-bush and crept softly to the edge of the well. He could see the robber away down at the bottom of the well lighting matches and looking for the money.

Jerry laughed gleefully to himself, as he crept off toward the wood-pile. "He'll

never find it that way," was the thought that made him laugh.

There was no moon, but the stars were shining, and by their light Jerry found the axe where he had left it the evening before.

Back he went to the well, moving softly as though he were only a part of the shadows. Down below the man was still lighting matches and searching. Carefully Jerry raised the axe over his head and brought it down on the rope with a resounding blow.

But, alas! his anxiety was so great that he missed. The axe cut a little notch in the rope and was buried in the windlass. Up from below came a shout like the cry of a wild beast, and the rope instantly tightened under the man's weight. Another blow! Another, Jerry! Then

the rope parted and went coiling down into the well, with something heavy at the end of it, and groans, shrieks, and curses came up as though that were a veritable demon down below.

“Now, I’ve got to fix him so that he can’t get out,” was Jerry’s comment, for he had seen men climb up from wells by making notches in the walls for their hands and feet. Quietly and without any excitement, now that the man was safely captured, Jerry began dragging up the logs of wood and piling them over the mouth of the well. Higher and higher he piled them, until he had at least a cord heaped up between the midnight marauder and liberty, and then he went into the house.

“Well, I’ve got the burglar shut up in

the well, father," he said in the most matter-of-fact tone, as though it were an everyday occurrence; "and now I'll cut you loose and we can see after mother."

As for Mr. Hodges, something had come over him, and he had nothing to say. When, half an hour afterward, the patient invalid lay smiling through her tears, and needed no further "seeing after," it was Jerry that said:

"I'll stay awake the rest of the night, father, and watch the well, and I guess you'd better ride over to Mr. Odom's and get some help."

The next morning the people began to arrive. The news spread like magic, and half the town, fifteen miles away, turned out to see the boy who had shut up a burglar in a well—and a burglar that meas-

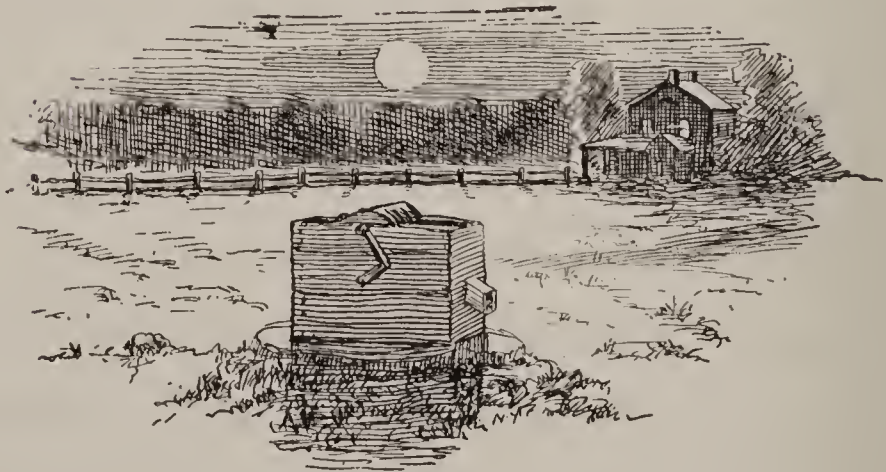
ured six feet four at that. Jerry had to tell his story over and over again, and we may be sure he enlarged eloquently on Clem's part in it, and had little to say about his own. Clem was petted and praised and made much of, but he resented all advances, and tried to bite the hands that sought to stroke him. He wanted nobody but Jerry.

But that night, after they were all gone, when Jerry was going about his work whistling in tune with the whippoorwills out in the orchard, his father met him and stopped to stroke the head of the gay little merry-maker on his shoulder.

“Good Clem!” he murmured softly, as though half-ashamed of himself. “Good little fellow! I don't know where we'd all be now if it hadn't been for you!”

“Isn’t he great, father!” cried the delighted Jerry, hugging his pet close. His father put his arm over his shoulder and walked beside him into the house.

“Jerry,” he said, and his voice trembled, “I’ve been a fool! Let’s rub out and begin over again.”



ONLY A MOLE.



HERE is a certain little friend of ours who builds his residence in very quiet and retired places, for he does not court attention. Indeed, he rather seems to avoid it. He builds a fortress, but he is not a warrior. He drives long tunnels, but he is not a miner. He can calculate numbers and distances, though he is not a mathematician. He never makes a mistake in his angles, though he has not studied geometry. He sometimes digs wells, but he is not a professional well-digger.

Nobody calls him the king of beasts, but he can fight with more than the ferocity of the lion or the tenacity of the bulldog.

The little friend to whom I allude is the mole.

Ever since farming came into fashion mankind has been the sworn enemy of molekind, and has waged relentless warfare against the little genius of the dark. The traps that have been set, the poison that has been left in those underground highways, the cleverly contrived little homes that have been turned inside out by cruel spades—it would take a volume to tell of them ! And yet, the little animal that runs his long tunnel straight down the potato ridges is well worth studying.

The round little body with its velvety fur, the long, elastic snout, and the broad

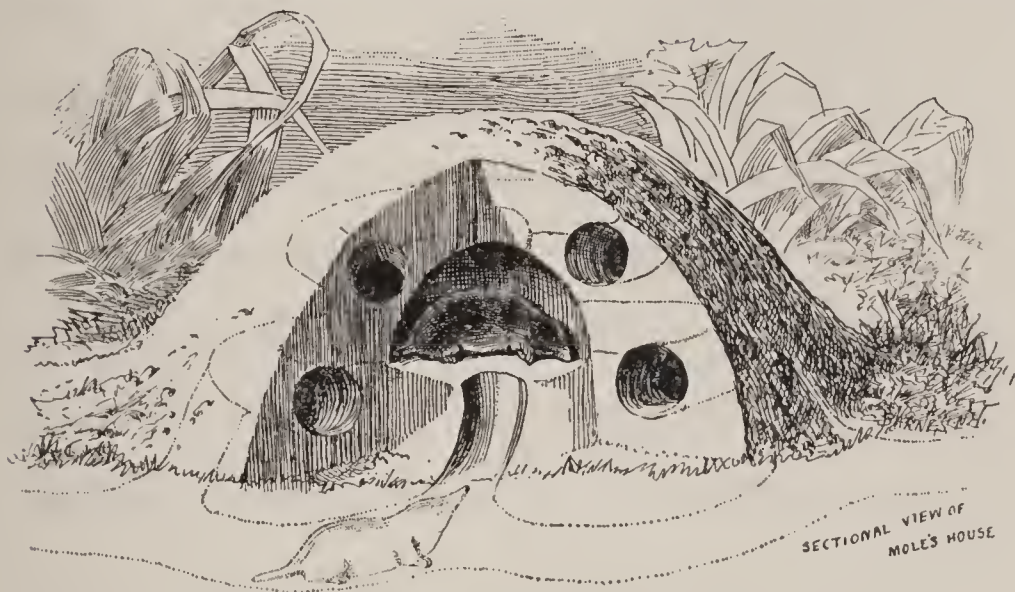
“paddles” armed with strong claws are familiar to every one, by reason of the traps and snares above mentioned, but people who think that “blind as a mole” expresses total blindness reckon without their host. Deep under the sheltering fur are two tiny points of eyes, which are somewhat discomposed by the bright glare of day, but which are sharp and bright enough to see all that is to be seen in the dusky shadows underground.

It is much the fashion, too, to compare people that are mean and sneaking with moles, but this is a manifest injustice. The mole lives underground because that is his home. He drives his tunnels as men send pioneers and build railroads into new countries, and he is full of courage, with nothing of the sneak in his disposition.

And such a little builder as he is, with only his nose for auger, and his queer little paddles for shovel and spade! There is the mound of earth, for instance, in which he makes his fortress. The tunnels that he bores all over the farm lead back into the fortress, where he intrenches himself in time of danger. If you were underground, like him, and could follow him through those dark passages, you would find yourself, all at once, in a circular gallery. How did the little home-builder ever manage to draw that circle, I wonder?

And there are five passages from this gallery, leading upward in a slanting direction to another and a smaller gallery near the roof, and the little geometrician laid this off, also, with invisible compasses, for it is a circle like the lower gallery.

Leading from this gallery are three passages, slanting downward into a large, domed room, and there is his moleship's stronghold, where he sits at ease as though



he were in a moated castle with the draw-bridge up.

To reach his retreat, you must follow along some tunnel that leads into the lower gallery, you perceive; and then you must take one of the five passages to the upper gallery; and then you must take one of the

three passages downward into the stronghold; and all that time he would have heard you coming, for his ears are of the sharpest; and before you could think, he would be far away.

Who taught him to draw his fairy circles, and hollow out his dome-shaped roof, and smooth those earthy walls without plaster or cement or trowel? Who taught him to make the five passages at equal distances apart? Who showed him how to make the three other passages, at equal distances between them? Who taught him to count at all,—this tiny creature, shut out from the sunlight, and working his laborious way through unknown regions beneath our feet?

But, after all, this many-chambered castle is not the end of his resources. He provides a nursery for his little ones, too, and

carpets it with soft, dried grasses for their repose; and he places the nursery at some point where two or three tunnels meet, so that the mother and the babies may have the more chances for escape if hard pressed by the enemy. What a reasoner this little home-builder seems to be, with his plans that look so far into the future!

If you examine the skeleton of the little burrower you will find that its shoulder-blades are out of all proportion to the remainder of its anatomy, so large are they, and strong, projecting above the backbone. The bones of the forelegs are short and curved and strong, and there were powerful muscles in the neck and shoulders which gave those paddle feet their terrible tearing power.

Even when a mole is detected above

ground, he must be wary and swift of foot who can capture the little miner, so rapidly does he work those formidable paddles and sink out of sight. If one can get near enough to thrust a spade or a board beneath him he may be caught; but given "a fair field and no favors," the mole is sure to have the better of the race.

I am sorry to say that the manners of this underground householder are not up to the standard required by civilization, and that he is not at all versed in table etiquette. When he succeeds in running down a worm he pounces upon his prey with a savage ferocity astonishing to see, and tears it with teeth and claws, and becomes altogether a very disagreeable animal.

And when he meets another mole with whom he does not happen to be on friendly

terms, I am sorry to say that they fall upon each other with a vindictive fury impossible to describe. What terrible battles they have underground there, those cruel and bloodthirsty little duelists, who shall say?

But we may congratulate ourselves that the mole is not so large as the lion. If he were, and had strength and ferocity in proportion, he would devastate so much of the earth that puny, insignificant man would be sulking in caves or housing in tree-tops.



THE
HORNED FROG.

SOME INTERESTING TALK ABOUT A VERY
INTERESTING CREATURE.



QUICK rustle through the dry grass, a gleam of something that might be a patch of gray lichens, and then your eyes fasten upon him and he stands confessed in all his native homeliness—the horned frog of the great Texas plains. He is not proud of his appearance, and if you give him half a chance he will skurry away and be out of sight before you know it.

When you look at him closely you discover, with some resentment, that he is not a frog at all, for he has quite a respectable tail two or three inches in length, and he runs smoothly and swiftly, and never makes his way over ground by leaping, like the animal whose name has by some mistake been made a part of his possessions.

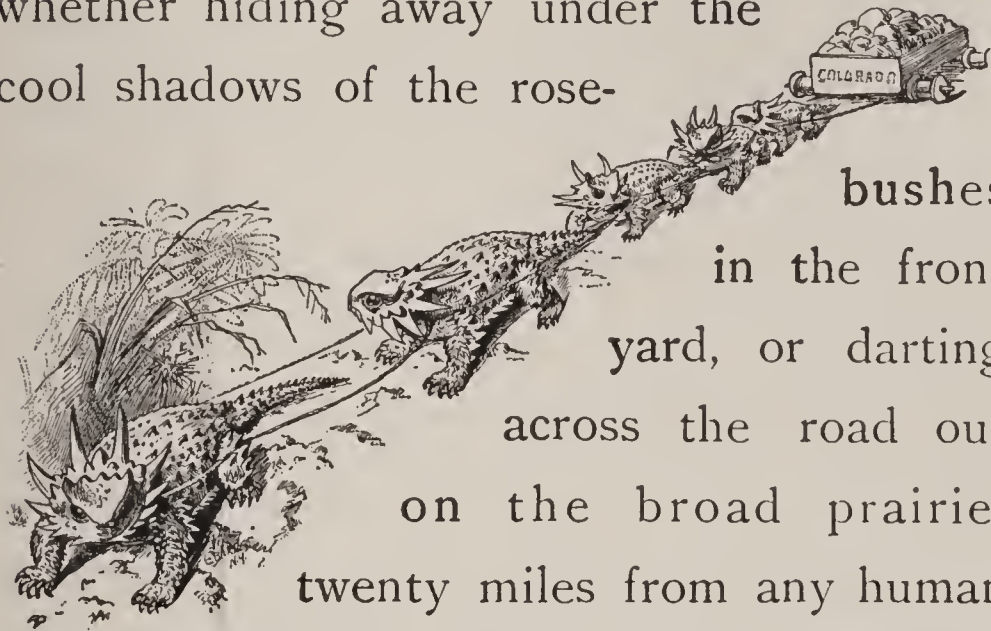
And yet, one can hardly call him a lizard, either, for his head is short and frog-like, and he has a big, round, frog-body. The truth appears to be that nature was busily engaged in making a lizard one day, and in a fit of merriment, just for a joke, she gave him a frog's head and body, covered his back with gray scales and his head with horns, and then turned him loose, the most grotesque figure that wanders over the earth to-day.

The stranger that visits Texas and sees the horned frog for the first time is seized with terror, and cannot be persuaded that the wild, vicious-looking creature will not bite or perhaps "hook," else of what use are his horns? Not until they see the Texas children go out and catch one and make a plaything of him can they be convinced that the horned frog is harmless; and even then they are possessed with the belief that he will some day turn upon his tormentors and bite them to instant death.

The Texas boy, however, knows better, and manages to have a great deal of fun with his queer pet. One of his standing pleasures is to use the horned frog for a horse, and the small, sunburned urchin driving five or six such horses tandem to a

wagon ingeniously constructed from a cigar-box and four spools is a sight to move the laughter of the gravest.

Wherever one sees the horned frog, whether hiding away under the cool shadows of the rose-



bushes
in the front
yard, or darting
across the road out
on the broad prairie,
twenty miles from any human

habitation, he is always perfectly at home. He has a queer way of raising himself on all his four feet sometimes, and standing up straight and stiff, looking not unlike a quaint little four-legged stool. I have thought that perhaps he does this to give himself a better view of the surrounding

country, but it is hard to tell. He is very quiet in his ways, and has never offered any explanation.

One can readily believe, however, that all sorts of thoughts and fancies run through that little horned head ; that he has doubtless seen many years roll over the Texas plains, and is gifted with a long memory, and that if he would only talk he could tell wonderful things that would surprise us all. He has such a wise, cunning look, this strange little child of the sun ; there is nothing in all the plains to compare with him.

* * *

The Tonkawa Indians, a remnant of whose tribe still lingers in Texas, tell a curious story concerning the origin of the horned frog. The legend runs thus :

Many years ago, when the Tonkawas were a powerful tribe, when their step was heard on the war-path, and their enemies were afraid of the very shadow of their smallest children, their great chief, No-chambo, died, and his son, Mo-cham-be-ze, became chief in his stead. Now, Mo-cham-be-ze means "rabbit-footed," for the young chief's knees shook beneath him when a snake-skin came stuffed with arrows, and he left the great buffalo herds and followed the antelope no longer, but drew his tribe away to another part, and left the finest hunting-grounds to the Wacos and the Kiowas.

At last the great medicine-man Nin-to-lo-to came to him and said :

"Lo, my father, the Great Spirit is angry. He gave us this whole country for

our possession, and we have given it up to the snake and the wildcat. Come, now, let us drive them out and fix a dwelling-place for the Tonkawas, where they may bury their dead and burn their council-fires."

And Mo-cham-be-ze promised, and they put on their war-paint, and went out to drive the Kiowas from their country. In the midst of the great battle, Mo-cham-be-ze fled, and a few of his followers with him, and many of the tribe were killed; so that the Tonkawas could never hold up their heads against an enemy again. But Nin-to-lo-to, being sorely wounded, and seeing how his chief had fled, asked the Great Spirit to change their shape, and give them bodies befitting their small and cowardly spirits.

After the battle nothing more was seen of Mo-cham-be-ze and his followers, but a few horned frogs were found trying to approach the scattered remnants of the tribe, and the Tonkawas recognized their old associates, and fled from them in terror.

* * *

That is the story. Now when one sees the alert little creatures rustling through the grass and recognizes that the soul of some fugitive Tonkawa, with tomahawk and arrowhead gone, and scalping-knife laid aside, looks at him from those small, shining eyes, he will have a kindlier feeling for the silent native of the sunny plains.

Does he mourn over his lost hunting-grounds, I wonder? Does he remember the thrill of battle and the joy of hunting,

and the smoke of the evening camp-fire?
Alas! poor little horned frog!--a mere
reptile, whose language no man can under-
stand.



ZIP.



T seems to me, in looking back, that my entire boyhood was passed in acquiring pets, educating them until they had a great number of accomplishments, and then losing them, by one calamity or another, and mourning over them with the most heartfelt sorrow. Cindy, the old black cook, ruled over our household with a rod of iron, and I was constantly at war with her over my pets, which she cordially despised.

But among them all, the pet that I most

loved, and which Cindy most hated, was nothing but a coon. He was given to me in his babyhood, and the young man that captured him said: "He's going to be a sly little rascal, a sort of touch-and-go mischief-maker, and you'd better call him Zip." So Zip it was.

No one had to teach Zip anything. I began with some idea of training him, but he learned so many queer things of his own accord that I left him to develop in his own way. He went about the place with a solemn, almost melancholy look, and yet I am sure that there never was a more cheerful, contented spirit than his.

He had an abundance of sly humor, too, and I used to wonder why he didn't laugh a little at the pranks he played. A great many of them were irresistibly funny, and

none but a fun-loving soul could have played them ; and yet there was Zip's face always as full of sorrow as though something were resting heavy on his conscience.

He soon learned to go hunting with me, and after that I never went to the woods without him. He grew very proficient in treeing 'possums, and the whole country round rung with his praises, for 'possum-hunting was a popular sport among the boys. When, added to that, he began to tree coons, the members of his own family, you know, every boy round about was wild to possess him, and I was offered various sums, some of them quite fabulous in my eyes, for the coon that could do such wonderful things. I resisted every temptation, however, and clung to my pet.

Zip had a lordly contempt for his own

kind all his life, and assisted in the hunting down of many a coon, always standing by, an impassive spectator, at the death. He must have thought that his superior circumstances lifted him very far above any ordinary coon that dwelt in the woods and hunted for a living. Sometimes I was afraid he would grow lonely and run away from me, to seek some playmate of his own species ; but I wronged him ; he loved me too well.

When there was no serious business on hand in our hunting excursions, Zip amused himself in very curious ways. One of his habits was to look for wasps' nests. He would walk along, peering up into trees and bushes in the sharpest way ; and if he caught sight of a nest he immediately climbed the tree, took the nest in his

hands, rolled himself up like a ball, and fell to the ground. I believe he could

have fallen almost any distance without hurting himself.



When he and the nest had reached the ground together, and the wasps had settled all over him and were stinging him wickedly, Zip would sit up, reach around and catch a wasp, rub it between the palms of

his paws until it was dead, and then drop it and go for another. This performance was kept up until all the wasps were killed, Zip's face wearing a serious, absent-minded look all the time, as though he were thinking of something else; and then he would tear the nest to pieces and eat all the young wasps.

Then I would come out of hiding,—for when Zip went up a tree I always knew what was going to happen, and took myself to a place of safety.

When we passed a pool of water or a small creek, Zip invariably paused a while to stand on the bank and feel around in the water with one of those baby-like hand-paws, hunting for frogs or crawfish. He caught a surprising quantity of such game, too, and I always had to wait for him to eat it before he would stir.

I loved Zip with such devotion that I was especially anxious for him to make a favorable impression on Cindy, but, on the contrary, he left nothing undone that would make her life a burden to her. If she fried the spring chicken and set it on the table and then turned her back but a moment, Zip would seize the finest and tenderest piece and mount to his favorite retreat, a little ledge above the kitchen door, eating serenely and looking down at Cindy, who was fuming and scolding below.

If she slipped off her capacious shoes, as she often did, to "rest her feet," Zip would stuff into them all the bones, stale bread, pebbles, or anything else he could find. Once he stole one of Tabby's young kittens and put it into one of the shoes, where it went to sleep; and when the shoe was

about to be put on again, "Aunt" Cindy screamed most lustily as her toes touched the soft, furry creature.

Not long afterwards Zip capped the climax by bringing a snake and stowing it away in the same convenient receptacle. To be sure, the snake was dead. He had killed it himself, that very morning; but when Cindy put her foot on it her screams rent the air and roused the entire family.

She feared the coon as much as she hated him, and her shoes were left within his reach no more. He avenged himself, however, by capturing her best Sunday bonnet and climbing into the garret of her cabin through a broken place in the ceiling, and spending the day there, occasionally dangling the bonnet over the opening by one string. In vain Cindy begged and scolded

and wept. Late in the evening Zip and the bonnet tumbled through the opening together and landed on Cindy's bed; but though the bonnet was in ruins, the coon was not hurt in the least.

One of Zip's last accomplishments was devised solely for "Aunt" Cindy's benefit. If she left the pan of dish-water a single moment, he was on the table, and had mounted to the edge of the pan, and was feeling around in the dish-water, as he did in the creek, for frogs. Sometimes he found a crumb, and he brought it up in that funny little hand, and ate it with great satisfaction; but I am sure he always expected to find a frog.

This was one accomplishment more than Zip needed, however, and it brought calamity on him. One evening Cindy had just

come in from milking, and had strained the milk into a huge, shining tin pan. She was gone but an instant, to put away the strainer, and when she came back there was Zip mounted on the table and serenely feeling all through the milk for frogs. I am sure he never forgot the whipping Cindy gave him that day. She said afterward: "Dattair coon jes' like some young'uns, you gotter whup'em 'fore you kin do anythin' widdem."

At any rate, after that Zip always kept at a distance when Cindy was around.

The little fellow died the next year, and during his last illness Cindy forgave him. She worked with and nursed him as faithfully as though I had been the patient instead of Zip; but he, true to his instincts, reached up and gave her fat arm

a sly pinch, not ten minutes before he died.

As for me, I was inconsolable; and though I have had many pets since then, not one of them ever took the place of Zip in my affections.

10



CLEOPATRA.

THE GRAPHIC DESCRIPTION OF A STRANGE
LITTLE PET.



CLEOPATRA was what I called a certain little pet in which I was much interested once upon a time. I was very much given to writing in these days. I had a little den of my own, where I spent a great deal of time weaving stories, and it was seldom that anybody intruded on my seclusion. Thus the room was silent for hours at a time, except for my slight motions or the occasional rustle of a sheet of paper.

It was amusing to me to see how bold some of my little neighbors became. There was a mouse whose home was in the chimney; he grew quite friendly in the course of time, and after eating the crumbs that I put on the hearth for him he would stand on his hind feet and look at me, turning his head to one side, as much as to say :

“ Well, haven't you any more ? ”

And there was the little green lizard that lived in the vines at my window, and that used to come out on the window-sill, right at my elbow, and caught flies, without paying any more attention to me than if I were a part of the furniture. What a regular turncoat he was, that lizard! As long as he stayed among the vines he was the most beautiful green, but as soon as he came down on the brown window-sill he

turned brown, and looked as innocent as though he were not doing it on purpose to deceive the flies and make them think that he was part of the window-sill.

But there was another fly-catcher in the room, too. I had a way of writing on a large blankbook, which I held in my lap. The sheets of manuscript, as soon as they were written, were laid on a chair beside me. It was very primitive and very woman-like, and, perhaps, that was the reason I did it. And one day, happening to glance down at my last sheet of manuscript, I beheld Cleopatra.

Cleopatra was a spider.

Now, I am not fond of spiders. I object to their cobwebs, strung around in the corners and vexing the souls of good housekeepers. I am afraid of their poisonous

bite, and it gives me a “creepy” feeling to know that they are so much better provided with eyes than I am. My first impulse was to brush the spider off the chair and kill it. I actually raised my hand to do this, but the spider was at that moment cautiously creeping up on a giddy young fly, so I let it live; and a few moments afterward I had forgotten it.

But the next morning I had no sooner begun work than there he was again, crawling over the sheets of paper on the chair. I recognized him at once. He was a black spider, with three white spots on his back. “Aunt Glory,” the old colored woman who cleaned up the room, entered at that moment to consult me about something, and came near demolishing my new pet with the feather duster before I could speak.

“Don’t touch it, please, Aunt Glory,” I cried, just in time. “It seems such a friendly spider. I think I shall let it live, just for curiosity.”

“Well, I ain’ gwine come ’bout dissher room no mo’,” exclaimed Aunt Glory, with a toss of her turbaned head. “I kin lib wid mos’ anything, but I ain’ gwine try to lib wid spiders, you heah me right now !”

So Cleopatra and I were left to our own devices, and a friendship sprang up between us that was as firm as it was astonishing.

I never knew where Cleopatra came from. He certainly must have had some hid-ing-place, where he spent the time when I wasn’t writing, but I never saw him going or coming. I would look down at the chair that held my work, and there he would be in full possession. If he had

possessed the secret of fern-seed he could not have made his comings and goings more invisible.

There could not have been a more agreeable companion for a literary worker. He



was never noisy or garrulous. He never persisted in talking when I wanted to be silent. Nothing could have been more modest and unobtrusive than his demeanor.

And how patient he was. What a lesson his conduct was to me. I was always fretting because of the long delays and the bitter disappointments that beset the road to literary preferment. Cleopatra never fretted. How many times I have seen him crawl slowly, by the very faintest motion, across a sheet of paper toward some reckless fly, and at last, just as he was about to spring, away would go the fly with an impudent flirt of its rainbow wings. But Cleopatra was never discouraged. Without the slightest hesitation he immediately "camped on the trail" of another fly.

This had been going on some time when all at once, one day, there was Cleopatra on the sheet of paper on which I was writing. He did not mind the motion of

my hand. I laid the sheet on the chair, and him with it, but within five minutes he was back again. After that there were very few days when he did not make his appearance on my blankbook, as much at his ease as though he had lived there always.

Once, in the course of his travels, he walked over my hand. I must confess that I didn't like that much. I was afraid that he was growing too familiar. However, it soon became so common a thing that I did not even stop writing for it; though I generally held my sleeve together at the wrist. There was no doubt that Cleopatra was a superior spider, but I did not want him up my sleeve, for all that.

For a whole month Cleopatra and I were companions. In whatever part of the

room I had my writing, there was Cleopatra, quietly supervising it. He walked over the lines as I traced them, perhaps weaving daintier fancies of his own; for it was difficult to watch him long and not believe that he was filled with subtle wisdom.

But one day as I sat at work, Aunt Glory violated her promise and came into the room.

“You gwine be sick, settin’ up in dissher room all de time, lak what you is,” she began. “I heerd Mas’ Dick say dis berry mawnin’—”

But I never heard what Mas’ Dick said, for Aunt Glory suddenly gave utterance to an unearthly shriek and slapped viciously at the back of her neck. The next instant there on the floor lay the mangled remains

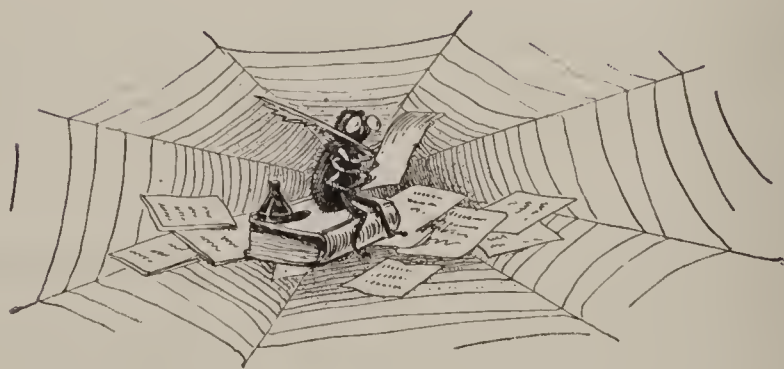
of Cleopatra. He had bitten her on the neck and she had killed him.

“I knowed all de time dattair pizen critter was gwine to bite somebody!” exclaimed Aunt Glory wrathfully. “Now jes es like es not dey’ll be a hole slump outen de back o’ my neck you could put a aig in!”

Aunt Glory flounced out indignantly. She did not even offer to clear away the remains. I went and looked at it presently, a mere little pulpy mass, with its helpless legs still quivering. Yet that little pinpoint which served Cleopatra as a brain had been capable of memory and affection. He had known the difference between me and another, and had looked on me with eyes of tenderness and love.

Such a little thing, and so easy to crush,

but the thought of his daily and hourly companionship could not be crushed out, and I mourned for my lost Cleopatra.



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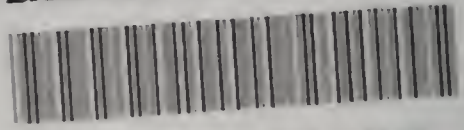
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