



LITTLE BLACK  
RABBIT

KENNETH GRAHAM DUFFIELD



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BRER B'AR COME BY JESS' A—FUSSIN' AN' A—CARRYIN' ON.

# Little Black Rabbit

By

KENNETH GRAHAM DUFFIELD



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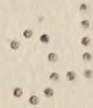
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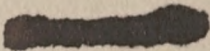
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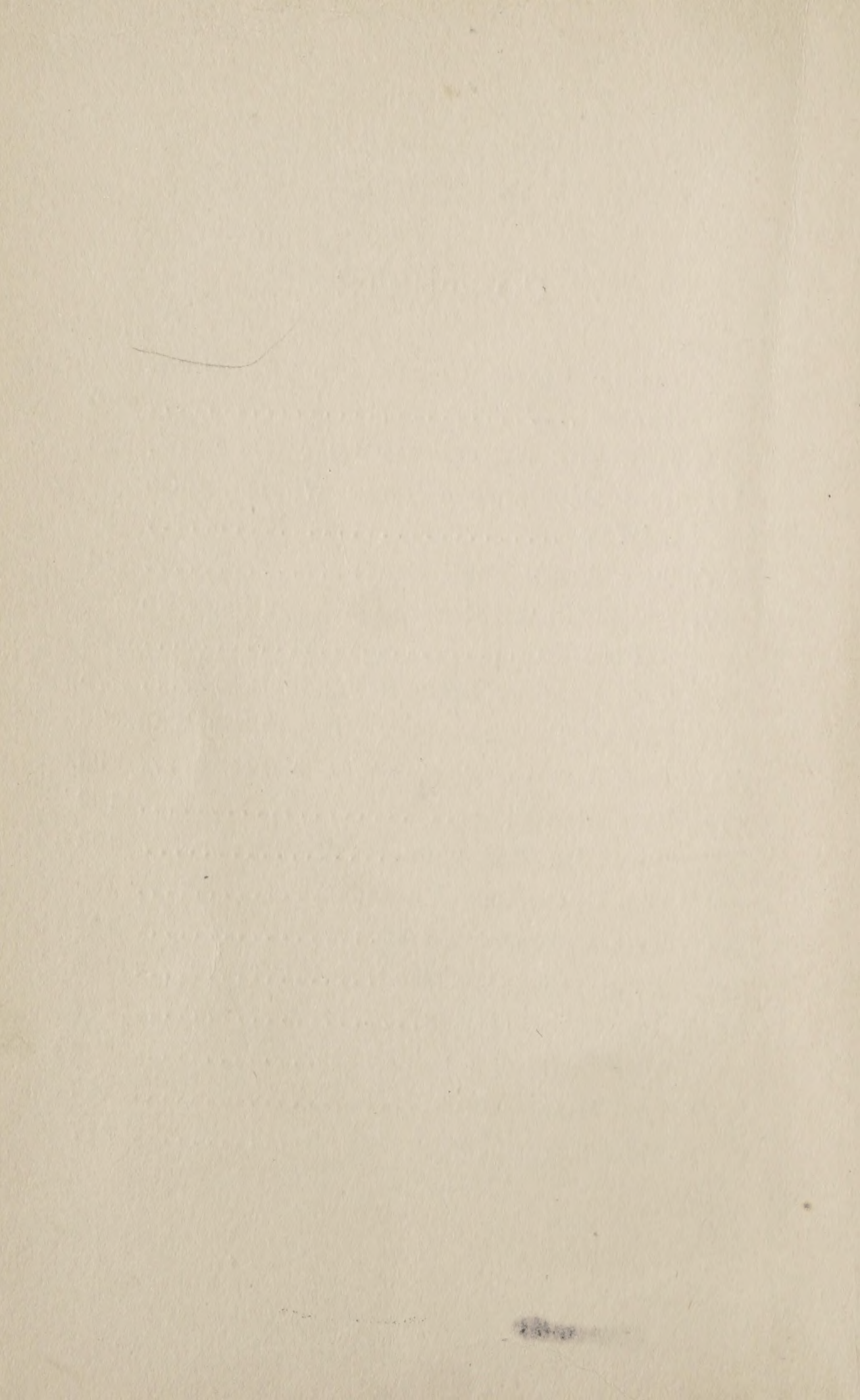


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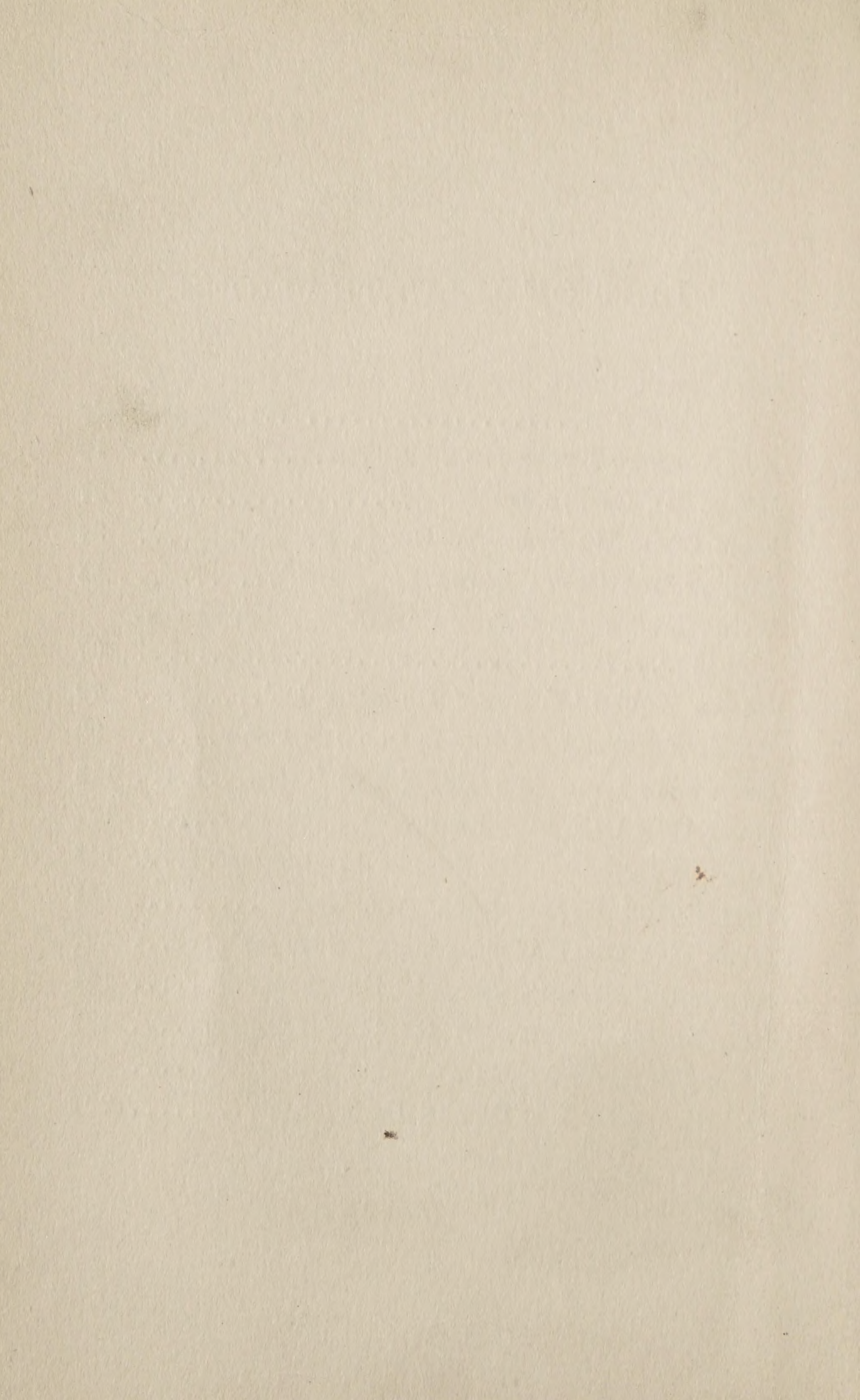
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# LITTLE BLACK RABBIT

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## I

### LITTLE BLACK RABBIT AND THE HOOP-SNAKE

**L**I'L BLACK RABBIT wuz de head of de family, an' Mollie Cottontail wuz de res' of de family, 'scusin' de chillun.

Yassir, boss! Dere wuz some chillun:

Dere wuz Billie Pink-Eye,

An' Johnnie Jump-Up,

An' Dottie Dimple-Nose,

An' Timmie Tiny-Toes,

An' Slim Jimmie,

An' some what ain't got no names, dey wuz so new.

One night Li'l Black Rabbit wuz settin' by de fire smokin' 'is big black seegar, when he hear somethin' come a-tearin' th'oo de woods, gittin' closer, an' closer, an' afore he

## LITTLE BLACK RABBIT

kin git out o' de cheer, here it come, bus'in' right in de do'—swish—swash—bang—KERBUNK! An' in tumble Billie Pink-Eye.

“Lawd have mercy!” says Li'l Black Rabbit, “doan' do dat no mo', Billie Pink-Eye; you like to skeer me to death, bus'in' in on me dat-a-way.”

“Lemme 'lone,” says Billie Pink-Eye, “lemme 'lone till I ketch my breff—never wuz so skeered in all my life! Jess a-comin' down de lane, by de white folks' house up on de big hill, an' li'l ole moon shinin' jess ez purty, an' Brer Bullfrog out in de bayou jess a-grumblin' away to 'isself, when all on a sudden I hear somethin' behin' me a-rustlin', an' a-rustlin'—sure wuz skeered! 'N'en I walk a li'l faster—li'l ole rustlin' keep gittin' closer an' closer. 'N'en I start a-runnin'—I run, an' run, an' yere I is.”

Li'l Black Rabbit sort o' cock 'is eye, an' wiggle 'is lef' ear, an' say: “You jess run,

## THE HOOP-SNAKE

an' run, an' yere you is! You doan' say nuthin' 'bout li'l ole rustlin'. What dat?"

"How I know, Black Rabbit?" says Billie Pink-Eye. "Jess heerd li'l ole rustlin' behin' me, an' seed somethin' turnin' over an' over. Jess run, an' run, an' yere I is."

Li'l Black Rabbit draw 'is seegar out o' 'is mouf, sort o' clear 'is th'oat, an' start fer to spit in de fire. Ole Mollie Cottontail got 'er eye on 'im, an' Li'l Black Rabbit doan' spit in no fire dat night—jess set dere studyin'.

Bimeby it come bedtime, an' Li'l Black Rabbit stretch 'isself good, an' start off to bed.

An' Mollie Cottontail, she start off to bed.

An' Billie Pink-Eye, he start off to bed.

An' Johnnie Jump-Up, he start off to bed.

An Dottie Dimple-Nose, she start off to bed.

An' Timmie Tiny-Toes, he start off to bed.

## LITTLE BLACK RABBIT

An' Slim Jimmie, he start off to bed.

An' all de chillun what ain't got no names, dey wuz so new, dey start off to bed—ev'y las' one of 'em.

Nex' mornin', bright an' early, up jump Mollie Cottontail an' hustle all de chillun off to de white folks' garden to see what dey kin fin' fer breakfuss. 'Tain't long afore dey-all comes trompin' back loaded down wid cabbages an' turnips an' carrots an' yaller yams.

'Bout de time Mollie Cottontail git de table set, in come Li'l Black Rabbit wid de mornin' paper, jess like white folks' daddy, an' set 'isself down in de big cheer.

When de breakfuss done been et, an' de chillun all fixin' to run out an' play, Li'l Black Rabbit lean back in 'is cheer an' say:

“Billie Pink-Eye, I been studyin' 'bout dat rustlin', rollin' t'ing what skeer you so bad las' night. Ain't been right clear in my min' jess 'zackly what dat wuz.”





YOU LIKE TO SKEER ME TO DEATH.



## THE HOOP-SNAKE

“Now it couldn’ ’a’ been no bird, kaze you didn’ hear no wings a-flutterin’.

“Couldn’ ’a’ been no animal, kaze you didn’ hear no feets a-trompin’.

“Couldn’ ’a’ been no fish, kaze fishes doan’ go on no lan’.

“Jess one t’ing lef’—must ’a’ been a snake!

“Couldn’ ’a’ been a whip-snake, kaze it didn’ whip you none.

“Couldn’ ’a’ been a coat-snake, kaze dey ketches on de tail of you’ coat.

“Couldn’ ’a’ been a garter-snake, kaze dey wrops ’roun’ you’ leg.

“Couldn’ ’a’ been a milk-snake, kaze dey jess sucks de cows.

“Must ’a’ been a hoop-snake, kaze dey lives on de side of de hill, an’ de only way dey gits ’roun’ is jess a-rollin’—dey takes dere tail in dere mouf an’ rolls. Ain’t got no feets, an’ ain’t got no wings—jess rolls. Sure must ’a’ been a hoop-snake! Now,

## LITTLE BLACK RABBIT

Billie Pink-Eye, how we gwine ketch dat hoop-snake?"

"What you talkin' 'bout *we* fer, Black Rabbit? *I* ain't studyin' 'bout ketchin' no hoop-snake. Nossir, boss! Not me—had my fill of hoop-snake; never wuz so tired of a snake in my whole life—doan' wan' to see 'nuther hoop-snake never no mo'."

Li'l Black Rabbit he see Billie Pink-Eye wa'n't what you might call anxious fer to ketch Ole Hoop-Snake, so he take 'isself out in de backyard, an' set 'isself down till he kin study out how he gwine ketch Ole Hoop-Snake all by 'isself.

Whiles he settin' dere studyin', yere come Blue-Jay.

"Hi! Blue-Jay," says Li'l Black Rabbit.

"Hi! Black Rabbit," says Blue-Jay, jess like white folks.

Dey ax each other how dey is, an' d'rec'ly he motion to Blue-Jay to hop down on de log where he sittin' at.

## THE HOOP-SNAKE

“What kin’ of terbacker you chew, Blue-Jay?”

“I ain’t pertickler, Black Rabbit, any kin’ you got, plenty good fer me,” says Blue-Jay, kaze he think Li’l Black Rabbit want to borrer a chew, an’ he gwine beat ’im to it.

Li’l Black Rabbit pass over ’is plug an’ say: “Blue-Jay, you know Ole Hoop-Snake?”

“Yassir, boss!” says Blue-Jay. “Me an’ ’im good fren’s.”

“Do he chew terbacker?” says Li’l Black Rabbit.

“Umph-uh,” says Blue-Jay, “he doan’ like terbacker. All de terbacker what he gits he give to me—he jess crazy ’bout cheese.”

Dat start Li’l Black Rabbit a-thinkin’, an’ purty soon up he jump an’ tell Blue-Jay dat he have to ’scuse ’im, kaze he got some business dat he gotta ’tend to right quick. Off fly Blue-Jay, an’ off put Li’l Black Rab-

## LITTLE BLACK RABBIT

bit, lippity, lippity, lippity, all de way down to de big store. An' what you s'pose he buy? He come back wid a poun' of de stronges' cheese what he kin buy, an' wid a li'l ole barrel what he rollin' in the middle of de road.

Li'l Black Rabbit look all 'roun' till he fin' li'l piece o' wood what fit in de bung-hole, an' off he push de barrel down de lane till he come to de hill where de white folks lives at. 'N'en he roll de barrel up 'long-side de bushes, an' march 'isself up to de top of de hill.

Look all 'roun', doan' see nuthin'; listen all 'roun', doan' hear nuthin'; 'n'en he drop li'l ole piece o' cheese here, an' drop li'l ole piece o' cheese dere, all de way down de hill till he come to de barrel 'longside de bushes, an' in th'oo de bung-hole he squz a big, fat juicy piece, what he been keepin' fer de las'. 'N'en Li'l Black Rabbit lay down in de bushes an' play like he dead, till bimeby

## THE HOOP-SNAKE

yere come Ole Hoop-Snake, wid 'is tail in 'is mouf—jess a-rollin'. Ole Hoop-Snake spy de firs' piece o' cheese, an' he turn loose 'is tail an' reach down an' snap up dat piece o' cheese, like ole Turkey Gobbler snap up a piece o' corn. 'N'en he reach out an' snap up de nex' piece o' cheese, an' reach out an' snap up de nex' piece o' cheese, an' de nex' piece o' cheese, till he come plumb to de li'l ole barrel 'longside de bushes. Ole Hoop-Snake look 'roun', but he doan' see no more cheese; look in front of 'im, look behin' 'im, look on bofe sides of 'im, but doan' see no mo' cheese. He sniff, an' he sniff, an' he sniff, an' he sure do smell more cheese; he keep on a-sniffin, an' a-lookin', an' a-lookin', an' a-sniffin, till bimeby, way down in de bottom of de barrel, he spy de big, fat, juicy piece what Li'l Black Rabbit keep till de las'. In course Ole Hoop-Snake gotta git dat piece somehow, an' he stretch out 'is neck, an' keep

## LITTLE BLACK RABBIT

a-stretchin' an' a-stretchin', till all on a sudden he slip th'oo de bung-hole—Bang! 'N'en Li'l Black Rabbit jam de wooden plug what he got right in de bung-hole, an' dere Ole Hoop-Snake safe an' soun'.

Li'l Black Rabbit boun' he gwine teach Ole Hoop-Snake a lesson. He roll de barrel over, an' over, an' over, all de way down de road, an' when dey gits home Ole Hoop-Snake so dizzy dat when Li'l Black Rabbit shake 'im out of de barrel, all he kin do is jess lay on de groun' an' see what gwine happen nex'.

Li'l Black Rabbit holler fer Billie Pink-Eye, an' Billie Pink-Eye come a-runnin'. "Dere he is," says Li'l Black Rabbit, "jess like I tole you."

'N'en Li'l Black Rabbit rub 'is han's good in de dirt, an' Billie Pink-Eye rub 'is han's good in de dirt, kaze Ole Hoop-Snake mighty slickery. Li'l Black Rabbit grab Ole Hoop-Snake by de head, an' Billie



## THE HOOP-SNAKE

Pink-Eye grab Ole Hoop-Snake by de tail, an' afore you kin say "Jack Robinson" dey got Ole Hoop-Snake wid a knot tie right in 'is middle.

He can't git away nohow, kaze de knot make 'is tail so short he can't reach it wid 'is mouf.

Li'l Black Rabbit keep 'im layin' dere till he promise he ain't gwine skeer nary one of de Rabbit family ag'in. 'N'en he untie 'im an' turn 'im loose, an' de las' dey seen of Ole Hoop-Snake, he done kotch 'is tail in 'is mouf, an' away he go rollin' down de big road in a big cloud of dus'.



## II

### HOW THE WHIFFLEBAT LOST HIS SKIN

**S**EEMS like when Ole Man Trouble start arter ennybody, dere ain't no dodgin' 'im nohow.

Li'l Black Rabbit ain't ennymore'n got shet of Ole Hoop-Snake, when yere come 'long nuther thing to pester 'im.

Ain't doin' a thing, jess settin' in 'is big cheer by de fire, smokin' 'is long black seegar when he hear a funny li'l ole noise out in de back of de house. Doan' soun' like a dog, an' doan' soun' like a cat, an' doan' soun' like a fox, an' doan' soun' like Ole Blinkin' Squintin' Screech-Owl—jess soun' like a funny li'l ole noise.

So Li'l Black Rabbit he slip on 'is coat, and pick up 'is big crooked walkin'-stick, an' creep out to see what wuz de matter. He look all 'roun' de kitchen, an' doan' see

## LITTLE BLACK RABBIT

nuthin'; he peek out de back do', an' doan' see nuthin' 'cep' li'l ole moon jess a-shinin' high up in de sky.

"Light of de moon," says Li'l Black Rabbit, sort o' studyin'. "Fine night fer to ketch me a li'l ole fat 'possum." So off he took 'cross de meadow, an' th'oo de wood, an' over de brook, till he come to de big swamp. Li'l Black Rabbit turn all 'roun', an' listen all 'roun', but he can't ketch up with Ole Brer 'Possum nohow.

'Bout dis time Li'l Black Rabbit he begin to git sort o' sleepy. It long pas' 'is bed time, 'bout quarter pas' two in de mornin', so down he set 'isself on a big log, fer to smoke 'is seegar afore he start off home. He strike one match, an' it go out; strike 'nuther match, an' *it* go out. Jess goin' to strike 'nuther match, when he hear some-thin' 'way up in a black gum-tree. Li'l Black Rabbit jess keep right still an' listen, an' scrunch 'isself all up good in a li'l roun'

## THE WHIFFLEBAT

ball; den he hear it ag'in—jess a kin' o' hummin' noise, like somebody singin' to 'isself.

Li'l Black Rabbit he stick up bofe 'is ears ez high ez he kin, fer to listen good, and what you s'pose he hear? Hear Ole Man Whifflebat singin' to 'isself, jess like dis:

“Li'l ole hole in de black gum-tree,  
Fines' ole hole you ever did see,  
You goes right in an' you sets right down,  
An' you doan' come out till de world turns  
'roun'.”

I 'spec' you wonder how Li'l Black Rabbit knowed it wuz a whifflebat. Well, he knowed it, kaze it wuz a black gum-tree, an' only whifflebats lives in black gum-trees, an' fuss 'roun' at quarter pas' two in de mornin'. Dat's de only time dey comes out, an' dey rustle 'roun' till three by de clock, an' den back dey pop in de hole.

Now a whifflebat sure is a funny animal;

## LITTLE BLACK RABBIT

it got fur like a rat, but it ain't no rat; it got a head like a monkey, but it ain't no monkey; an' it got a big, bushy tail like a fox, but it ain't no fox. Whifflebats lives on chinkopins, which is jess like chestnuts, only smaller, so whifflebats doan' get much to eat only onc't a year, when de chinkopins is ripe. De res' of de time dey rustles 'roun' an' eats what dey kin fin'.

Li'l Black Rabbit take out 'is knife an' cut a big slash in de tree, so he know it ag'in, an' off he put fer home.

Nex' mornin', bright an' early, up he jump an' off he run to de big wood fer to hunt 'im some chinkopins. It wuz late in de year an' chinkopins all gone, so he doan' fin' nary chinkopin. Look all 'roun' an' all he see is Chippie Chipmunk a-settin' on a pile of rocks.

“Hi! Black Rabbit,” says Chippie Chipmunk.

“Hi! Chippie Chipmunk,” says Li'l



WHAT HE GWINE DO NEX'?





## THE WHIFFLEBAT

Black Rabbit. "You seen enny chinkopins 'roun' dis-a-way?"

Li'l Ole Chipmunk say: "Go 'long, Black Rabbit, dis ain't de time of year fer to be huntin' chinkopins. Chinkopins all gone. I done et 'em all up."

So Li'l Black Rabbit set down on a big log an' begin to study how he gwine git 'im some chinkopins. Bimeby he git an idee, an' up he jump an' off he put to de brook, so he kin make 'im a chinkopin out of clay. When he come to de brook, dere wuz ole Brer Bullfrog a-settin' on de bank grumblin' away to 'isself 'bout de water bein' too cole fer to swim good.

"Hi! Black Rabbit," says Brer Bullfrog.

"Hi! Brer Bullfrog," says Li'l Black Rabbit. "Kin you tell me whar I kin git me some brown clay, please, sir?"

Den Brer Bullfrog ax Li'l Black Rabbit what he gwine do wid de brown clay, an'

## LITTLE BLACK RABBIT

Li'l Black Rabbit he say he want to make a chinkopin out o' clay, an' use it fer bait to ketch Ole Man Whifflebat. Den Brer Bullfrog say ef Li'l Black Rabbit wait a minit he dive down in de brook an' fetch 'im up some clay. So Brer Bullfrog take a runnin' dive an'—plunk! he go right in de middle of de water. 'Tain't long afore up he come.

“Ole Slippery Eel all curl up on de clay bank, an' he say he ain't gwine move till summer come an' de water gits warm,” says Brer Bullfrog.

Li'l Black Rabbit feel mighty bad 'bout what Brer Bullfrog say, an' he sets down on a log an' study what he gwine do nex'. Purty soon up he jump, an' off he put fer home, lippity, lippity, lippity, jess ez fas' ez he kin run.

Bimeby back he come wid a tin cracker box, an' a box of matches, an' a string. 'N'en he build 'im a li'l ole fire in de

## THE WHIFFLEBAT

cracker box, an' when it git goin' good an' hot, he put de lid on—Bang! 'N'en he tie a string on de box, an' let it down in de water right over where Ole Slippery Eel tak'n' 'is sleep. Ole Slippery Eel feel de heat of de fire, an' sort o' stretch 'isself, an' stir 'roun a bit.

“Certainly is gittin' warm weather; must be summer sure,” says Ole Slippery Eel, an' off he puts to git 'isself some nice fat worms. Soon ez Ole Slippery Eel move away from he clay bank, Brer Bullfrog dive down in de water ag'in, an' fetch up a handful o' clay fer Li'l Black Rabbit.

“Certainly am 'bliged,” says Li'l Black Rabbit.

“Certainly are welcome,” says Brer Bullfrog.

Dem two is mighty good fren's, kaze dey done growed up togedder, an' been in all sorts of debbilments when dey wuz kids.

So Li'l Black Rabbit make 'im a clay

## LITTLE BLACK RABBIT

chinkopin, an' put it out in de sun fer to dry, an' off he run hot-foot to de big store. When he git dere, de onliest thing he buys is a rat-trap. 'Tain't a trap wid a snap to it, ner a trap wid a ketch to it; 'tain't a tin trap ner a wood trap, but jess one of dese yere wire traps what got a hole whar you goes in at but you can't come out at. Den he put de clay chinkopin in de trap, an' off he run 'cross de meadows, th'oo de wood, an' over de brook, till he come to de big swamp an' de black gum-tree.

Whiles he fixin' de trap, Brer Coon come along. He ax Li'l Black Rabbit what he doin' wid de trap, an' Li'l Black Rabbit say he fixin' to ketch Ole Man Whifflebat, an' he want Brer Coon to put de trap up in de black gum-tree. Brer Coon he 'gree'ble, an' he fix up de trap in de crotch of a big limb, an' 'im an' Li'l Black Rabbit set dereselves down fer to see what gwine happen. Dey watch an' dey wait, till jess sharp at quar-

## THE WHIFFLEBAT

ter pas' two in de mornin', den out pop Ole Man Whifflebat. He look all 'roun' dis side, an' he look all 'roun' dat side, an' bimeby he spy li'l ole clay chinkopin in de rat-trap. It look like sho'-'nuff chinkopin to Ole Man Whifflebat, so he march 'isself right in de do', an' he takes a bite of dat clay chinkopin—"P-p-tuh! p-p-tuh!" How he spit an' sputter, an' how mad he git! 'N'en he try fer to back out of de trap, but he can't back out. He try fer to wiggle out, but he can't wiggle out. He try fer to scratch out, but he can't scratch out nuther, an' dere he stay till Brer Coon climb up in de black gum-tree an' fetch 'im out.

'Twan't long afore Li'l Black Rabbit come out wid a new fur Sunday-go-to-meet-in' hat. De nabers done a heap of guessin', but ain't nobody know what kin' of fur it made of 'cep'in' Li'l Black Rabbit and Brer Coon—an' dey won't tell.



### III

#### THE PECKERWOOD THAT WOULDN'T GO 'WAY

**D**E firs' one up in de mornin' is Mollie Cottontail, and she makes de fire, an' puts on de kettle, an' den she has a time. She roust out Billie Pink-Eye, and she wrastle wid Johnny Jump-Up, an' she haul at Slim Jimmie, an' she fuss at Timmie Tiny-Toes and Dottie Dimple-Nose, an' all de chillun what ain't got no names, dey wuz so new, till she gits ev'y las' one of 'em wide awake an' out o' bed.

By dat time Li'l Black Rabbit gits all waked up, an' de whole kit an' bang of dem tromps in ready fer breakfuss.

Li'l Black Rabbit look 'roun' at Billie Pink-Eye, when de breakfuss done been et, an' he say:

“How de boat gittin' on, Billie Pink-Eye?”

## LITTLE BLACK RABBIT

“Ain’t got no boat,” says Billie Pink-Eye.

“Must be a wheelbarrer,” says Li’l Black Rabbit.

“Ain’t got no wheelbarrer,” says Billie Pink-Eye.

“Must be a li’l ole wagon,” says Li’l Black Rabbit.

“Ain’t got no li’l ole wagon,” says Billie Pink-Eye.

“What you hammerin’ at early in de mornin’, if ’tain’t no boat, an’ ’tain’t no wheelbarrer, an’ ’tain’t no li’l ole wagon?” says Li’l Black Rabbit.

“Ain’t hammerin’ at nuthin’,” says Billie Pink-Eye. “Ain’t got no hammer in de firs’ place, an’ ain’t been hammerin’ on nuthin’ in de secon’ place.”

Li’l Black Rabbit he call in all de chillun, an’ he say: “Ef I ketches de one what’s doin’ dis yere hammerin’ in de mornin’, I gwine skin ’im, dat’s what I gwine do.”



## THE PECKERWOOD

Johnnie Jump-Up, he speak up an' say 'tain't him.

An' Dottie Dimple-Nose, she speak up an' say 'tain't her.

An' Timmie Tiny-Toes, he speak up an' say 'tain't him.

An' Slim Jimmie, he speak up an' say 'tain't him.

An' all de chillun what ain't got no names, dey wuz so new, dey speak up an' say 'tain't dem.

Li'l Black Rabbit he satisfied somebody lyin', an' he 'low he gwine ketch him, but he gwine let de matter res' at present.

De nex' mornin', when Li'l Black Rabbit layin' in de bed dreamin' 'bout all de cabbages, an' de radishes, an' de lettuce, an' de peas in de white folks' garden, here come de hammerin' ag'in—B-r-r-r-r-r, B-r-r-r-r-r—jess like dat. Up jump Li'l Black Rabbit, an' he say: "Billie Pink-Eye, you quit dat hammerin', you hear me?"

## LITTLE BLACK RABBIT

“Ain’t doin’ no hammerin’,” says Billie Pink-Eye.

Li’l Black Rabbit, he holler: “Johnnie Jump-Up, ef you doan’ quit dat hammerin’, I wear you out.”

Johnnie Jump-Up holler back he ain’t doin’ no hammerin’.

All de res’ of de chillun dey hollers back dey ain’t none of ’em doin’ no hammerin’.

“Ef you wants to see what’s doin’ all de hammerin’, stick you’ head out of de front winder, an’ look up, Black Rabbit,” says Mollie Cottontail.

Li’l Black Rabbit stick ’is head out of de front winder an’ look up, an’ what you s’pose he see? He see Ole Red Headed Peckerwood jess a-goin’ it.

“Hey, you!” says Li’l Black Rabbit. “You wid de red topknot, you quit dat noise, you hear me?”

Peckerwood, he stop ’is hammerin’, an’ turn ’roun’ an’ look at Li’l Black Rabbit.



BRER COON HE 'GREE TO CLIMB DE TREE.



## THE PECKERWOOD

“Hush you’ fuss, you good-fer-nuthin’ li’l Rabbit, you!”

Li’l Black Rabbit he git right mad, an’ he holler out: “Ef you doan’ go ’way from here right quick, I come out dere an’ bus’ you wide open wid a big rock.”

Peckerwood he jess laugh at Li’l Black Rabbit, an’ say: “Who you fussin’ at? Here I is, an’ here I stay, an’ can’t no low-down li’l ole rabbit chase me ’way. Jess foun’ a good nes’ of bugs in you’ ole rotten house, an’ ain’t gwine leave till I ketch de ve’y las’ bug in de ve’y las’ hole. How you like dat?”

Li’l Black Rabbit sure is mad, an’ he rush down stairs, an’ rush out de do’, an’ rush all ’roun’ till he fin’ a pile of rocks.

He chuck de rocks at Ole Peckerwood till ’is arm so tired he can’t pick up ’nuther rock, ’n’en he quit. Ole Peckerwood have lots of fun, dodgin’ de rocks what Li’l Black Rabbit been chuckin’.

## LITTLE BLACK RABBIT

“Res’ up, Black Rabbit, res’ up; rub you’ arm good, kaze I be back to-morrer;” an’ wid dat Ole Peckerwood fly ’way.

Li’l Black Rabbit arm so sore from chuckin’, he kin hardly lif’ ’is cup o’ coffee, an’ he ain’t got much int’res’ in ’is breakfuss nohow.

Arter breakfuss, whiles Li’l Black Rabbit settin’ out in de yard, sort o’ coolin’ off, here come Blue-Jay.

“Hi! Blue-Jay,” says Li’l Black Rabbit.

“Hi! Black Rabbit,” says Blue-Jay. “Looks like you all het up dis fine mornin’.”

Li’l Black Rabbit he gotta talk to somebody, an’ he tell Blue-Jay what a time he had wid Ole Peckerwood, an’ ax ’is help fer to git square. Blue-Jay say he doan’ want no truck wid Peckerwood, kaze Peckerwood bill too long and sharp.

’N’en Li’l Black Rabbit he go to Brer Fox, an’ ax ’is help; but Brer Fox say

## THE PECKERWOOD

Peckerwood kin fly too fas'. Chippie Chipmunk he say Peckerwood got too much red on 'is head; he doan' like a red-head nohow.

All dat day Li'l Black Rabbit set 'roun', an' study how he gwine ketch Ole Peckerwood.

De nex' mornin', bright an' early, dere wuz Ole Peckerwood jess a-hammerin' on Li'l Black Rabbit's house.

Li'l Black Rabbit he put sticky flypaper on de place where Peckerwood workin', but Peckerwood jess flop 'is wings an' sing:

“Worms in de tree,  
An' de tree is tough,  
Ef you doan' peck hard,  
You never git 'nuff.  
I see 'im in de hole,  
De son-of-a-gun,  
Jess one more peck,  
An' out he come.”

Li'l Black Rabbit he get 'im big, fat,

## LITTLE BLACK RABBIT

juicy white worm, an' put hook in 'im, like he gwine fishin'.

He put de worm out whar Peckerwood kin see it, but Peckerwood spy de hook, an' spy de line tied onto de hook. Den he holler out, "You Black Rabbit, you, you ain't got 'nuff sense fer to ketch me, nohow." An' 'way he fly, laughin' so hard he kin hardly flop 'is wings.

Whiles Li'l Black Rabbit been fussin' wid Peckerwood, Ole Mister Land Turkle done come on de scene.

"Hi! Black Rabbit," says Mister Land Turkle.

"Hi! Mister Turkle," says Li'l Black Rabbit. "Kin you tell me how I gwine ketch dis yere Peckerwood?"

He purty wise ole turkle, an' he say, "Dey ain't no two ways 'bout it, Black Rabbit, you gotta fin' ole Peckerwood asleep, an' bus' 'im on de side of de head, an' dat's de onliest way he gwine leave you 'lone."



## THE PECKERWOOD

“How I gwine git near ’nuff to bus’ ’im?” says Li’l Black Rabbit. “Peckerwood sleep up in de big tree, an’ you know I can’t climb no tree. Ef I could climb de tree, I bound fer to wake ’im up scramblin’ in de branches; an’ ef I doan’ make no noise scramblin’ in de branches, never could see where he hidin’ in de dark nohow.”

“Dem’s de things what you gotta study out,” says Ole Mister Land Turkle, an’ off he lumber in de bushes.

Li’l Black Rabbit he set an’ study, an’ study, an’ bimeby he got a plan what he think gwine do de trick.

First off, he gotta see Brer Coon fer to do de climin’, kaze Brer Coon he kin slip ’roun’ in de tree, jess like Ole Cotton-Mouth Moccasin, so Li’l Black Rabbit put off fer Brer Coon’s house ez fas’ as he kin run.

Brer Coon he ’gree to climb de tree, an’ bus’ Ole Man Peckerwood on de side of de head, ef Li’l Black Rabbit fix it up so he

## LITTLE BLACK RABBIT

kin see whar Peckerwood hidin' in de dark. Li'l Black Rabbit 'low he done got dat part all fix up, an' he tell Brer Coon to meet 'im down in de big swamp jess arter sundown.

Li'l Black Rabbit he trot off home, an' when he git dere he git 'im a termater can, like he gwine fishin'. 'N'en he hunt all 'roun' in de grass, till he ketch 'im whole mess of lightnin' bugs, what been hidin' dere waitin' fer sundown.

Li'l Black Rabbit take de can of bugs in one han', an' fishin' pole in t'udder han', an' walk off sort o' keerless, like he gwine fishin' sho' 'nuff. When he git to de big swamp, he make out like he mighty tired, an' set 'isself down on a big log fer to res' 'is legs. He act sort o' sleepy-like, an' d'rec'ly he slide off de log an' stretch 'isself out like he gwine take a good nap whiles he got de chance.

All dis time Li'l Black Rabbit know dat Peckerwood settin' up in de tree, watchin'

## THE PECKERWOOD

ev'y move he make. He sort o' scrunch 'isself up like he tryin' to fin' de bes' way to git comf'ble, an' he knock over de termater can all full o' lightnin' bugs.

Peckerwood keep watchin' to see ef Li'l Black Rabbit notice he knock over de can, but Li'l Black Rabbit act like he so sleepy he doan' know nuthin', an' d'rec'ly he play like he fall fas' asleep sho' 'nuff.

Dat's de chance what ole Peckerwood been waitin' fer, an' he think he play big joke on Li'l Black Rabbit, an' eat up all de bait what he got in de can. So down he jump, an' gobble up all de lightnin' bugs, an' back he fly up in de tree. 'N'en he start off, jess a-hammerin' — B-r-r-r-r-r, B-r-r-r-r-r, B-r-r-r-r-r — right over Li'l Black Rabbit's head.

Up jump Li'l Black Rabbit, an' make out like he skeered to death, an' off he put th'oo de bushes, like he gwine fer de doctor. Peckerwood he laugh so hard, look like he

## LITTLE BLACK RABBIT

gwine shake all 'is feathers out by de roots.

'Long 'bout sundown, back come Li'l Black Rabbit an' Brer Coon jess a-sneakin' th'oo de wood. When it come good an' dark, an' de birds all gone to bed, dey creep out of de bushes, an' creep 'long till dey come to de tree where Peckerwood lives at.

“Look up in de tree, Brer Coon,” says Li'l Black Rabbit. “an' see ef you see some-thin'.”

Brer Coon put 'is head back an' look up in de tree.

“Lawd have mercy! Black Rabbit, what dat? Look like li'l ole bird all on fire!”

“Dat Peckerwood,” says Li'l Black Rabbit. “Done tricked 'im into eatin' whole termater can full o' lightnin' bugs, an' all dem lightnin' bugs what he et got 'im all lit up inside like a church.”

Brer Coon he pick up a good stout stick, an' he creep up de tree jess easy-like. He creep closer, an' closer, an' closer, but Ole

## THE PECKERWOOD

Peckerwood ain't woke up yit. Brer Coon he climb out on de limb, an' keep gittin' closer, an' closer, when all on a sudden—Bang! He bus' Ole Peckerwood 'longside de head, like he gwine spill all his brains out at one lick.

Ole Peckerwood he jess give one squawk, an' fly straight up in de air, an' if he keep gwine like he started, it ain't gwine be long afore he fin' he struck a mighty cole place up in dem ole clouds.



## IV

### THE APRIL FOOL PARTY

**S**EEMS like all de nabers more proud to come to Li'l Black Rabbit's house dan enny udder house in de whole naberhood. Ev'y time dey have a votin' to see who is de bes' cook, Mollie Cottontail carry off de prize.

What wid de Hoop-Snakes, an' de Peckerwoods, Li'l Black Rabbit been workin' mighty hard lately, an' he figger it 'bout time fer to have some fun. He jus' fixin' to git ready to ax Mollie Cottontail ef he kin have de nabers come 'roun' some night, when in come Billie Pink-Eye.

"Hi! Billie Pink-Eye," says Li'l Black Rabbit.

"Hi! Black Rabbit," says Billie Pink-Eye.

'N'en Billie Pink-Eye set 'isself down in

## LITTLE BLACK RABBIT

front of de fire, cock up 'is feet on de fender, an' bite 'isself off a chew of terbacker.

“Does you know what day wuz yis-tiddy?” says Billie Pink-Eye.

“Uh-huh,” says Li'l Black Rabbit.

“An' what day to-day?”

“Uh-huh,” says Li'l Black Rabbit.

“An' what day to-morrer?”

“Umph-uh,” says Li'l Black Rabbit.

“To-morrer April Fool Day,” says Billie Pink-Eye. “An' you promise us sho'-'nuff party on April Fool Day. What you gwine do 'bout dat?”

“Gwine to have sho'-'nuff party,” says Li'l Black Rabbit. “Jess like I done tole you.”

So he holler fer ole Mollie Cottontail, an' tell her to git ready, kaze he gwine to have “big company” to-morrer.

'N'en he holler fer:

Dottie Dimple-Nose,

An' Johnnie Jump-Up,



## THE APRIL FOOL PARTY

An' Slim Jimmie,  
An' Timmie Tiny-Toes,  
An' de res' of de chillun what ain't got  
no names, dey wuz so new.

Li'l Black Rabbit hustle all de chillun off  
to invite de nabers to de frolic. All of 'em  
gotta bring somethin' when dey come, an'  
he 'low he ax Brer Fox to bring de turkey,  
An' Brer B'ar to bring de honey,  
An' Sis Cow to bring de buttermilk,  
An' Brer Wolf to bring de yaller yams,  
An' Brer Coon to bring de blackberry  
wine,

An' Brer Squirrel and Chippie Chip-  
munk to bring de nuts.

Now, Brer Turkey-Buzzard, an' Ole Man  
Skunk, dey wa'n't invited, kaze dey ain't  
nobody gwine stay in de same room wid  
'em.

Bimeby de chillun come tromping back,  
an' tell Li'l Black Rabbit all de nabers sho'  
wuz proud to git de invite to de party, ev'ey

## LITTLE BLACK RABBIT

one of 'em, an' dey all done promise to bring what he ax fer.

Nex' mornin' arter breakfuss, Li'l Black Rabbit set 'isself down in front of de fire to read de paper an' smoke 'is seegar. Ev'y now an' den he sort o' chuckle to 'isself 'bout de fun he gwine have at de party, but he doan' say a word to nobody.

When he see Mollie Cottontail begin to dus' off de big log, 'n'en Li'l Black Rabbit know it 'bout time to git ready, kaze dat's de firs' thing Mollie Cottontail do afore ev'y party—dus' off de big log.

When he see ain't nobody lookin', Li'l Black Rabbit slip out in de kitchen, an' mess 'roun' wid de stew-pan, an' d'rec'ly he have somethin' on de stove, jess a-b'ilin' an' a-bubblin'. Off he put to de cotton patch, lippity, lippity, lippity, jess ez fas' ez dem li'l short legs kin carry 'im. When he git back he start more messin', an' what he make he carry down to de spring-house



ALL OF 'EM GOTTA BRING SOMETHIN'.



## THE APRIL FOOL PARTY

to cool, but he doan' say a word to nobody. He ain't set down good in de big cheer, when yere come Brer Fox.

"Hi! Brer Fox," says Li'l Black Rabbit.

"Hi! Black Rabbit," says Brer Fox. "'Fraid I gwine be late, an' 'fraid dis yere big fat turkey gwine melt in de sun an' run off. Sho' is a fine big turkey.'" 'N'en Brer Fox sorter lif' his lip an' grin out of de side of 'is mouf.

Den come Brer B'ar wid de honey,  
An' Sis Cow wid de buttermilk,  
An' Brer Wolf wid de yaller yams,  
An' Brer Coon wid de blackberry wine,  
An' de res' of de nabers wid what dey  
done promise to bring.

Ole Brer B'ar got a mighty sharp nose, an' a mighty sharp smell, an' he sniff, an' sniff, till he make sure Ole Man Skunk ain't hidin' 'roun' in de woods nowhars.

When de rabbit chillun done rustle

## LITTLE BLACK RABBIT

'roun', an' spread all de goodies out on de table, Li'l Black Rabbit he jump up an' 'low he gwine ax de blessin', kaze he done got religion down at de camp-meetin' las' week:

“Ef ennybody gits what nobody wants,  
Jess th'ow it out de do'.  
Ef ev'ybody gits what ev'ybody wants,  
Den nobody wants no mo'.”

Arter Li'l Black Rabbit done ax de blessin', Brer Fox nominate Brer B'ar fer to set at de head of de table an' carve de turkey, an' ev'ybody willin', kaze Brer B'ar he de stronges' one in de naberhood. 'N'en Li'l Black Rabbit he 'p'int Brer Fox to pour de buttermilk,

An' Brer Coon to pass de honey,  
An' Billie Pink-Eye to carry 'roun' de yaller yams,

An' Johnny Jump-Up to help crack de nuts,

## THE APRIL FOOL PARTY

An' all de res' what spry on dere legs to see dat ev'ybody got plenty to eat.

Brer B'ar he stan' up at de head of de table an' thank de nabers fer de honor dey 'lected him to, an' 'low he gwine carve de turkey de bes' he know how. Den he take up de big carvin'-knife, an' de firs' cut what he make in de turkey, out jump li'l ole squealin' pig an' run plumb down de table. Brer B'ar he so skeered he like to jump out of 'is skin, an' Brer Fox he laugh, an' laugh, till he mos' laugh 'isself sick.

Bimeby dey gits all straightened out, an' de chillun start passin' de turkey what Brer B'ar been carvin'. 'N'en Brer Fox he holler out he can't eat turkey widout cramberry sauce. In come Billie Pink-Eye wid de sauce. Brer Fox he take one taste an' he start a-hollerin'. He holler, an' he holler, an' he jump up in de air, an' he roll on de groun', an' off he put fer de spring-house to git some water. Somebody done put red

## LITTLE BLACK RABBIT

pepper in de cramberry sauce, an' like to burn Brer Fox up. Dat de time fer Brer B'ar to laugh, an' he sho' did laugh.

Brer Wolf 'low he like glass o' buttermilk, an' de buttermilk all full of salt. De yaller yams all fill wid flour, an' seem like ev'ybody been tryin' to play joke on ev'ybody else.

'Twa'n't long till dey all tired of de laughin', an' de jokes, an' Li'l Black Rabbit bring on de cracklin' bread, an' all de res' of de good things what he been savin', an' ev'ybody et till dey plumb full up. Ole Brer B'ar speak up and say: "Mighty fine dinner you set up, Black Rabbit, an' now ef I had a piece o' candy from de big store, it sho' would top de dinner off good."

Jess what Li'l Black Rabbit been waitin' fer, kaze he know Brer B'ar got a sweet toof, an' sure gwine ax fer a piece o' candy.

So he sen' Billie Pink-Eye off to de spring-house, an' back he come wid de



## THE APRIL FOOL PARTY

nices' pan of chocolate creams what you ever did see.

Dat candy sho' make Brer B'ar mouf water, an' in he pop two of dem chocolate creams afore you kin say "Scat" to a jay-bird.

Right dere whar Brer B'ar miss a bet, kaze de candy all full up wid cotton. "P-p-p-p-tuh! P-p-p-tuh!" says Brer B'ar. "Oh, p-p-tuh-duh! Coddan all stug id my moud, ad all id by teed; oh, ah, p-tuh!"

An' he look so funny clawin' 'way at 'is mouf, an' de cotton all stickin' in 'is teeth, dat all de nabers jess lay back in dey cheers an' laugh, an' laugh, an' laugh, till dey falls on de groun'. Right dere Ole Turkey-Buzzard and Ole Man Skunk seen dere chance fer to git a square meal, an' dey sho' took it.

By de time dey run Ole Man Turkey-Buzzard an' Ole Man Skunk plumb off in de woods, it 'bout time to go home. De

## LITTLE BLACK RABBIT

nabers all tells Mollie Cottontail what a fine cook she is, and Li'l Black Rabbit what a fine party he give, an' off dey puts th'oo de woods, laughin', an' carryin' on like dey was young folks on a straw ride.

## V

### LITTLE BLACK RABBIT AND BRER COON GO FISHING

**L**I'L BLACK RABBIT ain't seen hide ner hair of Brer Coon since de night of de April Fool Party, an' he jess figgerin' he drap in an' see him firs' thing in de mornin', kaze him an' Brer Coon mighty good fren's, when he hear some one knock-in' at de do'. He holler, "Come in," an' in come Brer Coon.

"Hi! Brer Coon," says Li'l Black Rabbit.

"Hi! Black Rabbit," says Brer Coon, "I jess step in fer to tell you howdy, an' ax does you want to go fishin' to-morrer."

Li'l Black Rabbit 'low he'd ruther go fishin' 'n eat 'is dinner, an' he certainly wuz 'bliged to Brer Coon fer de invite.

Dey fix it up fer to start off firs' thing in

## LITTLE BLACK RABBIT

de mornin', bright an' early, an' Li'l Black Rabbit he say, "I 'spec' you-all better come by fer me, Brer Coon, kaze I sho' is a heavy sleeper. Never kin git up in de mornin' early."

"I reckon we better start off afore day-break, Black Rabbit," says Brer Coon, "kaze we gotta be dere wid de worms when dem fishes is ready fer dere breakfuss. Ef I start a-chuckin' rocks at you' house to wake you up in de mornin', I'se liable to break a winder, an' den Mollie Cottontail she liable to fuss wid me, an' cuss me out. Never do like to have nobody cuss me out when I'se gwine fishin'; it certainly do bring me bad luck."

'N'en Brer Coon he sugges' dat Li'l Black Rabbit tie a string on 'is big toe an' hang de string out of de winder, so he kin pull it when he come by. Li'l Black Rabbit 'low de string hurt 'is toe. Brer Coon say dat he pull de string easy-like.

## THE FISHING TRIP

“How you gwine fin’ de en’ of de string in de dark?” says Li’l Black Rabbit.

Brer Coon he got ’n idee, an’ he say he show Li’l Black Rabbit; an’ off he put in de bushes, an’ bimeby yere he come back wid one of dese yere big white squshy worms.

“Look-a-yere, Black Rabbit,” says Brer Coon, an’ he stan’ off in de dark, “What you see in my han’?” An’ sho’ ’nuff, Brer Coon got one of dem glow-worms what shines in de dark like when you spit on you’ han’ an’ rub it wid de head of a match.

Li’l Black Rabbit ’low dat do de trick, an’ Brer Coon promise he pull de string easy, kaze Li’l Black Rabbit got a sore toe. So dey fix up de string an’ tie de glow-worm fas’ on de en’ of de string, an’ Brer Coon he puts off home, an’ Li’l Black Rabbit he gits ready fer bed.

Li’l Black Rabbit wrastle ’roun’ in bed consid’ble afore he gits to sleep, but bimeby he drap off, an’ jess ’bout ez soon ez

## LITTLE BLACK RABBIT

he drap off he start a-dreamin'. He dream he fishin' down at de brook, an' ain't kotch nuthin' but lots o' li'l ole catfish. He keep a-ketchin' 'em, an' he keep a-ketchin' 'em, till he git plumb 'scouraged. Jess fixin' to quit, when he git a reg'lar ole sho'-nuff bite. De fish pull an' Li'l Black Rabbit pull, an' Li'l Black Rabbit pull an' de fish pull, an' seem like de fish gwine pull Li'l Black Rabbit clean in de water an' drown 'im, kaze he can't leggo. 'N'en he dream he holler out, "Ketch me, Brer Coon, ketch me! Dis yere fish gwine drown me!"

When he holler out "Ketch me!" he fall plumb out of de bed—BLAM! An' he wake up right quick, an' de noise wake up all de res' of de folks in de house.

Li'l Black Rabbit holler, "Help! Murder! Somethin' got me by de toe tryin' fer to pull me out de winder. HELP!"

In rush Mollie Cottontail,  
An' Billie Pink-Eye,



WHEN DE FISHES GWINE COME FER DERE BREAKFUSS.





## THE FISHING TRIP

An' Johnnie Jump-Up,  
An' Dottie Dimple-Nose,  
An' Timmie Tiny-Toes,  
An' Slim Jimmie,

An' all de chillun what ain't got no names, dey wuz so new, fer to help Li'l Black Rabbit.

Mollie Cottontail she grab de string what's tied on Li'l Black Rabbit's toe, an' Johnnie Jump-Up run to de winder an' look out, an' what you s'pose he see?

He see Ole Turkey-Buzzard a-jumpin', an' a-hoppin', an' a-floppin', an' a-wras-tlin', away down on de groun'.

Ole Turkey-Buzzard been p'rambulatin' 'roun' in' de dark, an' spied de glow-worm an' done et it. He swallered it, an' when he fin' it tied fas' to de string, he can't un-swaller it, an' dat's what all de fuss 'bout.

By de time Li'l Black Rabbit git loose from de string, an' dey done chase Ole Turkey-Buzzard 'way, it mos' mornin'.

## LITTLE BLACK RABBIT

So Li'l Black Rabbit fix 'im up a cup o' coffee, an' set down to wait fer Ole Brer Coon. Purty soon yere come Brer Coon, an' de two of 'em start off to de fishin' place. Brer Coon he travel at a fox-trot, an' Li'l Black Rabbit he come 'long, lippity, lippity, lippity, all de way to de big brook.

Dey baits dere hooks, an' th'ows in de lines, an' set down to see when de fishes gwine come fer dere breakfuss.

Li'l Black Rabbit feel tug on 'is line, an' he pulls in. Somethin' been at de hook, an' de bait all gone.

Brer Coon feel tug on 'is line, an' *he* pulls in. Somethin' been at de hook an' de bait all gone.

Dat's de way it goes till d'rec'ly Li'l Black Rabbit git a sho'-'nuff bite, an' what you s'pose he ketch? 'Twa'n't nuthin' but ole mud-turkle.

Brer Coon git a bite, an' he ketch ole cat-fish.

## THE FISHING TRIP

Li'l Black Rabbit an' Brer Coon so mad dey jess natch'rally beat up dat li'l ole catfish till 'is eyes pop out. Li'l Black Rabbit say, "You good-fer-nuthin' ole catfish, ef you-all doan' keep 'way from me, I'se gwine beat you to a frazzle de very nex' time I ketch you." Wid dat he slam 'im back in de water. Li'l Black Rabbit he ketch a ole slip'ry, squirmin' eel, an' Brer Coon he ketch ole catfish brother.

Brer Coon he mad like ole hen what been douse wid a pan o' dishwater, an' dey pull in dere lines an' hunt fer 'nuther place to fish.

Done strike a good place, an' dey bofe on 'em ketch string of "goggle-eyes" afore you kin say "Scat" to a jay-bird. Dey keep on a-fishin' till dark, an' Li'l Black Rabbit make a big fire, an' Brer Coon pick out de bigges' fish, an' 'low he gwine clean 'im good an' cook 'im, so dey kin have fried fish fer dinner afore dey start off home.

## LITTLE BLACK RABBIT

Jess when de ole "goggle-eye" gittin' good an' brown in de pan, an' Brer Coon mouf begin to water, he hear somethin' say, "Ew-w-w-w, Ew-w-w-w," out in de bushes.

Li'l Black Rabbit an' Brer Coon look all 'roun', but can't see nuthin'.

Li'l Black Rabbit whisper, "You s'pose dat a ha'nt?"

An' Brer Coon whisper back, "Soun' jess like a ha'nt to me, Black Rabbit. I ain't never seen one, but I been chase by one many a time. Ain't never ketch me, an' ain't gwine ketch me dis time. Nossir, boss, I'se on my way an' a-startin' right now!"

An' wid dat he put out in de bushes like a houn' dog arter 'im. Li'l Black Rabbit he grab up a big stick an' jump behin' a bush right quick.

Ef it a ha'nt, he want to know what kin' a ha'nt is livin' in de woods, an' skeerin' folks what ain't doin' nuthin' to nobody.

What kin' a ha'nt you s'pose come hop-

## THE FISHING TRIP

pin' into de firelight an' begin to gobble up de fish what Brer Coon done cook? 'Tain't nuthin' but Ole Blinkin' Squintin' Screech-Owl.

When Li'l Black Rabbit see what 'twas dat done skeer 'em, he so mad he bus' dat Ole Screech-Owl 'longside de head, an' knock 'im plumb in de middle of de fire. Ole Screech-Owl like to put de fire out afore he kin git on 'is feets an' fly 'way.

Li'l Black Rabbit pick up de fish what he done ketch, an' de fish what Brer Coon done ketch, an' off he put fer home, an' Brer Coon doan' know to dis day what 'twas dat skeer 'im so bad, kaze Li'l Black Rabbit ain't never said nuthin' to nobody, an' from de looks of things he ain't gwine say nuthin' nuther, kaze he doan' want Brer Coon to git mad wid 'im. Ef Brer Coon doan' know nuthin', Li'l Black Rabbit 'low dat what he doan' know ain't gwine hurt 'im.



## VI

### THE PRICKLY BRISTLY PORCUPINE

**D**ONE took Li'l Black Rabbit an' all de family jess 'bout three-fo days to eat up all de fish what him and Brer Coon kotch, an' de night dey finished de las' fish, Li'l Black Rabbit lean back in 'is cheer an' say:

“Sho' am fed up on fish; feel like I gwine fin' fish-scales in my whiskers fer a month. Doan' nobody say fish to me till de moon changes, kaze I'se jess natch'rally tired of de very smell of fish.”

Mollie Cottontail say she got 'nuff, too; an' all de chillun seem like dey plumb wore out takin' fish-bones out of dere moufs.

Li'l Black Rabbit jess fixin' to set 'isself down in de big cheer in front of de fire, when he hear somethin' sort o' scufflin' 'roun' outside de do'.

## LITTLE BLACK RABBIT

“What dat outside de do’?” says Li’l Black Rabbit. Ain’t nobody answer, jess keep on a-scufflin’.

Li’l Black Rabbit jump up right quick an’ grab de double-barrel shotgun what he keep handy, an’ he holler: “Ef nobody doan’ answer, I’s e gwine turn loose dis yere gun an’ shoot somebody.”

’N’en he hear li’l ole weak voice outside:

“Black Rabbit, open de do’ right quick, I’s e all stuck up an’ dunno where I’s e at.”

Li’l Black Rabbit fling open de do’, an’ in come Brer Fox. Certainly wuz a sight! Brer Fox done met up wid Ole Prickly Bristly Porkypine, an’ got ’isself all stuck full o’ bristles. Dey wuz bristles in ’is face, an’ bristles in ’is ears, bristles in de front of ’im, an’ bristles in de back of ’im.

“Have mercy!” says Li’l Black Rabbit. “How come you meet up wid all de porkypines in de woods all on de same day, Brer Fox?”



## THE PORCUPINE

“Twa’n’t all on ’em,” says Brer Fox; “jess one, an’ he sho’ had some bristles—certainly did.”

Li’l Black Rabbit he good fren’s wid Brer Fox, an’ he help pull out de bristles, an’ he rub de places good wid a piece of fat meat fer to take out de soreness.

Bimeby off goes Brer Fox home, an’ Li’l Black Rabbit he git ’nuther seegar out of de sideboard fer a good-night smoke. He jess light up good an’ strong, an’ set ’isself down in de big cheer, when “Ouch!” Up he jump, ’bout two-three feet in de air. Trouble wuz, Li’l Black Rabbit set down plumb on de p’int of one of dese yere bristles what he pull out of Brer Fox hide.

De bristle right sharp an’ stick Li’l Black Rabbit good an’ plenty.

Li’l Black Rabbit sure wuz mad an’ he ’low jess fer dat he gwine ketch Ole Prickly Bristly Porkypine an’ pull all ’is bristles plumb out, ef it’s de las’ ac’.

## LITTLE BLACK RABBIT

Purty soon he put off to bed, an' de nex' mornin', bright an' early, up he jump. Arter breakfuss he holler fer all de chillun:

Billie Pink-Eye,

An' Johnny Jump-Up,

An' Dottie Dimple-Nose,

An' Timmie Tiny-Toes,

An' Slim Jimmie,

An' all de chillun what ain't got no names, dey wuz so new.

When he gits all de family out in de back yard, he ketch one of dese yere tumble-bugs what got pinchers like de ice-man use fer to carry in de ice, only not so big.

“You chillun, you see dis yere tumble-bug? You all run off right quick an' fetch me all de tumble-bugs you kin fin', an' fer ev'y tumble-bug you bring in, I'se gwine pay you one penny.”

Off dey start jess a-scootin', an' Billie Pink-Eye in such a hurry he run spang dab into de big scaly-bark tree what stan' at de



NEVER WOULD 'A' FOUN' DE BACK DO'.



## THE PORCUPINE

side of de house, an' like to bus' out all 'is brains. Li'l Black Rabbit buy from de chil-lun all de tumble-bugs dey kin ketch, an' dey ketch termater can plumb full to de top.

Li'l Black Rabbit cut 'im big stick, an' take de termater can full of tumble-bugs, an' off he put 'cross de meadow, down de hill, th'oo de wood, till he come to de big swamp.

Firs' thing he spy is Ole Blue-Jay up in de tree.

"Hi! Black Rabbit," says Blue-Jay.

"Hi! Blue-Jay," says Li'l Black Rabbit.

"Gwine fishin'?" says Blue-Jay.

"Umph-uh," says Li'l Black Rabbit, "gwine call on Ole Prickly Bristly Porkypine. Whar is he?"

"Foller me," says Blue-Jay. "Ole Porkypine jess gone in 'is front do', ain't five minutes back."

Li'l Black Rabbit he foller 'long o' Blue-Jay till dey come to Ole Porkypine's house.

## LITTLE BLACK RABBIT

'N'en he thank Blue-Jay fer de trouble he done took, an' say he doan' want to keep 'im from 'is business. So off fly Blue-Jay, an' off put Li'l Black Rabbit to see kin he fin' Ole Porkypine's back do'. He look, an' he look, an' he look, an' never would 'a' foun' de back do' ef Ole Porkypine hadn' 'a' stuck 'is head out to see what makin' all dat noise on de roof.

“Hi! Black Rabbit,” says Porkypine.

“Hi! you' own self,” says Li'l Black Rabbit. “You good-fer-nuthin' rascal. You done made pin-cushions out of good fren' o' mine yistiddy, an' I'se gwine snatch you bald ez a watermillion, ef it's de las' ac'.”

Ole Porkypine jess laugh, an' laugh, an' laugh, an' wid dat Li'l Black Rabbit make pass at 'im wid 'is big stick, but Porkypine too quick fer 'im, an pop 'is head back safe in de hole.

Li'l Black Rabbit sort o' grin out of de

## THE PORCUPINE

lef' side of 'is mouf, an' chase 'isself right quick 'roun' to de front do', an' down dat hole he dump all de termater can of tumble-bugs, an' roll a big rock in de hole. 'N'en Li'l Black Rabbit run to de back do'. He spit on 'is han's, an' take good grip on de big stout stick, an' wait fer what he know gwine come out. He know somethin' gwine come, an' come right quick, when de tumble-bugs start a-pinchin'.

Purty soon he hear Ole Porkypine jess a-scoldin', 'n'en he hear 'im jess a-cussin', an' d'rec'ly out come Ole Prickly Bristly Porkypine all cover over wid tumble-bugs.

Li'l Black Rabbit ready for 'im, an'—BLAM! He took 'im 'longside de head, an' Porkypine drop down like he fas' 'sleep. When he wake up Li'l Black Rabbit done finish de job, an' all Porkypine got on 'is back is jess big bunch tumble-bugs; ain't nary bristle lef' on his whole body.

It doan' pay none of de nabers to git gay

## LITTLE BLACK RABBIT

wid Li'l Black Rabbit, but it 'pears like Ole Porkypine was de las' one to fin' it out, an' he had to stay hid in 'is hole fer a long time afore he could walk 'long de road widout scandalizin' de naberhood.



## VII

### LITTLE BLACK RABBIT HELPS BRER B'AR

**W**HEN enny of de nabers gits in trouble dey comes hot-foot fer Li'l Black Rabbit. Ef de chillun git a colic, Li'l Black Rabbit gotta physic 'em. Ef de cows gits stuck in de mud, Li'l Black Rabbit gotta show how to get 'em out. Li'l Black Rabbit mighty good-natured 'bout it, an' ain't nary one he turn 'way from de do' sence 'im and Mollie Cottontail settle down in de naberhood.

One night he wuz settin' on de do'-step smokin' 'is big black seegar, an' studyin' 'bout de craps, when Brer B'ar come by jess a-fussin' an' a-carryin' on.

“Hi! Brer B'ar,” says Li'l Black Rabbit. “Is you gwine somewhars, er is you comin' back?”

“Ain't gwine nowhars, Black Rabbit,”

## LITTLE BLACK RABBIT

says Brer B'ar, "an' ain't comin' back. I'se here, an' I'se in a heap o' trouble."

"'Tain't nuthin'," says Li'l Black Rabbit. "Done been raised on trouble; been in trouble sence I wuz knee-high to a grass-hopper, an' I'se gettin' sort o' used to it by dis time. What special kin' of trouble you got?"

"Gotta heap o' trouble, Black Rabbit, gotta heap o' trouble, an' de wust one is dat my well done gone dry, an' dere ain't no water fer de cows, an' de chillun all tuck sick, an' my ole woman slip on a rock an' bus' 'er head wide open."

"Dat's a-plenty, Brer B'ar, doan' tell me no mo' till you gits de firs' one fix. Ef de well gone dry, you kin tote de water from dis yere spring, an' you kin dig 'nuther well."

"How I gwine dig 'nuther well, Black Rabbit, when my han's burn to de bone, tell me dat?"

## BRER B'AR GETS HELP

“How you burn you’ han’s?” says Li’l Black Rabbit.

“Burn my han’s tryin’ fer to save de cows when de barn burn down.”

“Quit it,” says Li’l Black Rabbit; “quit dat tellin’ me so many troubles all at onc’t. Ef you’ han’s burn, me an’ de chillun gwine dig de well, an’ Mollie Cottontail she come over an’ nuss de sick, an’ de nabers dey all come an’ buil’ de new barn. Now we got dat all fix; when you want de well dug?”

“Right off, quick, please sir,” says Brer B’ar. “Jess ez quick ez you kin, Black Rabbit, kaze de cows ain’t got nuthin’ to drink.”

So off Brer B’ar puts fer home, an’ de nex’ mornin’, bright an’ early, up jump Li’l Black Rabbit an’ holler fer:

Billie Pink-Eye,  
An’ Johnnie Jump-Up,  
An’ Dottie Dimple-Nose,  
An’ Timmie Tiny-Toes,

## LITTLE BLACK RABBIT

An' Slim Jimmie,

An' all de chillun what ain't got no names, dey wuz so new.

'N'en he tell dem to eat dere breakfuss right quick, kaze dey all gotta heap o' work to do afore de sun go down.

Li'l Black Rabbit gobble up some carrots, an' some turnips, an' some cabbage, an' chase 'isself 'cross de meadow, down de hill, an' th'oo de big wood, till he come to de swamp where de witch-hazel grows at. He pick 'im out a piece o' witch-hazel dat bend nice an' easy-like, an' what gotta crotch like de li'l boy's nigger-shooters. When he git back home he hunt up de almanac what tells when it's de light of de moon, an' when it's de dark of de moon. Li'l Black Rabbit know dat ef you cuts trees in de light of de moon, de planks ain't never gwine stay straight, but gwine twis' an' curl an' be no good. He know de tree has to be cut in de dark of de moon. An' he know ef you wants

## BRER B'AR GETS HELP

to fin' water when you dig a well you gotta dig in de light of de moon, kaze de water rise in de light of de moon an' fall in de dark of de moon.

De almanac say it de light of de moon right now, an' so Li'l Black Rabbit holler fer all de chillun, an' off dey start fer Brer B'ar's place.

When de rabbit family gits to Brer B'ar's place, all de nabers stan'in' 'roun', kaze somebody carry de word dat Li'l Black Rabbit gwine use de witch-hazel an' dig a well fer Brer B'ar, an' dey wants to see how de witch-hazel work fer Li'l Black Rabbit. 'Tain't ev'ybody ez kin use de witch-hazel.

Sho' 'nuff Li'l Black Rabbit got de witch-hazel p'inter, an' de nabers all crowd in close ez dey kin.

“Stan' back, you-all,” says Li'l Black Rabbit; “stan' back an' gimme plenty air, an' plenty room, kaze when de witch-hazel workin' good I'se gotta travel fas'.”

## LITTLE BLACK RABBIT

'N'en Li'l Black Rabbit spit on 'is han's, an' take one en' of 'de crotch in 'is lef' han', an' one en' of de crotch in 'is right han', an' begin to git ready to start.

You allus gotta say de magic words when you starts to use de witch-hazel, an' Li'l Black Rabbit he ain't fergit, an' he say:

“Water, water in de groun’,  
Tell me whar you kin be foun’.  
Ain’t no use to play no trick,  
Kaze I got a hazel stick.  
Hazel stick it got to tell  
Whar I gwine to dig de well.”

When Li'l Black Rabbit finish de magic words, he start lookin' 'roun' fer de like-liest place to strike de water. He walk, an' he stop, an' he stop, an' he walk, so he kin give de witch-hazel p'inter right good chance fer to do de work. When Li'l Black Rabbit ain't run on no water, he gits sort o' 'scouraged, an' he say to Brer B'ar:

## BRER B'AR GETS HELP

“Has de water all done run off dis yere plantation, er does you reckon dis witch-hazel p'inter all dried up an' ain't no good nohow?”

“I did hear,” says Brer B'ar, “dat whar de witch-hazel p'inter ain't workin' good, ef you grease it wid a piece o' fat meat, it sure git busy. I ain't never seen no one try it, but dat's what my ole Mammy says.”

Li'l Black Rabbit say he take a chance, an' he grease de witch-hazel p'inter right good an' start out ag'in. An' he ain't fer-got to say de magic words when he start, nuther.

Sho' 'nuff, when he come to a likely spot right by de ole scaly-bark tree, de witch-hazel p'inter begin to turn itself to de groun'.

Brer Fox he holler out: “I seen it move, Black Rabbit.”

An' Brer B'ar he holler out: “It's a-workin', Black Rabbit, it's a-workin'.”

## LITTLE BLACK RABBIT

An' all de nabers dey sets up a cheer for Li'l Black Rabbit.

Li'l Black Rabbit hole up 'is han's fer less noise, an' he say:

“Right yere de place whar we gwine dig de well, an' right yere de place whar we gwine fin' de bestes' stream o' water what ennybody got in de whole naberhood.”

'N'en he call all de chillun, an' dey sets to work an' make de dirt fly, like dey wuz diggin' fer a pot o' gole.

'Bout sundown Billie Pink-Eye holler up: “Gittin' close, Black Rabbit, de groun' all damp.”

An' L'il Black Rabbit holler back: “Keep a-diggin', Billie Pink-Eye, keep a-diggin'.”

Johnnie Jump-Up holler up: “Gittin' closer, Black Rabbit, I'se standin' in mud.”

An' Li'l Black Rabbit holler back: “Keep a-diggin', Johnnie Jump-Up, keep a-diggin'.”



## BRER B'AR GETS HELP

'N'en Dottie Dimple-Nose holler up: "Gittin' right close, Black Rabbit, de water up to my knees."

Li'l Black Rabbit holler back: "Keep a-diggin', Dottie Dimple-Nose, keep a-diggin'."

'N'en Timmy Tiny-Toes holler up: "De water up to my wais', Black Rabbit, an' I'se comin' out."

An' wid dat up dey all come out 'cep'in' Slim Jimmie.

'N'en Li'l Black Rabbit he holler down: "How you makin' it down dere, Slim Jimmie?"

An' Slim Jimmie he holler back: "De levee done bus' down yere, Black Rabbit, an' yere I come a-ridin' on de high water."

An' wid dat de water done riz to de top of de well, an' Slim Jimmie paddlin' 'roun', like li'l ole puppy-dog what can't swim good.

Dey pulls Slim Jimmie out an' dry 'im

## LITTLE BLACK RABBIT

off by de big fire, an' jess ez Li'l Black Rabbit say, dat wuz de bestes' stream o' water what ennybody got in de whole naberhood, an' de well ain't gone dry to dis day.

## VIII

### OLD JIM CROW MAKES A MISTAKE

**S**EEMS like Brer Fox done forgot all 'bout Li'l Black Rabbit, sence de time he met up wid Ole Prickly Bristly Porkypine, an' had to run to Li'l Black Rabbit fer to get all dem porkypine bristles pulled out o' 'is hide.

Li'l Black Rabbit sort o' miss Brer Fox, kaze he like 'is company, an' he like to play checkers wid 'im, an' Brer Fox de onliest one in de whole naberhood what kin give 'im a game.

Li'l Black Rabbit jess tellin' Mollie Cottontail dat he believe he'll stroll out, an' see how Brer Fox makin' it out at de new place whar he done moved to, an' he ain't hardly got de words out of 'is mouf when in come Brer Fox.

“Hi! Brer Fox,” says Li'l Black Rab-

## LITTLE BLACK RABBIT

bit. "Won't you res' you' hat an' coat an' jine me in a glass o' cider?"

"Cider certainly would taste good," says Brer Fox, an' he take off 'is hat, an' shuck 'is coat, an' draw a cheer up 'longside de fire wid Li'l Black Rabbit like he gwine spen' de evenin'.

"How you-all makin' out, Brer Fox?" says Li'l Black Rabbit, while he gittin' de glasses an' pourin' out de cider.

"Poorly, mighty poorly, Black Rabbit. Ole Jim Crow got me pestered mos' to death. Dat black rascal jess foller me 'roun', an' foller me 'roun', an' fas' ez I kin git de corn planted, he come 'long an' scratch it up. I'se plumb wore out, dat's what I is. Ain't gwine raise no crap nohow, an' if I doan' raise no crap de cows gwine die; an' ef de cows die, ain't gwine have no milk; an' ef I doan' git no milk de chillun gwine starve to death; an' ef de chillun starve to death, my ole woman she——"

## JIM CROW'S MISTAKE

“Hole on, Brer Fox, hole on, fer de Lawd sake, you’ trouble gittin’ wusser ev’y minit. De firs’ thing you gotta do is git shet of Ole Jim Crow.”

“How I gwine git shet of dat scoun’rel? I’s done tried hollerin’ at ’im, an’ beggin’ ’im, an’ coaxin’ ’im, an’ cussin’ ’im, an’ chuckin’ rocks at ’im, an’ shootin’ at ’im, an’ I done tried trappin’ ’im, but he jess set an’ laugh at me, an’ say, ‘’Tain’t nuthin’.’”

“What you gwine do nex’, Brer Fox?” says Li’l Black Rabbit.

“Dat’s what I come to ax you, Black Rabbit, what I gwine do nex’. Now, you got de mostes’ sense of ennybody what live in de naberhood, you tell me what I gwine do nex’.”

Li’l Black Rabbit study fer minit, an’ he say: “Offer reward, Brer Fox, fer de man what kin git shet of Ole Jim Crow. Offer a good reward, an’ somebody gwine git it.”

Brer Fox he ’low dat good idee, an’ he

## LITTLE BLACK RABBIT

say he give ennybody share of de crap what kin drive off Jim Crow.

“How much share?” says Li'l Black Rabbit.

Brer Fox 'low he 'vide de crap in five parts, an' give one of dem.

“'Tain't 'nuff,” says Li'l Black Rabbit.

Brer Fox 'low he 'vide de crap in three parts an' give one of dem.

“'Tain't 'nuff,” says Li'l Black Rabbit.

Brer Fox 'low he split de crap even, ef ennyone kin drive off Ole Jim Crow.

“Dat's a-plenty,” says Li'l Black Rabbit; “an' ef you' lookin' fer de man what gwine drive off Jim Crow, look right yere, Brer Fox, kaze yere he is.” Brer Fox made de barg'in, an' he gotta stick to it.

'N'en Li'l Black Rabbit tell Brer Fox fer to pick out a measure of de bestes', whites' corn what he got, an' save it till he come. Brer Fox trot off home, an' Li'l Black Rabbit amble off to bed.



DE FIRS' PERSON HE SEE IS OLE JIM CROW.





## JIM CROW'S MISTAKE

Nex' mornin' bright an' early, Li'l Black Rabbit hunt up de white gloves what he allus wear to de funerals, an' sharpen up 'is knife, an' take 'isself off to de big swamp where de poison ivy grows at. He cut a big stem of poison ivy, but he mighty keerful to put on de gloves afore he touch de poison ivy. He drag de stem of ivy off home, an' build big fire, an' put on de big kettle full of water, 'n'en he cut de stem of ivy all up in li'l pieces, an' th'ow 'em in de b'ilin' water, jess like he gwine make ole-fashion stew.

Bimeby de juice all stew out of de ivy stems, an' de water all bile down, an' he set de kettle on one side to cool. When de juice cool 'nuff, he pour it in de bottle what he got, an' put off fer Brer Fox place, lippity, lippity, lippity, chucklin' 'way to 'isself like he got Ole Jim Crow done beat a'ready. Whiles he joggin' 'long he run 'cross Blue-Jay.

## LITTLE BLACK RABBIT

“Hi! Blue-Jay,” says Li'l Black Rabbit.

“Hi! Black Rabbit,” says Blue-Jay.

Blue-Jay spy de neck of de bottle stickin' out Li'l Black Rabbit's pocket, an' he 'low maybe he kin work Li'l Black Rabbit fer a dram of licker.

“Jess a minit, Black Rabbit, please sir,” says Blue-Jay. “I'se got such a misery in my side, I kin hardly lif' my lef' wing. Ain't you got somethin' you kin gimme to stop de pain, Black Rabbit?”

“You fly mighty spry when I see you,” says Li'l Black Rabbit.

“An' I got such a cramp in my lef' leg dat I kin hardly hole on de tree,” says Blue-Jay.

“Den I reckon you have to set on de groun',” says Li'l Black Rabbit.

Blue-Jay see he ain't gwine git no dram from Li'l Black Rabbit, an' he git sort o' peevish.

## JIM CROW'S MISTAKE

“Sho’ are a mean man, Black Rabbit; yere I is, kin hardly see out of my lef’ eye, an’ you won’t do nuthin’ fer to help me.”

Li’l Black Rabbit he sort o’ laugh, kaze he know Blue-Jay jess puttin’ on, an’ he say: “What I got in dis yere bottle ain’t no eye-wash, Blue-Jay, an’ ain’t no liniment fer to cure no misery in de back, er no cramp in de lef’ leg. Dis yere bottle some-thin’ what gwine make somebody I knows of mighty sick.”

Blue-Jay he fly off, an’ Li’l Black Rabbit keep on to Brer Fox house.

When he come in sight of Brer Fox place, de firs’ person he see is Ole Jim Crow a-settin’ on de fence. Jim Crow jump up an’ flop ’is wings an’ holler out:

“Yere come de doctor, yere come de doctor; got Brer Fox feelin’ mighty sick, an’ it take more dan dis yere doctor to make ’im well.”

Li’l Black Rabbit he pick up a rock to

## LITTLE BLACK RABBIT

chuck at Ole Jim Crow, but Jim Crow jess laugh an' fly up in de tree an' holler back:

“Doctor come a-runnin’,  
An’ he run right quick,  
Doctor come a-runnin’,  
Kaze Ole Fox sick.  
Doctor come a-runnin’,  
Ole Fox in bed,  
You better git busy,  
Kaze de Fox mos’ dead.”

Li'l Black Rabbit fin' Brer Fox all scrunch up in de cheer, like he los' 'is las' fren'.

“Yere I is,” says L'il Black Rabbit. “Ole Jim Crow 'low he got you mighty sick, an' dat I'se de doctor what you done sen' fer. You git de measure of de bestes' white corn what you pick out, an' we see what we kin do wid Ole Jim Crow right quick.”

Li'l Black Rabbit take de measure of corn, an' soak it right good in de poison ivy

## JIM CROW'S MISTAKE

juice what he got, 'n'en he dry it over de fire, an' 'low he ready fer Ole Jim Crow, but Brer Fox gotta come an' plant de corn same ez usual, kaze Ole Jim Crow mighty s'picious person.

Brer Fox he plant de corn, an' Li'l Black Rabbit stan' by de fence an' make out like he tryin' to skeer Ole Jim Crow off. Li'l Black Rabbit run to one en' of de lot, an' Jim Crow fly t'udder en'; Li'l Black Rabbit run to dat en', Jim Crow fly t'udder en'.

Li'l Black Rabbit make out like he plumb wore out, an' Jim Crow start a-scratchin'.

He gobble up de firs' piece of corn so fas' he ain't taste nuthin', de nex' piece of corn taste kind o' funny, but Jim Crow in a hurry, an' he swaller it right quick. De nex' piece of corn he roll 'roun' in 'is mouf, an' it taste so bad he spit it out on de groun'. 'Tain't no use, kaze Ole Jim Crow done been kotch wid de firs' piece of corn what he et.

## LITTLE BLACK RABBIT

Li'l Black Rabbit know he got Ole Jim Crow, an' got 'im good.

“How you like de doctor, Jim Crow? Doan' reckon you steal enny corn out of dis patch no mo'.”

Jim Crow set right still, studyin' Li'l Black Rabbit, an' purty soon he feel 'isself a-swellin' an' a-swellin', kaze de poison juice what Li'l Black Rabbit put in de corn start a-workin'.

Firs' he swell up in 'is lef' eye, 'n'en he swell up in 'is right eye, an' swell up in 'is body, till d'rec'ly he look like one of dese yere balloons what de white folks' boys gits at de State fair, only he's black. He swell, an' he swell, an' he git so big dat all on a sudden he jess bus' wide open. An' when he bus', he bus' so hard ain't nuthin' lef' of Ole Jim Crow 'ceptin' jess two-three black feathers floatin' 'roun' in de wind.

An' dat fall, when de corn git ripe, an' de punkins all turn yaller, Brer Fox ain't fer-

## JIM CROW'S MISTAKE

got what a good fren' Li'l Black Rabbit been to 'im, an' he load up a big wagon, an' carry Li'l Black Rabbit more corn an' punkins dan Li'l Black Rabbit an' all de chillun kin eat in a year.





## IX

### THE BEE-TREE

**D**EM li'l Rabbit chillun plays so hard all day long dat, when night come, seems like dey ought to be mighty glad to slip off to bed easy-like.

But 'tain't so, nossir, boss. Ev'y night Mollie Cottontail gotta chase 'em off to bed. Firs' she try coaxin' 'em, 'n'en she try drivin' 'em, an' finally she start fussin' at 'em. When she start fussin' dey knows dey better go, an' go right quick.

“Ef you chillun doan' git in bed dis minit, I'se gwine skin you. Scat! Every las' one o' you, kaze you-all got to be up bright an' early in de mornin'. I'se gwine to make some rock soup, an' somebody gotta hustle 'roun' an' git me what goes in it.”

When Mollie Cottontail talk dat-a-way all de chillun know she mean it.

## LITTLE BLACK RABBIT

An' Billie Pink-Eye, he hustle off to bed.

An' Johnnie Jump-Up, he hustle off to bed.

An' Dottie Dimple-Nose, she hustle off to bed.

An' Timmie Tiny-Toes, he hustle off to bed.

An' all de chillun what ain't got no names, dey wuz so new, dey hustle off to bed.

Dey all gone 'scusin' Slim Jimmie, an' he slip up jess easy-like, an' climb up in Li'l Black Rabbit's lap, kaze he's de favorite, an' Mollie Cottontail she think he's de beautes' one of de whole lot.

De nex' mornin' bright an' early, Mollie Cottontail roust all de chillun out o' bed, an' hustle 'em off to de white folks' garden fer to git what goes in de rock soup. An' Slim Jimmie she sen' down to de big brook to fetch a big roun' white stone.

Bimeby here dey come:

## THE BEE-TREE

Billie Pink-Eye, he got head o' cabbage under each arm.

Johnnie Jump-Up, he got a big bunch o' carrots.

Dottie Dimple-Nose, she got armful o' turnips.

Timmie Tiny-Toes, he got a mess o' onions.

An' all de chillun what ain't got no names, dey all got armful o' somethin'.

"Lawd, have mercy!" says Mollie Cottontail. "I done fergot de four-leaf clovers fer to season de soup. Billie Pink-Eye, you run down in de meadow right quick, an' hunt 'roun' till you fin' me a han'ful of four-leaf clovers."

'N'en Mollie Cottontail wash off de big 'roun' white stone right good an' put it in de big kettle what she got settin' on de fire full o' hot water. When de water b'ilin' good, she put in de carrots, an' de turnips, an' de onions, an' de truck what de chillun

## LITTLE BLACK RABBIT

what ain't got no names done brung. 'N'en she put in big chunk o' meat, an' she let de whole mess bile, an' bile, an' bile, till it git good an' done.

'Bout de time de soup bile a-plenty, in come Billie Pink-Eye wid de four-leaf clovers, an' when Mollie Cottontail git de soup season right, it ready to dish out.

Billie Pink-Eye got 'im a tin bucket, an' stan' ready fer 'is share.

An Johnnie Jump-Up he ready fer 'is share.

An' Dottie Dimple-Nose, she ready fer her share.

An' Timmie Tiny-Toes, an' Slim Jimmie, an' all de chillun what ain't got no names, dey all ready fer dere share.

When all de chillun been help, an' Li'l Black Rabbit an' Mollie Cottontail et what dey want, ain't nary drap of soup lef' in de kettle, only big roun' white stone down in de bottom, an' nobody ain't know to dis day



BRER B'AR LOOK ALL 'ROUN' AND SNIFF.



## THE BEE-TREE

why Mollie Cottontail got to start wid big roun' white stone—but dat's de secret, an' so 'tis.

Ennyhow, Li'l Black Rabbit 'low dat it mighty good soup, but he gotta go an' ketch 'im a mess o' fish fer supper, so off he puts, lippity, lippity, lippity, down de meadow, an' th'oo de wood, till he come to de big swamp.

While he studyin' whar de likeliest place fer de fish, somethin' come a-buzzin'—“B-z-z-z-z, B-z-z-z-z—ZIP!” An' when it say “Zip,” somethin' sting 'im on de lef' ear, an' somethin' sting 'im on de right ear, an' what you s'pose it wuz? It wuz little Ole Honey-Bee.

Now Honey-Bee doan' sting wid 'is mouf, an' doan' sting wid 'is leg, an' doan' sting wid 'is wings; he stings wid 'is tail, an' he sure can sting.

Li'l Black Rabbit's ears begin to hurt right bad, an' begin to swell up right bad,

## LITTLE BLACK RABBIT

an' off he puts to git 'im some mud. Mud is de bestes' thing what a rabbit knows to take out de pain when he gits hurt.

Dere he wuz a-settin' in de mud-bath an' a-plasterin' 'is ears wid mud, when 'long come Ole Sis Cow. When she see dem great big ears what Li'l Black Rabbit got stickin' out o' de mud, she think fer sure Ole Man Mule got bogged down in de swamp an' fixin' to drown, so off she puts fer help. While she gone, yere come Ole Gruntin' Pig, an' he think Ole Man Mule been took wid a fit, an' fall in de swamp an' can't git out, an' off he puts fer help.

Den yere come 'long Ole Brer B'ar.

“Hi! Black Rabbit,” says Brer B'ar—you see Brer B'ar got mighty sharp eyes, an' he knowed it wuz Li'l Black Rabbit jess ez soon ez he puts 'is eye on 'im. “Is you doin' dis on a bet, or is you takin' mud-baths fer you' rheumatism?”

“Hi! Brer B'ar,” says Li'l Black Rab-



## THE BEE-TREE

bit. "Nossir, I ain't doin' dis on no bet, an' I ain't doin' dis fer no rheumatism; I'se jess a-doin' it kaze it feels good on my ears. Dat mis'able Ole Honey Bee done stung me on bofe of 'em, an' de mud takin' de swellin' down. Yere I is an' yere I stays till dem ears feels like dey belongs to me."

Whiles dey settin' talkin', yere come Sis Cow wid Ole Man Bull an' all de little heifers, an' yere come Ole Gruntin' Pig wid Mis' Sow an' all de piggy-wigs fer to help Ole Man Mule.

When dey see fer sho' 'twas Li'l Black Rabbit, dey all roll over on de groun' an' laugh, an' laugh, an' laugh. Li'l Black Rabbit he can't stan' fer nobody to laugh at 'im, an' off 'im an' Brer B'ar puts th'oo de bushes lickety split, like dey gwine to a fire.

Bimeby dey come to de place whar Li'l Black Rabbit been stung at.

"Yere it is," says Li'l Black Rabbit, "yere's de ve'y identicul place whar I wuz

## LITTLE BLACK RABBIT

settin' when dat triffin', no-'count Honey-Bee light on my ear."

Brer B'ar look all 'roun' an' sniff, an' sniff, an' sniff. "Seems like I smell honey," says Brer B'ar, an' wid dat he sniff some more. D'rec'ly Li'l Black Rabbit spy de big roun' hole in de top of a black gum-tree, an' he notice de bees a-flyin' in an' out of de hole, an' a-buzzin', an' a-hustlin' 'roun', like de niggers in a cotton patch when de boss man watchin'.

"Lawd have mercy! Brer B'ar," sing out Li'l Black Rabbit. "Yere a sho'-'nuff bee-tree." An' he p'int out de hole to Brer B'ar. 'N'en dey bofe keep right still, an' listen kin dey hear de workin' song what de honey-bees sing in ev'y bee-tree when dey makin' honey:

"Work all day,  
Never kin play,  
Storin' up honey,  
Kaze we built dat way."

## THE BEE-TREE

When dey hears de song dey know fer certain dat it a real, sho'-'nuff, honess'-to-goodness bee-tree, all chock full of honey. Off dey puts fer home, Li'l Black Rabbit to call all 'is chillun, an' Brer B'ar to git de big wash-boiler to ketch de honey.

By de time Brer B'ar gits back, Li'l Black Rabbit got all de chillun makin' swamp-fire to smoke out de bees, kaze smoke make de bees sleepy, an' dey can't sting when dey sleepy. Ev'ybody know rabbits can't climb trees, an' so Brer B'ar had to climb de tree an' scoop out de honey.

When de honey been scoop out, an' Brer B'ar git back safe to de groun', widout up-settin' de wash-boiler, de question come up how dey gwine 'vide de honey. Li'l Black Rabbit want de mos', kaze he been stung on bofe 'is ears, an' he foun' de bee-tree in de firs' place; Brer B'ar he want de mos', kaze it 'is wash-boiler, an' he done de climbin' an' de sniffin' in de secon' place.

## LITTLE BLACK RABBIT

Whiles dey 'sputin', yere comes Blue-Jay.

"Hi! Black Rabbit," says Blue-Jay.

"Hi! Blue-Jay," says Li'l Black Rabbit. "You jess in time to settle de question." So dey tell Blue-Jay de question, an' he 'cide dat de bes' way is fer Li'l Black Rabbit to take all de honey an' put it in 'is spring-house to keep cool; 'n'en fer Li'l Black Rabbit to have a party, an' invite all de nabers, an' use de honey on de prize waffles what only Mollie Cottontail kin make. Dey 'gree dat's de fines' way, an' dey fix de day, an' Li'l Black Rabbit an' de chillun tote off de honey an' put it in de spring-house.

When de big day come, an' all de nabers settin' 'roun' de table wid Brer B'ar at de head, in come Billie Pink-Eye wid a big plate full of smokin' hot waffles.

'N'en Billie Pink-Eye he start on de lef' side of de table, an' pass de waffles to all de nabers; an' de waffles las' till he come to

## THE BEE-TREE

Brer Wolf, what sit nex' to Brer B'ar, an' Brer Wolf he got de las' waffle, an' Brer B'ar gotta wait till de nex' time.

'N'en Billie Pink-Eye start on de right side of de table, an' pass de waffles to all de nabers, an' de waffles las' till he come to Brer Fox, what sit nex' to Brer B'ar, an' Brer Fox he got de las' waffle, an' Brer B'ar gotta wait till de nex' time.

An' so it go till Brer B'ar he set up a howl dat de waffles runs out jess when dey gits to 'im, an' he ain't had nary waffle yit.

Li'l Black Rabbit he holler fer Mollie Cottontail to fix up a nice big plate special fer Brer B'ar, an' sen' 'em in right quick.

So in come Billie Pink-Eye wid a big plate special for Brer B'ar, an' what you s'pose? By de time Brer B'ar git de waffles de nabers done et up all de honey, an' all dat's lef' is jess de smell what stay in de pitcher, an' de smell mighty poor eatin' fer a man what's ez hungry ez ole Brer B'ar.



## X

### THE BIG BARBECUE

**A**RTER Mollie Cottontail gits all de chillun to bed dese summer nights, her an' Li'l Black Rabbit used to sit out under de big bush in de cool of de evenin', an' figger 'bout de chillun.

“Mos' on 'em bad,” says Li'l Black Rabbit, “an' de res' wusser.”

“'Tain't so,” says Mollie Cottontail; “ain't no wusser dan you an' Jimmie Coon when you wuz li'l. Ev'y bit of debbilment in de whole naberhood you two wuz up to. You an' 'im done got over it, an' I reckon our chillun gwine git over it, ef you give 'em time.”

Li'l Black Rabbit sort o' yawn, an' 'low mebbe dat's so, when in de gate yere come Ole Brer Bullfrog wid two hops an' a jump. Ef you ever notice a bullfrog, dat's de way

## LITTLE BLACK RABBIT

he travel, two hops an' a jump, an' ef he keeps on long 'nuff, he boun' to git whar he's gwine.

“Hi! Brer Bullfrog,” says Li'l Black Rabbit.

“Hi! Black Rabbit,” says Brer Bullfrog; an' wid dat he jump up on li'l ole stool what Li'l Black Rabbit keeps by de fire fer to put 'is feets on.

“What you doin' out dis time o' night?” says Li'l Black Rabbit.

“Jess p'rambulatin' 'roun', Black Rabbit,” says Brer Bullfrog, usin' big words like he allus does. 'N'en dey talks 'bout de weather, an' dey talks 'bout de craps, an' dey talks 'bout mos' ev-ythin', 'cep'in' what Brer Bullfrog really got on 'is min'.

Brer Bullfrog say he gotta hop along home, kaze Mis' Bullfrog waitin' up fer 'im, an' he sort o' clear 'is th'oat; he doan' say “Er-hum,” like de res' of de folks; he say “Jigger-jigger-room,” jess like dat. He



## THE BIG BARBECUE

sort o' clear 'is th' oat an' he say: "Mos' fergot to tell you, Black Rabbit, dat we gwine to have a bobbycue nex' week, an' we like mighty well to have you jine de party." Li'l Black Rabbit say dat soun' mighty good to 'im, an' how much de invite gwine cos' 'im. Jess what Brer Bullfrog been leadin' up to, an' he 'low Brer B'ar done give dollar, an' Brer Fox give six bits, an' Brer Coon give fo' bits, an' de res' give what dey could.

Li'l Black Rabbit say he give fo' bits, jess like Brer Coon, kaze 'im an' Brer Coon dey are sort o' partners, an' dey allus go fishin' togedder.

When de big day come fer de bobbycue, all de animals wuz dere, 'scusin' Brer Turkey-Buzzard, what ain't been axed, an' Ole Man Skunk, what ain't been axed, kaze none of de animals ain't willin' to set 'long-side 'em. Dese two ain't had no invite to de bobbycue.

## LITTLE BLACK RABBIT

De judge sets up on de big platform an' 'low dere's gwine be a prize fer de fas'es' man in de runnin' race, an' a prize fer de man what gits th'oo firs' in de pertater race, an' a prize fer de stronges' man in de pullin' match.

Brer Fox he 'low dey ain't nary one kin run ez fas' ez he kin.

Brer Coon he 'low dey ain't nary one kin pick up de pertaters ez quick ez he kin.

Brer B'ar he 'low dey ain't nary one kin pull ez hard ez he kin.

Li'l Black Rabbit ain't open 'is mouf to nobody.

When it come time fer de runnin' race, ev'ybody done back out kaze dey skeered of Brer Fox. De judge 'low he has to give de prize to Brer Fox, kaze nobody run 'gainst 'im. 'N'en Li'l Black Rabbit he holler out: "Jess a minit, Mister Judge! Please sir! I ain't feelin' right smart dis mornin', an' I got a misery in bofe my legs, but I ain't



NARY ONE KIN RUN EZ FAS' EZ HE KIN.



## THE BIG BARBECUE

gwine to let Brer Fox have a walk-over. Ef you hole de race jess a minit till I gits on my runnin' shoes, I gwine to give Brer Fox work-out ennyhow."

Li'l Black Rabbit gits on 'is runnin' shoes, an' Brer Fox gits on 'is runnin' shoes, an' dey git on de line ready fer de race.

"Is you ready?" says de judge.

"Jess a minit," says Li'l Black Rabbit; "my shoestring done come untie."

Li'l Black Rabbit reach down like he gwine tie 'is shoestring, an' when ain't nobody lookin', he drap two of dese yere li'l ole dry peas in Brer Fox shoe. Brer Fox he jumpin' 'roun' all de time so fas' he doan' notice nuthin'.

De judge shoot de pistol, an' off dey put like de houn' dogs arter 'em.

Brer Fox he light out like he gwine lose Li'l Black Rabbit firs' turn out of de box, but Li'l Black Rabbit keep a-pluggin' 'long.

## LITTLE BLACK RABBIT

Brer Fox begin to feel de peas what Li'l Black Rabbit put in 'is shoe, an' he slow down fer to git 'em out, but he can't stop kaze yere come Li'l Black Rabbit a-pluggin' 'long.

Bimeby de peas make Brer Fox foot right sore, but he doan' dast set down an' git de peas out, kaze yere come Li'l Black Rabbit jess a-pluggin' 'long. Brer Fox foot hurt 'im so bad, he gotta hop on three legs, an' when Li'l Black Rabbit see dat, yere he come jess a-zoomin', an' de upshot wuz dat Li'l Black Rabbit win de prize, an' Brer Fox los' de title of champion.

Brer Coon he get a s'picion dat Li'l Black Rabbit been up to some of 'is tricks, an' de race ain't on de square, kaze he know Li'l Black Rabbit well, an' he know he right tricky man.

Brer Coon, he 'low to 'isself dere ain't nobody gwine win de pertater race but 'im, an' ef dey any tricks gwine be played, he

## THE BIG BARBECUE

gwine play 'em firs'. He sneak off in de woods, where de pertaters been put ready fer de race; an' when nobody lookin', Brer Coon git some butter an' grease all de pertaters right slick. Ev'ybody what got long, sharp claws kin hole de pertaters, an' dem de kin' of claws what Brer Coon got. Ev'ybody what got short, dull claws can't git no hole on de pertaters, an' dem de kin' of claws what Brer Wolf an' Li'l Black Rabbit got. What you s'pose Li'l Black Rabbit doin' all dis time? He know Brer Coon, jess like Brer Coon know Li'l Black Rabbit; an' all de time Brer Coon greasin' de pertaters, Li'l Black Rabbit lyin' in de bushes watchin' on 'im. 'N'en Li'l Black Rabbit look all 'roun' in de woods till he fin' ole pitch-pine tree, an' he smear 'is han's all over wid de sticky pitch-pine gum, an' jess saunter back easy-like to de judge's stan'.

De judge 'nounce de pertater race, an'

## LITTLE BLACK RABBIT

Brer Coon he holler out he gwine run, an' Brer Wolf he 'low he gwine run, an' Li'l Black Rabbit 'low he gwine run, ef only to keep Brer Wolf company.

When de judge say "Go!" Brer Wolf start off wid a big jump an' reach down right quick to grab a pertater. Pertater all slick wid grease an' slip clean out of Brer Wolf's han'. Brer Wolf try to grab pertater wid udder han', an' pertater slip an' slide out of de udder han'. Brer Wolf look at 'is han's, an' 'n'en he smell 'is han's, an' he see dat de pertaters all smear wid butter, an' he know he ain't got no chance fer to win de race, kaze somebody been playin' tricks.

Brer Wolf got plenty sense, he has, an' he quit right den an' dere, an' set down to enjoy de fun.

Brer Coon do purty good at firs', but d'rec'ly 'is han's get so slickery he can't hole de pertater long 'nuff to git 'is long,



## THE BIG BARBECUE

sharp claws in it, an' he keep gittin' slower an' slower.

Li'l Black Rabbit he doin' fine, de pitch-pine gum stick fas' to de pertater like houn' dog to a ole ham-bone, an' de upshot of de race wuz dat Li'l Black Rabbit win de prize, an' Brer Coon los' de title of champion.

De nex' thing what de judge 'nounce is de pullin' match.

Brer B'ar he ac' like he got de match done won, kaze he doan' reckon nobody gwine pull 'gainst 'im. He 'low he jess ez strong dis year ez he allus been.

He jess fixin' to tell de judge he kin give 'im de prize, when Li'l Black Rabbit holler out:

“Jess a minit, 'Mister Judge! Please sir! My feets all sore from de race wid Brer Fox, an' my han's all sore from de race wid Brer Coon, but ef you'll let me set down on de groun', an' put de rope 'tween

## LITTLE BLACK RABBIT

my knees, I'se willin' to let all de nabers see how hard Brer B'ar kin pull."

De judge 'low dat fair 'nuff, an' Brer B'ar say dat 'gree'ble to 'im.

Li'l Black Rabbit squat down on de groun' right quick, an' say ef he kin set right whar he is, he 'preciate it, kaze 'is feet hurts so bad he can't walk a step.

De judge 'low dat fair 'nuff, an' Brer B'ar say dat 'gree'ble to 'im.

"Th'ow me de rope, please, Mister Judge," says Li'l Black Rabbit. "My back hurts so bad, ef I onc't gits up can't never git back down." 'N'en de judge th'ow Li'l Black Rabbit de rope.

"I gotta dig my feets in de groun', Mister Judge." De judge 'low dat fair 'nuff, an' Brer B'ar say dat 'gree'ble to 'im.

Li'l Black Rabbit take 'is en' of de rope 'tween 'is knees, an' Brer B'ar take 'is en' of de rope over 'is shoulder, an' de judge holler out: "Is you ready?"

## THE BIG BARBECUE

“Jess a minit,” says Li'l Black Rabbit. “I'se settin' on li'l ole sharp rock, an' I gotta res' comf'ble, else I can't give Brer B'ar no kin' o' match nohow.”

De judge 'low dat fair 'nuff, an' Brer B'ar say dat 'gree'ble to 'im.

Li'l Black Rabbit fluff out all 'is hair, an' reach 'roun' under 'im, like he scratchin' out li'l ole piece of rock, but all de time he tyin' de rope 'roun' ole cypress root, what he been settin' on. 'N'en de judge holler out: “Is you ready?” an' dey bofe say dey is, an' de judge holler out: “Pull!”

Brer B'ar start to walk 'way wid Li'l Black Rabbit, but de root helt and Li'l Black Rabbit doan' budge. Brer B'ar ties de rope 'roun' 'is neck like ole mule collar, an' pull fer who-laid-de-rail. When Brer B'ar set 'is min' to it, he sure kin pull, an' when he pull, somethin' gotta come.

Li'l Black Rabbit feel de root a-crackin', an' he gotta think quick.

## LITTLE BLACK RABBIT

He spy Ole Turkey-Buzzard, an' he holler out: "Stop 'em! Stop 'em, right quick! Turkey-Buzzard an' Ole Man Skunk messin' up de bobbycue!"

Sho' 'nuff, dere wuz de two of 'em up on de table jess a-goin' it.

Ev'ybody run to drive way Turkey-Buzzard an' Ole Man Skunk. When dey been run clean off, an' de nabers done stop sniffin' 'bout, de judge 'cide dey had to give de prize to Li'l Black Rabbit, kaze Brer B'ar never budged 'im nohow.

So Li'l Black Rabbit get de gole medal, an' Brer B'ar los' de title of champion.

Brer Fox he come up, an' feel de muscles of Li'l Black Rabbit's leg, an' he can't understand' how come Li'l Black Rabbit beat 'im runnin'. An' Brer Coon he come up, an' look at 'is claws, an' he doan' understand' how Li'l Black Rabbit pick up de per-taters so good.

Brer B'ar he come up, an' look Li'l Black

## THE BIG BARBECUE

Rabbit over from top to toe, an' shake 'is head. He know it wuz a trick, but he doan' understan' how Li'l Black Rabbit work it. Brer B'ar never will understan', kaze Li'l Black Rabbit de onliest one what knows, an' he ain't gwine tell.



## XI

### OLD GRANDDADDY PICKEREL

**I**N course, arter Li'l Black Rabbit win de runnin' match from Brer Fox, an' de pertater race from Brer Coon, an' prove dat Brer B'ar couldn' pull enny harder dan he could, he mighty sot up, an' de gole medal what he wear on 'is coat shine out like ole cat's eye on a dark night.

Seems like Li'l Black Rabbit hangin' 'roun' de big store a mighty heap, an' talk-in' 'bout how fas' he kin run, an' how hard he kin pull. Ef enny one only talk long 'nuff, he boun' to git 'is come-upens, an' one day Li'l Black Rabbit like to got his'n.

Brer Coon jess drapped in de big store, on de way home from a fishin' trip, an' he 'low he's de bestes' fisherman in de whole naberhood. Ain't nobody 'spute dat. Den Brer Coon 'low he kin ketch a fish, clean

## LITTLE BLACK RABBIT

'im, cook 'im, an' eat 'im, faster dan enny one in de naberhood. Ain't nobody 'spute dat.

De talk kep' on, till d'rec'ly somebody start talkin' 'bout Ole Grandaddy Pickerel what live down in de big bayou, jess beyon' de railroad bridge.

“Dat sho' is some fish,” says Brer Fox. “I 'member de day when I wuz a little feller, dat big ole fish like to bit me on de toe, an' chase me clean 'cross de bayou. Sho' did cure me of goin' in swimmin' in dat place.”

Brer B'ar 'low dat one day, when he was fishin', Ole Grandaddy Pickerel must of had de itch, kaze he kep' on a-scratchin' 'is back on de boat till he wore all de paint off o' one side. Well, de talk kep' on, till bimeby Brer Coon speak up an' say, “I bet you ain't nobody in de whole naberhood smart 'nuff to ketch dat fish.”

Li'l Black Rabbit was settin' on a keg of



## OLD GRANDADDY PICKEREL

nails, jess a-listenin'; ain't had no part in de talk, jess settin' dere listenin', an' waitin' fer somebody to make it wuth 'is while to ketch dat ole fish. Li'l Black Rabbit know ef de talk keep on somebody gwine let 'is foot slip d'rec'ly.

"How much you bet, Brer Coon?" says he. "Bet you a meal sack of goobers," says Brer Coon. "'Tain't 'nuff," says Li'l Black Rabbit. "Bet a sack of yaller yams," says Brer Coon. "Still 'tain't 'nuff," says Li'l Black Rabbit. "Bet a big barrel sorghum sweet'nin'," says Brer Coon. "Dat's a bet," says Li'l Black Rabbit, an' dey bofe signed de paper, dat ef Li'l Black Rabbit ketches Old Grandaddy Pickerel by de time de moon gits full, Brer Coon gotta pay 'im a big barrel of sorghum sweet'nin'. An' ef Li'l Black Rabbit ain't ketch de fish by de time de moon gits full, he gotta pay Brer Coon de barrel of sweet'nin'. Dat's de way de bet wuz made, an' 'bout de time Li'l

## LITTLE BLACK RABBIT

Black Rabbit cool off a bit, he fin' he got de hardes' job on 'is han's what he ever tackled.

Ain't nobody ever say Li'l Black Rabbit lay down on no job yit, an' so he 'bliged to ketch de fish sho', but he doan' know how he gwine do it. 'Bout de time Li'l Black Rabbit gits back home, he mighty hot from de long walk, an' he set 'isself down in de big cheer, till he kin study out some plan how he gwine ketch Ole Granddaddy Pick-erel, an' win de barrel of sorghum sweet'n-in'.

Li'l Black Rabbit think 'bout de kin' of bait fer to use, an' he figger on hopper-grasses, but he 'cide dem ain't no good. He figger on dem big white squashy worms wid de brown heads, an' he 'cide dem ain't no good. Dere he set a-turnin', an' a-twistin', an' a-twistin', an' a-turnin', till it come plumb dark, an' he ain't enny nearer 'cidin' on de bait dan when he firs' set down.



AN' HE 'LOW 'HE'S DE BESTES' FISHERMAN.



## OLD GRANDADDY PICKEREL

He smell de corn pones bakin' in de stove, an' he smell de turnip greens a-b'ilin' in de pot, an' gits right hungry. "Hi! Mollie Cottontail, ain't you got de supper mos' ready? Here I sets a-waitin' on you till my stomach 'bout 'cide my th'oat been cut, an' dat I ain't never gwine eat no more, never." Dat's de way Li'l Black Rabbit talk, jess like all de mens folks. When dey wants dere supper dey wants it when dey wants it, an' dat's when dey wants it. Ain't it de troof?

So Mollie Cottontail she wrastle 'roun', an' dish up de supper an' holler fer de chil-lun; an' yere dey all comes jess a-zoomin':

Dere wuz Billie Pink-Eye,  
An' Johnnie Jump-Up,  
An' Dottie Dimple-Nose,  
An' Timmie Tiny-Toes,  
An' Slim Jimmie,  
An' some what ain't got no names, dey  
wuz so new.

## LITTLE BLACK RABBIT

In dey comes an' down dey sets, an', when dey all th'oo, Li'l Black Rabbit lean back in 'is cheer an' look all 'roun' de table.

“You Billie Pink-Eye, you run down to de ice-house an' fetch up de bigges', col'es' watermelon you kin fin', an' do it right quick, kaze all dese chillun ain't gwine give me no peace ef dey doan' have slice of melon to top off de supper.”

Li'l Black Rabbit sure is a funny man, kaze dey ain't nary chillun open 'is mouf 'bout de watermelon. Li'l Black Rabbit is de one what wants it, but he gotta make out it de chillun wants it. Bimeby in come Billie Pink-Eye wid de melon.

“Fer de Lawd sake! Hole dis yere melon, Black Rabbit. My han's mos' froze.”

Li'l Black Rabbit take de melon, an' by de time Mollie Cottontail gits de dishes cleared off, Li'l Black Rabbit han's so cole he ain't got no feelin' in 'em. Li'l Black Rabbit look at 'is han's, an' try fer to

## OLD GRANDADDY PICKEREL

double up 'is fingers, but dey so cole dey stiff like ole p'inter dog's tail when he spy flock of pa'tridges out in a fiel'. He try an' he try, an' finally he kin work de little finger. Den he kin work de big finger, an' by de time he gits de thumbs workin' good, de han's all right. Li'l Black Rabbit et his slice of melon mighty slow, kaze he thinkin' 'bout de stiffness in his fingers from de cole. Bimeby he begin to smile, 'n'en he begin to chuckle, an' d'rec'ly he laughin' so hard he mos' fall off'n de cheer. Sho' wuz thinkin' 'bout Ole Grandaddy Pickerel, an' sho' wuz thinkin' 'bout a big barrel of sorghum sweet'nin' what Brer Coon done bet. Li'l Black Rabbit certain he foun' de way to ketch de fish an' win de bet, but dere's only one way he kin make sho', and dat is try it on. All de nex' mornin' Li'l Black Rabbit snoopin' 'roun' de big bayou, to see kin he fin' de place where Ole Grandaddy Pick-erel sleepin' at.

## LITTLE BLACK RABBIT

He keep on a-snoopin', an' a-lookin', an' a-lookin', an' a-snoopin', till jess 'bout de time fer de dinner horn to blow, he spy Granddaddy Pickerel takin' 'is snooze in de shade of de big cypress tree jess 'bove de bridge. He mark de place good an' careful, an' de nex' day yere come Li'l Black Rabbit pushin' a wheelbarrer all full up wid chunks of ice. Li'l Black Rabbit tie a string on big chunk of ice, an' let it down in de water real easy-like.

Ole Granddaddy Pickerel ain't make a move. He let down 'nuther chunk of ice, an' he let down 'nuther chunk of ice, an' d'rec'ly he got de ice all pile 'roun' Granddaddy Pickerel like he gwine bury him sho' 'nuff.

Ole Pickerel keep gittin' colder an' colder, an' stiffer an' stiffer, an' by de time he get so cole he woke up, he so stiff dat all he kin do is jess wiggle de tip en' of 'is tail. He can't bend to de right, an' he can't bend



## OLD GRANDADDY PICKEREL

to de lef', can't even roll one of dem big eyes of his'n—jess lay dere stiff an' straight, an' wait fer what gwine to happen.

Li'l Black Rabbit see dat Ole Grandaddy Pickerel stiff ez a board, an' him an' Billie Pink-Eye hop in de water right quick, an' de firs' thing Ole Pickerel know, he lyin' in de wheelbarrer, an' Li'l Black Rabbit totin' 'im off to de big store to collec' de bet of a barrel of sorghum sweet'nin', what 'im an' Brer Coon made.



## XII

### THE CHICKEN THIEF

**A**LL de nabers say dat Li'l Black Rabbit jess a natch'ral-born farmer. De watermelons in 'is patch grow de bigges', an' 'is peaches gits ripe de quicke'; but when you come down to de bottom of de whole matter, it mos' generally is de farmer what take de mos' int'res' in 'is farm, what makes de bes' crap.

Li'l Black Rabbit wuz proud of 'is watermelons, an' proud of 'is peaches, but he certainly set a heap o' store by 'is chickens.

He traps all de minks, an' poisons all de rats, an' he tend to dem chickens jess like dey ev'y one 'is own chillun.

He wuz jess fixin' to go to bed one night, when he hear somethin' out in de chicken yard jess a-carryin' on. He holler out: "Oh, Billie Pink-Eye! Run out in de back

## LITTLE BLACK RABBIT

yard, an' see kin you fin' out what makin' all dat noise. Soun' like some of de nabers fixin' to have fried chicken fer dinner out of my chicken yard."

Up jump Billie Pink-Eye, an' off he put to see what makin' all de racket. In course, when Billie Pink-Eye start off, de res' of de family gotta go, too, de whole kit 'n' barrel of 'em. Dere wuz:

Johnnie Jump-Up, he gotta go.

An' Dottie Dimple-Nose, she gotta go.

An' Timmie Tiny-Toes, he gotta go.

An' Slim Jimmie, he gotta go.

An' all de res' of de chillun, what wuz so new dey ain't got no names, dey gotta go.

Bimeby back come Billie Pink-Eye jess a-prancin'. "Oh, Black Rabbit! Come quick! Come a-runnin'!"

"What all de trouble, Billie Pink-Eye?" says Li'l Black Rabbit.

"You know Ole Dominecker Hen, what got all dem li'l chickens?"

## THE CHICKEN THIEF

“Uh-huh,” said Li’l Black Rabbit.

“Well, de hen what got all dem chickens, *ain’t* got all dem chickens.”

Li’l Black Rabbit turn ‘roun’ in ‘is cheer an’ jess look at Billie Pink-Eye. “What kin’ of talk you call dat, Billie Pink-Eye? ‘De hen what got all dem chickens *ain’t* got all dem chickens.’ Dat doan’ mean nuthin’ to me.”

’N’en Billie Pink-Eye say he tryin’ fer to tell Li’l Black Rabbit dat somebody done stole all dem chickens, an’ ain’t nary one of ‘em lef’ nowhars.

Li’l Black Rabbit sho’ ‘nuff mad when he hear dat, kaze he been raisin’ dem chickens fer ‘is own use. Up he jump an’ grab de double-barrel shotgun what he allus keep handy, an’ off he jump to see what he kin see. He can’t see nuthin’, an’ can’t hear nuthin’, ‘cep’ Ole Dominecker Hen fussin’ ‘roun’ in de coop, callin’ fer dem li’l chickens of hern to come back to bed.

## LITTLE BLACK RABBIT

Li'l Black Rabbit git de lantern, an' look all 'roun' to see kin he fin' any tracks what de thief done lef'. Can't fin' no tracks, an' can't fin' no feathers. Can't fin' nuthin', 'cept' li'l ole mark on de groun' like whar somebody been draggin' ole dead limb.

"Certainly is funny," said Li'l Black Rabbit. "Somebody done steal my li'l chickens, an' ain't lef' no track, an' ain't lef' no feathers. Can't be ole Blinkin' Squintin' Screech-Owl, kaze dey ain't no feathers. Can't be no Skunk, kaze I certainly can smell whar he been. Can't be no Mink, kaze a Mink can't fly, an' dey ain't no prints of 'is feets. 'Tain't nuthin' 'cep' li'l ole scratchin' on de groun'."

Li'l Black Rabbit sets down on a barrel an' begin to study.

"Lawd have mercy!" says Li'l Black Rabbit, "dat's de very feller what done de trick; dat good-fer-nuthin' Ole Black Snake what I been runnin' 'cross out in de



OLE BLACK SNAKE LOOK ALL 'ROUN'.





## THE CHICKEN THIEF

woods. Dat's jess de kin' of track what dat rascal make ev'y place he work. Dat's him sho' 'nuff, an' now I gotta fix up a scheme an' ketch dat scoun'rel or he gwine eat me out o' house an' home."

Li'l Black Rabbit come back in de house, an' set 'isself down in front of de fire, an' begin to study how he gwine trick Ole Black Snake. He purty wise Ole Black Snake, an' he know jess what de bestes' way to ketch chickens an' birds, kaze he been ketchin' 'em all 'is life, an' ain't never done a lick of work nohow. Li'l Black Rabbit git sort o' sleepy, an' purty soon he amble off to bed.

De nex' mornin', bright an' early, up jump all de chillun, an' off dey puts fer de white folks' garden, 'cross de meadow, an' down de lane. Bimeby yere dey come back, all loaded down wid cabbages, an' turnips, an' lettuces, an' yaller yams, an' dey all sets down to breakfuss.

## LITTLE BLACK RABBIT

Arter breakfuss Li'l Black Rabbit start off to de big store, an' bimeby he come back wid somethin' all done up in a paper sack. All mornin' long he jess ez busy ez a bird dog. He fussin' wid dis, an' he foolin' wid dat. He cuttin', an' he slicin', an' he carvin', an' he fixin', till it mos' sundown. 'N'en Li'l Black Rabbit say he gwine quit an' call it a day, kaze he plumb wore out. Must 'a' got de things fixed what he been fixin', kaze all de time he eatin' 'is supper, he sort o' chucklin' to 'isself.

“Oh, Billie Pink-Eye,” says Li'l Black Rabbit when he gits up from de table, “run down to de spring-house right quick an' fetch me good big pan of water.”

When Billie Pink-Eye come back, Li'l Black Rabbit make him carry de pan, an' off dey start to de chicken coop where Ole Dominecker Hen live at. “What you got in de sack?” says Billie Pink-Eye. “Got somethin' in de sack what gwine s'prise dat

## THE CHICKEN THIEF

ole scoun'rel what been stealin' my chickens," says Li'l Black Rabbit.

Li'l Black Rabbit been makin' things what look like li'l chickens. Ain't been makin' 'em out o' clay, an' ain't been makin' 'em out o' wood, an' ain't been makin' 'em out o' stone. Been makin' 'em out o' dried apples. Been cuttin', an' carvin', an' stickin' feathers on 'em, an' got 'em made so good dat when he puts 'em on de groun', it fool Ole Dominecker Hen, an' she start a-cluckin', an' a-scoldin', an' a-fussin', tryin' fer to make dem li'l chickens come in to bed.

Li'l Black Rabbit set all de li'l April Fool chickens 'roun' de coop whar Ole Hen is. He sprinkle 'em all over good wid salt. He set out de big pan of water, an' 'im an' Billie Pink-Eye hide behin' de bushes to see what gwine happen.

Dey wait, an' dey watch, an' dey watch, an' dey wait, till long 'bout twelve o'clock

## LITTLE BLACK RABBIT

yere come somethin' black slippin' 'long easy-like, in de moonlight. Sho' 'nuff, it wuz Ole Black Snake fixin' to git 'im some more chickens, while de gittin's good. He see all de li'l things settin' on de groun' right by de coop, an' dey looks like sho'-'nuff chickens to 'im. Ole Black Snake look all 'roun' dis side, an' look all 'roun' dat side, an' can't see nuthin', an' can't hear nuthin'.

He coil 'isself all up comf'ble like, an' reach out, an' afore you kin say "Scat!" to a jay-bird, he got all dem li'l chickens tucked 'way in 'is insides. He eat 'em so fas', he ain't taste nuthin' 'cep' feathers, but d'rec'ly de salt, what Li'l Black Rabbit put on de chickens, start a-workin', an' Black Snake git mighty thirsty. He look all 'roun' an' finally he spy de pan of water. "Dat's jess de very thing I wants," he says, an' he doan' stop drinkin' till he drink de pan plumb dry.

## THE CHICKEN THIEF

Ev'ybody knows dat when you puts water on dried apples, dey start a-swellin' right off quick. Dat's de way dem li'l chickens do, an' de firs' thing Ole Black Snake know, de chickens what he et done swelled up an' fill 'im so full, dat all he kin wiggle is jes 'is tail, an' he can't wiggle dat much.

"I 'spec' I got you dis time," says Li'l Black Rabbit, an' wid dat 'im an' Billie Pink-Eye start a-workin' on Ole Black Snake wid de big stout sticks what dey got. Dey beat on 'im so hard, an' dey beat on 'im so long, dat Ole Black Snake like to die. He cry, an' he beg, an' he promise, an' he swear, ef Li'l Black Rabbit turn 'im loose dis time, he ain't gwine to steal 'nuther chicken de longes' day he live. All de beat-in' what Black Snake got, done broke up de dried apples, an' when Li'l Black Rabbit say he kin go, he start off th'oo de woods ez fas' ez he kin wiggle.

"Good night, Black Rabbit," he holler.

## LITTLE BLACK RABBIT

“Doan’ look fer me ’roun’ dis way no more,  
kaze I ain’t never comin’ back.”

Li’l Black Rabbit ain’t los’ nary chicken  
de res’ of de year, an’ Ole Black Snake take  
mighty good keer to keep clear of Li’l Black  
Rabbit chicken yard all de res’ of ’is life.

## XIII

### THE RAZORBACK HOG

**E**F ennybody gotta finer patch of goobers in de whole naberhood dan Li'l Black Rabbit, somebody gotta fin' it. Ole Man Hare what live down in de bottom done sen' de seed to Li'l Black Rabbit, an' de whole family set 'roun' night arter night an' shuck 'em.

Mollie Cottontail she set an' shuck 'em, an' Billie Pink-Eye he set an' shuck 'em, an' Johnnie Jump-Up he set an' shuck 'em, an' Dottie Dimple-Nose, she set an' shuck 'em, an' Slim Jimmie, he set an' shuck 'em; an' all de little chillun what ain't got no names, dey wuz so new, dey sets 'roun', an' every las' one of 'em shucks dem goobers. Dey sure wuz a lot, an' all dem chillun sure wuz proud when dey gits th'oo.

Some folks plants goobers mos' enny ole

## LITTLE BLACK RABBIT

time when de groun' gits warm, but not Li'l Black Rabbit. Nossir, boss. Li'l Black Rabbit know dat what grows under de groun' gotta be planted in de dark of de moon, an' what grows on top of de groun' gotta be planted in de light of de moon. So when de moon jess right, an' all de signs from de frogs an' de whip-poor-wills say it gwine rain soon, Li'l Black Rabbit calls all de chillun fer to help 'im plant de goobers. He 'p'int Billie Pink-Eye fer to lead de ole gray mule what he borryer off Brer B'ar. He 'p'int Johnnie Jump-Up an' Timmie Tiny-Toes fer to drap de goober seed in de furrows. He 'p'int Dottie Dimple-Nose an' Slim Jimmie fer to tote de seeds to Johnnie Jump-Up and Timmie Tiny-Toes what doin' de drappin', an' all de chillun what ain't got no names, dey wuz de ones what come 'long behin' an' cover up de rows. Li'l Black Rabbit guide de plow 'is own self, kaze he mighty pertickler 'bout



## THE RAZORBACK HOG

de rows being straight. Dey work, an' dey work, an' when Mollie Cottontail ring de big bell fer supper, dem goobers ain't more'n half planted. Li'l Black Rabbit 'bliged to call it a day an' quit, kaze Mollie Cottontail done lay down de law, dat when de big bell ring fer supper ev'ybody gotta come quick ez dey kin, an' ef dey doan' come, she gwine raise a ruckus.

Arter supper been et, Li'l Black Rabbit hustle all de chillun off to bed. "You chillun," he say, "we got a right smart piece of work to-morrer, an' we gotta work 'can to can't,' so you all git to bed right quick."

Dem chillun know what workin' "can to can't" mean. Dat's what de white folks say when dey hirin' folks to work in de cotton fiel's, an' it mean you starts work when you kin see, an' you work till it so dark you can't see to work no mo'. Sho' make a long day. Yassir, boss.

Ennyhow, de goobers gits planted, an' de

## LITTLE BLACK RABBIT

rain done come 'long jess like de frogs an' de whip-poor-wills says, an' ain't long afore dem little ole goobers stickin' dere whiskers out o' de groun', like dey allus been livin' dere.

Li'l Black Rabbit sho' is proud of dat goober patch, an' he invite Brer B'ar an' Brer Coon to walk 'roun' de fiel' wid 'im, an' admire de way dey growin'. "I wouldn' take nuthin' fer dat patch," says Li'l Black Rabbit.

An' Brer B'ar an' Brer Coon say it wuz de fines' patch in de whole naberhood. Den Li'l Black Rabbit gotta tell dem how he got de seed from Ole Man Hare, what live down in de bottom, an' how 'im an' de chillun done shucked ev'y pod. Some folks jess breaks de pod in two, but de right way is to shuck 'em like Li'l Black Rabbit done.

Ev'y mornin', de firs' thing Li'l Black Rabbit do is to go down to dat goober patch, an' ev'y night, de las' thing he do afore sun-



DERE WUZ OLE RAZORBACK HOG SNEEZIN'.



## THE RAZORBACK HOG

down is go down to de goober patch. Seems like he can't wait fer de goobers to git ripe.

One mornin' Li'l Black Rabbit done turn over an' drap back to sleep when Mollie Cottontail call 'im, an' he ain't more'n got 'is clothes on when breakfuss ready, an' he ain't got time to go down to de patch afore he eat. Whiles he's settin' dere eatin', in come Billie Pink-Eye, de las' one at de table. He doan' say nuthin', jess look at Li'l Black Rabbit; an' bimeby he whispers to Johnnie Jump-Up, what sets nex' to 'im. Johnnie Jump-Up doan' say nuthin', jess look at Li'l Black Rabbit, an' bimeby he whisper to Dottie Dimple-Nose, an' she whisper to Timmie Tiny-Toes. 'Bout dis time Li'l Black Rabbit gits on to all de whisperin' an' de lookin', an' he say: "What all you chillun whisperin' 'bout? Is you all got sore th'oats?" Ain't nobody say nuthin'.

Li'l Black Rabbit speak up: "Billie

## LITTLE BLACK RABBIT

Pink-Eye, you de one what started all dis yere foolishness. Ef you got ennything to say, you tell me what 'tis." Billie Pink-Eye look sort o' skeered an' say: "I been down in de goober patch, an' it look like somebody been diggin' fer gole."

Billie Pink-Eye ain't more dan git de words out o' 'is mouf, when up jump Li'l Black Rabbit, an' off he put, lippity, lippity, lippity, jess like de coon dogs arter 'im. Sho' 'nuff, when he gits dere, one en' of de patch all tored up. "Lawd have mercy!" says Li'l Black Rabbit. "Ef I ketch de black scoun'rel what been robbin' my patch, I gwine skin 'im alive, dat's what I gwine do."

Li'l Black Rabbit an' Brer Coon mighty good fren's, an' Brer Coon de bes' fisherman an' de bes' hunter in de whole naberhood, so Li'l Black Rabbit start off hot-foot fer Brer Coon's house to tell 'im de news. Arter Li'l Black Rabbit finish de tale, Brer

## THE RAZORBACK HOG

Coon he set back in de cheer an' say, "What kin' of marks you fin' on de groun', Black Rabbit? Ef de marks is big an' splay-footed, dat's de ole gray mule over at Brer B'ar's place. Ef dey smaller, an' cut in between de hoof, dat's Ole Mis' Cow. Ef you see de marks like chicken foots, only diff'rent, dat's Ole Turkey-Buzzard. But ef you see de marks like two sharp toes wid a split between, I know who done de mischief."

Li'l Black Rabbit, he been so excited when he see 'is goober patch all tored up dat he ain't take time fer to look fer de foot-prints, so off 'im an' Brer Coon puts to see what dey kin fin'. Brer Coon he do de leadin' an' Li'l Black Rabbit do de follerin'.

Sho' 'nuff, 'twan't de ole gray mule, an' 'twan't Mis' Cow, an' 'twan't Ole Turkey-Buzzard, but it wuz dem little foot-prints like what Brer Coon said las'. "What scoun'rel made dat mark?" says Li'l Black

## LITTLE BLACK RABBIT

Rabbit. "Lemme ketch 'im an' I gwine skin 'im alive, dat's what I gwine do."

"Jess what I thought," says Brer Coon. "De one what been messin' up your goober patch is Ole Razorback Hog what lives out in de big swamp. Ain't nuthin' but a low-down thief, allus rootin' 'roun', tearin' up things, but he sho' kin run."

"How we gwine ketch 'im?" says Li'l Black Rabbit. "Can't put no trap 'long de fence, kaze we don't know whar he come in at. Can't put it on de groun', kaze we don't know whar he gwine start diggin' at."

Brer Coon say he doan' know 'is own self how dey gwine ketch 'im. All he kin do is tell who de t'ief is. It Li'l Black Rabbit's job fer to figger out a way to ketch 'im. Li'l Black Rabbit set down on a log studyin' how he gwine ketch Ole Razorback Hog, an' Brer Coon mosey off home.

Jess afore sundown, Li'l Black Rabbit git an idea, an' he jump up in de air an' knock



## THE RAZORBACK HOG

his heels togedder three-fo' times afore he come down, he so happy. Off he put fer de big store, ez fas' ez 'is short little legs kin carry 'im, an' when he come back, all he got is little paper sack.

Li'l Black Rabbit spen' some time down in de goober patch, an' when he come back he tell Billie Pink-Eye to run an' fetch Brer Coon right quick. When Brer Coon come in, Li'l Black Rabbit ax 'im is 'is knife sharp, an' Brer Coon 'low it is. 'N'en Li'l Black Rabbit ax 'im will he go an' cut two walkin'-sticks, an' cut 'em right stout.

Brer Coon cut de sticks, but Li'l Black Rabbit ain't never let on how he gwine ketch Ole Razorback Hog. Brer Coon stay to dinner, an' de yaller yams so good, he like to fergot what he come fer. But still Li'l Black Rabbit ain't tole 'im how dey gwine ketch Ole Razorback Hog. "Hadn' we better start?" says Brer Coon. "Plenty time," says Li'l Black Rabbit. Bimeby in

## LITTLE BLACK RABBIT

come Billie Pink-Eye, who been watchin' de patch. "I done heerd Ole Hog rootin' 'roun' in de patch," says Billie Pink-Eye. "Better hurry," says Brer Coon. But all Li'l Black Rabbit say is "Plenty time."

So dey saunter on slow, like dey walkin' behin' de corpse at a funeral, an' sho' 'nuff, dey hear Ole Hog snortin' an' snuffin' an' gruntin', away down in de corner of de goober patch. Brer Coon lif' up 'is big stout stick an' start to run. "Hole on," says Li'l Black Rabbit; "plenty time." Pretty soon dey hear somethin' coughin', an' snuffin', an' d'rec'ly dey hear somethin' say "Ah-ki-choo."

"I got 'im," says Li'l Black Rabbit. An' sho' 'nuff, he did have 'im. Dere wuz Ole Razorback Hog sneezin' so fas' he couldn' run a step—jess a-standin', sayin', "Ah-ki-choo! Ah-ki-choo! Ah-ki-choo!" ez fas' ez he could say it. Ev'y time he start to run, he have to sneeze; an' every time he sneeze,

## THE RAZORBACK HOG

he have to stan' stock still. Li'l Black Rabbit done spread red pepper all 'long de rows of goobers where it look de likelies' place fer Ole Razorback Hog to root.

Brer Coon an' Li'l Black Rabbit dey get right busy wid de big stout sticks, an' all de nex' winter Li'l Black Rabbit didn' have to beg no side-meat to go wid his turnip greens.



## XIV

### THE TUMBLE-BUG

**D**OWN in de big swamp over de hill from Li'l Black Rabbit's house, dere's mos' ev'y kin' of animal what you ever saw, an' some what you ain't never even hear tell on. An' snakes! Lawd have mercy! Dere's pink snakes, an' yaller snakes, an' green snakes, an' snakes wid spots all over 'em. Dat's a funny place fer Ole Brer Bullfrog to live, but he gotta live near de water, an' dere de very place where 'im an' Mis' Bullfrog set up housekeepin'.

One day Li'l Black Rabbit feel like he need some medicine, an' off he puts down de hill, 'cross de meadow, an' th'oo de wood, till he come to de big swamp. He dig in dis place, an' he dig in dat place, but he can't fin' nice crisp sassafras root nowhars, an' he gotta have sassafras root fer to cure

## LITTLE BLACK RABBIT

what ails 'im. Whiles he's lookin' all 'roun' dis side, an' lookin' all 'roun' dat side, he hear funny li'l gurgle. Doan' soun' like a fish, an' doan' soun' like a animal, an' Li'l Black Rabbit can't make it out nohow. Look up in de tree, an' can't see nuthin'. Look in de bushes, an' can't see nuthin'. Finally he look on de groun'. Sho' 'nuff, dere wuz Ole Brer Bullfrog pretty nigh et up by Ole Cotton-Mouth Moccasin. Ole Moccasin Snake pretty near got 'im swallowed whole, an' ef Brer Bullfrog hadn' been mighty quick an' grab a stick cross-wise in 'is mouf, he wouldn' never seen Mis' Bullfrog no more.

“Look like you in mighty bad fix,” says Li'l Black Rabbit.

Brer Bullfrog got de stick in 'is mouf, an' hangin' on fer dear life, an' Ole Moccasin Snake tryin' hard fer to swaller 'im, but he can't quite make it. Brer Bullfrog talk de bes' he kin, but he got 'is teeth fas' in de

## THE TUMBLE-BUG

stick an' all he kin say is, "Helb, Blag Rabbit! Take dis yere snage off be."

Li'l Black Rabbit grab up a big stick, an' bus' Ole Moccasin Snake 'longside de head, an' he turn Brer Bullfrog loose in a hurry, an' scurry off in de water.

"Mighty close shave, Black Rabbit," says Brer Bullfrog. "Ef de stick'd been rotten, it'd been all off wid dis yere bullfrog. You certainly come in de nick o' time dis time."

Li'l Black Rabbit an' Brer Bullfrog been mighty good fren's dis long time, an' in course, Li'l Black Rabbit gwine see dat Brer Bullfrog git home safe an' soun'. Ole Mis' Bullfrog mighty skeered when she see Brer Bullfrog all cut up from de snake's teeth, and she make a great 'miration. She rub 'im good wid bear's grease, an' ain't many days afore 'im an' Li'l Black Rabbit sittin' out under de cypress tree, smokin' dere seegars same as usual when Li'l Black Rabbit come a-visitin'.

## LITTLE BLACK RABBIT

Dey mos'ly argefey all about who kin jump de far'es', when Li'l Black Rabbit spy somethin' slippin' 'long in de grass. Look like big ball o' mud jess rollin' 'long easy-like.

“What dat?” says Li'l Black Rabbit. “I ain't never seen no ball o' mud rollin' 'long de groun' dat-a-way. Ain't natch'ral, dat ain't. Ain't got no wings, an' ain't got no feets. How you reckon dat ball o' mud movin', Brer Bullfrog?”

Brer Bullfrog he jess r'ar back an' laugh. “Look on de behin' side, Black Rabbit, an' you see what doin' all de shovin'.” Sho' 'nuff, dere wuz Ole Tumble-Bug a-pushin', an' a-shovin', an' a-shovin', an' a-pushin', an' dat wuz de why an' de wharfore of de ball o' mud movin' like it done.

“What dat fool bug gwine do wid all dat big ole ball o' mud?” says Li'l Black Rabbit.

“Dat's de question,” says Brer Bullfrog.





SOMETHIN' SLIPPIN' 'LONG IN DE GRASS.



## THE TUMBLE-BUG

“You kin allus see dem tumble-bugs rollin’ dem balls o’ mud all ’roun’, but dey ain’t nary person what kin tell you what dey does wid ’em.”

Ain’t no person in de whole naberhood what knows ez much ez Li’l Black Rabbit; an’ de reason is, dat when he light on some- thin’ what he doan’ know, he ain’t never satisfied till he fin’ out how ’tis. Li’l Black Rabbit know all ’bout de straddle-bug what lives out in de woods, an’ all ’bout de doodle-bug what lives in de holes in de groun’, but he jess natch’rally doan’ know nuthin’ ’bout de tumble-bug, an’ he sho’ gotta fin’ out. It gittin’ late, an’ he know Mollie Cottontail ain’t gwine keep de supper hot ef he late, so he tell Brer Bullfrog an’ Mis’ Bullfrog good-night, an’ off he puts fer home.

All de way home he keep wonderin’ ’bout what Ole Tumble-Bug gwine do wid dat big ball o’ mud. De supper jess been put on

## LITTLE BLACK RABBIT

de table when Li'l Black Rabbit come in, an' Mollie Cottontail stick her head out de do', an' holler fer:

Billie Pink-Eye,  
An' Johnnie Jump-Up,  
An' Dottie Dimple-Nose,  
An' Timmie Tiny-Toes,  
An' Slim Jimmie, an' all de chillun what ain't got no names, dey wuz so new.

When de supper been et, an' all de chillun settin' 'roun', Li'l Black Rabbit he look at Billie Pink-Eye an' he say:

“Billie Pink-Eye, you know what one of dese yere tumble-bugs look like?” An' Billie Pink-Eye say, “Uh-huh.”

“You seen 'em pushin' one of dese yere balls o' mud all 'roun'?”

An' Billie Pink-Eye say, “Uh-huh.”

“Well, kin you tell me what dat tumble-bug gwine do wid dat ball o' mud when he gits it to de place whar he lives at?”

Den Billie Pink-Eye say, “Umph-uh.”

## THE TUMBLE-BUG

“Dat’s de question,” says Li’l Black Rabbit, “what you an’ me gotta fin’ out.”

De nex’ mornin’, bright an’ early, Li’l Black Rabbit an’ Billie Pink-Eye puts up a snack to eat, an’ takes dere fishin’-poles, an’ off dey puts fer de big swamp. All de time de fish ain’t bitin’, dey kin watch fer a tumble-bug; an’ ’tain’t long afore yere one come hustlin’ ’long a ball o’ mud. De bug git on de front side an’ pull, an’ he git on de behin’ side an’ shove. He tug at it, an’ he wrastle wid it, an’ he jess worry dat ball o’ mud until he gits it rollin’, jess like he want it. Li’l Black Rabbit an’ Billie Pink-Eye ain’t make a move, jess set dere watchin’. Dey know dat ef Ole Tumble-Bug spy ’em in de bushes, he gwine quit right off de reel, kaze he ain’t gwine let nobody see what he do wid de ball o’ mud, ef he kin help it.

Ole Tumble-Bug keep a-rollin’ de ball, an’ Li’l Black Rabbit an’ Billie Pink-Eye keep a-slippin’ ’long th’oo de bushes jess

## LITTLE BLACK RABBIT

easy-like, till finally dey come to de hole in de groun' whar Ole Tumble-Bug an' all 'is family done set up housekeepin'.

When de Tumble-Bug chillun hear dere Daddy comin' wid he ball o' mud, dey pops out of de hole, an' de whole kit 'n' barrel of 'em grab hold of dat ball o' mud, an' dey push, an' dey shove, an' dey tug, an' dey twis', till dey gits de ball o' mud tucked away safe down in de groun'.

“Doan' dat beat Ole Nick?” says Li'l Black Rabbit. “Here we been follerin' dat ole bug de bes' part of de day to fin' out what he gwine do wid dat ball o' mud, an' we doan' know no more now dan when we started.”

“Ain't dat de troof?” says Billie Pink-Eye.

“S'pos'n' we dig 'em out,” says Li'l Black Rabbit.

“S'pos'n' we ain't got no shovel,” says Billie Pink-Eye.

## THE TUMBLE-BUG

“Shovel in de tool-house,” says Li'l Black Rabbit.

“Done stuck a big thorn in my foot, an' I can't walk,” says Billie Pink-Eye. “An' ef I fetch de shovel, it gwine be plumb dark when I gits back, an' I can't dig in de dark nohow.”

Dey kep' on talkin', an' dey kep' on arge-fyin' 'bout who do de fetchin', an' who do de diggin', till dey hears de Ole Whip-poor-will start singin' out in de swamp. When dey hears dat, dey know it ain't long afore sundown, an' off dey puts fer home.

Dey start off so sudden-like, ain't nary one of 'em 'member to make a mark on de tree by Ole Tumble-Bug's hole, an' Li'l Black Rabbit ain't never fin' out to dis day what Ole Tumble-Bug do wid all de balls o' mud what he rolls th'oo de woods. An', what's more, he ain't never gwine fin' out, kaze he never could fin' where 'nuther one of dese yere bugs lived at nohow.





## XV

### THE SEVEN-YEAR LOCUSTS

**D**E corn look good out in de fiel', an' de yaller yams look good down in de patch back of Li'l Black Rabbit's house, an' de goober vines standin' up all green an' pretty. Li'l Black Rabbit 'low dat he gwine have a sho'-'nuff crap dis year. One night him an' Mollie Cottontail an' all de chillun settin' out on de front porch list'nin' to de whip-poor-wills callin' down in de wood, when Li'l Black Rabbit say:

“Billie Pink-Eye, run in de house an' fetch me de big stick wid de notches on it, what I got hangin' over de fireplace.”

When Billie Pink-Eye bring de stick, an' Li'l Black Rabbit open up 'is jackknife fer to cut de notch, Slim Jimmie speak up: “What fer you cut a notch in de stick ev'y year, Black Rabbit?”

## LITTLE BLACK RABBIT

Li'l Black Rabbit hef' de stick in 'is han's, an' lean back in 'is cheer.

“Dis yere stick is what I calls a ‘year stick.’ Ev’y year, in de light of de moon, when de garden’s growin’ good, I cuts a notch in de stick, an’ ev’y notch I cut, dat means one year, an’ dat’s de way I keep track on de Seben-Year Locusts. Doan’ neber cut de notch in de dark of de moon, kaze dat sure mean bad luck ef you cuts it in de dark of de moon. Folks what kills folks allus works in de dark of de moon, an’ craps what’s planted in de dark of de moon doan’ never come up. Allus plant in de light of de moon, ef you wants to have good luck. Now dis yere notch what I cut in dis yere stick, it number seben, an’ dat mean dat dis year is de time fer de Seben-Year Locusts, what gwine come dis yere spring. Dat’s de way I keeps track of de time when de Seben-Year Locusts gwine to come.”

Slim Jimmie look like he understan’

## THE SEVEN-YEAR LOCUSTS

what Li'l Black Rabbit talkin' 'bout, but he doan' understan' nohow. He doan' know what a Seben-Year Locust look like, in de firs' place; an' ef he know what a Locust look like, he doan' know why Li'l Black Rabbit so pertickler 'bout de Seben-Year Locust in de secon' place. So he doan' say nuthin', jess sort o' walk off an' look wise, like de white folks does when dey doan' want no one to know how ignorant dey is.

De nex' mornin', up jump Li'l Black Rabbit bright an' early, an' holler fer breakfuss. Ole Mollie Cottontail she say she sent de chillun out to de white folks' garden fer to rustle 'roun' an' fetch home somethin' fer breakfuss, an' dey ain't got back yit. Pretty soon here come Billie Pink-Eye wid 'is arms full of carrots, an' here come Johnnie Jump-Up wid a cabbage under each arm, an' here come Dottie Dimple-Nose, an' Timmie Tiny-Toes, an' Slim Jimmie, an' all de chillun what ain't

## LITTLE BLACK RABBIT

got no names, dey wuz so new, dey all got somethin'.

Arter Li'l Black Rabbit done et 'is break-fuss, he sets 'isself down in de back yard fer to study out how he gwine keep de Seben-Year Locusts from eatin' up 'is garden, like dey did de las' time dey come.

In course, Li'l Black Rabbit he's a heap older, an' he got a heap more sense dan he had de las' time de locusts come, an' he boun' dis year he gwine have a garden, an' he boun' de Seben-Year Locusts ain't gwine touch it.

De spring time mighty pretty, an' de birds all singin' in de trees, an' de spring frogs all hollerin' down in de swamp. Li'l Black Rabbit call all de chillun togedder, an' lays out de work dey gotta do in de garden: Billie Pink-Eye, he gotta dig up de weeds in de pertater patch, an' work out de yaller yams. An' Johnnie Jump-Up, he gotta fix up de beets, an' de collards, an' de



LI'L BLACK RABBIT SPY DE FIRS' LOCUST.



## THE SEVEN-YEAR LOCUSTS

ochre; an' Timmie Tiny-Toes, an' Slim Jimmie dey gotta sucker de corn stalks; an' de chillun what ain't got no names, dey gotta clean up aroun' de yard, pick up de tin cans, an' fix up de fences. When he got all de chillun right busy, off put Li'l Black Rabbit to de big store, lippity, lippity, lippity, jess ez happy ez a white folks farmer goin' to a frolic. When he gits to de big store he says to de man: "Gimme two bits' wuth of poppy seeds, please sir."

An' de man give 'im de seeds, an' Li'l Black Rabbit give 'im de money, an' off he start home. 'N'en he fence 'im off a piece of groun' in de corner of de garden, an' dere he plants dem poppy seeds, but he doan' say nuthin' to nobody. It come along till well in de summer, an' de craps growin' fine, when Li'l Black Rabbit spy de firs' Locust, an' he gits sort o' uneasy, kaze he got a plan, but he ain't sure dat de plan gwine work jess like he want it. Li'l Black

## LITTLE BLACK RABBIT

Rabbit he gotta fine place, an' he gotta nice yard in front of 'is house, but he gotta piece of lan' what all covered over wid little scrub bushes, what some day he gotta grub right out afore he kin use de lan' fer a pasture like he want to. Ennyhow, ez soon ez he see the firs' Locusts, he know dey is de Mamma Locusts, what come firs' an' digs 'roun' in de groun' an' lays de eggs an' den dies. Den come de Baby Locusts, what look like ants, but what ain't ants. Den come de Creepin' Locusts, what ain't got no wings yit, an' dey eats, an' eats, an' eats, an' grows dere wings, an' flies away.

Li'l Black Rabbit know dat he can't ketch de Mamma Locusts, an' know dat he can't ketch de Ant Locusts, so all de work he do, he gotta do wid de Creepin' Locusts.

By de time de eggs what de Mamma Locusts done laid all been hatched out, an' de Ant Locusts all crawlin' 'roun' on de groun', Li'l Black Rabbit got 'im a little



## THE SEVEN-YEAR LOCUSTS

piece of groun' all fenced in good wid planks, an' he sets all de chillun to paintin' de inside of de plank fence wid black sticky tar, so when he gits de Locusts all driv' in, can't nary one of 'em crawl out again. Meanwhile all de craps keep on a-growin'—de onions, an' de radishes, an' de yaller yams, an' de collards, an' de ochre, an' all de stuff what he done set out. De piece of groun' what he done sowed wid de poppy seed, it covered so thick wid poppy flowers look like it burnin' up, kaze de poppies so red. When it come time fer de Ant Locusts to turn into de Creepin' Locusts, Li'l Black Rabbit calls all de chillun an' give 'em all ole tin pans, an' tells 'em dat when he say de word, he want 'em to beat on de pans, like dey does when de bees is swarmin'.

Den Li'l Black Rabbit he place Billie Pink-Eye on de right side, an' Johnnie Jump-Up he place on de lef' side, an' Dottie Dimple-Nose he place on de before side,

## LITTLE BLACK RABBIT

an' Timmie Tiny-Toes he place on de behin' side, an' he scatter all de chillun what ain't got no names in betwixt an' between de udders. 'N'en Li'l Black Rabbit give de word, an' de chillun all starts beatin' on de pans, an' dey make such a noise dat it scare all de Creepin' Locusts most to death, an' dey rush 'roun' dis way, an' dey run 'roun' dat way, but de only way dey kin go is straight into de little pen wid de sticky sides what Li'l Black Rabbit done built. Li'l Black Rabbit crowd 'em in, an' crowd 'em in, till dey ain't no Creepin' Locusts left out no-whar 'roun' Li'l Black Rabbit's house. Li'l Black Rabbit, he keep de Creepin' Locusts shut up in de pen mos' two days wid nuthin' to eat, kaze ef dey can't eat, dey can't grow an' make no wings, an' when dey ain't got no wings, dey can't fly.

When he thinks dey 'bout hungry 'nuff, he calls all de chillun, an' open de gate, an' he herds all dem Creepin' Locusts into de

## THE SEVEN-YEAR LOCUSTS

lot what he got all covered over wid dem scrubby bushes an' weeds. Yassir, boss, he turn dem Creepin' Locusts in dat lot, an' dey so hungry dey jumps into dem bushes an' weeds like a white folks boy into a big plate of griddle cakes. Ev'y night when he takes de Creepin' Locusts out of de lot an' puts 'em back in de pen, he th'ows in a armful of dese yere poppy leaves, an' dey make de Creepin' Locusts so sleepy dat dey doan' think of nuthin' but jess gettin' a good night's res'. So Li'l Black Rabbit keep dem Creepin' Locusts workin' till dey cut down all de bushes, an' et up all de weeds what he got in de lot. Li'l Black Rabbit he push 'em so hard, one day when de lot 'bout clean up, dat it plumb dark when he gits 'em in de pen. It so dark de Creepin' Locusts can't see de armful of poppies what he th'ows over de fence, an' dey doan' eat none of dem poppies dat night at all.

On 'count of all de food what dey et while

## LITTLE BLACK RABBIT

dey cleanin' up de lot fer Li'l Black Rabbit, all dese Creepin' Locusts done turn into Flyin' Locusts, but Li'l Black Rabbit keep 'em workin' so hard dey ain't fin' out dey kin fly wid dese new wings what dey got. De nex' mornin', kaze dey ain't et no poppy leaves de night befo', de Locusts up sharp at daybreak, an' one little ole Locust sort o' shake 'isself an' spread 'is wings, an' flop 'em couple of times, an' off he fly over de fence. 'N'en 'nuther Locust he flop 'is wings, an' he fly over de fence, an' 'nuther Locust he fly over de fence, 'n'en all de Locusts in a big bunch dey flies over de fence.

Dey sho' wuz glad to get away from de place where dey been worked ez hard ez dey wuz at Li'l Black Rabbit's, an' dey fly, an' fly, till dey clean out of sight. When Li'l Black Rabbit come down arter breakfuss to start de Locusts to work, an' he see dere ain't 'nuther Locust lef' in de pen, an' he see dat he got de bushes an' de weeds all cut

## THE SEVEN-YEAR LOCUSTS

out of de lot, an' he see dat all de vegetables in de garden ain't been touched, he say to 'isself: "It certainly do mean luck when you plants your garden in de light of de moon." An' dat's de troof.



## XVI

### OLD BLIND MOLE

**O**NE morning bright an' early, Li'l Black Rabbit wuz walkin' 'roun' in 'is garden, knockin' dem little black an' yaller bugs off'n 'is 'tater vines, when he come to a place where somethin' been happenin'. Firs' he think it look like de place where Brer Coon been havin' mix-up wid ole houn' dog, but dey ain't been 'nuff scufflin' 'roun' in de dirt.

'N'en he think it must 'a' been ole Brer B'ar huntin' 'roun' to git 'im a mess o' yaller yams, but de groun' ain't dug up 'nuff fer ole Brer B'ar. It ain't dis, an' it ain't dat, an' finally he 'cide it mus' be dem chillun, kaze mos' in generally, when it ain't nuthin' else, it de chillun. Dey all on 'em allus up to some debbilment, an' ef 'tain't Billie Pink-Eye, it Johnnie Jump-

## LITTLE BLACK RABBIT

Up; an' ef 'tain't Johnnie Jump-Up, it Timmie Tiny-Toes, er Dottie Dimple-Nose, er Slim Jimmie, er some of de chillun what's so new dey ain't got no names.

Li'l Black Rabbit he mighty mad, an' he start a-hollerin':

"You, Billie Pink-Eye, come yere dis minit, you hear me?"

"Yere I is," says Billie Pink-Eye. "What you fussin' 'bout, Black Rabbit?"

"Ain't fussin' 'bout nuthin', jess askin' questions," says Li'l Black Rabbit. "Jess askin' who been tearin' up my garden, an' if de one what done it start lyin' to me, I'se gwine cuff 'im into a peak an' cuff de peak off."

Billie Pink-Eye hole up 'is right han', cross 'is heart, hope to die he ain't done de diggin', an' he ain't seen nobody else doin' de diggin'. All de res' of de chillun dey swear dey ain't done nuthin'. Ef dere's one thing Ole Mollie Cottontail done teach her



## OLD BLIND MOLE

chillun, it's to tell de troof, an' when ev'y one of 'em hole up 'is right han', an' cross 'is heart, an' hope to die, an' say he ain't done it, den Li'l Black Rabbit know sho' 'nuff dat he gotta look somewhars else.

Can't many people fool Li'l Black Rabbit when he git right down to business, an' so he run all de little rabbit chillun away, an' set down to study, kaze he know he gotta job on 'is han's to fin' out who done de diggin'. He gotta ketch de thing what doin' de diggin', but firs' he gotta fin' out what kin' of a thing he gotta ketch. He look all 'roun' to see what kin' o' feets makin' de tracks, but he can't fin' no tracks nohow. He look all 'roun' to see kin he fin' enny place where enny long nails been scratchin', but he can't fin' where no nails been scratchin'. He know it ain't no bird. Li'l Black Rabbit sort o' stumped. "Ain't no animal what walk on de groun', an' ain't no bird what fly in de air," he say to 'isself.

## LITTLE BLACK RABBIT

He set dere studyin', an' studyin', an' all of a sudden de right idee hit 'im. "Lawd have mercy! If 'tain't on top of de groun', an' 'tain't up in de air above de groun', it gotta be somethin' down in de groun'. I know de rapscaillon what diggin' up my garden. It's dat ole triflin' good-fer-nuth-in' Star-Nose Mole. Dat's who it is. Ef I had plenty sense, I'd 'a' knowed it long time ago."

It's one thing to fin' out what doin' de diggin', an' 'nuther thing to ketch what's doin' de diggin', an' 'tain't long afore Li'l Black Rabbit fin' dis out. Mos' ev'eybody what try to catch a mole fin' dis out in time.

First he try fer to dig out Ole Star-Nose Mole wid a shovel. He spit on 'is han's an' dig in dis place, an' he spit on 'is han's an' dig in dat place. But Ole Mole got mighty good ears, an' when he hear Li'l Black Rabbit rootin' 'roun' like Ole Razorback Hog, all he do is turn 'roun' an' dig right



DERE HE SETS ON DE TOP OF DE GROUN'.



## OLD BLIND MOLE

straight back down in de groun', like he gwine to de water-line sho' 'nuff.

Bimeby Li'l Black Rabbit's back feel like it gwine break plumb in two, an' 'is han's gits all full of blisters, an' he know it 'bout time to stop, kaze he ain't gwine ketch Ole Star-Nose Mole by no diggin'—he gotta use 'is brains. Li'l Black Rabbit got plenty sense, an' so he carry de shovel back, an' put it in de tool-house, an' set 'isself down on de front steps to study out a plan to ketch Ole Mole. De firs' night he put a lot of broken glass down in de tunnel what Ole Mole got, in hopes Ole Mole git all cut up an' bleed to death.

When Ole Mole rootin' 'roun', he spy de broken glass, an' all he do is dig 'nuther tunnel 'roun' on de udder side of de glass. Mos' folkses, what doan' know moles, thinks dey ain't got no eyes, an' ain't got no ears, ain't got nuthin' but feets an' a mouf wid a long snoot on de en' of it.

## LITTLE BLACK RABBIT

Li'l Black Rabbit know better dan dat. He know de mole got ears what hidden way under de fur, so de dirt can't get in nohow when he diggin'. An' he know de mole got little bits o' eyes what he kin wink up so tight—ain't many people 'low he got enny eyes a-tall. Ef you look sharp 'nuff, an' look long 'nuff, you sho' kin fin' de eyes an' fin' de ears. Dat's de way Ole Mole been made, an' dere he is. De mole doan' dig in de winter: he jess wrap 'isself all up tight in all de leaves an' moss what he got in 'is hole, an' put in all 'is time sleepin'. He doan' do no diggin, an' doan' do no rootin' 'roun'; he jess sets dere an' sleeps. When de spring come he right on de job, an' de fishin' worms gotta scramble 'roun' mighty fas' to keep out o' 'is way. He jess gobble 'em up fas' ez he meet 'em.

He ain't been eatin' all winter long, jess sleepin'; an' when he start to git hungry, he sho' is hungry. He eats de bugs an' he eats

## OLD BLIND MOLE

de worms, an' he eats de little roots what he finds in de groun'. He so hungry he sort o' like Ole Turkey-Buzzard, an' he eat mos' ennything what layin' 'roun' loose. When Li'l Black Rabbit fin' Ole Mole see de sharp glass what he put in de tunnel, he try fer to trap 'im when he come up out o' de groun' at night. De nex' mornin', dere de trap, but 'tain't no mole in de trap nohow.

It keep on till Ole Star-Nose Mole got Li'l Black Rabbit mighty worried. Ain't no animal in de whole naberhood what ever git de bes' of Li'l Black Rabbit, an' dey ain't no hole he ever fall in but what he kin fin' de way out. He 'low he ain't gwine be beat by any low-down, good-fer-nuthin' mole what ever digged in de groun'.

Dere he set on de front steps studyin' an' smokin' 'is big black seegar, an' studyin', till it come time fer Mollie Cottontail to put on de supper.

All de chillun done wash dere faces an'

## LITTLE BLACK RABBIT

han's down at de spring-house, an' slicked dere hair down all nice an' smooth, an' settin' 'roun' de table waitin' fer Li'l Black Rabbit to dish out de turnip greens. Li'l Black Rabbit look 'roun' right sharp at Slim Jimmie.

“What dat you chewin' on?” says Li'l Black Rabbit. “Ain't I tole you to leave de things on de table 'lone till I helps you?”

“Ain't took nuthin',” says Slim Jimmie. “Ain't chewin' nuthin' 'cep' ole piece o' spruce gum what I jess got workin' good.”

Dat give Li'l Black Rabbit an idee, kaze he know de spruce gum mighty sticky when it right from de tree, an' it gits you' teeth all stuck up, so you kin hardly chew a-tall. Li'l Black Rabbit ain't say nuthin' to nobody, but de nex' mornin', bright an' early, off he puts th'oo de wood, down de meadow, an' 'cross de brook, till he come to de big swamp where de spruce trees grows at.

He cut a piece of gum off'n dis tree, an'



## OLD BLIND MOLE

a piece of gum off'n dat tree, till bimeby he got a bucket plumb full. He doan' take de ole gum what's dry an' hard, he only takes de new gum what is sof' an' sticky.

“What you mixin' up, Black Rabbit?” says Billie Pink-Eye, when he see Li'l Black Rabbit workin' de spruce gum wid a big stick.

“Jess fixin' up some chewin' gum fer Ole Star-Nose Mole,” says Li'l Black Rabbit, an' 'en he sort o' chuckle to 'isself. “You an' me gwine ketch dat rascal dis time, an' he ain't gwine dig up nobody's garden no mo'.”

When de spruce gum all mix up good, Li'l Black Rabbit take de bucket, an' Billie Pink-Eye take de spade, an' off dey puts fer de garden. Ev'y place where Ole Mole got a tunnel, right at de en' of de tunnel, down in de groun', Li'l Black Rabbit dump a big ball of gum, an' cover all de dirt back good. 'N'en he puts a ball of gum ev'y

## LITTLE BLACK RABBIT

place where Ole Mole been use to comin' out at night.

“Dat gwine be some s'prised mole dis night, when he gits rootin' 'roun' in de garden,” says Li'l Black Rabbit; an' Billie Pink-Eye 'low dat a fac'.

De nex' mornin', de sun ain't hardly up yet, when Billie Pink-Eye jump out o' bed, an' hustle off to de garden to see what been happenin' endurin' de night time. It take some time afore he kin fin' what he lookin' fer; but when he fin' it, dere it is sho' 'nuff.

Billie Pink-Eye start a-laughin', an' den he start a-runnin' fer to fetch Li'l Black Rabbit. When he gits to de house, he laughin' so hard he kin har'ly tell Li'l Black Rabbit what de matter.

Li'l Black Rabbit s'picion what de matter is, kaze jess what done happen, dat's jess what he 'spec' gwine happen, an' he ain't s'prised none a-tall. All de chillun done woke up wid de noise, an' dey gotta come

## OLD BLIND MOLE

along, too. Li'l Black Rabbit pick up a good stout stick, an' off dey all puts fer de garden an' Ole Man Mole. Dar he wuz sho' 'nuff, settin' on de top of a mole hill, jess a-clawin' away at 'is tooths. He run into one of dese yere balls of gum, an' start to dig 'is way th'oo. A mole digs wid 'is feets, an' chews wid 'is teeths, an' roots wid 'is snoot. When Ole Mole's feets got stuck in de gum, he tried fer to chew it off, an' dere whar he make a big mistake. He got de gum on 'is feet, an' he got de gum on 'is snoot, an' he got de gum in 'is teeths, an' he can't do nuthin' a-tall. All he kin do is back up in de tunnel. He back, an' he back, an' finally he back right out of 'is hole, an' dere he sets on de top of de groun', all stuck up an' waitin' fer company.

Li'l Black Rabbit ain't waste no words on Ole Star-Nose Mole. He spit on 'is right han', an' he spit on 'is lef' han', an' grab hold of de big stout stick what he got, an'

## LITTLE BLACK RABBIT

he took dat Ole Mole—BLAM! right 'long-side of de head.

Ole Mole got mighty soft fur, an' when Mollie Cottontail make it into ear-muffs fer Slim Jimmie, it keep 'is ears good an' warm endurin' de whole winter time.

## XVII

### WHEN THE LEVEE BROKE

**L**I'L BLACK RABBIT'S front yard wuz all cluttered up wid rabbits. Dey wuz so thick seems like he gwine squish two-three of dem ev'y time he puts 'is feets down.

Billie Pink-Eye he wuz dere,

An' Johnnie Jump-Up, he wuz dere,

An' Timmie Tiny-Toes,

An' Dottie Dimple-Nose,

An' Slim Jimmie, an' all de chillun what wuz so new dey ain't got no names, dey wuz all dere.

An' all de little Hare chillun what come a-visitin', dey wuz dere, too. All of 'em wuz slicked up nice an' clean like dey wuz gwine to dey rich aunt's funeral, only dere li'l feets wuz jess a-dancin' an' dere li'l eyes jess a-poppin'. Dottie Dimple-Nose wuz

## LITTLE BLACK RABBIT

doin' de countin' out fer to play hide-an'-seek:

“One-zi, two-zi, zigamo zan,  
Ketch ole 'possum fas' ez you can,  
Zum-ree, he-ree, ickory mo,  
Had a good holt but I let 'im go.  
You're out.”

Come 'long till ev'ybody out but Johnnie Jump-Up, so he gotta be “It,” an' hunt fer de res' of de chillun. Dey played, an' dey romped, an' dey romped, an' dey played, till it come time fer de little Hare chillun to trot 'long home.

Li'l Black Rabbit an' Billie Pink-Eye gwine see dat de Hare chillun gits back home safe an' soun', an' off dey start, Li'l Black Rabbit in de lead, an' de res' on' 'em strung 'long behin' like dey wuz playin' Injun.

When dey reach Mis' Hare's house, Li'l

## WHEN THE LEVEE BROKE

Black Rabbit mighty dry, an' he gotta have a big glass o' buttermilk afore him an' Billie Pink-Eye starts off home. Whiles dey all settin' dere drinkin' de buttermilk, who should drap in but Mis' Hare's brother Jack, what live down in de big swamp.

Li'l Black Rabbit tell 'im "Howdy," an' ax him 'bout de craps.

"De craps is good what dey is of 'em," says Mis' Hare's brother Jack, "an' 'nuff of 'em sech ez dey is."

"Ain't much encouragement in dat," says Li'l Black Rabbit.

"Dat ain't all, nuther," says Brother Jack. "You-all live up on de hill, an' you doan' care nuthin' 'bout de troubles us swamp rabbits has. De water been risin' steady dis two-three days, an' mos' reach de top of de levee right now. Dem pesky ole muskrats been diggin' in de levee bank, an' it gwine bus' wide open one of dese days. Dem what kin run gotta run fas'. Dem

## LITTLE BLACK RABBIT

what kin swim gotta swim hard, an' dem what kin climb gotta climb high. De Lawd have mercy on dem what can't swim an' what can't climb, kaze, when de levee break, dey gotta run like houn' dogs arter 'em."

Li'l Black Rabbit tilt back 'is head an' let de las' of de buttermilk slip down 'is th'roat easy-like, an' sit dere studyin'. He ain't sayin' nuthin' but he doin' a heap of thinkin'.

Finally he say, "Brer Jack, let's you an' me go down by dis yere levee bank, an' see kin we run dem muskrats off, kaze it mighty ticklish business fer all dem animals to be a-diggin' in de bank endurin' dis yere high water."

Brother Jack 'low dat suit 'im kaze he been chuckin' rocks at dem muskrats ev'y day fer mos' a week, but dey jess keep on a-diggin', an' he feel certain de levee gwine bus' wide open, an' it ain't gwine be long nuther.





AN' SWEEP DE LOG OUT IN DE STREAM.



## WHEN THE LEVEE BROKE

When dey come down to de big river, dere wuz de whole muskrat family diggin' away like dey foun' a gole mine. Li'l Black Rabbit he ain't de one to start a fuss, ef 'tain't gwine git 'im nuthin', an' he say:

“Hi! Mister Muskrat, how all de family?” An' Mister Muskrat he say:

“Hi! Black Rabbit, how is all you' folks? It looks mighty funny to see you 'sociatin' wid dese yere low-down swamp rabbits.”

He ain't forgot dat Brother Jack been chuckin' rocks at 'im fer mos' a week. Li'l Black Rabbit he let on like he ain't heard what he say.

“What you-all diggin' in de bank so hard fer, Mister Muskrat? Look like you done struck a mighty wet place.”

“Certainly is wet,” says Brother Muskrat; “but we done run up on a big mess of sassafras roots an' dey sho' is good.”

“Look like de levee mighty weak, right in

## LITTLE BLACK RABBIT

dis spot,” says Li'l Black Rabbit. “Ain't you skeered it gwine bus'?”

“Doan' make no diff'rence to me, Black Rabbit, not a mite of diff'rence. Me an' my folks kin swim, an' ef de levee break, dem what can't swim er climb a tree, gwine get dere come-upens.” Wid dat Mister Muskrat dive down in a hole chucklin' 'way to 'isself, kaze he know ain't nary rabbit kin swim er climb a tree.

Li'l Black Rabbit ain't say a word to Brother Jack till dey gits back to Mis' Hare's house. “Ef I wuz you, Brer Jack,” says he, “I'd kind o' study on what Brer Muskrat said. It doan' look good to me.” An' off he put th'oo de wood till he come to 'is own home.

Mollie Cottontail an' Li'l Black Rabbit talk over de matter till mos' mornin', an' dey 'low somethin' gotta be done. Las' spring de high water come 'bout half-way up de hill afore it start a-fallin'. De nex'

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time it might come higher, an' dere wa'n't much more dan 'nuff room fer all de animals de las' time. Ain't nobody never kotch Li'l Black Rabbit 'sleep yit, an' he boun', ef de levee break dis year, he gwine have some place where 'im an' all de family kin keep dere feets dry. So nex' mornin' bright an' early he roust out all de little chillun, an' arter breakfuss he tell 'em all to roll up dere sleeves, an' turn up dere pants, kaze dey all got a right smart heap of work to do afore de sun go down.

Right back of Li'l Black Rabbit's house dere wuz a big ole oak-tree what blowed down de time of de big win'. It done fell clear of de stump, an' ain't got more dan 'nuff limbs lef' on it so 'twould ride steady on de water widout turnin' over.

Li'l Black Rabbit set all de chillun to chewin' off de little branches so de log wouldn' hang in de trees when it gits afloat, an' 'im an' Mollie Cottontail dey hunts

## LITTLE BLACK RABBIT

'roun' till dey fin' a place whar de wood all rotten so dey kin dig out a good big holler, big 'nuff fer all de chillun, an' big 'nuff fer a lot of yaller yams what he fixin' to carry 'long so dey all won't starve to death.

By de time dey gits all th'oo, an' got de holler all fix up wid soft moss, an' de yaller yams all pile up in de new house, Ole Moon jess peekin' 'er head up over de trees. Mollie Cottontail hustle in de house an' fix up de supper, an' Li'l Black Rabbit he call all de chillun 'roun' 'im.

“Now you all listen right good,” he says, “kaze I'm gwine tell you what I been study-in' 'bout, an' why I been fixin' up dis yere ole oak log. Me an' Mis' Hare's brother Jack been down to de big river, an' what you s'pose we see? We see Ole Mister Muskrat an' de whole Muskrat family diggin' in de levee bank, jess ez hard ez dey kin. Ain't gwine be long afore de whole levee gwine bus' wide open, an' when de

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high water come, all of dese yere animals in de naberhood gwine hunt de high spots fer to keep out of de water. De water gwine come up clean to de top of de hill dis year, an' a mighty lot of animals gwine drown fer sho'. Brer Fox an' Brer Wolf dey kin run fas', an' dey kin git away right at de firs'. Brer Coon an' Brer B'ar dey kin climb de trees. Brer Bullfrog an' Ole Mud-Turkle dey kin swim. De Rabbit family gotta do some studyin' er dey gwine be kotch bad. When you hear me yell, you all run fer de oak log an' pop down in de hole what me an' you' mammy dug, an' dere you stay till we tell you to come out. Doan' do no fussin', an' doan' do no scramblin' 'roun', jess sit an' wait."

All de chillun say dey gwine min' Li'l Black Rabbit sho', an' dey better had, kaze ef dey doan' jump when he tell 'em to, he say he gwine bus' 'em 'longside de head wid a big stick.

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De chillun ain't no more dan got dere prayers said an' cover up good in bed, when Li'l Black Rabbit hear somethin' beatin' on de do'. He open de do' right quick, an' dere was Ole Blinkin' Squintin' Screech-Owl.

“Run quick ez you kin, Black Rabbit. De levee done bus' wide open an' here come de high water,” says Ole Screech-Owl.

Li'l Black Rabbit 'low it mighty kin' of Ole Screech-Owl fer to warn 'im 'bout de levee, an' he say he got ev'ything all fix up fer de high water, an' 'im an' 'is family ain't gwine git hurt er git drowned nohow. Mollie Cottontail an' Li'l Black Rabbit roust out all de chillun an' git 'em all safe an' soun' in de holler of de big oak log, an' dere dey stay waitin' fer what gwine happen. Ain't long afore yere come de water creepin' up de side of de hill, gittin' closer, an' closer, an' gittin' higher, an' higher. Firs' de log begin lif'in' a little bit, 'n'en it



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begin teeterin' a little bit, 'n'en it begin rockin' a little bit, an' ain't long afore de water ketch a good holt an' sweep de log out in de stream what runnin' pas'.

De big log hole steady an' doan' turn over, 'count of de limbs what been lef' on it, an' ain't long afore all dem little Rabbit chillun settin' in a row enjoyin' of de sights.

Li'l Black Rabbit got plenty yaller yams, an' dey keeps on sailin', an' sailin', till one day de log run agroun' in a big cane-brake. Li'l Black Rabbit an' Mollie Cottontail knows dat yere dey is, an' yere dey gotta stay till de high water go down. So off dey puts—Li'l Black Rabbit one way an' Mollie Cottontail t'udder way, huntin' fer a good place to set up housekeepin'. Ain't long afore yere come Mollie Cottontail hollerin' fer Li'l Black Rabbit:

“What you fin', Mollie Cottontail?” says Li'l Black Rabbit.

“Got de fines' house you ever did see,”

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says Mollie Cottontail. "De only trouble is de house all full up wid dem pesky muskrats."

Li'l Black Rabbit say he fix de muskrats, if Mollie Cottontail show him de place. Sho' 'nuff, dere wuz de fines' house he ever see, an' sho' 'nuff de house wuz all cluttered up wid muskrats.

Li'l Black Rabbit ain't waste no time on dem muskrats. He make a pass at 'em wid a big stick, an' dey all duck down in de hole laughin'. Dere dey is laughin' an' hollerin', an' makin' fun of Li'l Black Rabbit. Ain't no use tryin' fer to poke 'em out, kaze de hole too crooked. Ain't no use tryin' fer to drown 'em out, kaze muskrats lives in de water ennyhow. Ain't no use tryin' fer to burn 'em out, kaze de grass too wet. Ef Li'l Black Rabbit ain't had a can of snuff in 'is pocket, what he been fixin' to carry over to Ole Mis' Hare, he never would have got dem muskrats out nohow. He jess reach

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down in 'is pocket an' open up de snuff an' pour it out on a piece of bark, an' set it down in front of de hole. 'N'en he take a long breff an' give a good blow, an' Mollie Cottontail she take a long breff an' she give a good blow.

In jess about a pair of minits, de hole start a-b'ilin' out muskrats: big muskrats, an' li'l muskrats, an' grandaddy muskrats wid long gray whiskers, an' li'l young muskrats widout no whiskers a-tall. Ev'y las' one of 'em sneezin', an' cryin', an' cryin', an' sneezin', ez hard ez dey kin. Dat sho' wuz strong snuff, an' 'twa'n't long afore dere wuzn't nary muskrat on de place.

De house wuz good an' dry, an' de eatin' good out in de cane-brake, an' dere de whole Rabbit family stay till it come fall, an' de nights start gittin cole.

One day Li'l Black Rabbit say, "Well, chillun, we all had nice vacation, but it mos' time to be gittin' back home." De nex'

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mornin' bright an' early dey pack up dere traps an' off dey start. Dey walk, an' dey walk, an' dey res', an' dey res', an' ain't long afore dey comes to de big swamp what is over de hill from Li'l Black Rabbit's house, when all of a sudden Billie Pink-Eye holler out:

“Ef dat ain't Brer Coon settin' up on a log fishin'!”

Sho' 'twuz Brer Coon, an' he sho' wuz glad to see Li'l Black Rabbit an' Mollie Cottontail an' all de chillun. Brer Coon 'scort Li'l Black Rabbit back to 'is ole house an' 'n'en he run an' tell all de nabers dat Li'l Black Rabbit back home. Yere dey all come a-runnin'. Brer Fox, an' Brer Wolf, an' Brer B'ar, an' all de res' of 'em what Li'l Black Rabbit know. De las' of all come Brer Bullfrog; two hops an' a jump, jess like he allus does. He keep on hoppin', an' he keep on jumpin', an' he allus gits where he gwine.

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De nabers fix up a big dinner party, an' dey all make speeches to tell Li'l Black Rabbit how glad dey is dat he got back home safe an' soun'. When dey all gone home, an' de place all been cleared up, Li'l Black Rabbit set 'isself down in de big cheer an' look all 'roun'.

“Mollie Cottontail,” he say, “dere ain't no use talkin', de folks what you knows real well, an' what you done been raised up wid, dey is de bes' fren's in de whole world arter all.”

An' Mollie Cottontail she say: “Ain't dat de troof?”

THE END











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