

PZ
7
S615
Ni

FT MEADE
GenColl

THE BUNNY IN MANNERS-LAND



SINDELAR

BECKLEY-CARDY COMPANY

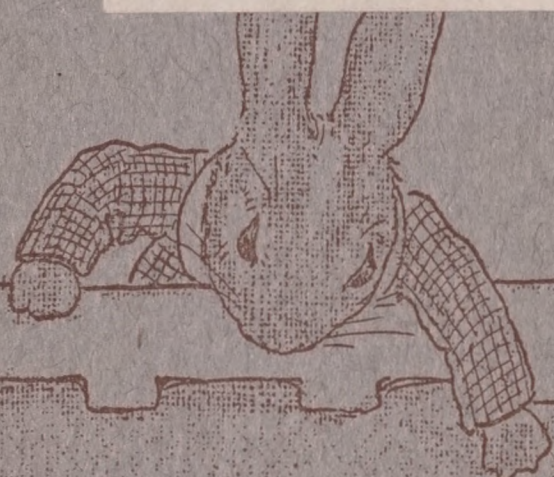
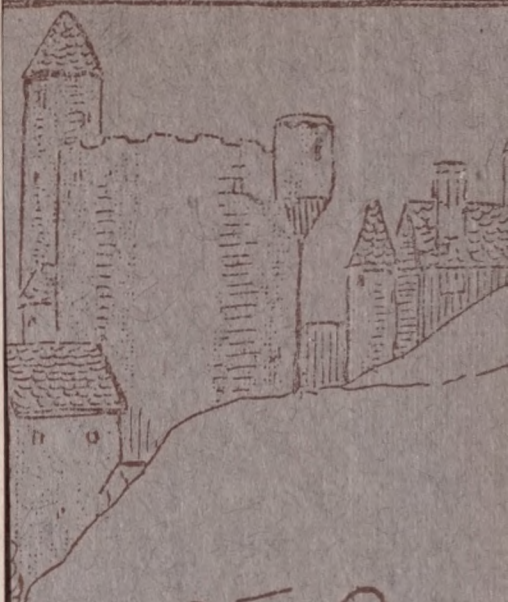


Class PZ7

Book .S615

Copyright N^o Ni

COPYRIGHT DEPOSIT.



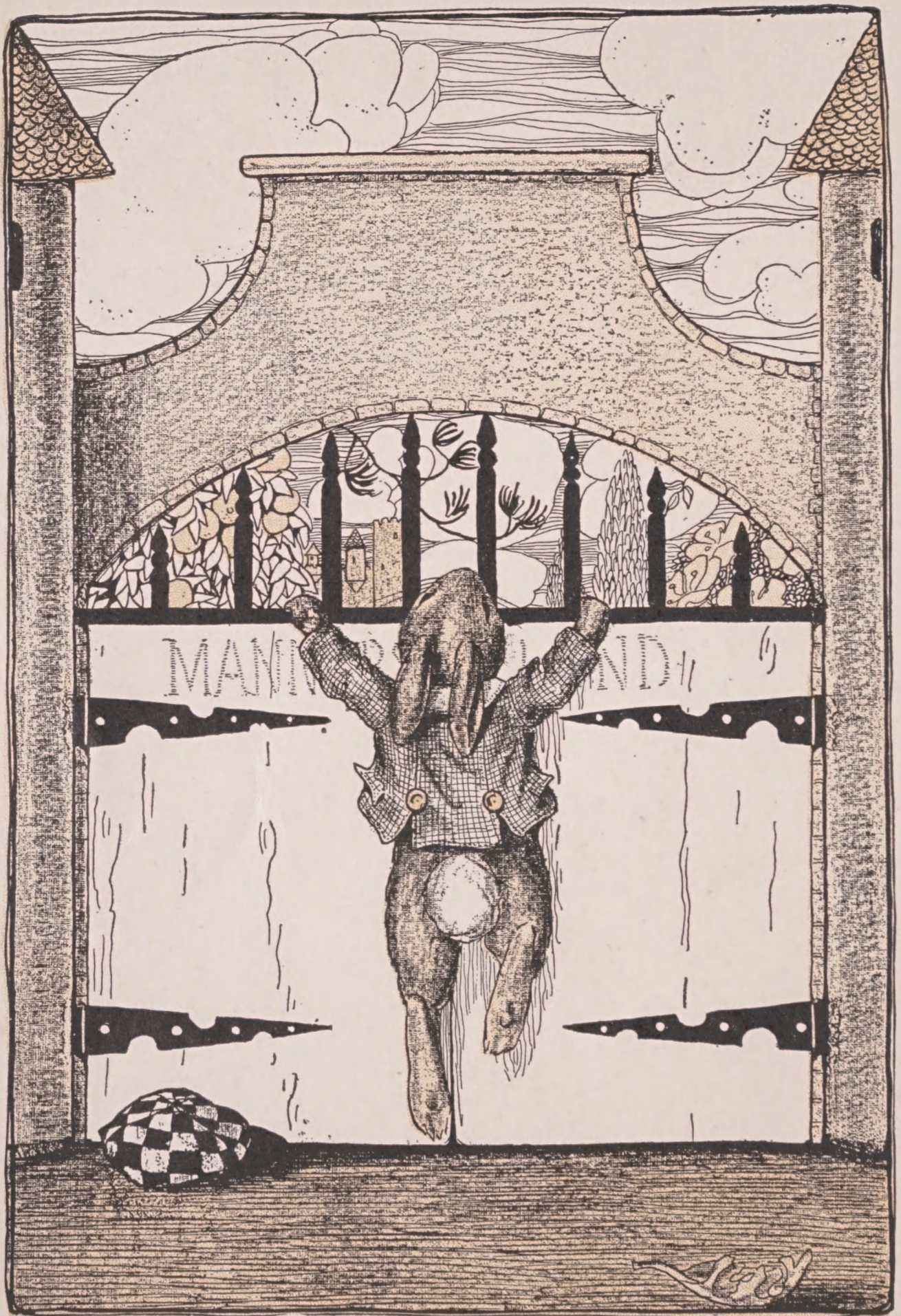
THIS BOOK BELONGS
TO





THE NIXIE BUNNY SERIES

NIXIE BUNNY IN MANNERS-LAND



NIXIE BUNNY IN MANNERS-LAND

BY *Charles*
JOSEPH C. SINDELAR



ILLUSTRATIONS BY
HELEN GERALDINE HODGE

MUSIC BY
ALYS E. BENTLEY
DIRECTOR OF MUSIC, WASHINGTON, D. C.

CHICAGO
BECKLEY-CARDY COMPANY

IN PREPARATION

Nixie Bunny in Workaday-Land
Nixie Bunny in Holiday-Land
Nixie Bunny in Faraway-Lands

P27
SG15
N:

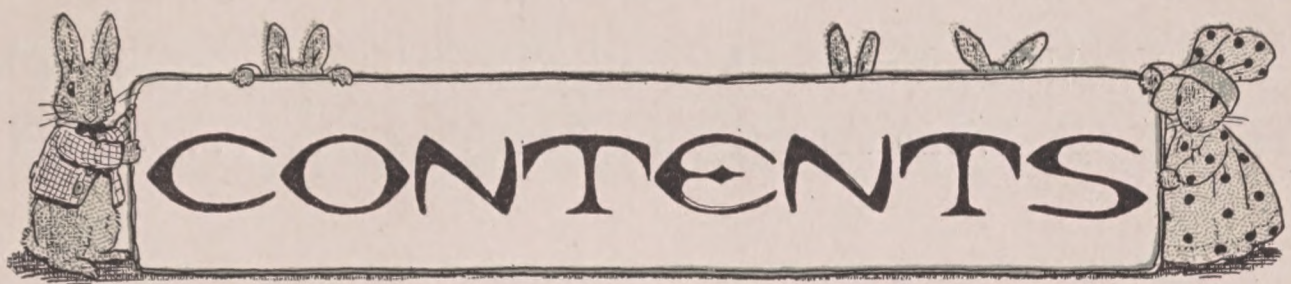
COPYRIGHT, 1912, BY
JOSEPH C. SINDELAR

All rights reserved

The author gratefully acknowledges his obligations to HELEN WOODROW BONES, writer and editor, for valuable editorial assistance and criticism; to E. N. CASSADY, Superintendent of Schools, Brookfield, Ill., and the principals and teachers of the Dallas (Texas) schools, who were so kind as to give the book a thorough trial with the children before its publication.

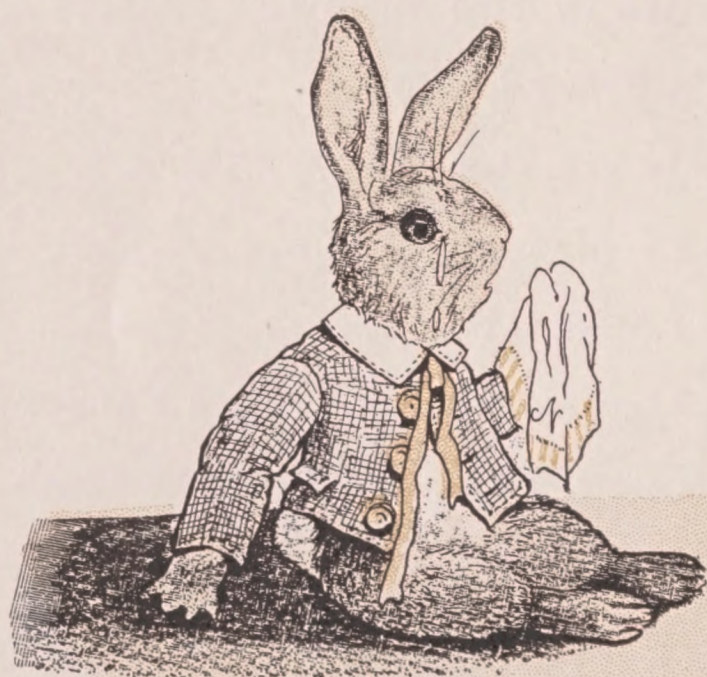
\$0.40
© Cl. A320706
no. 1.

H. B. 10 Oct. 12



CHAPTER	PAGE
INTRODUCTION	7
I AT HOME IN THE WOODS.....	11
II NIXIE'S FIRST LESSON.....	19
III NIXIE LOSES HIS WAY.....	25
IV NIXIE IN MANNERS-LAND.....	31
V NIXIE LOOKS ABOUT.....	37
VI NIXIE HAS LUNCHEON AT THE PALACE.....	43
VII KINDHEART, KING OF MANNERS-LAND.....	49
VIII THE KING TELLS A STORY.....	57
IX NIXIE MEETS SOME NEW BUNNIES.....	65
X THE KING TELLS MORE STORIES.....	73
XI MANY PLEASANT DAYS.....	79
XII WORD FROM HOME.....	87
XIII NIXIE IS SAD.....	95
XIV THE OWL MAKES A BARGAIN.....	103
XV ON THE WAY TO SCHOOL.....	111
XVI NIXIE IN THE SCHOOLROOM.....	117

XVII	LUNCH TIME.....	123
XVIII	NIXIE GIVES A LECTURE.....	129
XIX	NIXIE FINDS BUNNY GIRL.....	139
	A WORD ABOUT THE BOOK.....	144





And where is Manners-Land, I pray?
Over the sea and far away:
Over the sea and yet at home,
And everywhere that people roam.

What do they do in Manners-Land?
They listen to the merry band,
And sing, and laugh, and work, and play,
Throughout the happy, livelong day.

How do they act in Manners-Land?
In a way that children understand;
For sweet, and good, and kind are they,
And naughty things they never say.

Then let us visit Manners-Land
And lend a loving thought and hand.
And, oh, how happy all will be
To see the change in you and me!



Dark gray is his color,
Brown are his eyes.
His ears appear reaching
Up toward the skies.



Little bunny, you're so funny,
With your hip, hip, hippity-hop!
Kitty walks, but, not so bunny—
He goes hip, hip, hippity-hop!

NIXIE BUNNY IN MANNERS-LAND

I

AT HOME IN THE WOODS

Nixie Bunny was the name of a young rabbit. Wherever he got the name I do not know.

Mischievous little fairies are sometimes called nixies. And as this bunny was mischievous as well as naughty, I suppose that is how the name came to be given him.

He lived with his mother and his two brothers and two sisters in a hole in the side of a hill.

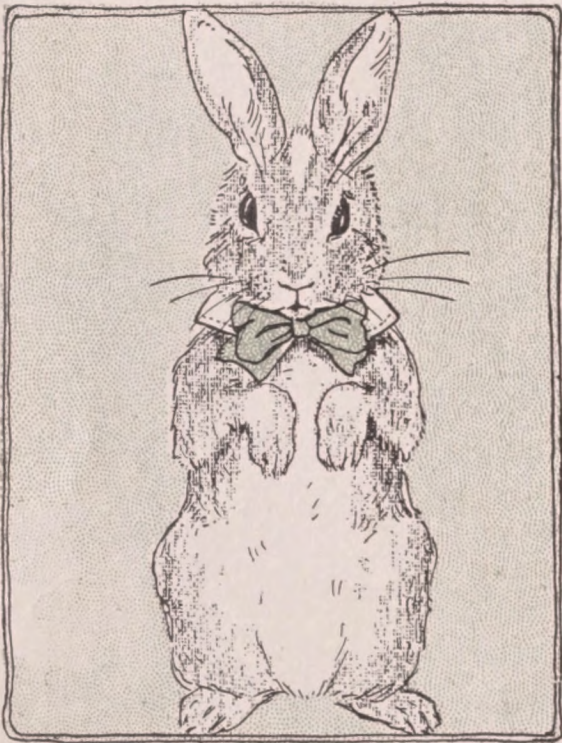
Sometimes he might be seen sunning himself, with his mother and the four other baby rabbits, in front of their home.

But most days he spent inside the hole in the hill, stretched out, fast asleep! For rabbits, you know, eat and play by night and sleep by day. They do many other things just as odd and queer.

Nixie always wore a gray coat and a vest of lighter color.

His eyes were a soft brown, his ears were long and thin, and he had a white spot on his face.

He was a pretty little fellow. I wonder if you can find him in the picture.



This rabbit family was one of the most interesting I have ever known. They went by the name of Cottontail, because each of them wore a snow-white, stubby, cotton-like tail.

You should have seen those five babies!

Sometimes one of them would sit, with his ears pricked up, as straight as any circus bear or trained dog. These little bunnies were very wide awake, and when they sat so they looked as though they might be listening to something. Indeed, they were

pretty sure to hear any sound there was to be heard in the woods around their home.

Sometimes the bunnies would nibble the grass. They liked clover and cabbage better, but if they didn't have either of these, they were satisfied to eat what they did have.

Often, too, you might see one of the babies brushing his fuzzy little face and his long, thin ears with his fore feet, or hands.



For rabbits are very clean, I would have you know—that is, most rabbits are. I shall tell you presently of one little bunny that wasn't. Maybe you can guess his name even now!

And when he gets through washing and brushing his face and ears, what do you suppose the bunny does? Why, he sponges his furry coat with his tongue! Now, isn't that an odd thing to do?

Sometimes he has to bite burrs out of his vest, or out of the pads on his hind legs.

But the most curious thing of all is to see his furry nose keep moving up and down all the while he is dressing himself.

It seems that a rabbit's nose-tip is almost always moving, though he may be ever so still otherwise.



At times you might see one of the babies sitting close beside his mother, with his front feet, or hands, hanging in the air. And perhaps he would touch his lips to hers, very much as little children kiss their mothers.

Often a baby would rest on all his four legs, with his ears partly raised, one a little higher than the other. He would hardly move a hair, he would sit so still.



And sometimes the little rabbit would have a sad, faraway expression in his eyes.

Perhaps he was wondering why it was that he should have so many enemies, when he himself would harm no one.

Perhaps he was dreaming of carrots, and peas, and clover-fields, and other delightful things, and wondering why, when he liked all these so much, he should have so little of them.

And the mother would sit quietly by, watching her babies, lest something happen to them.

How proud she was of every furry little one of them!



Father Cottontail was dead. The farmer's dog had caught him one day when he was out in the garden looking for food. And I am told they had rabbit-stew at

the farmer's house the next day.

It couldn't have been very good, however, as Father Cottontail was a very old rabbit. And that was the only reason the farmer's dog had been able to catch him. Had Father Cottontail been younger, he would have been able to outrun the dog, as he had done many times before.

So all the care of bringing up the baby bunnies had been left to Mrs. Cottontail.

She was a good little mother to them. She had made a home for them, where they were safe from enemies and bad weather. Truly, it was only a hole in the hillside,

but it seemed to them a very pleasant home, and they loved it.

Mother Cottontail had made a comfortable bed for the little ones, with leaves she had gathered and hair she had pulled from her own body.

To her, I suppose, these five babies seemed much alike. But they really were not so.

Nixie, the first bunny of whom I told you, was quite different from the



rest. He was, for one thing, by far the naughtiest! He was saucy and he was selfish. And he often disobeyed his mother. Wasn't that unkind of him, when his mother did so much for him?

And it was his naughtiness that brought about all of Nixie's troubles, as I shall tell you.



In the moonlight, on a bright night,
Wee folk, wild folk, gather.
Frisky and gay, Cottontails they,
To the garden scamper.

II

NIXIE'S FIRST LESSON

The baby rabbits were now nearly four weeks old. They were all the same age, to a day!

Mrs. Cottontail thought it was about time they should learn to get their own living.

One day she decided to take them out that very evening to give them a lesson.

Rabbits do not go far from home in the daytime. They are afraid of men and dogs. But when night comes they run about everywhere.

They run to the farmer's garden. They eat what they wish of the good things they find there, and then they run home again.

Sometimes they play tag on the way. Sometimes they play hop-skip-and-jump. And I have heard it said that sometimes—sometimes, though not often—they fight, just like naughty boys I have known!

But, whatever else they do, they always keep their eyes wide open for enemies.

At the slightest noise, how their eyes bulge!

And these eyes have saved the life of many a little rabbit. For they can see backward and forward and on all sides, just as a bird's eyes can see.

Mother Cottontail chose this night for her children's first lesson in getting food because the moon was shining bright. In the moonlight she could better keep her eyes on the little bunnies.

"Now, my dears," said Mrs. Cottontail, "all keep together and follow me. And watch for the danger signal!"

The danger signal, I must tell you, was the white cotton-like tail which kept bobbing this way or that as the mother rabbit hurried through the woods. It looked like a candlelight shining in a dark room. The little bunnies could hardly lose sight of that!

All was well so long as the fluffy, snow-white ball was up. But the minute it should



go down, the babies might know that danger was near.

The signal meant, "Look out! Look out!" "The owl!" "The cat!" "The hawk!" "The fox!" "The wolf!" or any one of many other enemies.

The five little bunnies were quick to learn their lesson.

The minute the mother's cotton tail would go down, down, too, the little bunnies would go. Then they would pretend to be dead. They would lie perfectly still, making no sound, not even moving a hair.

When the danger was over, up would jump Mother Cottontail. And, without a word, swish! after her would follow the five furry babies.

It was a curious sight! Indeed, the little ones looked real funny, with their small oval heads bobbing up and down every time they hopped or jumped.

They ran their hardest to keep up with their mother, and soon were in the farmer's garden, eating all the good things they wished.

They ate green peas, cabbage leaves, green onions, lettuce, and many other kinds of green stuff.

Once they heard a strange noise. Up sat Mrs. Cottontail on her white cushion. This was another signal of danger. The little bunnies understood its meaning. And up like a shot went her ears.

In a minute she knew what the noise was.

Meanwhile, the little rabbits were all scared almost to death. That is, all but one. Nixie wasn't! He kept on eating and chattering and didn't seem to mind the strange noise at all.

Mrs. Cottontail was much displeased with Nixie. She was afraid the farmer might hear

him. And if he should, there was likely to be trouble for them all!

So Mother Cottontail beckoned the bunnies to come to her under a bush. She had something to say to her little ones, and did not wish to talk to them out in the open, as the farmer might see them in the bright moonlight.

“Sh-h-h! sh-h-h! You must be more quiet, my dears!” Mother Cottontail said.

“What for?” asked naughty Nixie.

“I think the farmer has had company to-night,” his mother answered. “That is why he is about so late. We must be very careful or he may hear us.”

“What do we care!” said Nixie, with a saucy swing of his head.

Now wasn't he a rude, naughty bunny, to talk so to his mother?

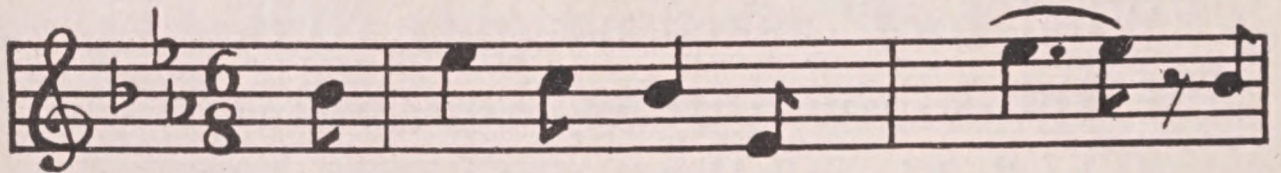
“That will do!” replied Mrs. Cottontail.

She really was angry with Nixie, and I am sure she had reason to be.

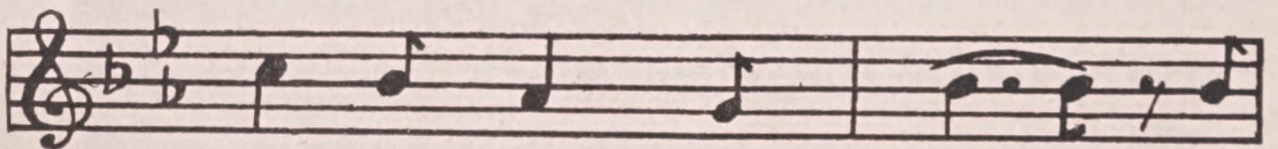
But oh, if this had only been all that that naughty bunny did!



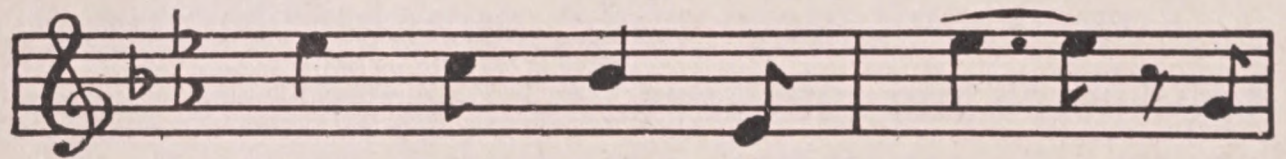
MUSIC BY ALYS E. BENTLEY



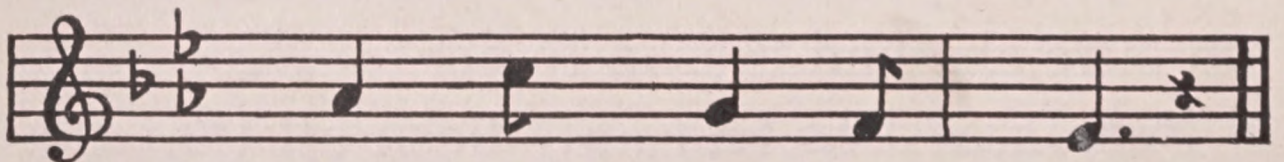
Sing high, sing low, heigh - ho! Hip-



hop and pippy - pop; Gay



is the world, I know— Hip-



hop, and nev - er stop.

III

NIXIE LOSES HIS WAY

By this time Nixie had had so many good things to eat that he felt very cheerful indeed. He laughed and he chattered and was as silly as possible.

Presently he began jigging and hopping and dancing round and round. He took a cabbage leaf and twirled it around his head.

Then he began to sing and shout at the top of his voice:

“Sing high, sing low, heigh-ho!

Hip-hop and pippy-pop;

Gay is the world, I know—

Hip-hop, and never stop.”

“I wonder where the child learned that!” said Mrs. Cottontail to herself. She was so surprised that she did not even try to quiet her naughty son.

But suddenly she heard steps. The farmer was coming toward the garden.

It did not take Mrs. Cottontail long to make up her mind that it was time to leave.

She signaled to her little bunnies, by going thump! thump! thump! on the ground with her hind paw.

“Run! run for your lives!” she cried. “Run, or the farmer will catch you!”

And they ran as fast as their fluffy legs could carry them.

“As for you, Nixie,” Mother Cottontail called back to him, “I’ll pull your ears when we get home!”

Mrs. Cottontail was in the lead. The little rabbits were close at her heels. They kept their eyes fixed on the snow-white, stubby tail of their mother, which was both a guide and a danger signal.

Now Nixie didn’t like to have his ears pulled. So when he heard his mother’s threat, he fell behind the other bunnies.

While the others were going faster and faster, he kept going more and more slowly.

At first he was but a few leaps behind; then he was a few more. At last, he was so

far behind that he could hardly see the danger signal.

He thought that if he went slowly enough he would reach home much later than the rest of them. They would be fast asleep when he got there.

Then he would sneak in without having his ears pulled! And he believed that by morning his mother would have forgotten all about his naughtiness.

But somehow Nixie lost his way, and entered the wrong rabbit-hole, though he



was too tired and sleepy to know it until he woke up the next morning.

Yet it would seem that he ought to have known it. Almost anybody with half an eye could have seen the difference, provided he kept that open.

The Cottontails' home was in the side of a hill.

This other hole started beneath the roots of a very big tree.

The entrance to their home was ever so crooked, zigzagging this way and that, and almost every other way.

This hole went on straight like a tunnel for a long way, and then it dipped suddenly down. Then it went on almost straight again, only in a different direction.

Nixie never stopped to notice any of these things, which goes to show that he was not a very wise rabbit. Perhaps he wasn't old enough to be very wise!

And as he had never before been away from home, I suppose he thought his own rabbit-hole and their rabbit village to be

the only ones in the whole woods around!

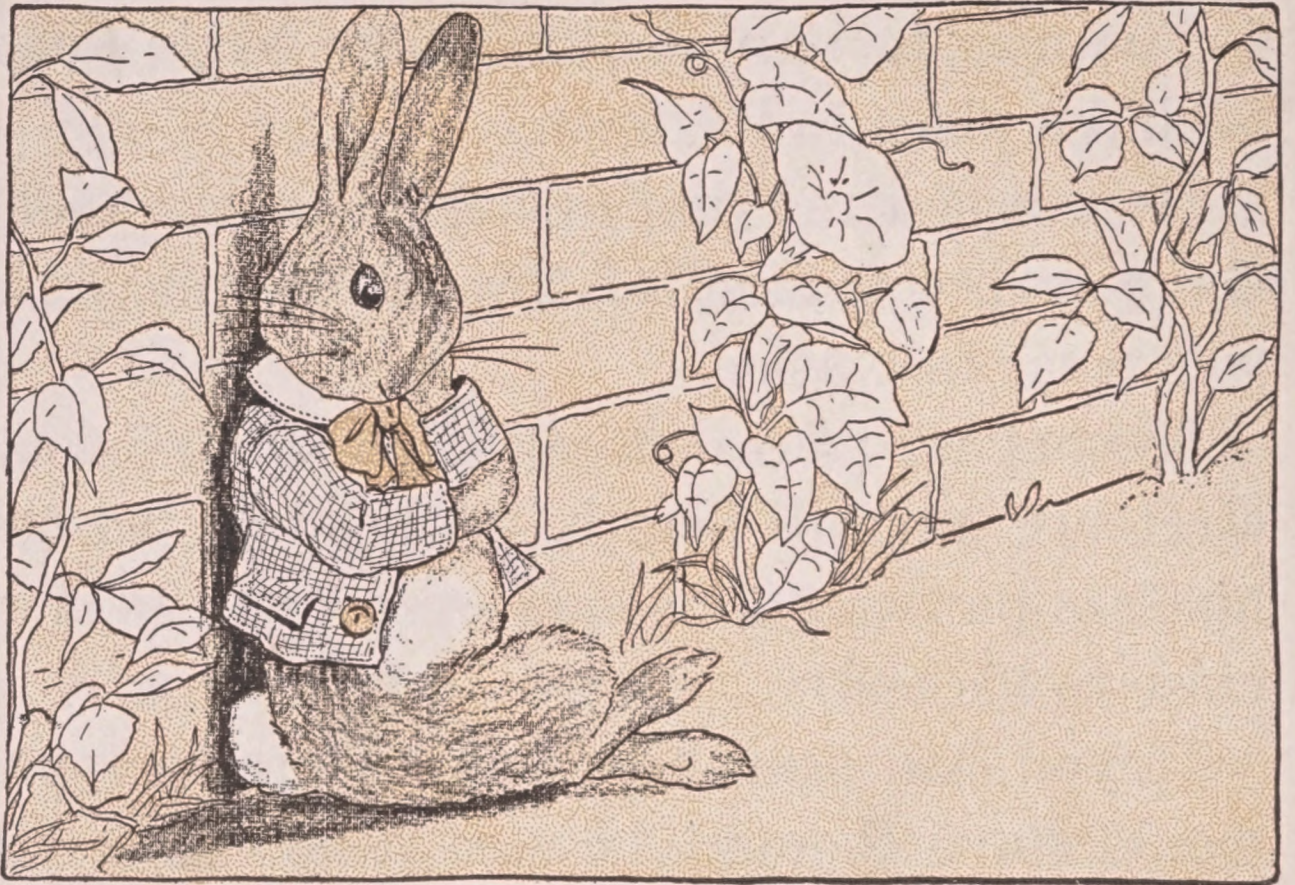
You may be sure it didn't take Nixie long to find a place to lie down.

He was so tired that he flopped down upon the warm, soft sand of the rabbit-hole, and was soon fast asleep.

His eyes were closed, his body was stretched out full length, his head rested on his fore paws, and his ears were turned back close to his body.

If you had seen him lying there so, you would have thought he was dead. But he wasn't dead, you may be sure of that! And I shouldn't wonder if Nixie had happy dreams that night.





When I am bad—
Oh me! oh my!
The world is sad;
And why? and why?

When I am good—
Oh me! oh my!
Glad is the wood,
And glad am I!

IV

NIXIE IN MANNERS-LAND

It was late when Nixie awoke the next morning. And this isn't to be wondered at. It had been late the night before when he got to bed.

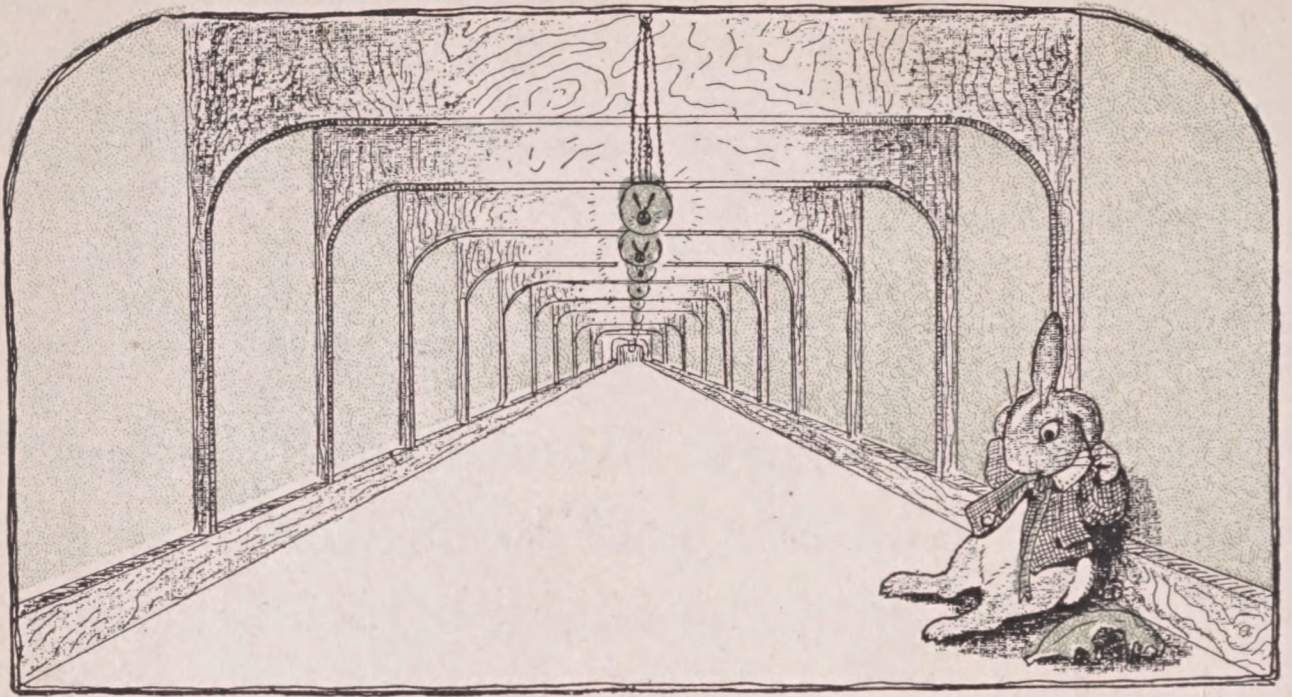
And, besides, at home he was always called. (Yes, and often he had to be called several times, and even scolded, before he would get up!)

When Nixie opened his eyes he found himself in a long, low hall, lighted by a row of lamps which hung down from the ceiling.

He had never before seen anything like them. There were no lamps in his home.

The Cottontails were not a rich family, and they couldn't afford lamps.

Mrs. Cottontail found it hard enough to get a plain living for her five children. She had no money to spend on things they could do without.



So a single candle-light was all the light they ever had.

Nixie could hardly believe his eyes when he looked about him.

Was he dreaming?

He pulled his ear. He pinched his cheek.

Then he thumped his head against the wall, to make sure he was awake.

The long hall was still there. And the lamps still shone.

Then he began talking to himself.

“Wake up, Nixie Bunny, wake up!” he said. “You’re only dreaming!”

But the lights still shone.

The hall was still there.

And the wall was a sure-enough wall, for he could still feel the thumps he had given his head.

“Well, that’s surely funny!” he said.

He got up and began walking around. No one was in sight. He listened, but could hear nothing. So he began to talk to himself again.

“Why, it was only last night that I was in the farmer’s garden,” he said.

“But was it last night?” Nixie was so puzzled.

“Maybe it was the night before,” he went on, “or the night before that night, or the night before the night before that night. Or, maybe it was—”

Here he stopped. His voice was getting so squeaky that he could hardly talk.

His eyes were getting so dim that he could hardly see.



His legs were getting so weak that he could hardly stand.

So he sat down.

He sat a long, long time, thinking. Then he began to cry, "Boo-hoo! boo-hoo-hoo!"

When he cried at home, his mother would pet him, and she would dry his tears with her apron.

She would hug him, and kiss him, too. Then he would cry longer. But as there was no one here to do that for him, he soon stopped crying.

Then he began talking to himself for the third time. (No one else was about, you know.)

"Maybe I'm not Nixie Bunny at all!" he said. "Nixie had a mother and four brothers and sisters. He was in the farmer's garden with them only last night.

After he had eaten all he wished there, he shouted, and jigged, and hopped, and danced.

Then they all ran because the farmer was coming. And Nixie fell behind the others

because his mother had said she would punish him for being so naughty.”

So Nixie talked on and on and grew more and more puzzled.

He remembered very well getting home and sneaking into the rabbit-hole, and going to sleep.

“If I am Nixie,” he said to himself, “where are the others?”

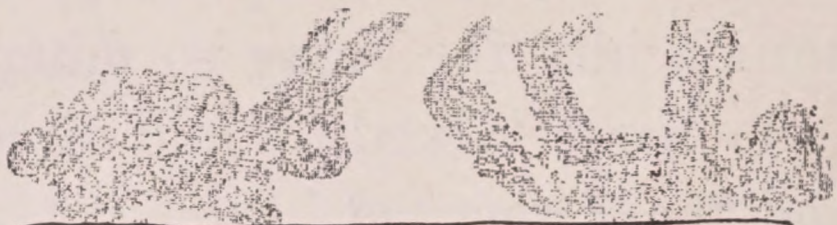
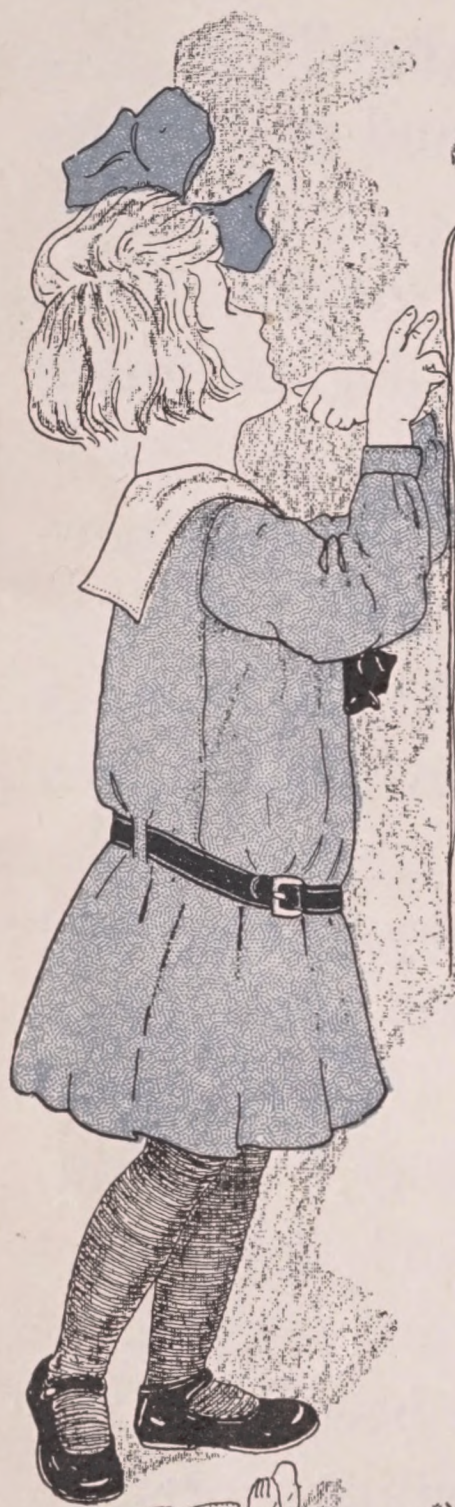
Nixie lived in a small house, lighted by a single candle,” he went on slowly. He was thinking hard.

“This house has many, many lights, and they aren’t candle-lights, either. So I guess I can’t be Nixie.

I wonder who I am, anyway,” he said, “and why I am here! I wonder! I wonder! I wonder!

Oh! oh! oh! What ever will become of me now! Oh! if I had only minded my mother!” Nixie wailed.

And the echo came back, “Oh, oh, oh!”

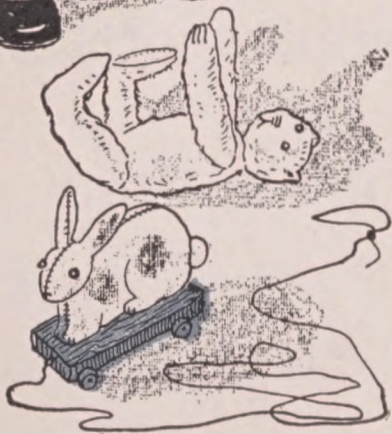


Shadows in the kitchen,
Shadows in the hall:
What can be the meaning
Of these shadows all?

Some of them are little,
Some of them are stout,
All of them are funny,
Playing round about.

But the queerest shadow,
Of the shadows all,
Is that of my bunny,
Hopping on the wall.

He's my shadow bunny,
Playful as can be.
Made him on my fingers,
This way,—don't you see?



V

NIXIE LOOKS ABOUT

Nixie was growing tired of sitting all by himself. Sitting all by oneself isn't the pleasantest thing to do.

He was beginning to feel lonely, too.

And then he began to see strange things.

He saw the queerest things on the wall! Some were little, some were big, and all were moving about.

He saw black rabbits there, and other black things that looked like other animals.

At first he was afraid, but soon he got up courage and spoke to them.

They did not answer.

He crept close to the wall and tried to touch one of the black things. But when he got there it was gone.

He tried another, and the same thing happened.

"My, but they are quick fellows!" he said.

For as soon as he would move away, there the black things were again. He didn't know what to make of it.

Poor little Nixie! To think he didn't know that those black things on the wall were only shadows!

He was almost ready to cry again.

From where Nixie was, all he could see was the long, low hall, lighted by the row of lamps hanging down from the ceiling.

He wondered what was beyond. So he crept along this low hall until he came to a place that was higher.

On and on he went, till at last he came to a high gate, with higher walls on each side of it. He gave the gate a push. But it would not open.

There were other gates in the wall. Nixie tried every one of them, but they were all locked.

As he was about to give up, he spied a second passageway. This wound in and out.

Nixie followed it, and a strange thing happened. He came upon a gate, about three

feet high, that he hadn't noticed before. He gave it a push, but this gate, too, was locked.

Had Nixie looked more closely, he would have found a tablet on the gate bearing the words, "Manners-Land." But Nixie hadn't yet learned to keep his eyes wide open.

He was about to turn away when he noticed that at the top of the gate was an opening. He stretched his neck and looked through the opening and into the most beautiful garden he had ever seen.

How he longed to get out of the narrow passageway and into that beautiful garden!

"If only this hole were large enough," thought Nixie, "I might be able to get my head through! But suppose I did get my head through," he added, "what good would that be without my legs and the rest of me?"

Presently Nixie sneezed, "Ker-choo! Ker-ker-choo! Ker-choo!"

In less time than it takes to tell it, the gate swung open. And there stood two handsome rabbit soldiers in blue uniforms. Each had a gun over his shoulder.

Nixie was frightened almost to death. And I think you would have been, too.

“Who goes there?” one of the rabbit soldiers asked Nixie.

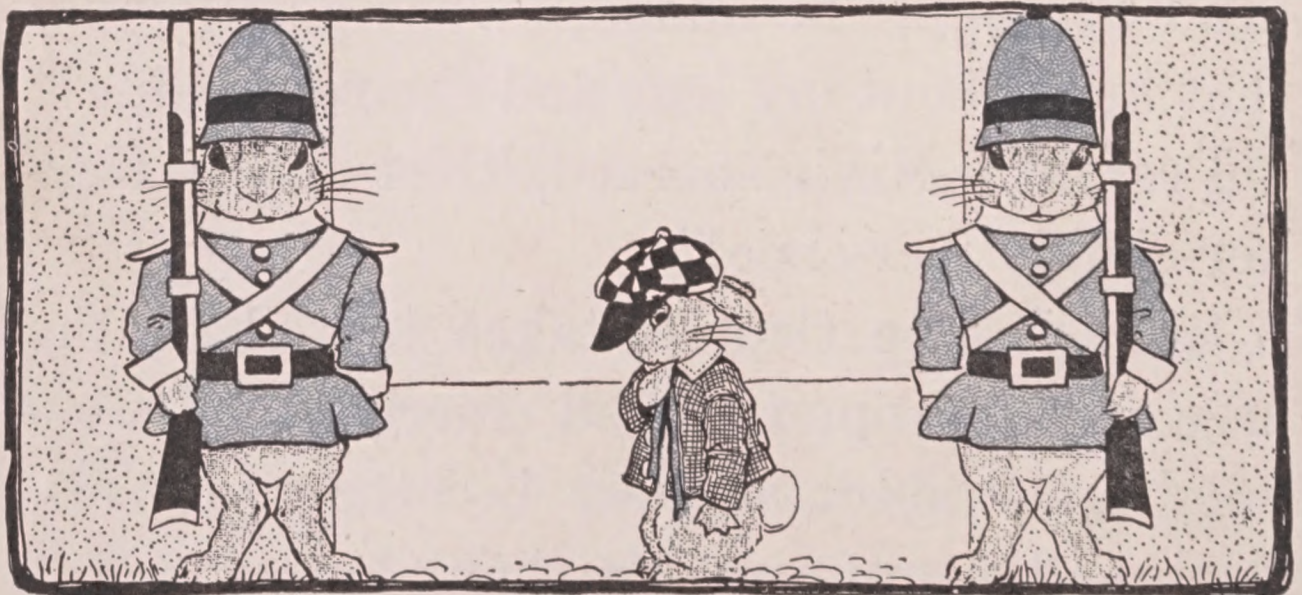
But Nixie was too frightened to answer at once.

“I—I—I th—think I’m l—l—lost,” he finally managed to stammer.

“What is your name?” the second rabbit soldier inquired.

And before Nixie had time to answer, the first rabbit soldier asked, “And what may your business be?”

Business? Nixie had no “business” that he knew of. I don’t believe he even knew what the word meant.



But he was terribly frightened by this time and he began to cry.

Now, King Kindheart, the good and great King of Manners-Land, just then happened to be strolling through the gardens.

Nixie cried so loud that the king heard him. He inquired of the soldiers what the trouble was.

They explained to him that a strange bunny—meaning Nixie—was trying to enter the grounds. Perhaps he meant to do harm to the king, they said.

The king looked first at the soldiers, and then at Nixie. The poor little bunny had stopped crying, but he showed plainly how frightened he was.

And then King Kindheart laughed long and loud.

“This little bunny would harm me, you think! Ha, ha! One of you had better take him to the palace. He looks tired and hungry, poor little fellow! Have them give him something to eat. I will see him later.”



Once there was a bunny—
Oh, what a disgrace!—
No one had ever seen him
With clean hands and face.

VI

NIXIE HAS LUNCHEON AT THE PALACE

The palace stood on top of a hill. It was a large and beautiful building. To it one of the soldier bunnies and Nixie made their way.

At the door of the palace they were met by a servant. The soldier gave him the king's orders, and Nixie was taken into the palace.

The servants all gathered about him. They did not seem to know what to make of the poor, tired, dirty little rabbit. He was so different from the bunnies of Manners-Land!

An old, motherly-looking servant came up just then, however. She knew what to do! She took Nixie by the hand and led him out of the room.

What took place then I cannot say. But I do know that when these two returned, Nixie looked quite like another rabbit.

His face was clean. His fur was smoothly brushed. He looked as neat and fresh as you could wish a little rabbit to look. Almost any one would have been proud of his looks now!

“What a pretty little fellow he is, now that you can really see him!” one of the lady bunnies said.

“Yes, but how hungry he must be, the poor dear,” the motherly-looking servant answered. “I think I had better take him to the dining-room, else there won’t be enough left for such a hungry rabbit as he must be by this time.”

And so she marched him through the palace until they reached the dining-room.

The first thing Nixie noticed was a large round table in the middle of the room. On it were dishes filled with fresh green stuff.

A very pompous rabbit, dressed all in white and black, showed Nixie to a seat at the table.

There were many other rabbits seated around the table.

There were a number of young bunnies there. There were some old rabbits, too. Nixie looked from one to the other and then he sat down.

And how he did behave! He at once began asking for this and for that, and not in the most polite way, either!

And the things that he couldn't reach, he would crawl after!

The lettuce tasted so good that he ate that and almost nothing else.

He spilled his water on the tablecloth.

The milk he drank from the milk pitcher.

But the most shocking thing he did was to eat with his knife.

He was punished for that, though, for he cut his mouth. And, oh my! how Nixie did cry! You would have thought some one was killing him.

Everybody stopped eating and some of the lady rabbits ran to him.

"What in the world is the matter with the child?" the bunnies asked of one another.

"Cut myself! I cut myself!" cried Nixie,

between his sobs. The tears rolled down his cheeks.

Then the lady bunnies petted him and said, "The poor little dear." That comforted Nixie some.

An elderly rabbit now spoke up and told Nixie that he ought never to put his knife into his mouth. Then he wouldn't cut himself.

Nixie cried out that he would never use a knife again.

He picked up the knife that he had cut himself with and threw it upon the floor.

"Bad old knife!" he said. "Why did you cut me?"

This was very silly of him, as of course the knife wasn't to blame at all. And besides, he deserved to be cut.

The fork and the spoon he threw after the knife. I suppose because they were with it, he felt that they, too, must be bad.

Then he began grabbing things with his hands. And he seemed to like that, all right!



Soon he filled himself up so full that it is a wonder he didn't burst.

Oh, if Mrs. Cottontail could have seen her naughty child now! How ashamed she would have been of him!

Why, one bunny like that is enough to disgrace a whole family.

And it was through no fault of Mrs. Cottontail's, either. For Nixie had had the same bringing-up as his brothers and sisters. And think what good and well-behaved bunnies they were!



If I were king!
If I were king,
You my queen I'd make,
Of palace, hill and lake.
For you my life I'd live,
To you my all I'd give,
And pretty gowns you'd wear,
With roses in your hair,
If I were king,
If I were king.

VII

KINDHEART, KING OF MANNERS-LAND

When Nixie had finished his luncheon, he was taken upstairs to the playroom.

He was given many fine toys to play with. But as he had no other little bunnies to play with him, he soon tired of these.

So it made Nixie glad when he heard some one coming to the door.

It was another servant who came. He wore a handsome red uniform.

“His majesty, the king, wishes to see you, sir,” this servant in the red uniform said to Nixie. And, bowing low, he took Nixie by the hand and led him away.

Through the palace they marched.

At last they stopped at a large door. When they entered, Nixie found himself in a most beautiful room. It was all decorated in gold.

At one side of the room was a throne. On this throne sat a large gray-haired rabbit.

Many young bunnies have gray hairs, but this rabbit was old.

He wore a gold crown on his head, and a scarlet mantle hung from his shoulders. His face was a kindly and pleasant one, but it was rough and wrinkled.

This rabbit was the good and great Kindheart, King of Manners-Land.

It was he who had talked to Nixie at the gate in the morning, but Nixie did not know him now. The gold crown and the scarlet mantle made him look different.

On the lowest step of the throne sat two little bunnies, one on each side. They were the king's pages.

A number of other rabbits were in the room, also. Some of these were the king's friends. The others were his servants.

When the rabbit in the red uniform approached the king's throne, he made a low bow. But Nixie only stared. He was too much frightened to do or say anything.

The king nodded his head and the servant said:

“Your majesty, this is the rabbit who says he is lost.”

“Come closer,” said the king to Nixie.

He spoke so kindly that Nixie was no longer afraid. He marched up the steps of the throne. The king laid his hand on the little bunny’s head and asked:

“What is your name, my child?”

“Nixie,” answered our bunny; “that is, leastways, I think that’s my name.

You see,” Nixie went on, “I was out last night with my mother and my brothers and sisters—that is, leastways, I think I was. We went to the farmer’s garden after something to eat.

It was late, but the farmer was still up. My mother said it was because he had company at his house. We were his company out in the garden; only we weren’t invited.

Well, when we had eaten all we wished I began to shout—that is, leastways, I think I did—but my sisters and brothers kept very quiet, as my mother had said we all should.

The farmer came and we ran for our lives.



Because I had been naughty my mother promised that she would pull my ears when we got home.

I didn't wish to have my ears pulled. So when we started for home I fell behind the others. While the others kept going faster and faster, I was going slower and slower. I thought that by the time I got home all

the others would be fast asleep. Then I shouldn't have my ears pulled.

When I got up this morning, I was somewhere else. Where it was, I don't know. But it wasn't home. I looked around, until I found my way in here. And here I am—unless, of course, I am somebody else.”

The king and his people couldn't help smiling. Nixie looked so comical, in spite of his pitiful story.

“What is your other name, Nixie?” inquired the king.

“I haven't any,” answered Nixie. And they all smiled again.

“That is, leastways, I don't think I have,” he said seriously. “Nixie is what they called me at home—unless, of course, I am somebody else.”

“Well, what is your mother's name?” asked the king again.

“Mrs. Cottontail,” answered Nixie. And again every one else smiled. To think that this bunny didn't know that his last name was the same as his mother's!

King Kindheart saw it was of no use to ask Nixie any more questions about himself.

So he nodded to a servant, who took Nixie to a seat.

Then the king stepped down from his throne and passed into another room.

He had not been in there very long when the door swung open again.

A servant came to tell Nixie that the king wished to see him in the next room.

In this room Nixie found King Kindheart sitting at a large desk, writing. He looked up and nodded pleasantly to the little bunny and motioned him to a seat.

Nixie was wondering what was going to happen next, and as the king seemed too busy to notice him, he began to look around.

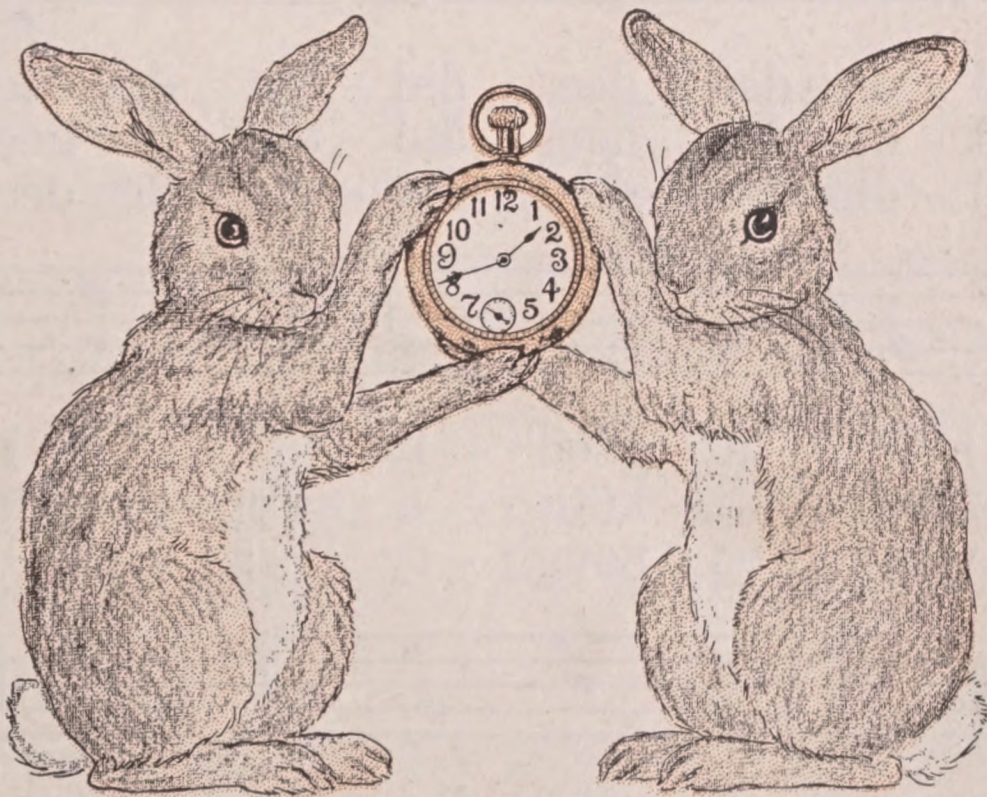
He liked this room even better than the others.

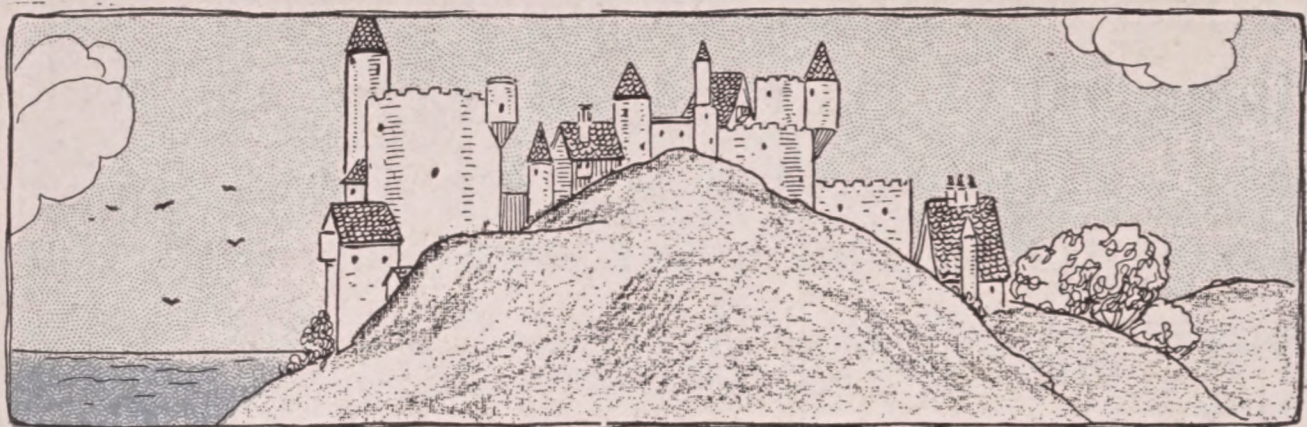
Beautiful rugs lay on the polished floors. The curtains and draperies were of the richest stuff. There were pictures on the walls, and statues stood here and there.

The furniture was richly carved, and——

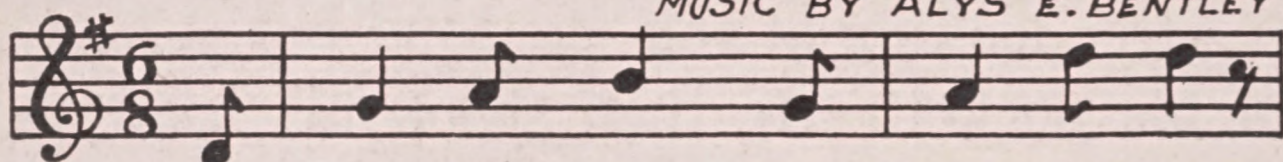
Just then Nixie saw the king take something out of his waistcoat pocket and look at it. (Guess what it was! Nixie didn't know, for he had never seen one. But you ought to know. It went "tick-tick, tick-tick.")

After looking at this the king put it back in his pocket. He then shook his head as though surprised, laid down his quill pen, and called Nixie to his side.

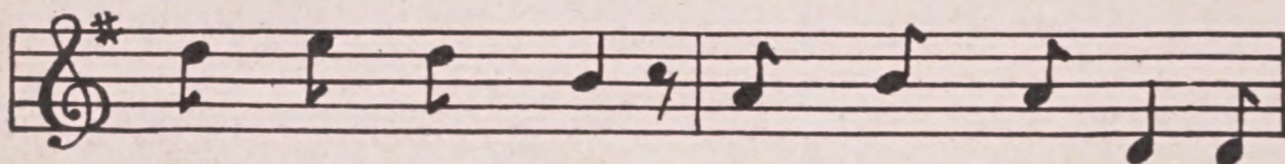




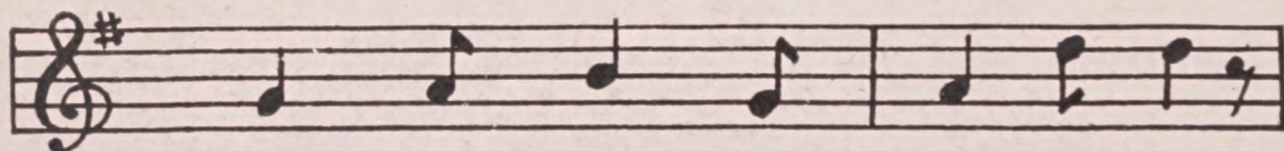
MUSIC BY ALYS E. BENTLEY



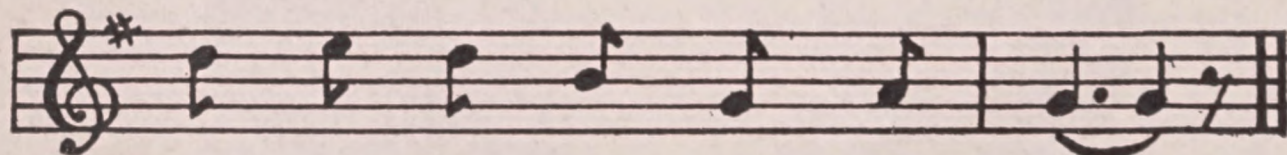
1. I know a king a - cross the sea—
2. A sto - ry once he told to me—
3. 'Twas of a bun - ny he told me—



Did - dle dee dee, did - dle dee dee; Oh,
 Did - dle dee dee, did - dle dee dee; This
 Did - dle dee dee, did - dle dee dee; Who



ho! a good - ly king is he—
 rab - bit king a - cross the sea—
 was as naugh - ty as could be—



Hey did - dle did - dle, dee dee.
 Hey did - dle did - dle, dee dee.
 Hey did - dle did - dle, dee dee.

VIII

THE KING TELLS A STORY

“Now, Nixie,” began the king, “I wish to tell you something about my kingdom. It is not like other rabbit kingdoms.

Here the bunnies act differently. They dress differently. They talk differently. And they eat different food in a different way than do bunnies anywhere else in the world.

After you have been here a little, I think you will notice some of these things yourself.

I suppose some very wise people might call my kingdom a fairy kingdom. But even very wise people are mistaken sometimes.

This kingdom is known as Manners-Land. I am its ruler, and my name is King Kind-heart.

All my people are good and kind and mannerly. That is how the place came to be given its name.

And now that I have told you something about my land and our people, wouldn't you like to hear a story?

Come, sit on my lap."

But Nixie would not. He said, "I want my ma!"

You see, he was feeling rather lonesome. And when you feel lonesome, or tired, or sick, home is the best place, after all. And mother is the first one you think of.

"We shall find your mother for you," answered the king, "but you must be patient. I have already sent out messengers in search of her."

Nixie looked up into the face of good King Kindheart, and felt sure that no harm would come to him.

Then King Kindheart took Nixie up in his lap and told him the following story—which, by the way, he said was true.

Once there was a mother rabbit, who had a little bunny whom she loved very much. She cared for him as best she could. She fed

him. She clothed him. She made a safe and comfortable home for him.

She told him about his enemies and how to keep away from them. In fact, she did everything for this bunny that it was possible for her to do.

But for all this the little bunny was naughty. He was saucy and he was disobedient. It made his mother very, very unhappy.

Well, one night the mother rabbit took this naughty bunny and his four good brothers and sisters out to a farmer's garden, to teach them how to get their own living.

The mother warned the little bunnies to be quiet, for fear the farmer might hear them. If he should, he might kill or catch them. Then he would make them into a rabbit-stew.

The four good brothers and sisters minded their mother. But when the naughty bunny had filled his little stomach full of nice, fresh green things, he grew very wild. He began to dance around and sing and shout.

Oh, how he did shout! Perhaps the exercise was good for his lungs. But this was no time and no place for exercising his lungs, however they may have needed it.

Besides, his mother told him to be quiet and he should have obeyed her.

The farmer heard the noise and started for the garden. The mother rabbit heard him coming. So she signaled to her little bunnies, and they ran for their lives.

The mother ran ahead. The four good bunnies kept close to her. But the naughty bunny stayed a safe distance behind. While they were running faster and faster, he followed more and more slowly.

You see his mother was angry. She had told this naughty little rabbit that she would pull his ears when they got home.

He believed that if he lingered behind, his mother would be fast asleep by the time he got home. And then he could sneak in without having his ears pulled! And before morning, no doubt, his mother would have forgotten all about punishing him.

This naughty bunny was young and did not know the woods very well. He did not know that there were many rabbit-holes besides those that led into the village his family lived in. So he happened to get into the wrong hole, though he did not find it out until the next morning.

When he awoke in the morning and found himself in a strange place, he began to cry. Then he wished his mother were there. And he thought how good he would be, if only he were at home again!

Here the king paused, but Nixie pleaded with him to go on.

“Did they find his mother?” he inquired anxiously.

“I am told they did,” answered the king, “and so I suppose it must be true. And I understand that the naughty little bunny promised to be oh, so good! ever after.”

Then, looking at Nixie, he added, “And I hope he was.”

Here the king paused again.

“Is that all?” asked Nixie.

“Yes, that is the end of the story,” the king replied.

“Tell another! Tell another!” pleaded Nixie.

“No,” said the king as he pulled out his watch again and looked at it. “It is growing late and you must now have your supper. To-morrow I will tell you more.”

Then the king touched a button, and presently a servant answered.

“Take this little bunny to the dining-room,” were his orders.

“After he has had his supper, you may take him out for a walk through the gardens. I am sure he would enjoy that. After the walk, take him to his room.”

Then the king patted Nixie on the head, and said, “Now, good-night, my child.”

That night the servant led Nixie to a pleasant, cheerful-looking room, in which was one small bed—oh, such a pretty bed!

And pictures hung on the walls.

And rugs were on the floor.

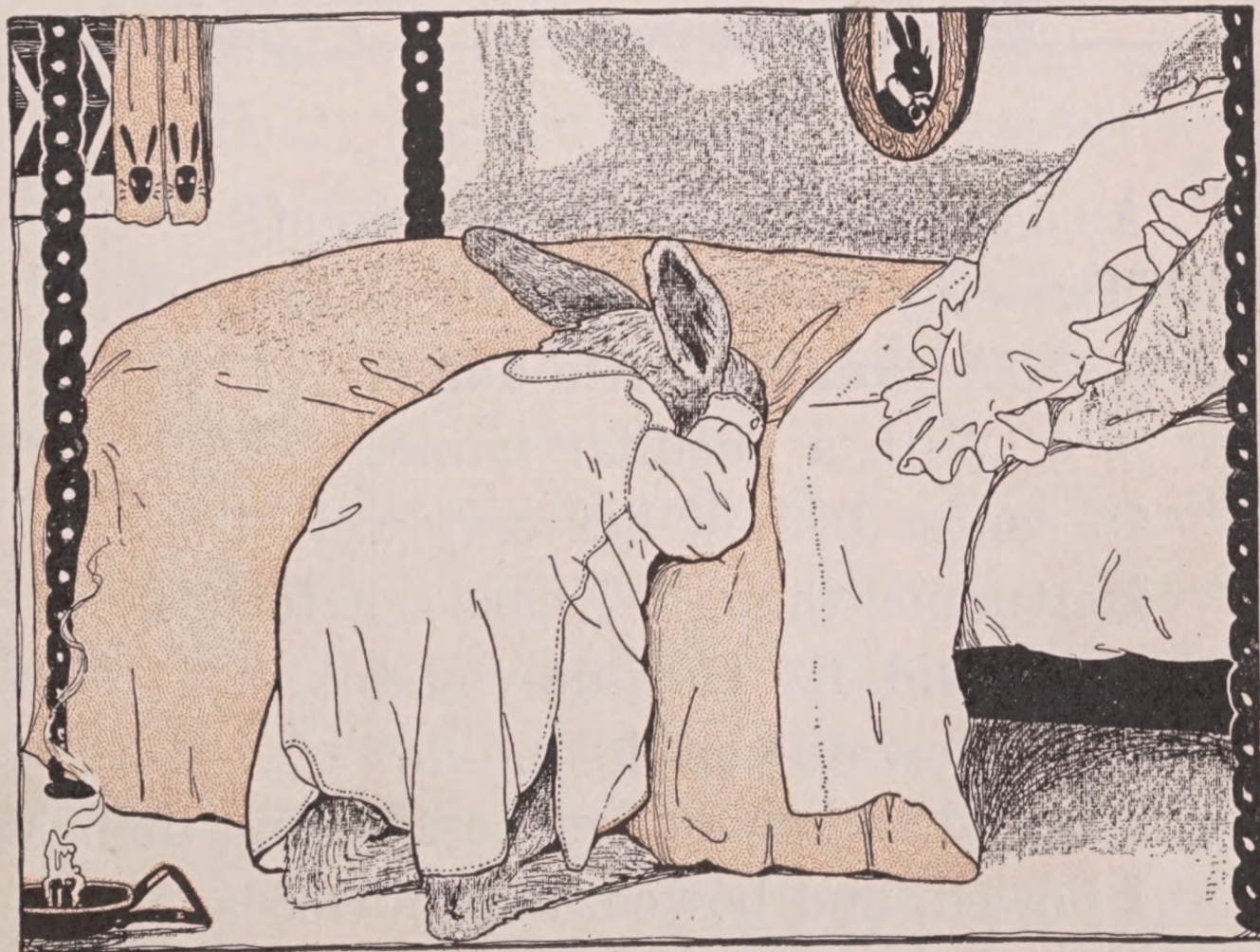
And there were curtains at the windows—
and in fact, there was no end to the wonders.

But, strange to say, Nixie saw none of
these. His little brain was busy wondering
over the story he had heard.

“Was it about some other bunny that King
Kindheart was telling, or was it about me?”
he kept thinking to himself.

He couldn't quite make up his mind.

But you may be very sure Nixie did not
forget to say his prayers that night!





As I was walking up the street,
'Twas my good fortune there to meet
A cunning little dame,
With a peculiar name.
Of course I knew her very well,
Her name, though, I care not to tell.
Said I, "How-do-you-do!
How-do-you-do-and-do!"
I bowed and shook her hand—and then
I bowed, and bowed, and bowed again.

IX

NIXIE MEETS SOME NEW BUNNIES

Nixie slept late the next morning. So many strange things had happened to him the day before that he had been tired out by bedtime. Besides, his bed was so soft and comfortable! And there is nothing like a soft, comfortable bed when one is tired.

I don't believe Nixie would have gotten up when he did if he hadn't felt hungry.

He quickly dressed himself, and out of the door he rushed.

But, thump! he hadn't taken a half-dozen steps when he bumped into another rabbit, nearly knocking him over.

It was a large rabbit that Nixie had bumped into. You may be sure our little bunny was frightened. He was about to run away, for he felt certain that he should be scolded for having been so careless.

Imagine his surprise when the large rab-

bit turned about and asked Nixie if he was hurt! And he really begged Nixie's pardon for having bumped into him. (Of course the fault was Nixie's; you know that!)

Our little bunny didn't know what to say. And somehow he felt ashamed of himself—much more ashamed than he would have felt if the big rabbit had scolded him.

As he wandered through the palace, not knowing where he was going, Nixie met many other rabbits.

Some were old, some were middle-aged, and some were young. But every one of them was polite.

Some said, "Good-morning."

Others said, "How-do-you-do."

Still others said, "A pleasant morning, sir."

And each of them bowed to Nixie.

But Nixie said not a word. He really didn't know what to say. He had never thought much about politeness himself, although his mother had tried hard to teach him more manners.

Nixie thought he was going toward the

king's room where he had been the day before. But I do not know where he would have strayed, if the servant with the red uniform had not found him.

“Where's the king?” Nixie asked at once.

“Very likely his majesty is in his study,” the servant answered. “Come this way, sir,” he said.

They went before the king, Nixie with his cap on his head. His boots were muddy from walking in the garden the evening before. Besides, his hands and face were dirty again. But he didn't seem to mind about these things.

“Well, lad, did you sleep well?” the king asked Nixie.

“You bet I did!” answered Nixie. At this every one smiled. King Kindheart himself laughed aloud. And Nixie laughed with him.

“Come now, Nixie,” said the king; “you and I will have breakfast together. After that I have a surprise for you.”

Then the king removed Nixie's cap for him. And he called one of the servants and

told Nixie to go with him. He whispered something into Nixie's ear.

The servant and Nixie went out of the room. Soon they returned. How different Nixie looked! He was as clean and neat as a pin now.

Then first the king and Nixie went for their breakfast.

That morning there were lettuce leaves and carrots (with the tops cut off) for breakfast. Oh, yes!—and each rabbit had a glass of water besides.

Now Nixie was very fond of lettuce leaves, and so he ate them all! He left none for the king.

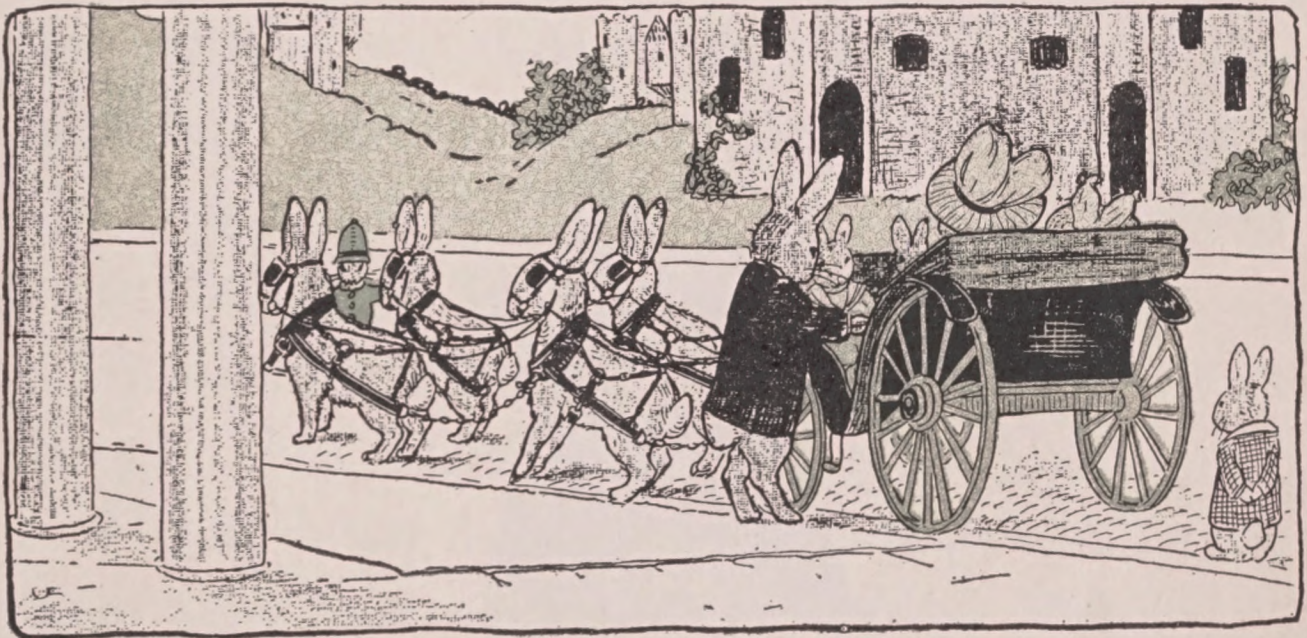
Would you have believed any little rabbit could be so greedy and rude?

Of course the king didn't say anything, but I wonder what he must have thought!

After King Kindheart and Nixie had had their breakfast, they returned to the king's study. No sooner had the door been closed behind them, when Nixie began asking, "Where's the surprise?"

“Just be a little patient, Nixie,” answered the king. “There will be plenty of surprises soon enough.”

The words were hardly spoken, when a beautiful carriage drew up before the palace. It was drawn by four handsome rabbits. And who do you suppose was in the carriage?

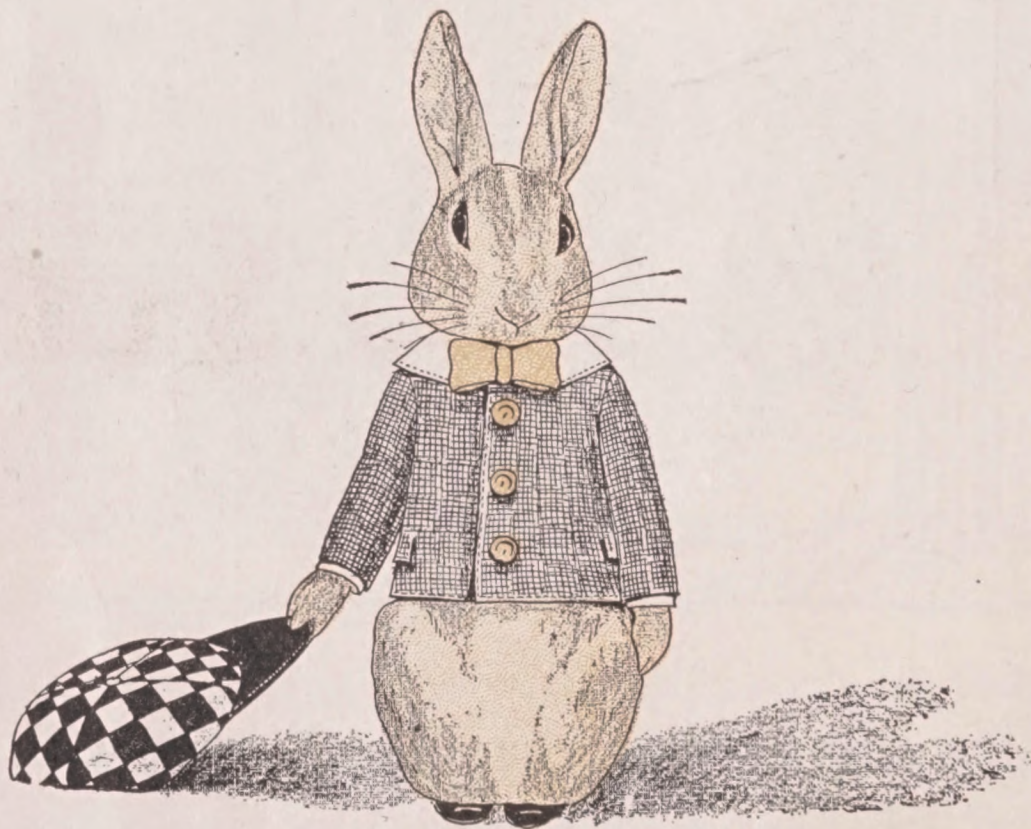


Why, none other than the king's wife, the Queen of Manners-Land; his two sons, the Princes of Manners-Land; and his only daughter, the Princess of Manners-Land.

The king's family had just returned from a long journey. They had been visiting

with their relatives. And you may be sure that the king was glad to see them again.

King Kindheart introduced Nixie to his family. They thought he was a real nice, neat little bunny. (But, oh my! what would they have thought if they had seen him before the king had had him taken to the bathroom?)



The king's children were pretty little rabbits.

The princes' names were Blinky and

Winky, and the little princess was named Pinky. Aren't these funny names?

Prince Blinky, the elder son, and Prince Winky, the younger, soon had Nixie out in the king's gardens with them, playing all sorts of games. They were glad to have this new playmate, who was of about the age of the younger prince.

They played together for a long time, and how they did enjoy themselves! At last they were tired, and so they went into the king's study. The little princes begged their father to tell them a story.

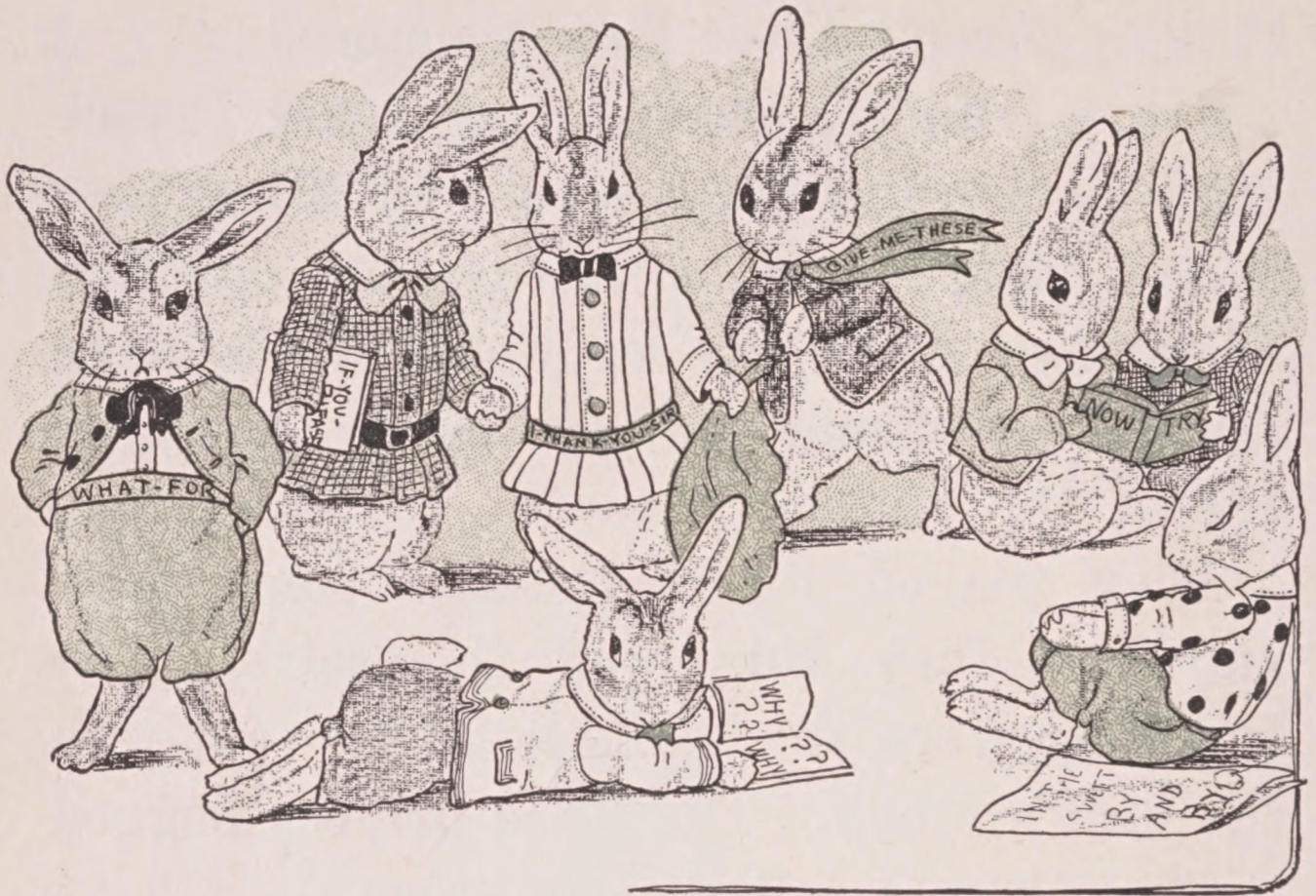
"A story! a story! Oh, please tell us a story!" they cried together.

"It has been a long time, you know, papa, since you told us a story," added Blinky.

"Well, what kind of a story shall it be?" the king asked, when he had hugged all three of the little bunnies.

"Something that's really, truly true!" they answered.

And so, of course, the king had to tell them a story.



I-thank-you-sir and If-you-please,
Good little brothers two are these.

Good brothers two have still another—
Give-me-these is their naughty brother.

And By-and-by, What-for? and Why?
Are cousins bad of Now and Try.

X

THE KING TELLS MORE STORIES

This was the story which the king told the three little bunnies:

Once a very hungry little bunny went to the table. There were a number of other bunnies there, some much older than he.

He quietly took the seat that was given him.

While the older rabbits talked, he said not a word.

While the rest were being served, he sat very still and waited patiently.

At last every one else was enjoying a good dinner. And this little bunny grew more and more hungry each minute.

He could hardly keep the tears back now, he was so hungry. Still, he did not ask for anything.

When it was found that he had been for-

gotten, but was so well-behaved, every one praised him.

They said he was a good bunny. They said he was a polite bunny.

And he had the best dinner they were able to give him, you may be sure.

Here the king stopped.

“Is that all?” Nixie asked.

Before the king could answer, the two little princes cried, “Tell us some more! Oh, please tell us some more!”

“Well,” said King Kindheart, “there really isn’t much more to tell. But when this good bunny did get his dinner, he ate it in a quiet, mannerly way. It was a pleasure to see him.”

Here the king stopped again.

“Is that the end of the story?” Nixie asked.

The king nodded his head.

“Then please tell us another one—a different one this time,” Prince Blinky said.

So, to satisfy them, the king told another

story, a different one this time. And here it is:

Once another very hungry bunny went to another table. There were other rabbits seated at this table, also.

This bunny looked from one to another, and then he sat down.

As he was very hungry, he at once began asking for this and for that, and not in the most polite way, either.

He would say: "Give me this!" and "Give me that!"

He might just as easily have said: "If you please," and "I thank you, sir."

And the things he couldn't reach he would crawl after.

And the things he happened to like very much he ate a great deal of. Of some things he ate so much that there was none left for the other rabbits at the table.

He spilled his water on the tablecloth.

The milk he drank from the milk pitcher, instead of sipping it slowly from a glass!

Then he cut his mouth with the table knife, when he shouldn't have put the knife into his mouth at all!

And the way that bunny did cry! You would have thought some one was killing him.

Next, he threw his knife down, saying, "Bad knife! why did you cut me?" Wasn't that silly of him? For, of course, the knife wasn't to blame.

The fork and the spoon he threw after the knife. Then he began grabbing things from all over the table.

In fact, this little bunny did so many things that were not nice that every one was quite willing to have him served first. They thought him very rude and disagreeable, and were glad when he left the table.

Here the king stopped. He looked down at the three little bunnies, and especially at Nixie. Nixie hung his head.

"Is that the end of the story?" asked Winky, the younger son.

“Yes,” the king answered, “that is the end of the story.”

Nixie hadn't said a word. Somehow or other the story made him feel unhappy.

Perhaps he was making up his mind about something. Anyway, when the king asked, “Like which bunny do you think you would like to be?” Nixie answered with the others. “Like the first one.”

“And why?” asked the king.

“Because every one liked him,” answered the little bunnies.

“And why not like the second one?” asked the king.

“Because every one thought him rude and disagreeable, and no one liked him,” Prince Blinky said.

And it was plain, from the way the other two bunnies nodded their heads, that they fully agreed with Blinky.





He was just a little lad,
A little lad was he;
She was just a little girl,
As pretty as could be.

He was bad, this little lad—
Oh, very bad was he!
She was good, this little girl,
As every one could see.

Every day the two would play,
And thus it was that he—
Naughty little lad—more like
The good girl grew to be.

XI

MANY PLEASANT DAYS

Nixie spent a long time in Manners-Land, or what is a long time in a rabbit's life. For rabbits do not live as long as people do, you know.

If a bunny is fortunate enough not to be killed by some one of his enemies of the woods—and he has many—he may live to an age of seven or eight years.

That is, he may if he is swift enough and sly enough also to escape the hunter's gun, and the farmer's cat, and the farmer's dog.

When a rabbit is five, or six, or seven years old, he is considered quite old. He perhaps has grown-up sons and daughters, who, in turn, have grown-up children themselves.

He may be a great-grandfather, or perhaps a great-great-grandfather.

Rabbit families grow very fast. And if no rabbits ever were killed, and all should

die a natural death, I imagine most of them would have to go quite hungry the greater part of their short lives. Soon there would be, oh, ever so many of them!—many more of them than of us, you may be sure.

As I was about to say, Nixie was enjoying his stay in Manners-Land. He had learned from the other little rabbits to play all kinds of interesting games.

They would hop, jump, and frolic around in the king's gardens, and outside of them as well, and have the most fun possible.

Each day more and more little bunnies would gather together to play. Nixie had made many good friends, and was always making new ones.

There was one bunny, however, whom he liked better than all the rest. She was a brownish-gray rabbit, with a little white spot on the back of her neck.

Her ears were somewhat shorter than Nixie's. Her eyes were brown, like his, and they bulged out of her little oval head in the same way.

She was smaller than Nixie, and just as pretty, if not prettier. Her name was Bunny Girl.

Bunny Girl came from I know not where. Perhaps she, too, had lost her way and strayed into Manners-Land, as had Nixie.

But I don't believe that she had ever been naughty!

One can tell whether or not a rabbit is naughty by looking at him, just as you can tell if little girls and boys are bad, by looking at them.

If they are bad, they show it in their faces. And if they are good, the goodness shows there, too.

Well, you may believe that Nixie was kind to Bunny Girl! And every one else had to be, or he couldn't be friends with Nixie.

Bunny Girl liked Nixie, too.



And because Nixie liked Bunny Girl so, he tried harder each day to behave himself. He wished to be as good a rabbit as the best of them, so that Bunny Girl might always like him.

And I must say that Nixie was getting along nicely.

He had learned to be quite polite. He would now lift his cap and smile when he met any one he knew.

He would get up in the morning when called the first time. (I wonder how many children do that!)

As soon as he was up he would sponge his fur and then brush it neatly.

He would brush his clothes. He would shine his little boots (whenever he wore them), and he always cleaned them on the mat before going indoors.

He was no longer selfish as he had been. He had learned to think of others besides himself.

But something happened one day that made him feel very, very sad.



The way that it happened was this:

Nixie and the little princes and some other bunnies were playing together. Suddenly Nixie saw on the ground an army of ants marching in orderly parade.

Perhaps they were parading in honor of some one. Or maybe it was an ant holiday. Anyway, they seemed very happy.

When Nixie saw them, he began to jump and shout, "Look here! Look here!"

The other little bunnies crowded about him, but they did not seem to find the ants so very amusing.

"Well, what is it, Nixie?" one of them asked.

"Look here! Look here! don't you see?" cried Nixie. He pointed to the ground.

The little ants were close to Nixie's feet now. He kept jumping up and down. Now they were under his feet. Still he jumped up and down, until he had killed every one of the poor little things!

The other bunnies looked on in astonishment.

"Oh, Nixie," one of them cried, "just see what you have done!"

"I killed the little rascals—every last one of them!" laughed Nixie.

But none of the other bunnies laughed.

"Don't you think that was mean of you?" one of them asked Nixie. "Suppose some big giant should jump on us now, and hurt or kill every one of us. How would you like that?"

Nixie couldn't answer. He really hadn't meant to be cruel. He just hadn't stopped to think.

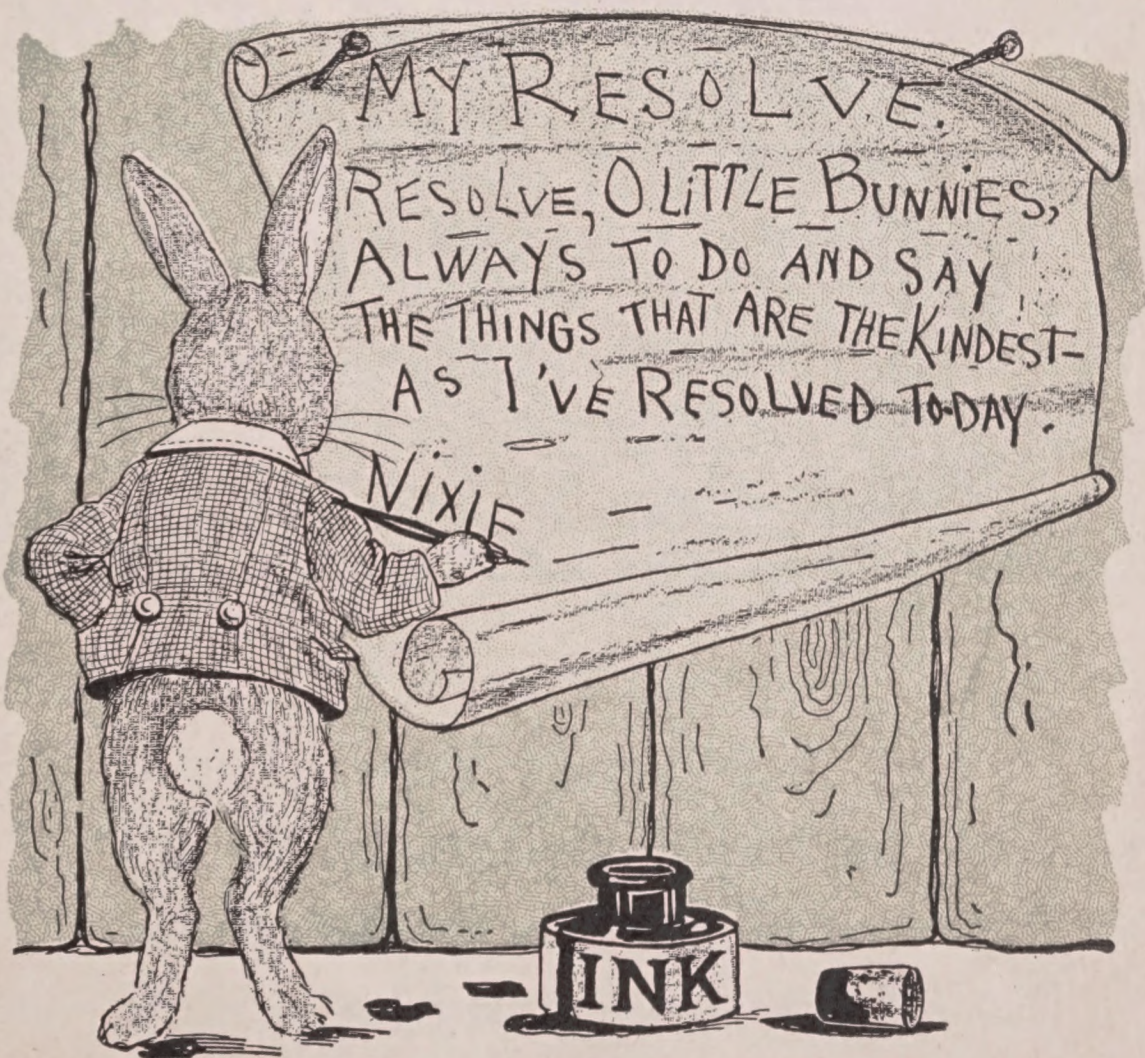
Nothing more was said about what had happened, but Nixie felt bad for several days after.

He was glad, however, that Bunny Girl

had not been there that day. As it was, he felt ashamed of himself, but, oh, how he should have felt if she had been there! He hoped no one would tell her of what he had done.

He made up his mind to be kind in the future to every living thing, however small.

And so as to remember his resolve, he wrote it out on a large sheet of bark, and here it is:





I'm glad I am a bunny,
And have a pleasant home;
For if I were a grasshopper,
I s'pose I should have none.

XII

WORD FROM HOME

Early one morning King Kindheart sent for Nixie. The king had not seen him for some time, and was surprised at the change that had come over him. He hardly knew the little fellow.

And I don't wonder—not one bit!

Nixie came into the king's study with his cap in his hand. He looked cheerful and happy.

His fur was brushed. His face was washed. His clothes were clean. His boots were well polished. He looked a model bunny in every way.

And when the king greeted him, Nixie bowed and said, "Good-morning, your Majesty," in a low, cheery voice.

"Well," said the king, "I have some glad news for you, Nixie. My messengers have returned. Your home has been found."

Instead of shouting "Hurrah!" or "Three cheers and a tiger!" or something like that, Nixie only smiled and said happily, "Oh, how glad I am!

Not that I do not like Manners-Land," he hastened to add, for fear he might hurt the kind king's feelings. "I think Manners-Land is the nicest place I have ever been in—that is, except my own home.

You know, I can't help wishing to go back to my home. I haven't seen my mother for a very long time!

You have been very kind to me, your Majesty. I wish I could do something for you!"

Nixie hung his head sorrowfully.

"You have already done a great deal for me, I think," replied the king. "By trying hard to be good, you have already repaid me partly for what I have done for you. Now, if you will promise to try always to be good, I shall consider that you have quite repaid me."

Of course Nixie promised.

Then the king handed him a little box.

“May you always think of Manners-Land when you look at it,” said he.

What do you suppose was in the box?

For fear that you cannot guess, I will tell you. It was a little gold watch, with tiny hands that told the time, and the softest “tick-tick” that any one could wish to listen to.

My! wasn't Nixie surprised and delighted! And who wouldn't have been!

He thanked the king over and over again.

Then he went out to bid all his bunny friends good-by.

He shook hands with them and told them how much he had enjoyed their company.

They were sorry to see him go, and begged him to come and visit them soon again.

But one little rabbit was missing, and could not be found. This made Nixie feel very unhappy, for the missing one was none other than his dearest little friend, Bunny Girl.

Where could she be?

No one seemed to know.

They searched throughout the entire kingdom of Manners-Land, but she was not to be found.

King Kindheart said that she must have strayed outside his kingdom, and perhaps could not find her way back. He promised to have his messengers search for her, and let Nixie know if she was found.

As it was growing late, Nixie and the king's messenger must lose no more time in making a start for Nixie's home.

Nixie had on a brand-new suit of clothes, which the king had given him.

He had on a new cap, too. And in his handkerchief pocket there had been placed a nice white silk handkerchief, with the initial "N" on it.

You surely wouldn't have known Nixie now!

After waving good-by (with his new silk pocket-handkerchief), Nixie and the messenger started up the same rabbit-way through which Nixie had first entered Manners-Land.

But somehow it looked different to him now.

He noticed that it was straight like a tunnel, and not at all like the rabbit-hole that led to his home.

“What a silly little thing I must have been, not to see the difference!” Nixie said to himself.

“Were you speaking to me, sir?” the king’s messenger asked.

“No, I was just talking to myself,” Nixie replied.

“I was wondering how I could have mistaken this rabbit-hole for our rabbit-hole—that is, I mean the one that leads to my mother’s home.

Why, it’s strange that I didn’t bump into this big tree and knock my head off. You see, there is no tree at the entrance to my home. My home is in the side of a hill.”

They wound their way in and out through the woods.

And often Nixie and the king’s messenger had to stop, as other rabbits had heard of



Nixie's adventures and wished to see him and shake hands with him.

It was dark outside when they reached Nixie's home. And it wasn't much lighter inside. As you will remember I told you, the Cottontails' house was lighted by only one

candle. It was a humble home. Still, Nixie liked it better than any other place in the world.

How glad Nixie's mother was to see him! She had long ago given him up for lost.

She kissed him first on one cheek, then on the other. And she hugged him again and again.

Nixie hugged and kissed her. Then he hugged and kissed each one of his brothers and sisters. He had brought each little rabbit a present, and there was one for his mother, too, you may be sure!

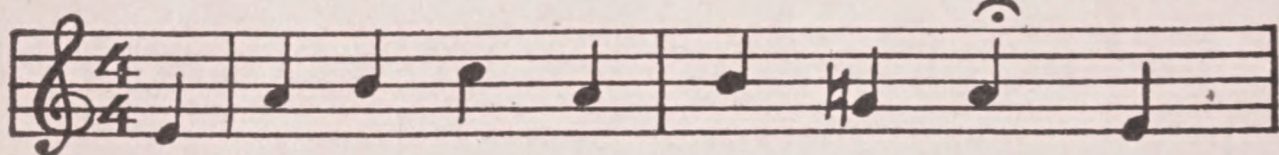
Then Nixie had to tell them his whole story, while the other bunnies kept saying, "How fine!" "How wonderful!"

They were all very proud of him, now that he was so good, so kind, and so mannerly.

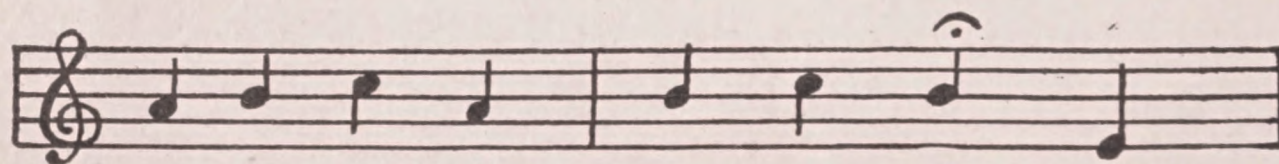
Old Mrs. Cottontail could hardly believe that this was her son, for Nixie had been so very, very naughty before he was lost. But now—now anybody would have been proud of Nixie Bunny Cottontail!



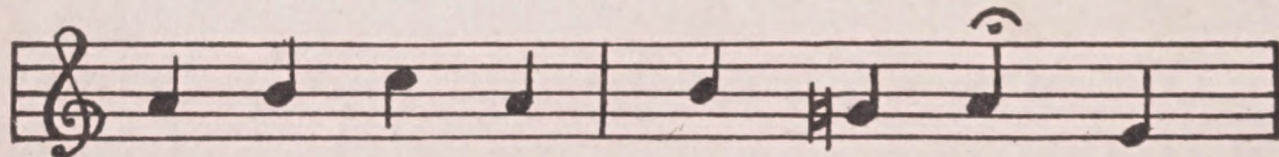
MUSIC BY ALYS E. BENTLEY



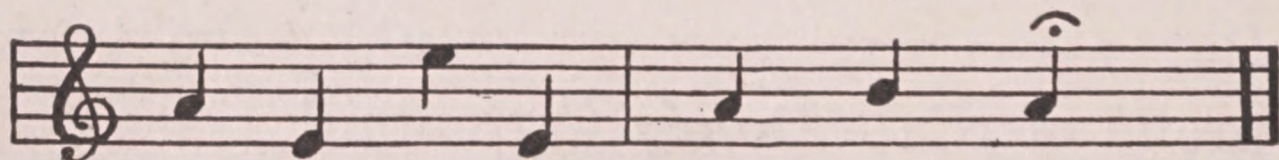
A big white owl sat in a tree— A



wise old bird he looked to be; His



eyes were large, his ears were, too,— To-



whit! to-who! to - whit! to - who!

XIII

NIXIE IS SAD

When the news spread about that Nixie was at home again, and that he was such a fine bunny, all the rabbits for miles around came to see him.

And those that couldn't come to see him wrote him letters.

But in spite of all this, Nixie was sad.

He was sad because he had heard nothing of Bunny Girl.

As time passed, Nixie grew more and more unhappy.

He would hardly eat. He could scarcely sleep. He grew very thin.

But when any one asked Nixie what was the matter with him, he would simply shake his head. He would not even talk.

As he was growing worse, Mrs. Cottontail made up her mind to find out what ailed him.

So, one afternoon after Nixie had not slept for several days, and was sitting up even then, Mrs. Cottontail went to him.

“I know that something is troubling you, Nixie, dear,” she said. “Won’t you tell me what it is? Perhaps I can help you.”

She stroked his fur and patted his head, as she used to do when Nixie was much younger, and, oh, that made Nixie feel so different! And then he told his mother all about Bunny Girl.

He told her how he had met Bunny Girl in Manners-Land. He told her how fond he had grown of this little brownish-gray rabbit, and how she had disappeared before he left the land over which good King Kindheart ruled.

And that is why he felt so sad. That is why he would hardly eat and could scarcely sleep. That is why he had grown so thin. It was all because Bunny Girl was lost, and he was so fond of her. My, how fond of her he must have been!

Now as it happened, Mrs. Cottontail was

able to help Nixie more than he thought she would be.

After Nixie had finished his story, Mrs. Cottontail said:

“Why didn’t you tell me of your troubles sooner, my dear child? I think I can help you.

On the outer edge of our wood lives a very wise old owl. He is white in color, and has large eyes and ears.

Of course, there are many such owls in these woods. And you well know how careful one must be not to get too near them.

But this owl of which I speak is different. He is harmless, for his home is in a cage.

Go to this owl and ask him if he can tell you where you would be able to find Bunny Girl. I am sure he can help you.”

These words cheered Nixie greatly. He wished to start for the woods at once. But his mother said he had better wait until evening, and then one of his brothers could go with him. Mrs. Cottontail said she would not feel so worried if two of them went.

So in the evening the two bunnies started off for the outer edge of the wood.

And Mrs. Cottontail's last words to them were, "Now, be sure that you go to the right owl. See that there is a cage around him before you go very near."

Nixie and his brother had no trouble in finding the white owl with the large eyes and ears, and the cage around him.

As they approached the cage, Nixie bowed and said, "How-do-you-do, Mr. Owl!"

The owl sat so still that you would have thought he was made of stone. But presently he blinked one eye, and then he blinked the other in a very wise way.

And then he said simply:

"To-whit! to-whit! to-whoo!

Who, who, who, who are you?"

"My name is Nixie Bunny Cottontail, sir," Nixie answered.

The owl blinked his eyes again, and then he asked haughtily:

"Why, why, why, whee, whee, whee,
Why do you come to me?"

“I have come for advice, Mr. Owl,” Nixie said. “My mother sent me to you. Bunny Girl, a dear friend of mine, is lost and cannot be found. As you are such a very wise bird, my mother thought you might be able to tell me where to go to find her.”

The owl seemed greatly flattered to be called a “very wise bird.” He puffed himself up a little more, and then he spoke:

“I have lived in and about this place for many years. I know nearly everybody for miles around. When any one gets into trouble, he comes to me for advice. As you say, I am a very wise bird.

But, you see,” he continued, “I have to live in a cage. Although I am given plenty to eat, there are many things which I should like to have that I am not given. So when I give advice I make a charge for it.

I think I can help you find this Bunny Girl. But, of course, you will have to pay me.”

“I will pay you with anything that I have,” Nixie said.

“But you must pay me with something that you haven’t, this time,” the owl answered. “The things that you have, I do not care about.

If I help you find Bunny Girl, you must pay me with six live mice.”

“But I haven’t six live mice,” Nixie said. “Neither can I get them for you.”

“Yes you can, young fellow; yes you can,” the owl answered quickly. “And you had better do so, too, if you wish to find Bunny Girl.

Now I shall tell you how you can get these six live mice. Mind what I say! Mind what I say!

To-day a boy in trouble came to me. He goes to the school near by. The children in his class were told by the teacher to find out something about rabbits and to bring one of them to school if they could.

Well, these children know very little about rabbits, and they haven’t been able to find one to take to school. So this boy came to me for advice.

I told him that for three live mice I would get him some one to tell the children all about rabbits. Now, I haven't been able to find any one yet. So you must do this.

Then the boy will give me the three mice. And you must have him give you six mice for telling the children what they wish to know. These, too, you will bring to me. Then I will tell you where to find Bunny Girl."

"But," Nixie said, "these children may kill me."

"No, they won't," the owl replied. "They won't harm you."

"Well, I will risk anything for Bunny Girl," Nixie said, sadly.

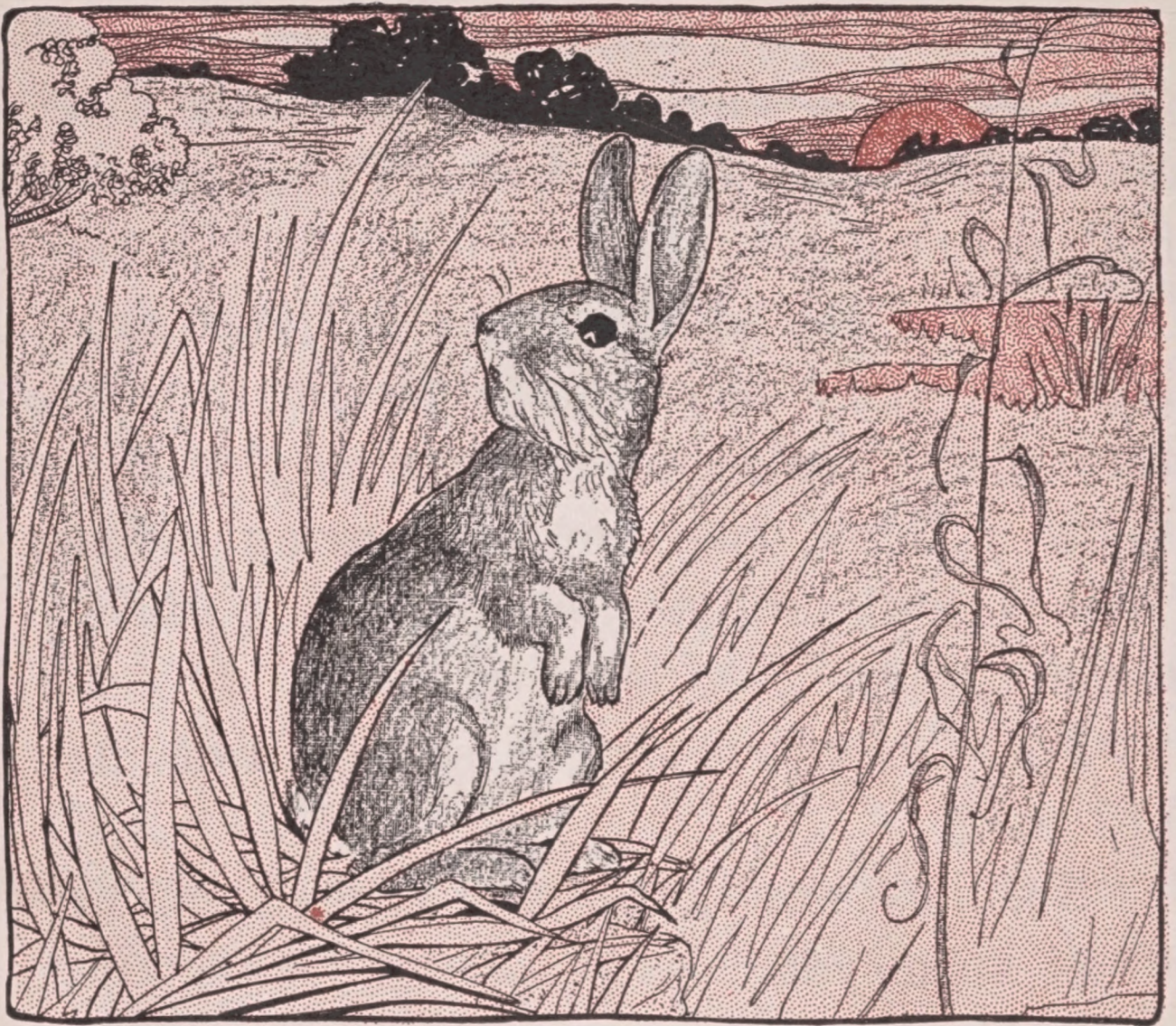
"So if it is a bargain, be here to-morrow morning at eight o'clock," the owl said.

"I will," Nixie replied. "Good-night." And the two rabbits hopped away toward home.

But the owl sat up in the tree all night long and kept saying to himself:

"To-whit! to-whit! to-whoo!

Who, who, who, who are you?"



Sniffle, sniffle, bunny goes,
Always sniffing with his nose.

Sniff, sniff, sniffle, sniffle—so.
What does sniffle mean? I know!

Sniffle means beware! take care!
There is danger in the air.

XIV

THE OWL MAKES A BARGAIN

A little before eight o'clock the next morning, Nixie was back at the owl's cage. He was alone this time, as Nixie's mother had some errands for his bunny brother to run.

The boy had not yet come.

Nixie looked at Mr. Owl, bowed, and said, "Good-morning," but the owl did not answer. He winked and he blinked in his wise old way, but Nixie had his opinion of the owl by this time.

"He can surely drive a good bargain, though!" he said to himself. "First he has the boy give him three live mice—and for what? Just for getting me to tell some children about rabbits.

And then this boy must give me six live mice for what I am to do. And then I must give these six mice, also, to the owl. A hard bargain for the boy, it seems to me!"

Then Nixie sat down to think it over.

He sat and he thought for some time. All of a sudden he pricked up his ears and exclaimed, "And what does the owl mean to do with the three live mice and the six live mice? Yes, what does he mean to do with them?"

He surely doesn't wish them for pets! He's an old grouch; he wouldn't wish any pets. Besides, he couldn't keep them in this cage; they would get away from him.

Strange I hadn't thought of that before! I shall have to ask the owl about that."

At that moment there was a sound of breaking twigs. Up went Nixie's ears!

Some one was coming! Nixie hid himself behind a log.

It was the boy! Nixie's heart went "pit-a-pat," so loud that he was afraid the boy might hear it. The poor little bunny was rather frightened.

The boy went up to the owl's cage. "Well, good fellow," he said, "have you found out anything for me?"

To which the owl's only answer was,

“To-whit! to-whit! to-who!”

Who, who, who, who are you?”

“Come, now,” the boy said, “I have no time to waste on you. I must get back to school before the bell rings.

I know that you can't see very well in the daytime, but I have been here no less than a half-dozen times already. It is about time that you knew me by my voice.”

This roused the owl. “So it is you, my boy, is it?” he said. “Well, I have things planned very nicely, only you will have to pay six more live mice.”

“Six more live mice!” the boy said. “What for?”

“Because that's my price,” the owl answered.

“Well, have it your way then,” the boy said. “I guess six mice won't make a very great difference.”

Now, as he had things fixed up with the boy, the owl began whistling for Nixie.

Up went Nixie's ears again. The boy saw

them this time. But Nixie was afraid to come from behind the log.

“So, you have a bunny here, have you?” the boy said to the owl.

“Yes, the foolish thing!” the owl said, “he’s afraid of his own shadow.”

“Perhaps he has reason to be,” the boy answered, “with such as you around. I’ll go and get him.”

The boy started toward Nixie, but Nixie began to run.

“Don’t run, little rabbit,” the boy said. “I won’t harm you.”

Nixie stopped in his tracks and looked at the boy. The boy didn’t look like a bad boy at all, and so Nixie stood still until he came close.

“Come, let us go to the owl together,” the boy said. So they walked side by side to the owl’s cage.

The owl eyed them curiously.

“Well, if you’ve gotten over your foolishness,” he said, frowning upon Nixie, “let us get down to business.

This is the boy from the nearby school.
Are you ready to help him?

If so, he will give you six live mice for it.
Then you will bring these mice to me and
I will tell you where you may find Bunny
Girl.”



The boy said, "Yes, I will give you the six live mice, Mr. Bunny. And then you can do with them as you please."

"But what do you intend doing with them, Mr. Owl?" Nixie asked.

"Well, I don't know that that concerns you," the owl replied.

"And yet I don't mind telling you. What did you suppose I meant to do with them? Hang them up by their tails for their good looks? Indeed, they're not pretty enough for that! Eat them! I mean to eat them!"

Nixie trembled at the thought of this. So the owl meant to eat the poor little mice! Yes, and he would have eaten Nixie, too, if only he had had half a chance.

"I didn't know that that was why you wished the mice, Mr. Owl," Nixie said, sadly. "But as it is, I cannot make this bargain."

"But you must! you must!" the owl answered, as he shook his head and hammered with his claws.

"You must! you must! or you will never see Bunny Girl again."

Oh, Bunny Girl! Bunny Girl! If it weren't for Bunny Girl! Poor Nixie began to cry.


The boy took him by the hand and petted him. He said, "Don't cry! don't cry, little rabbit. I don't know who this girl may be of whom the owl speaks, but if you love her so, and the owl can find her for you for just six little mice, why, give them to him!

Mice are no good, anyway. Everybody is only too glad to get rid of them. I will give you these six live mice."


And, as the owl said he would have nothing else, and Nixie felt sure he could not live without Bunny Girl, they made the bargain.

Nixie was to go to the school the next day to tell about rabbits and rabbit ways.


And then—oh joy! he would receive the six live mice, which he would give to the owl, and then the owl would tell him where to find Bunny Girl, the dearest little rabbit he had ever known!



Oh, who has seen my bunny?
For he has strayed away;
Will some one help me find
him,
And bring him home to stay?



I wonder what's the mean-
ing
Of these tracks in the
snow—
The tiny tracks so winding,
That seem nowhere to go!



Across the snow last ev'ning
I think he hopped away!
Ah, there you are, my
bunny—
My bunny rabbit gray!

XV

ON THE WAY TO SCHOOL

Nixie was up very early the next morning. He could hardly wait until it was time for him to go to the school.

He looked up at the sky. It was cloudy. He hoped it would not rain, as he meant to wear his new suit of clothes and did not wish to have it spoiled.

Suddenly it grew colder, and before Nixie was ready to set out, the ground was covered with snow.

Nixie was much pleased. He didn't like rain, but snow—oh my! how that rabbit loved snow!

That morning he used great care in washing himself, and brushing himself, and dressing himself. And when he was ready to start, he looked as neat as a new pin.

He carried a black box in one hand. Now what do you suppose Nixie had in that box?

“Books,” you say?

No, bunnies don't learn from books! The woods and the fields are their books.

Some things come to rabbits naturally, as they do to us. Others are taught the little ones by their mothers and by other friendly rabbits. But the rabbits' best lessons come from experience with their enemies and with things of their own little world.

So you see, it wasn't books Nixie had in that black box.

When his mother asked him what he had there, all he would say was, “A surprise for the children.”

Just as Nixie started out he saw some children coming along the road. They were on their way to school.

Rabbits are very timid, you know. When Nixie saw the children he hopped behind a bush. He didn't mean to be rude, but he just couldn't help it.

When the children reached the spot where Nixie had been, they noticed tracks in the snow. They decided these were rabbit

tracks. And as they had been told to find out all they could about rabbits, they were at once interested.

“Let us follow them!” one of the boys shouted.

And follow them they did. The tracks wound in and out. They went this way and that, but nowhere in particular, it seemed.

Still the children went on. At last, near a fallen tree, one of the boys noticed something like two branches of wood sticking up. He looked again. They moved!

“They are ears,” he said. “Be quiet! I think they are the ears of a bunny.”

He tiptoed around the log. The wind was blowing away from Nixie, and so our bunny didn't scent him coming.

My! wasn't Nixie surprised when the children stood before him!

“Good-morning!” one of them said.

Nixie did not try to run away. Though he was ever so timid, he was no coward.

But before he had time to answer, one of the girls said, “We are Miss Adams's chil-



dren. Our school is up on the hill. We have been told to find out all we could about bunnies like you, and are going to have a bunny talk to us to-day.”

“This bunny is supposed to be a good, and wise, and well-behaved rabbit. He has just returned from a place called Manners-Land,” spoke up another of the children.

“Yes, and Mr. Owl sent him to us. His name is Mr. Nixie Bunny Cottontail,” a third child said.

“Do you know him?” they all asked, almost in the same breath.

“Yes, indeed!” Nixie answered. He lifted his hat politely and bowed. “That is my

name. I am pleased to meet all of you.”
And he bowed again.

This time the children were surprised. How they wished they had not said so much! But Nixie didn't seem to mind at all. He just smiled and was as pleasant as ever he could be.

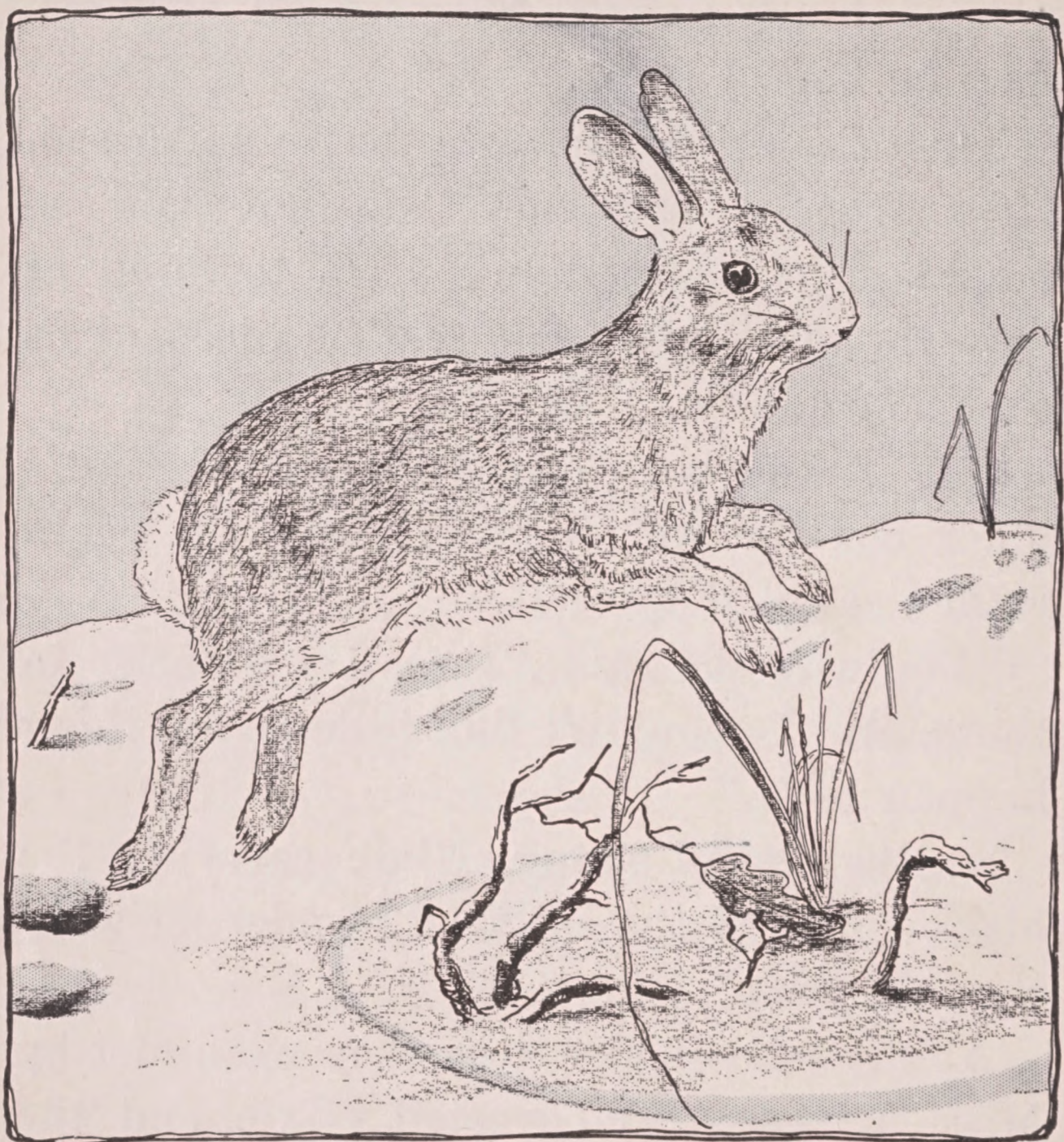
One of the boys offered to carry Nixie's black box for him, but Nixie said he would rather carry it himself.

“You see,” he said, “I have a surprise in there, and I shouldn't like to have anything happen to it.”

So they went along, Nixie carrying the black box, and the children wondering what the “surprise” might be.

At the schoolhouse door they were met by Miss Adams. She greeted Nixie and the children pleasantly. Then they all entered the schoolroom.

No one was absent that day, you may be sure! And every one was on time!



Four furry little legs—just four—
These are the hind, these are the fore;
These do the digging, hands are they;
These do the jumping night and day.

XVI

NIXIE IN THE SCHOOLROOM

Miss Adams gave Nixie the visitor's seat, on the platform, next to herself.

At nine o'clock the bell rang and every one took his seat. The room was so quiet that you could have heard a pin drop.

"Now, children," said Miss Adams, rising from her seat, "Mr. Nixie Bunny Cottontail has come to tell us some facts about himself and other rabbits.

Mr. Cottontail has just lately returned from Manners-Land, the rabbit kingdom where King Kindheart rules. I am sure we are very fortunate in having with us so distinguished a visitor."

Then all the children clapped their hands. And Nixie bowed and smiled.

As Nixie liked best to sit on the floor, the children spread papers over it and all sat about in a circle. Nixie sat in the center.



And you should have heard the things the children said, and the questions they asked of him!

The fun started when a little tot of a girl said, "What long ears you have, Bunny!"

"The better to hear with," Nixie replied. "You know, my hearing is very keen."

"What large eyes you have!" came from another.

"The better to see with," said Nixie.

"What a short tail you have!" another

child exclaimed. "It looks like a little cotton cushion."

"It is just that," Nixie replied. "You see, I have no need of a long tail. I am better off without it. If I had a long tail it might get tangled in the briars, or in a barb-wire fence, some time when I was in a hurry to get away from one of my enemies."

"What long, soft hair you have!" said one of the boys, stroking Nixie's back.

"That is to keep me warm in the winter," Nixie explained.

"And what a pretty color it is!" added one of the girls.

"It is more useful than pretty," Nixie replied. "When I am in the woods, my fur matches the color of things about me. So, if I see danger ahead, or behind, or at one side—for my eyes can see backward and forward and on all sides, as well as those of a bird—I can squat right down and then I am hard to find. It is only when I am moving about that I am easily seen."

"Why are your feet shaped so?" another

child inquired. "Other animals don't have feet like yours."

"Well, n-o, other animals don't have feet just exactly like mine," Nixie replied.

"But, then," he added, "other animals don't do as I do, either, nor live as I live.

I think my feet are very good for hopping and jumping, don't you?"

He had no sooner finished saying this, when over the head of one of the children he jumped. Then around the room he hopped. And before most of them knew it he was back in the center of the circle.



How the children did laugh! I think they quite agreed with him about his feet.

"And, besides," Nixie went on, "I must dig my home in the ground, unless I am fortunate enough to find a nice hollow tree or stump to live in.

My fore feet, or hands, are made just right for this, while my hind feet are the very things for pushing back the earth that my front feet dig up. Some people call my way of digging burrowing."

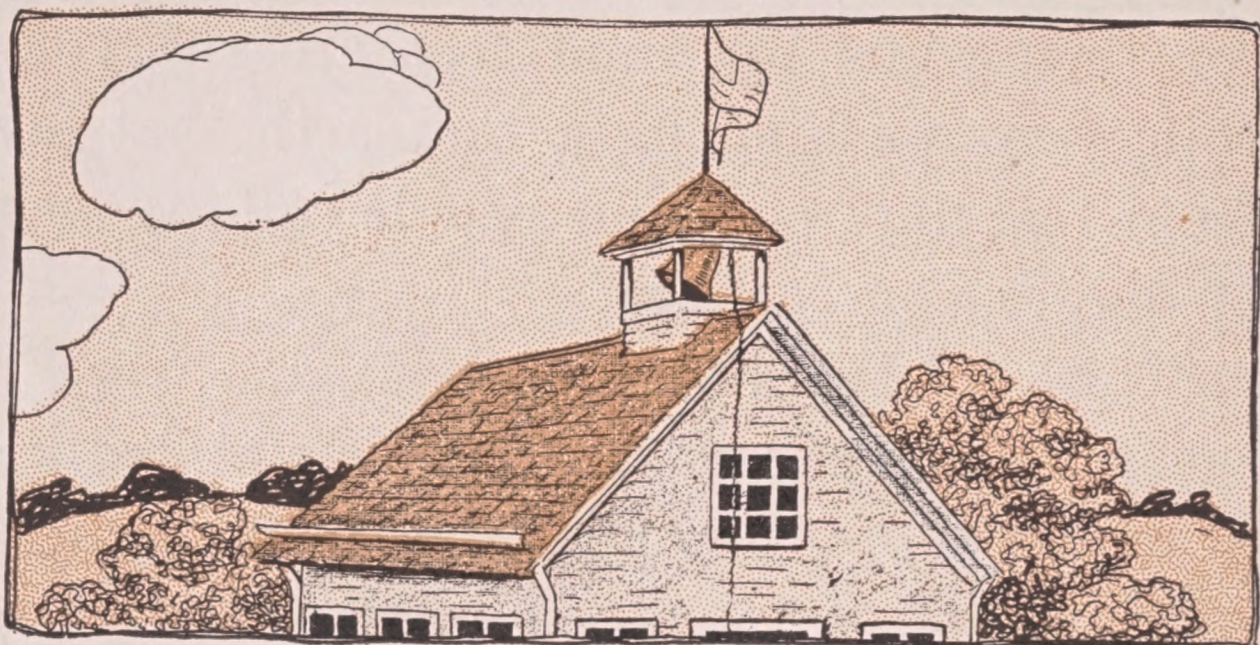
"How quietly you move about, Mr. Nixie!" several children cried. "We could hardly hear you hopping around the room."

"That is because my hind legs are padded," Nixie explained. "Feel the cushions on them, and notice the brush-like hairs and the strong nails on my feet."

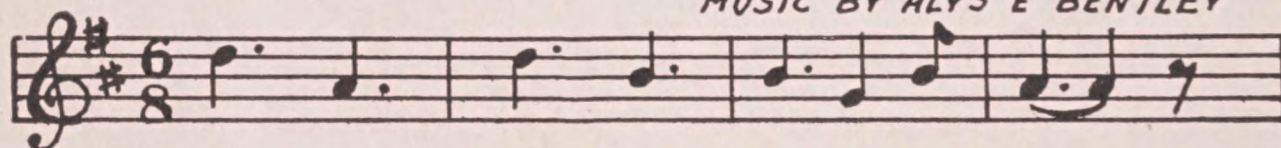
"Do you always hurry so?" some one asked.

"Oh, no!" Nixie answered. "If no one is chasing me, I don't go so fast. But if a fox, or a hawk, or an owl, or some other enemy is after me, I run for dear life. And then I am glad enough that my feet are formed as they are, you may be sure."

Just then the bell rang for recess, and Miss Adams and the children and Nixie all went out-of-doors for a breath of fresh air.

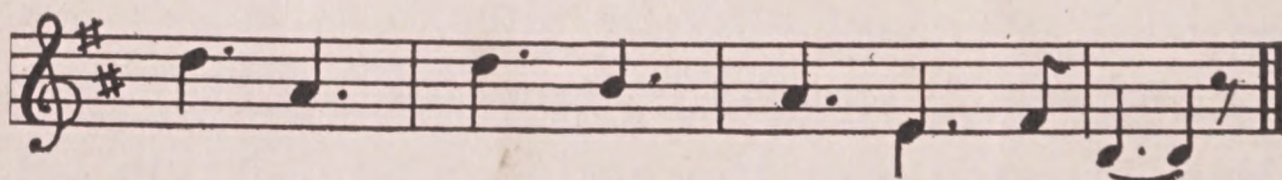


MUSIC BY ALYS E BENTLEY



Ding, dong! ding, dell! Why rings the bell?

Ding, dong! ding, dell! Why rings the bell?



Ding, dong! ding, dell! School is be - gun.

Ding, dong! ding, dell! School is done.

XVII

LUNCH TIME

The time passed quickly for the children between recess and noon.

The bell rang, "Ding, dong! ding, dell! ding, dong! ding, dell!" and every one knew that it was lunch time, except Nixie.

Nixie rather liked the sound of the bell, but he couldn't make out the meaning. So the children had to tell him.

All the children had brought their lunches, and Miss Adams had hers, too. Only Nixie hadn't brought any.

But Miss Adams had provided for Nixie's lunch. He wasn't to go hungry, you may be sure!

Miss Adams had told the pupils the day before each to bring something that Nixie would eat. She had not told them what to bring—each child was to decide that for himself.

And, oh, the things they had brought for that rabbit!

He would have had to be several times his size to be able to eat even a half of them. And I am sure some of the things would have made him feel quite queer.

There were dried clover tops, and oats, and carrots, and cabbage leaves, and turnips, and apples, and several other things that I should call good food for bunnies, and that Nixie liked very well.

But some of the children had brought such things as bread, and cake, and biscuit, and oranges, and bananas. And one boy had even brought a meat sandwich for Nixie!

Of course, he couldn't eat any of these!

After spreading their paper napkins out nicely, and one for Nixie, the children set about eating their lunches. But they really spent more time in watching than in eating.

And how they chattered! And what a good time they all had!

First, Nixie would bite off a piece of cabbage, or apple, or whatever else it might be,

with his long, chisel-shaped, sharp front teeth. A rabbit has only four of these teeth—two in the upper jaw and two in the lower.

Then he would pass the food into the back of his mouth, where he had many strong, flat, broad teeth. With these he did the grinding of the food. And he ground it well, you may be sure.

A rabbit's front teeth are always kept very sharp—so sharp that he can easily gnaw bark and eat twigs with them. And he is very fond of doing both. He also likes to eat leaves and stalks.

His teeth grow very differently from yours and mine. When our teeth are once full grown, they don't grow any more.

But the teeth of bunnies keep growing all the time.

Nixie would soon have had much longer teeth than he could well make use of, if they hadn't kept wearing away as fast as they grew out.

But the children didn't notice Nixie's



teeth so much as they did his jaws. These were very curious, especially the lower one.

Your lower jaw and mine moves up and down. But not so a rabbit's. His lower jaw works backward and forward mostly, although it also moves up and down, and sideways sometimes.

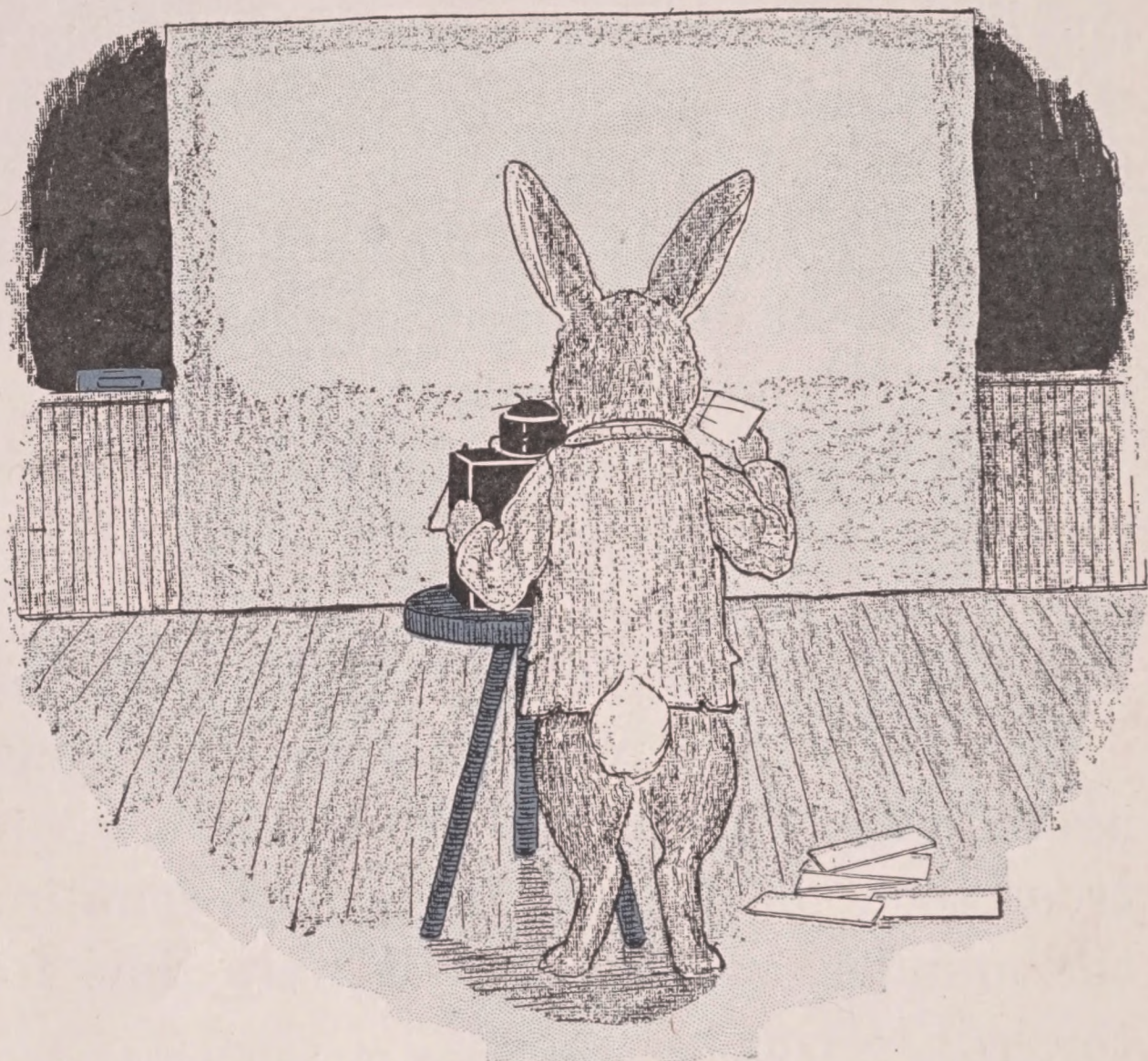
Because his lower jaw moves backward and forward and sideways is one reason why his teeth wear away so rapidly. The rubbing wears the teeth.

I don't know what else wouldn't have been noticed about Nixie's eating, if some one hadn't mentioned "surprise" just then.

This made all the children think of Nixie's "surprise-box" at once. They began asking him what was in it.

But Nixie wouldn't talk. He only smiled.

"He shall show you after the bell rings again," Miss Adams told the children. And from then on the children were counting the minutes, wishing that it were time for the bell to ring.



Bunny can sit by the bush and wink;
Bunny can hop and run;
He can do the queerest things, I think,
And have lots and lots of fun!

But sometimes Bunny gets serious
(Why, I could never see!)
Then he will sit before all of us
And lecture to you and to me.

XVIII

NIXIE GIVES A LECTURE

The bell rang again. Lunch time was over. The children all took their seats.

Nixie Bunny stepped up on the platform. He put his "surprise-box" on the teacher's desk.

The children were as still as mice. They hardly breathed. Then Nixie opened the box.

What do you suppose he had in it?

I know you couldn't guess and so I shall tell you. He—had—in—the—box—a—magic—lantern!

My, weren't the children pleased!

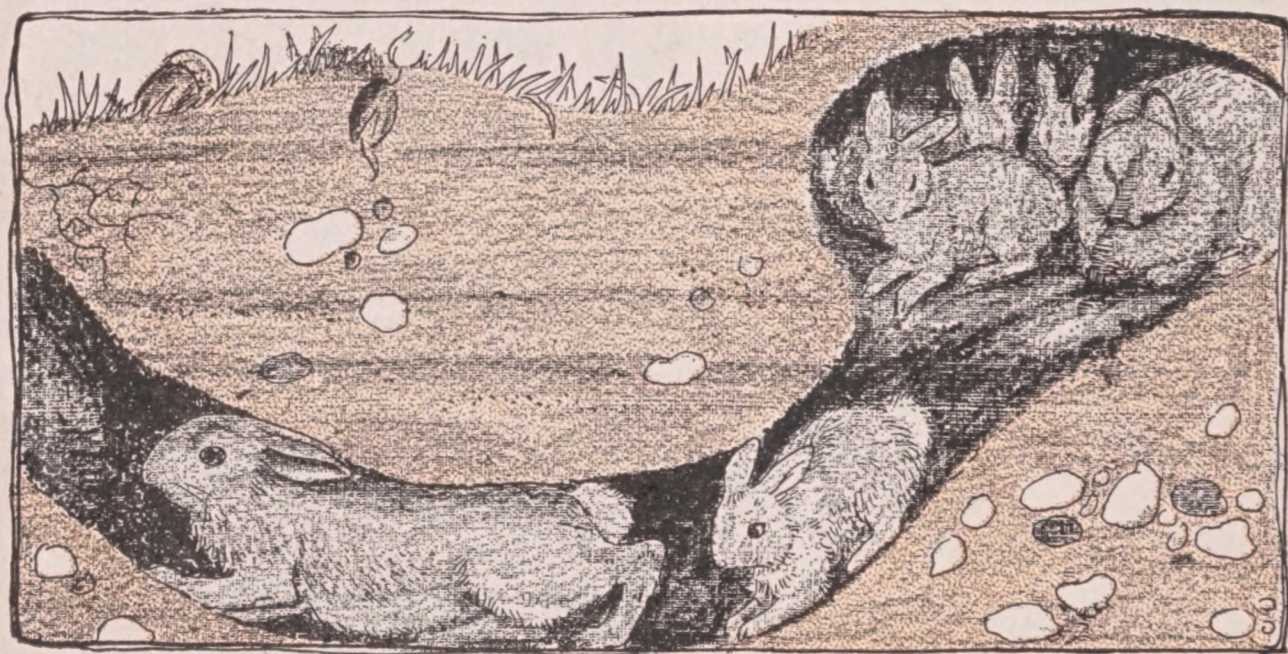
Miss Adams took a large sheet of white cloth out of her desk drawer, and fastened it up on the wall opposite her platform. For Nixie was going to show them some pictures. And he was going to give a lecture, besides!

Miss Adams pulled the window shades down, and the room was dark.

In a few moments a small, round light shone on the white sheet. Then Nixie began:

“My first picture will be that of a real rabbit home, down under the ground.

When a rabbit takes a wife, he must make a home for her. So he digs and burrows, and burrows and digs, until he has made a house with many chambers.



He is careful to make a long and winding passageway in this home, the better to protect his wife and himself from their many enemies of the woods.

Mrs. Rabbit is usually well satisfied with the home that her husband makes for her.

But for her babies she digs a separate home, at the far end of this home with the many chambers."

"And do the children have to live there by themselves? I shouldn't like that!"

This wasn't a part of the lecture, of course. One of the children asked the question. Every one laughed.

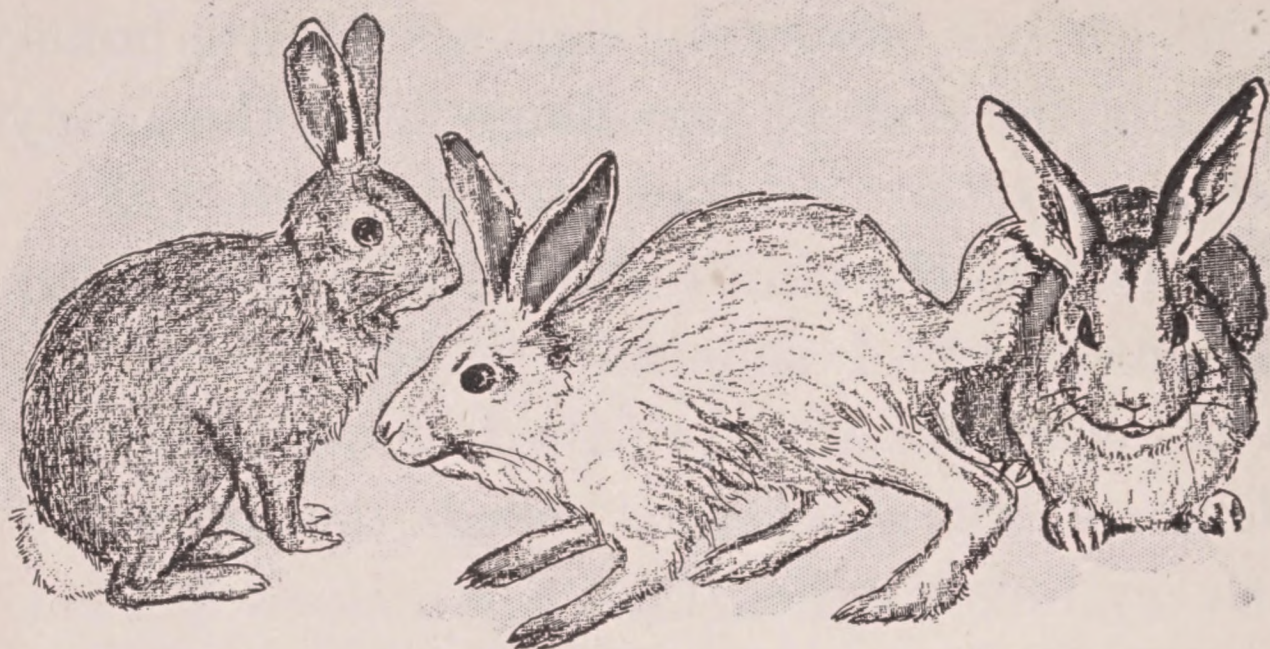
When the room was quiet again, Nixie said, "Oh, no, the mother lives with her babies. She makes a nest for them, lining it with dry leaves and with hair that she pulls from her own breast."

Here Nixie took the picture from the lantern. In a moment he had a different one on the sheet.

"My second picture," he said, "is that of three bunnies. They are not all alike, however, as you will notice.

There are nearly as many races of rabbits as there are of people," Nixie went on.

"The one on the left is a bunny of the same race as I am. We are known as gray wild rabbits, or Cottontails.



In the center of the picture is a cousin of mine, the Northern Hare, who looks very much like me. He is somewhat larger than a Cottontail, but only about half as large as the Jack Rabbit.

He has longer ears and feet than any of my family, and usually wears a black patch at the tip of his ears.

He is not quite so gray as I am in the summer, while in the winter he changes color and turns white. My fur is gray all the year round.

This cousin of mine is also known as the wild rabbit. Although we look much alike, our habits differ.

I make my home under the ground all the year. We Cottontails love company, and always live in a village where there are many other bunnies. Such a village is known as a warren.

My cousin, the Northern Hare, prefers to live alone. In summer he makes his home in the long grass in the open field. In winter the snow covers him and keeps him from freezing.

On the right is a tame white rabbit. He is not quite so timid as the hare or the Cottontail, and is a great pet with children.

He has no need for burrowing, or hiding in the grass, nor for hunting his food. And



he need not be afraid that some bad wood folks will get him.

Some boy generally makes a home for him, and gives him food.

This bunny's eyes are pink instead of brown, like those of the hare and the cottontail."

With this Nixie drew out the picture and slipped another one in.

And you could hear the children all over the room saying, "How nice!" "Isn't he fine!" "Aren't you glad he came?"

"My third picture," Nixie said, "shows you some of my best-known enemies.

The cat is almost as bad as any enemy that we have. When she has once had a taste of wild animal food, she always afterward prefers it to rats and mice."

Nixie's voice trembled a little, as though the very thought of his enemy frightened him. But he went bravely on.

"The dog and man usually come after us together. The dog hunts us up and the man shoots us.

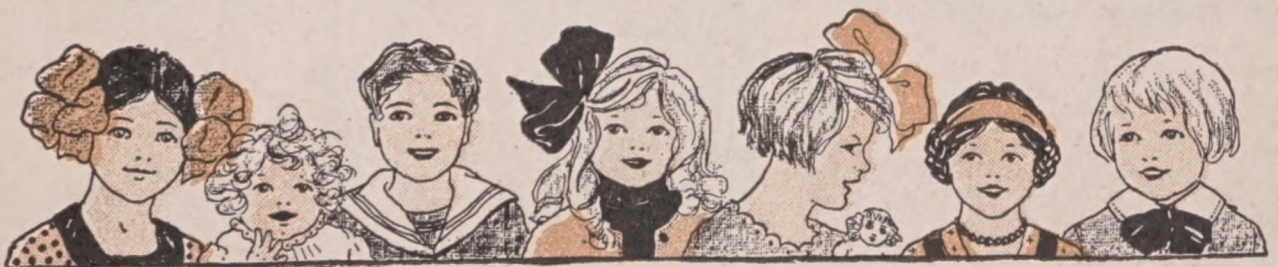


Many a merry chase did my father lead the dog when he was young. But he got caught at last. And I suppose some day I shall be caught. Few wild animals die of old age.”

Nixie spoke sadly and the children felt so sorry for him that they could have cried. But he had slipped in another picture and now began again:

“My fourth picture shows more of our enemies—the owl, the fox, and the hawk.

These are but a few of our enemies of the



woods. I suppose the reason we have so many is that our flesh is good to eat. And each enemy comes after us in a different way, which makes it harder for us to escape.”

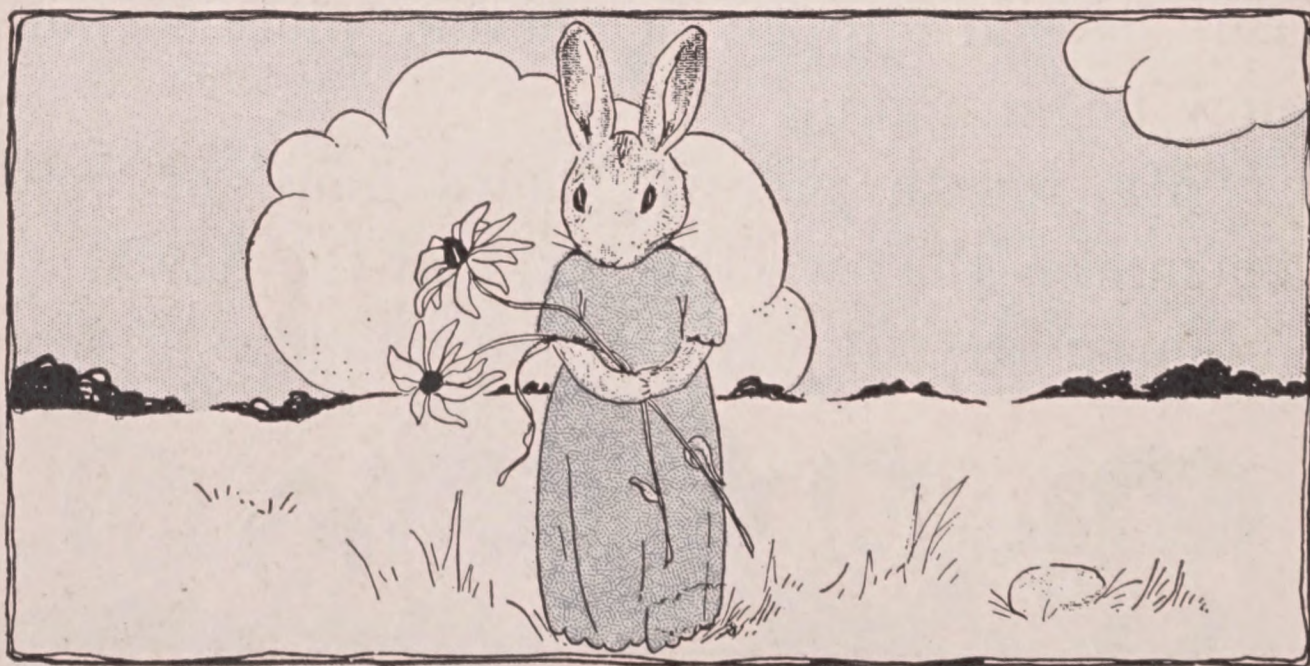
Here Nixie changed the pictures again.

“My fifth picture,” he continued, “is one I like very much. It is of my friends—I hope.”

And the picture Nixie threw on the screen was of the children.

Oh, my! how they did clap their hands!

When the clapping had ceased, Nixie said, “My last picture is one which is very dear to me.” He spoke slowly and sadly as he threw the picture on the sheet.



It was the picture of Bunny Girl, Nixie's sweetheart, who had disappeared so mysteriously, and because of whom he was even then giving this lecture.

From the picture you can see that Bunny Girl must have been a very sweet little rabbit. No wonder Nixie liked her!

When Nixie removed the picture, the window shades were raised. The show was over.

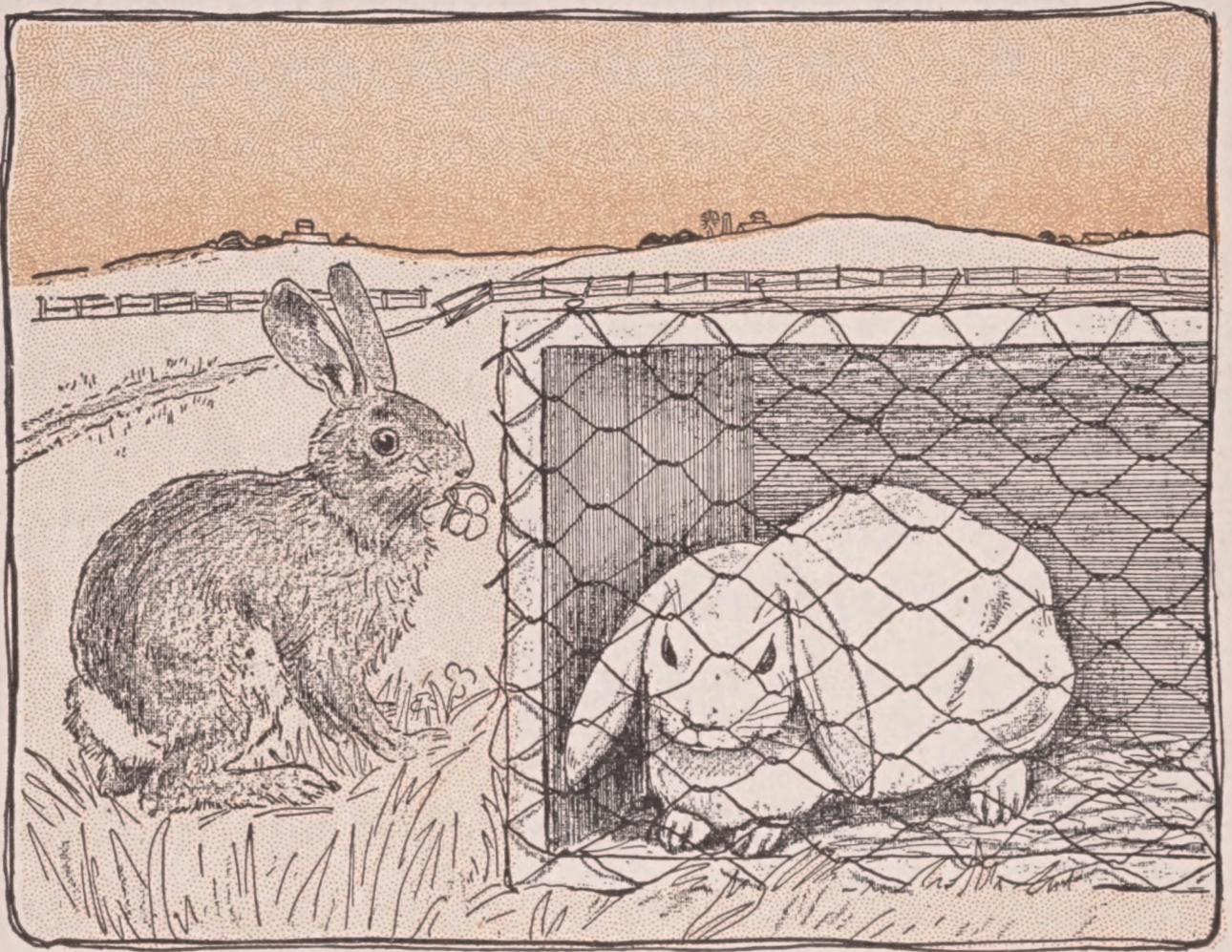
Miss Adams and the children thanked Nixie again and again.

Then one of the boys brought him the six live mice, and offered to carry them to the owl's cage.

Nixie was greatly pleased.

Every one shook hands with the kind little bunny, and soon he and the boy were on their way.

Nixie was in such a hurry that he kept running ahead of the boy. And as he went along he might have been heard to exclaim joyfully, "Bunny Girl! Oh, Bunny Girl!"



The tame rabbit lives in a house;—
The wild rabbit lives in the wood,
He's wary of the fox and owl,
For they know his meat is good.

The tame rabbit eats from my hand;—
The wild rabbit is filled with glee
At the sight of a clover-field
Or the bark of a nice young tree.

XIX

NIXIE FINDS BUNNY GIRL

The owl appeared much pleased to see Nixie and the boy. But he was more pleased to see the six live mice, you may be sure.

In fact, he was so eager to get the mice that he at once began his story:

“When Bunny Girl strayed outside of Manners-Land,” he said, “she wandered about for many a day, trying to find her way back. But she could not.

One day her uncle found her and took her to his home. He lives in the woods, far away from here, beyond the old mill.

That is where you will find her.

And, now, give me the mice!”

“Not so soon, my good friend,” the boy answered. “You have not told us yet the name of Bunny Girl’s uncle.

How do you suppose Mr. Nixie could find this rabbit home without knowing that?”

“The name of Bunny Girl’s uncle is Mr. Henry Brown-Rabbit,” the owl replied, crossly.

Nixie had heard of Mr. Brown-Rabbit before. He was supposed to be very wealthy. Rabbits for miles around knew of him, and so Nixie felt sure he could find the way to his home.

Nixie gave the owl the six live mice, and the boy and the owl and Nixie parted.

Mr. Brown-Rabbit did live quite far away, Nixie found. But as Nixie could run very swiftly, in a few hours he was there.

How glad he was to think Bunny Girl was so near to him now!

Mr. Brown-Rabbit was sitting in front of his home, enjoying the evening air, when Nixie came up.

“Good-evening, sir,” he said. “My name is Nixie Bunny Cottontail. I have been told that Bunny Girl, who is a friend of mine and who was lost from Manners-Land, is at your home. So I came to see her.”

But Mr. Brown-Rabbit shook his head.

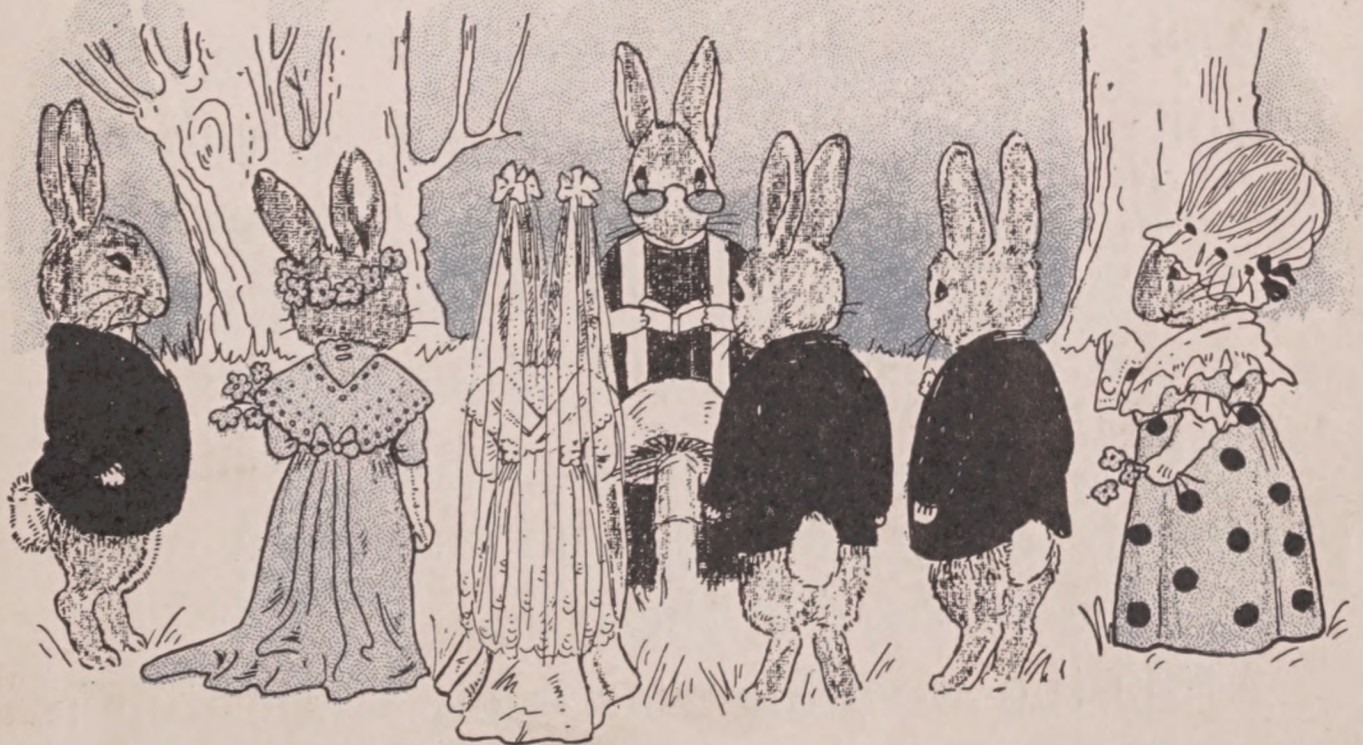
“My dear boy,” said he, “Bunny Girl is no longer here. I have taken her home.

Run straight down this way until you come to a wire fence. Then turn to your right. Her home is in the side of the large hill. You cannot miss it.

I know Bunny Girl will be glad to see you. She has often spoken of you.”

Nixie hardly stopped to thank Mr. Brown-Rabbit. With all speed he set out once more and soon was at Bunny Girl’s door.

And, sure enough, he found her safe and well at home. And, oh, how glad the two bunnies were to see each other!



Nixie often visited at her home after that. And sometimes Bunny Girl would go with him to see his mother.

And one day there was a wedding in the woods. And who do you suppose was being married?

Why, Nixie Bunny Cottontail and Bunny Girl, to be sure!

And all the rabbits for miles around came to the wedding. For every one liked Nixie Bunny, now that he was such a fine fellow. And every one was glad to have him happy.

Bunny Girl's rich uncle, Mr. Brown-Rabbit, provided the feast—and what a feast it was!

And what a lot of presents these two bunnies received! Even King Kindheart sent them a present. What do you suppose it was? Why, a set of beautiful dishes. And as both Nixie and Bunny Girl had learned how to eat from dishes while in Manners-Land, you may be sure they were very glad to receive these.

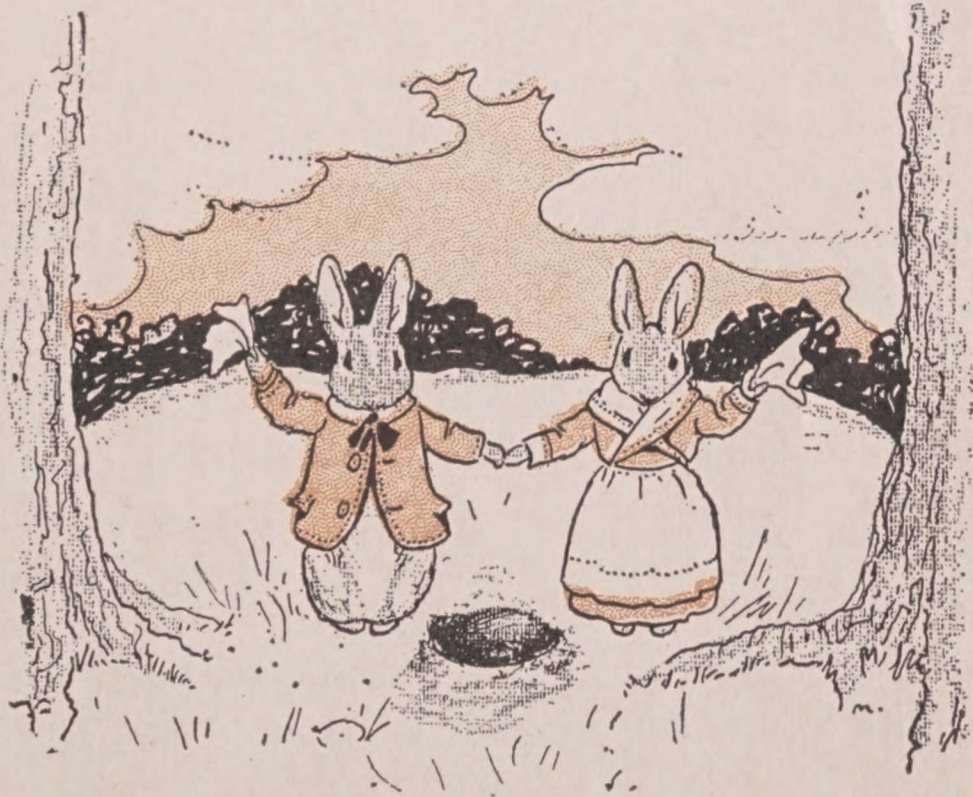
After the wedding was over, Nixie dug a

nice new home for his wife and himself, deep under the ground. Like the home in the picture which Nixie had shown the children, his home had many chambers.

It, too, had a long and winding passage-way, to protect them from outside enemies.

Although it has been long since I have heard anything of Mr. and Mrs. Nixie Bunny Cottontail, I trust they are living as happily as they deserve in their cozy home in Rabbit-Town-in-the-Woods.

Perhaps we may meet them again within the pages of another book, some day when we have a few moments to spare.



A WORD ABOUT THE BOOK

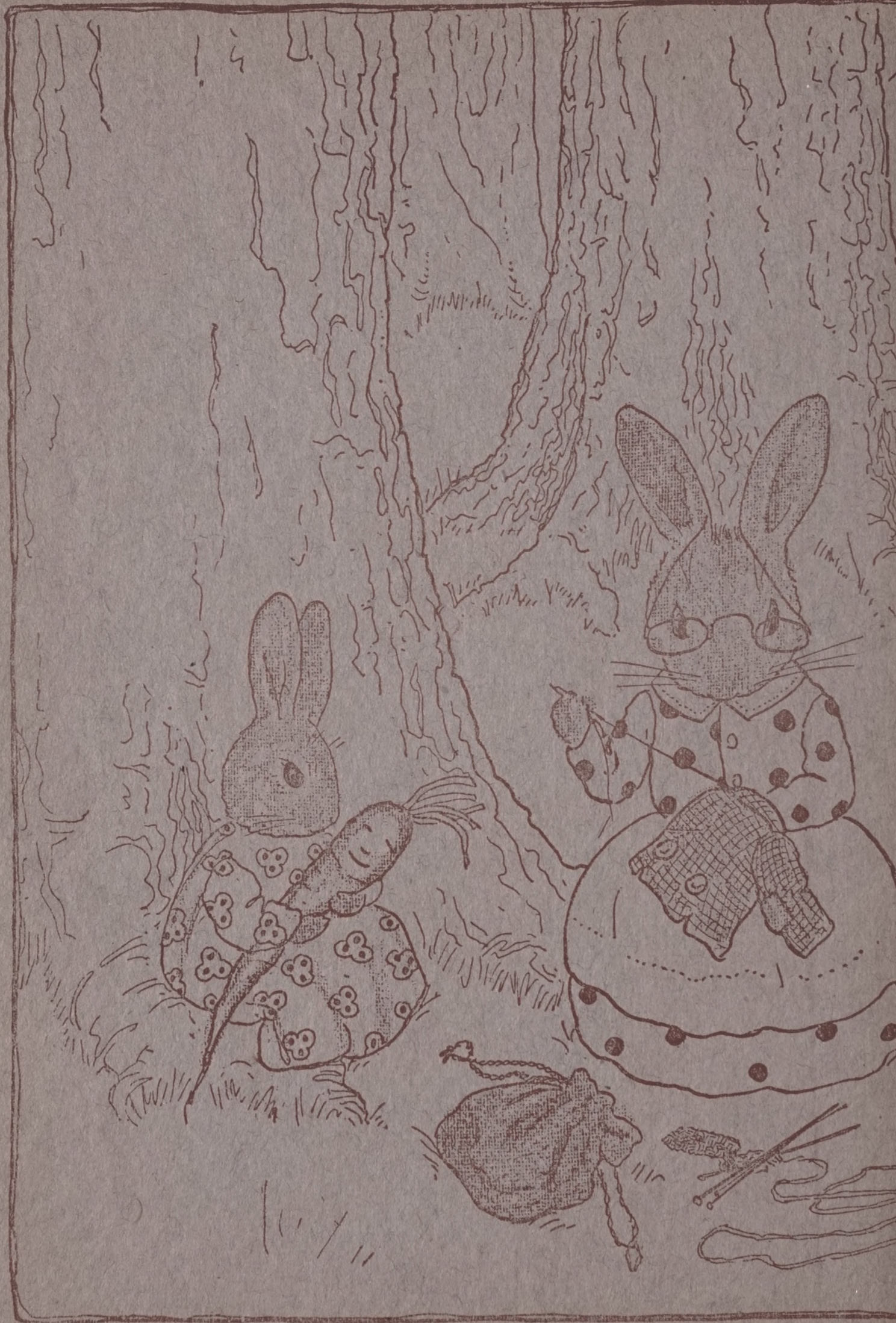
The effort here has been, first, to offer a story—a thing of pleasure and entertainment to the child; an appeal to his fancy and imagination.

Assuming that his interest has been secured, the secondary purpose has been to open the eyes of the little reader or listener to facts about nature, and to the upbuilding of his morals and manners. The author recognizes in the fairy story a source of great interest to the child, but believes also that the mere relating of jumbles of impossible incidents, regardless of educational or ethical value, is not an end to be desired.

The vocabulary employed is comparatively easy, the words used being largely those which are found in several of the best-known second readers. With few exceptions, the sentences are short and definite, and thus comprehensive to young readers. The chapters are almost like little stories, nearly complete in themselves, yet a part of an indivisible whole. These, in turn, have been punctuated by simple rhymes and jingles, each bearing on the chapter immediately following, and lending interest to the reading-matter. Four of these have been given easy but effective musical settings.

The illustrations have been planned and arranged with considerable care. Every drawing is illustrative of the text, simple yet expressive. These will be found a large factor in thought-getting and thought-molding.

The facts upon which the nature-study of the story is based have been drawn from trustworthy sources. This will continue to be the case in forthcoming books of the series as announced on page 4. Each volume will present a special basis of instruction, with our little animal friend, Nixie, as the center of interest. As this one dwells on ethics, a second book shall deal with occupation and industry; a third, with history, biography, and special days; a fourth, with geography, through a study of children of other lands.





LIBRARY OF CONGRESS



00020765033

