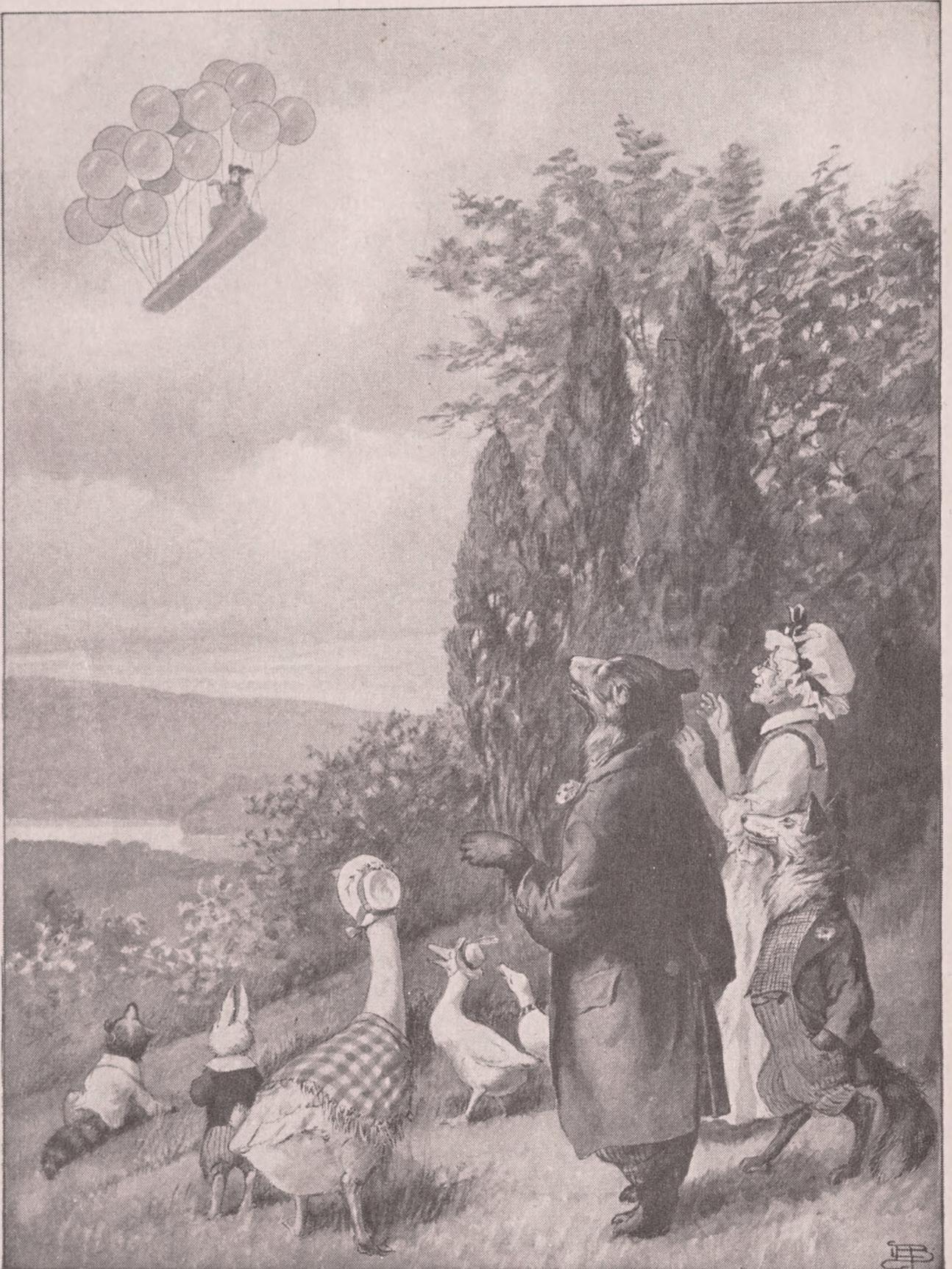


THE STRANGE STORY OF
MR. DOG AND MR. BEAR



The balloons swayed in the breeze, and up he went

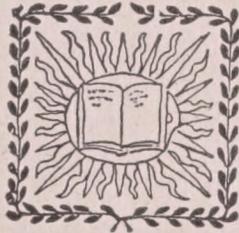
THE STRANGE STORY OF MR. DOG AND MR. BEAR

BY

MABEL FULLER BLODGETT

Author of "In Poppy Land," "Giants' Ruby," "When Christmas
Came Too Early," "Fairy Tales," etc.

WITH ILLUSTRATIONS
BY L. J. BRIDGMAN



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Ms.

To
JOHN BAPST BLAKE, JR.,
FREDERIC FAULKNER
AND
BARBARA HODGES
THIS BOOK IS DEDICATED

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The Strange Story of
Mr. Dog and Mr. Bear



The Strange Story of Mr. Dog and Mr. Bear

PART I

MR. DOG MEETS MR. BEAR IN THE FOREST

ONCE upon a time, in the good old days, Mr. Bear lived in a very comfortable house in the middle of the great wood, while poor Mr. Dog had no house at all, and thought himself lucky if he found so much as a nest of leaves or a roomy hollow tree to lie in.

Well, Mr. Bear not only had a real house all for himself, but it was a very nice house too. It had four windows, and a door, and a chimney. The windows had white lace curtains, and the door had a bright brass knocker, and the chimney was of red brick with a line of white-painted brick all around the top of it.

MR. DOG AND MR. BEAR

There was not such another house in the whole forest. It had two bedrooms, and a kitchen, and a china-closet, and a parlor besides; and it had a neat gravel-walk leading up to it, and a porch, and a door-scraper, and a handsome sign beside it, which said, "Please wipe your feet." Every animal, for miles around, had been to see it, and most of them had wiped their feet on the scraper, for it made one feel elegant and quite cityfied. When



And a handsome sign beside it, which said, "Please wipe your feet"

MR. DOG MEETS MR. BEAR

I say that Mr. Bear also owned a cottage piano, and a beautiful lamp that he got for a prize with a box of tea, you will think at once that he ought to be very, very happy.

He ought, but he was n't.

I will tell you why in a very few words.

Mr. Bear was L—A—Z—Y.

He just hated to get up out of his warm four-post bed, and go downstairs in the cold winter mornings to get breakfast. He even tried eating two suppers to see if he could n't skip breakfast altogether, but it did n't work, for he was just as hungry as ever in the morning after, at six-thirty.

So one day when he went to walk in the forest he met Mr. Dog, and this is what they said to each other:

“Good day to you, Mr. Bear,” began Mr. Dog, making a very low bow as he spoke.

“Good day,” said Mr. Bear—“that is,” he added, “it might be a good day if I did n't have to do all the work in my house over yonder.”

“Oh!” said Mr. Dog, pricking up his ears, “I

MR. DOG AND MR. BEAR

wish *I* lived in a beautiful house like yours, Mr. Bear! If I did, I'm sure I would n't mind the work of taking care of it."

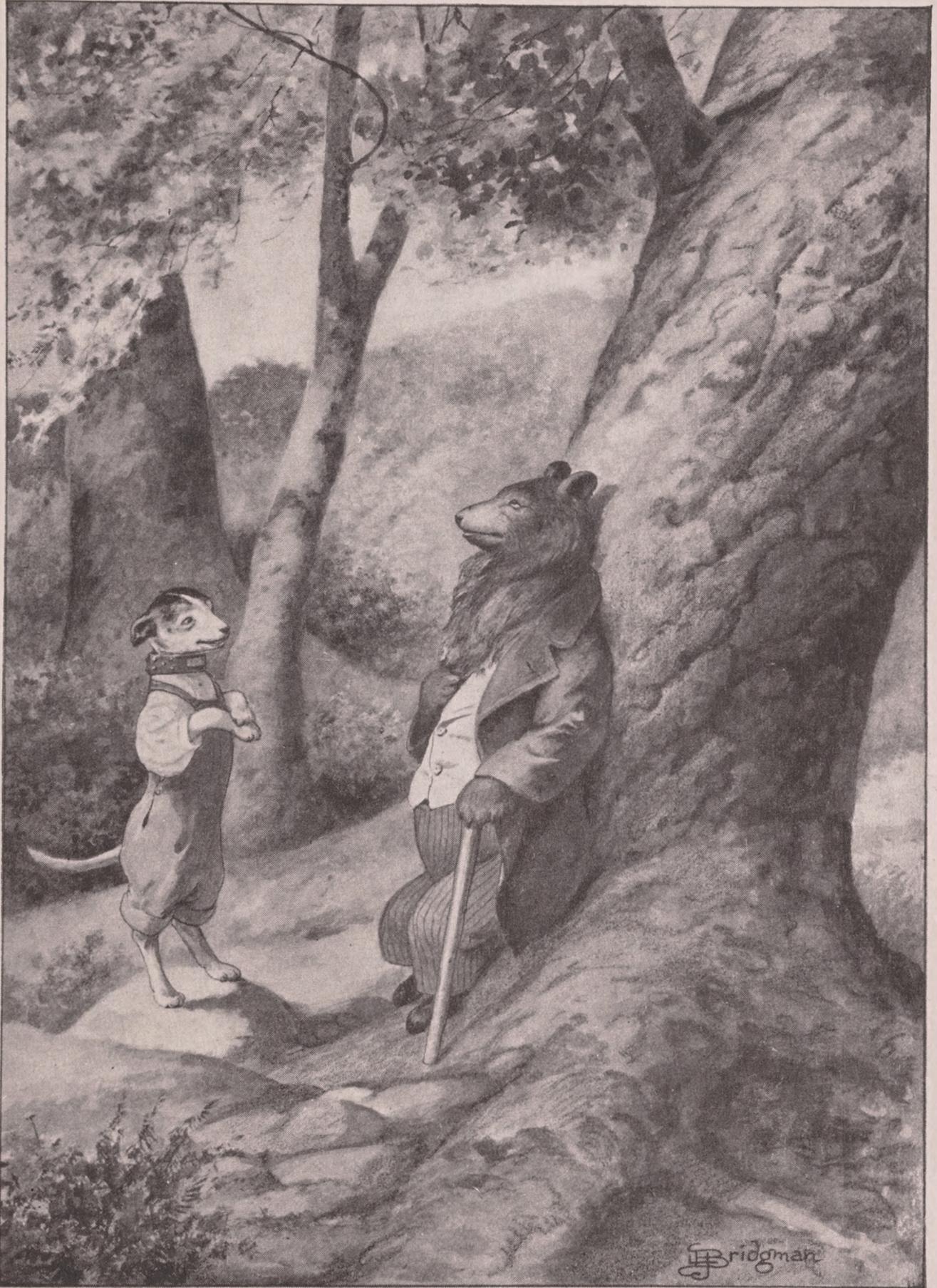
Mr. Bear stopped short, and scratched his head with his paw. His small eyes twinkled, for he had an idea—a fine idea, a wonderful idea; but it would n't do to look too anxious. So he gave a far-away glance at the tree-tops, and when he spoke he said in a far-away voice:

"If anybody came to live with me in my house, I should expect him to get up in the morning and get the breakfast—oh, yes, and start the fire."

"If anybody lived in a house like yours, Mr. Bear," said Mr. Dog, jumping up and down with excitement and almost wagging his tail off as he spoke, "if anybody came to live with you in your house, he ought to *expect* to get up and get the breakfast—oh, yes! and build the fire too."

Now when Mr. Bear saw how delighted Mr. Dog was, he had another idea, and that was to get Mr. Dog to do *all* the work, instead of part of it.

Yes, indeed, Mr. Bear was lazy. So he kept his



“And he spoke again in a far-away voice”

MR. DOG MEETS MR. BEAR

far-away look on the tree-tops, and he spoke again in a far-away voice:

“If anybody came to live with me in my house, I should expect him to get the dinner also.”

Mr. Dog stopped jumping when he heard this, but he still wagged his tail, and he answered very promptly and to the point:

“If anybody came to live with you in your house, Mr. Bear, he ought to expect to get the dinner.”

At this Mr. Bear, who had heard that Mr. Dog was a very good cook, almost rolled over and over with joy, but he remembered himself in time, and said, still looking at the far-away tree-tops as he answered:

“If anybody came to live in my house, I should want him to get the supper also.”

Now when Mr. Dog heard this he stopped wagging his tail and he did n't reply for a moment. But through the trees he caught a glimpse of Mr. Bear's beautiful house, and he remembered how cold and hungry he had been all the night before.

MR. DOG AND MR. BEAR

So he soon spoke up in answer, though rather solemnly:

“If anybody came to live in your house, Mr. Bear, he ought to expect to get the supper also.”

At this Mr. Bear took his eyes off the distant tree-tops and asked in a brisk business-like voice:

“Then, Mr. Dog, I’d like you to live with me in my house—on those terms, on those terms, mind you! Come, shall we shake paws, and call it a bargain?”

“Yes, Mr. Bear, we will,” said Mr. Dog, and they both gravely shook paws and said, “Done!” to seal the compact.

Now Mr. Bear felt indeed very happy, and after the way of such people he got lazier and lazier. He stayed in bed till the very last minute before breakfast, and some days he came down without brushing his hair at all.

At first, he felt a little ashamed at letting Mr. Dog do all the work; and, once in a while, he even thought of offering to help peel the potatoes, or carry in some firewood. But he soon got over

MR. DOG MEETS MR. BEAR

thinking anything at all about it, and only grumbled if everything was n't exactly to his liking.

Well, this went on for a good while, and though Mr. Dog had a nice room and plenty to eat, he got quite thin working so hard. Mr. Bear had a most enormous appetite and had a way that was most discouraging of coming into the pantry between meals and eating up everything he found there. So Mr. Dog had to set his wits to working, and this is what happened.

Mr. Bear came in, as usual, just before breakfast one fine morning, and feeling, as he always did, as hungry—well, as hungry as a bear, and you know how that is!—and there was no breakfast!

When Mr. Dog was asked for an explanation, he said cheerfully that he was very sorry but as there were no dishes to put any food upon he did n't really see how he could be expected to serve the morning meal as usual.

Mr. Bear was angry, and very much surprised. "No dishes!" he roared. "No dishes! I never

MR. DOG AND MR. BEAR



Dishes! You never saw so many!

heard such nonsense. Why, the china-closet is full of dishes!"

"Yes," said Mr. Dog, meekly, "it is full of

MR. DOG MEETS MR. BEAR

dishes, and so is the kitchen, but they are n't any of them clean."

"Why!" said Mr. Bear, sputtering over his words, he was so angry. "Not clean? Why are n't they clean? Why did n't you wash 'em? What do you mean by having this house full of dirty dishes?" and he pulled open the door of the pantry in a great rage as he spoke.

Dishes! You never saw so many! They were in great piles from floor to ceiling, and were simply everywhere, on the chairs, on the sink, even on the kitchen stove. And not one was clean.

"I did n't promise," said Mr. Dog, still very meekly, but with a sly laugh in the corner of his eye. "You remember, Mr. Bear, I did n't promise to wash the dishes—"

"You promised to light the fire, and get the meals, and of course washing the dishes goes with that," said Mr. Bear, not roaring quite so loud now, for he was beginning to get worried.

"Oh, no, it does n't," said Mr. Dog quickly; "though of course it is too bad about breakfast. I

MR. DOG AND MR. BEAR

took a snack myself off the tea kettle cover, but I would n't think of offering you food in any such way as that, Mr. Bear, and so I ate up all the breakfast myself this morning."

Mr. Bear nearly fell over when he heard this. He would have turned white, like a polar bear, if he could have done so, but as he happened to be a nice cinnamon-brown shade, he could n't.

He thought a while, and then he began to coax instead of blustering.

"My dear Mr. Dog," he said, "why not be sensible, and wash up the dishes, and let things go on comfortably just as before? It's so hot, and my fur is so long, I could n't possibly do it, but you've got beautiful short hair, and besides, if you get too heated working you could take off your collar. You see I have n't any collar to take off, so I could n't do anything to make myself cooler, if I wanted to ever so much."

But Mr. Dog refused to be wheedled. He said he would rather leave first, and that made Mr. Bear have a chill in spite of the weather.



Mr. Owl listened to both sides of the story

MR. DOG MEETS MR. BEAR

Well, in the end, they decided to leave the question of what was fair to both of them to Mr. Owl, and forthwith they proceeded to the great tree where he lived.

Mr. Owl was asleep, but he good-naturedly woke up and listened to both sides of the story. Then he took a nap again, while Mr. Dog and Mr. Bear—poor Mr. Bear, feeling very hollow indeed—waited patiently. All of a sudden Mr. Owl's big yellow eyes opened.

"You must *both* wash the dishes," he said.

Then he slept again for about ten minutes. It might have been longer, only Mr. Dog forgot and barked at a chipmunk.

"And you, Mr. Dog, must get up and light the fire, because it's Mr. Bear's house."

"Wise, wise bird!" murmured Mr. Bear.

"And as for the rest," went on Mr. Owl in his best giving-judgment voice, "you must just take turns." And with that he tucked his head under his wing and went so fast asleep that nothing could wake him.

MR. DOG AND MR. BEAR

Neither Mr. Dog nor Mr. Bear was really altogether satisfied, but each felt it might have been worse, and so they clasped paws once more over the new bargain. Then they went back to the cottage, and fell to.

They washed dishes, and washed dishes, and washed dishes, all the morning, all the afternoon, and into the evening.

Mr. Bear ate some bread-crusts and honey which he found, and Mr. Dog chewed on a bone, but, except for a very short time, they neither of them stopped work.

At last every dish was clean and in its right place, and both Mr. Dog and Mr. Bear lay right down on their backs with their four paws in the air and their tongues hanging out of their mouths, and never stirred for a whole hour.

Then, somewhat rested, they each curled up in bed, neither stopping to brush his teeth, so very tired were they. And the next day, when Mr. Bear heard Mr. Dog downstairs shaking up the kitchen-stove, he said to himself as he set his alarm

MR. DOG MEETS MR. BEAR

clock, "Well, after all, I believe Mr. Owl was right. It *is* pretty hard for one person to do all the work. I guess I'll make some buckwheat cakes this morning for Mr. Dog's breakfast."

PART II

MR. BEAR'S SURPRISE PARTY

AFTER Mr. Bear and Mr. Dog had arranged together about the housework in the way I have just told you, everything went very pleasantly.

But Mr. Bear's conscience troubled him a little whenever he saw Mr. Dog cheerfully doing a lot of extras, such as preserving and so on, which was more than Mr. Dog had promised. You see, in the beginning Mr. Bear had certainly worked Mr. Dog pretty hard. Now they were such good friends that he wished he had n't, and when Mr. Dog's birthday drew near, Mr. Bear made up his mind to give Mr. Dog a grand surprise party. Of course a surprise party has got to be a surprise; but Mr. Dog was so quick at guessing and Mr. Bear was so slow at planning, that it made things difficult.

MR. BEAR'S SURPRISE PARTY

Mr. Bear had already bought Mr. Dog the most beautiful red morocco collar with the name and address engraved on it on the solid brass plate attached to it, which was as good as a visiting-card any day, and more convenient. But now poor Mr. Bear was at his wits' end to hide the gift from Mr. Dog until the birthday came. Every night he changed the place when he thought Mr. Dog was asleep. Mr. Dog, as a matter of fact, generally slept with one eye open, so he could n't help wondering why Mr. Bear did so much walking about and poking into strange corners after night-fall, but he had so much politeness, which is another name for tact, that he only snored a little louder and pretended he had seen nothing at all.

The last place Mr. Bear had put the collar was in the wood pile, and it made him very nervous every time Mr. Dog went out to the shed to get a stick of wood. In fact, he kept thinking of reasons why they should only eat cold things and objected to having the potatoes warmed over in such

MR. DOG AND MR. BEAR

a violent manner that Mr. Dog was more puzzled than ever. Fortunately it was summer time, so much of a fire was n't needed. And now the birthday came nearer and nearer, till it got to be the very day, and Mr. Bear had n't sent out a single invitation to the party, or even cooked anything for the occasion, or said one word to Mr. Dog about it. It was plainly time to get Mr. Dog away from the house, but Mr. Dog was lying in the hammock with his cap over his eyes, and looked as though nothing could induce him to move for the next six hours.

However, Mr. Bear thought and thought, and scratched his head, and by and by he came to the door and coughed. "Ahem!" said Mr. Bear loudly, "ahem! Mr. Dog, er—I say, Mr. Dog—"

"Yes, Mr. Bear," said Mr. Dog, snapping lazily at a fly and turning over to get into a more comfortable position.

"I say, Mr. Dog, would n't you please just go over to the blueberry patch and pick about ten quarts of blueberries?"

MR. BEAR'S SURPRISE PARTY

Mr. Dog was so astonished that he opened both eyes wide and nearly, but not quite, fell out of the hammock.

"Blueberries! ten quarts!" he repeated.

"Yes," said Mr. Bear, smiling very pleasantly. "It would be so nice for blueberry pies and sauce next winter."

"Could n't think of it," said Mr. Dog, decidedly. "My dear fellow, it must be one hundred in the shade this minute in the blueberry patch, and we won't need anything of the kind for ever so long. Wait a while till it's cooler. And ten quarts! My dear Mr. Bear, it would take me all day!"

"I hope so," Mr. Bear started to say, and then changed it into a sneeze just in time.

Mr. Dog sank back into the hammock and Mr. Bear, feeling very discouraged, went into the house and scratched his head and thought some more. Then he came back. Mr. Dog was almost asleep this time, but Mr. Bear's loud voice brought him from the land of Nod in a hurry. Mr. Bear spoke very quickly this time, so that his words all

MR. DOG AND MR. BEAR

ran together, and that was the reason that just at first Mr. Dog did n't clearly understand him.

“Please-get-right-up-Mr.-Dog-and-go-to-the-post-office.”

If you say that very fast you will say it just as Mr. Bear did.

“What's that?” said Mr. Dog.



Mr. Dog lay back in the hammock

MR. BEAR'S SURPRISE PARTY

"Please-get-right-up-and-go-to-the-postoffice."

"What for?" asked Mr. Dog, who by this time had begun to wonder why Mr. Bear was acting so strangely.

"Very important letter," said Mr. Bear. "Must go at once, almost mail time."

"All right, all right," said Mr. Dog almost crossly for him, for the postoffice was five miles away and it did pass through his mind for the moment that Mr. Bear might post his own letters. Still Mr. Bear had such long fur and it was so hot—

"Well, where 's the letter, Mr. Bear?" he asked.

"The letter?" said Mr. Bear, looking around as though he expected it to fall out of the air or spring up from the ground. "The letter? Oh, yes, in just a minute." And Mr. Bear disappeared.

Mr. Dog lay back in the hammock, and Mr. Bear began to rush about the cottage. First he could n't find the ink, then he could n't find the paper, then he could n't find the pen.

When at last he really did find all three, he sat

MR. DOG AND MR. BEAR

down and could n't think of one thing to write. He was n't very good at writing anyway, and he made a great big blot on the paper before ever he began. At last with his tongue hanging out, and his eyes rolling, he wrote very slowly on the envelope:

*To Mr. Gray Goose, Esq.,
Next door Red Farm house,
Three miles from Forest,
Kindness Mr. Dog. . .
Haste, haste, haste.*

Mr. Dog called out from the hammock, "If you don't come right out, Mr. Bear, we'll lose the mail."

"Oh, that does n't matter," answered Mr. Bear before he thought.

"Does n't it?" said Mr. Dog, really annoyed. "Does n't it? Then I don't run any five miles in this heat for nothing!" And he sank further into the hammock and shut both eyes up tight and never even wagged his tail when Mr. Bear came out with



“Oh, Mr. Bear, are you sick?”

MR. BEAR'S SURPRISE PARTY

the empty envelope (for he'd quite forgotten to put anything in it) sealed and stamped and ready.

So Mr. Bear had to go back into the house. And he felt dreadfully because he could n't think of another excuse to get Mr. Dog away, so that he might freeze ice-cream, and make cakes and candy for the party, and give his invitations, and he groaned aloud.

Now Mr. Dog was very kind-hearted, and he was a little worried too about the queer way Mr. Bear was acting. So when he heard the groan, he jumped up and ran in.

"Oh, Mr. Bear, are you sick?" he said. "And shall I go for the doctor?"

Mr. Bear stopped groaning and sprang up, looking very happy. Then he remembered himself and sat down again, and began to groan louder than ever.

"That's it, that's it," he said. "Run for the doctor, dear Mr. Dog; run for the doctor, do!"

"Where is your pain?" said Mr. Dog, anxiously.

"My pain?" asked Mr. Bear much surprised.

MR. DOG AND MR. BEAR

“Oh, yes, my pain—well, it ’s kind of all-overish, I think.”

“What ’s it like?” said Mr. Dog, getting more worried every minute.

“Well,” said Mr. Bear, scratching his head, “it ’s kind of wiggly-waggly and then it jumps. Yes, Mr. Dog, that ’s it; it jumps,” and Mr. Bear looked very pleased with himself indeed.

“Oh!” said Mr. Dog, “that must be dreadful. I ’ll go right away. Which doctor shall I get?”

“The farthest off,” said Mr. Bear before he thought; but he added hastily, “He ’s the best. I must have the best, you know,” and he gave a louder groan than ever and turned a complete summersault; and Mr. Dog began to run down the road as though a whole pack of wolves were after him.

Mr. Bear lay still a minute, then he got cautiously up and peeked out the window, but all he saw on the winding road was a puff of dust slowly settling after Mr. Dog’s paws had stirred it up.

Then, well, then he did get busy. First, he got

MR. BEAR'S SURPRISE PARTY

one of Mr. Dog's checkered gingham aprons because all his own were in the wash, and as the strings would n't quite meet round his waist he had to hunt ever so long for a safety pin with which to fasten it together. At last he got out all the dishes and spoons, and the salt and pepper, and sugar, and spices, and flour and butter, and nuts, and raisins and cinnamon, and nutmeg, and candied lemon peel, that he wanted, and the real work began. He cooked, and he cooked, and he cooked: and when he got through there were the most beautiful tarts, and pies, and doughnuts, and cookies, and ginger-bread, and, best of all, the loveliest birthday cake with pink and white frosting, and "Happy Birthday to Mr. Dog" on it in wonderful curly letters.

Mr. Bear put all this away in the pantry and locked the door, and then he began on the ice-cream. He froze, and he froze, and he froze; and when he was through there were gallons and gallons of the loveliest ice-cream, strawberry and vanilla and chocolate. And this he locked up in the ice-chest.

MR. DOG AND MR. BEAR

Then he got some lemons, a lot of them, and he squeezed, and he squeezed, and he squeezed, till he had quarts and quarts of the most beautiful lemonade. And this he locked up in the cupboard. And then he was very tired, but he could n't stop for that, but he put on his linen cap and dust coat and started off to give his invitations. Fortunately, most of his friends and Mr. Dog's lived near, and a kind crow promised to send word to the far-off people.

Mr. Bear wasted no time. He dashed into Mr. Pig's house—the brick one, you know, that Mr. Wolf tried to huff, and to puff, and to blow down, and could n't. Mr. Pig was looking out the window that very minute at Mr. Wolf who was trying to get in through the barred door, but Mr. Wolf made off in a hurry, I can tell you, when Mr. Bear lumbered up the walk. But Mr. Bear waited for no words of thanks from Mr. Pig, but told him to be sure to come at eight o'clock promptly that night to Mr. Bear's house, and help give Mr. Dog the surprise of his life. Mr. Pig was very polite

MR. BEAR'S SURPRISE PARTY

and an ornament to any party, and he accepted at once with pleasure, and began right away to fix up generally for the grand doings of the evening. By this time Mr. Bear had got to the



By this time Mr. Bear had got to the Old Woman who lived in a Shoe

MR. DOG AND MR. BEAR

Old Woman who lived in a Shoe, and there he had to stop and explain, for the Old Woman had just finished soundly whipping her children and putting them to bed—they took early naps—and she was quite tired and wanted to sit and chat a while. Mr. Bear told his errand, and she said she would come and bring all her family, and Mr. Bear was greatly embarrassed, for she had dozens and dozens of children (by the way, did I say they were all little mice?) pulling at her skirts and running from the Shoe in every direction to see what the dame had brought them, and he knew they had wonderful appetites. But before she got through talking, Mr. Bear had really a bright thought.

“I’m inviting Mr. Owl also,” Mr. Bear remarked; “for you know he settled so wisely that one dispute Mr. Dog and I ever had about who was to do the housework.”

And the Old Woman very hurriedly said she would come to the party alone. You see, Mr. Owl had a bad habit of liking little mice all too well

MR. BEAR'S SURPRISE PARTY

for their comfort; so after she heard that, the Old Woman would n't have brought them for anything. So Mr. Bear got out of that trouble all right, and after he had seen Gray Goose and Peter Rabbit, and they had accepted, he was able to go home again, feeling very happy indeed.

Meanwhile, Mr. Dog had got back to the cottage first, and you may believe he was astonished to find the house empty. The doctor had promised to come that evening at eight. It was Dr. Racoon, who was the very best to be had, but who was too busy to come before. Mr. Dog could have got Mr. Red Fox to come at once; he sometimes acted as doctor in hurry cases, but, somehow, he never quite trusted him, and Mr. Red Fox never seemed either altogether easy in Mr. Dog's company. And now Mr. Bear was away.

Mr. Dog felt very much worried. He tried the pantry door; it was locked. He tried the ice-chest door; it was locked. He tried the cupboard door; *it* was locked! "Good gracious!" said Mr. Dog, very much excited. And I don't know what would

MR. DOG AND MR. BEAR

have happened, only just then Mr. Dog caught sight of a piece of paper pinned to a napkin that covered a dish of cold scraps, and on it was written in Mr. Bear's big handwriting:

"Gone. Be back in half an hour."

"Well, did you ever," said the amazed Mr. Dog, when he had slowly spelled out this message; but he was not, however, too surprised to do full justice to the luncheon left for him.

Having eaten, Mr. Dog decided to make a more thorough search of the whole premises, because his nose kept telling him that somewhere near there was something very good to eat. So he looked through the cupboard keyhole, and he looked through the ice-chest door keyhole, and he looked through the pantry keyhole, and he saw nothing at all in the first and second because it was pitch dark, but the pantry had a window and he saw—well, what did n't he see? Half a whole pie, and a lot of little round things that looked like cookies, and a gingerbread man, and what do you think? A big cake! A big frosted cake! A big birthday frosted

MR. BEAR'S SURPRISE PARTY

cake, with "Hap" on it and "day," for that was all the frosted letters Mr. Dog could read through the keyhole. But that was enough. Mr. Dog barked just once, he was so taken back. And then he began to think quickly. He looked out the kitchen window with the tail of his eye, and there he saw Mr. Bear come wearily up the road.

Now Mr. Dog could think ever so much quicker than Mr. Bear, and in a flash it came to him how disappointed Mr. Bear would be if he knew his secret was discovered. And Mr. Dog felt *so* happy that Mr. Bear was n't really ill, and that all these strange happenings were not so strange after all, and that dear old Mr. Bear was being exceedingly kind, that he made up his mind Mr. Bear should never, never know that the surprise was n't just as he planned it.

Mr. Bear came in, looking quite confused, but Mr. Dog appeared not to notice anything unusual. He said he was very glad Mr. Bear felt able to take a little exercise, that exercise was fine for illness, and that now Mr. Bear had better rest, and

MR. DOG AND MR. BEAR

that the doctor would come in the evening, and that he, Mr. Dog, was going to take a cat-nap himself (though just how he could do that is beyond me).

Mr. Bear was very glad Mr. Dog felt all these ways, and soon nothing could be heard in the cottage but the gentle snores of Mr. Dog and the great rumbling snores of Mr. Bear; for, indeed, both of them were tired out with their day's labors. By six o'clock, however, they both awakened much refreshed, and now Mr. Dog behaved in such a considerate and gentlemanly manner that it is a pleasure to write about it.

First he told Mr. Bear that he felt he must go up to his room, and finish an exciting novel he was reading, and that he should stay at least an hour, and then he never let Mr. Bear see him looking out the window, while Mr. Bear gathered all the flowers he could carry from the garden, and began to decorate the parlor. By and by Mr. Bear came and knocked on Mr. Dog's door.

"Ahem!" he said. "Mr. Dog, excuse me, but



Mr. Dog certainly did act finely

MR. BEAR'S SURPRISE PARTY

would you mind brushing up a little? You see, they—well, you see, the doctor's coming."

"Why certainly, Mr. Bear," said Mr. Dog. "I was just putting some perfumery on my handkerchief and washing up as you came in. I always feel like making myself look well for Dr. Racoon, he is so very neat himself."

"True, true," said Mr. Bear, rubbing his paws together in great glee. "Just comb that snarl out of the fur on my left hind leg, will you, Mr. Dog, and then I think we'll be ready. Do you think they'll come—I mean, he'll come promptly?"

"Oh, yes," said Mr. Dog, pretending not to notice, and just then they both heard the sound of approaching footsteps, while loud cheers resounded from the forest and calls for Mr. Bear and Mr. Dog.

"There," said Mr. Bear, dropping his brush and comb in his hurry, "would you please mind not looking out of the window, Mr. Dog? I'm going down to meet the doctor, and you come, Mr. Dog, in just five minutes, will you?"

"Certainly," said Mr. Dog, and he began to

MR. DOG AND MR. BEAR

whistle as loudly as he could so as to drown the sounds of joy beneath him. Pretty soon Mr. Bear's big voice came up the stairway.

"Please come down, Mr. Dog," he said, and down came Mr. Dog, amid such sounds as "Sh-sh-sh he's coming," "Not a sound," "Please stop crowding, here he is!" "Now all together," "One, two, three, hurrah for Mr. Dog! Happy birthday, old fellow, hurrah! hurrah!"

Mr. Dog certainly did act finely. He put his paw to his head and fell back. "What's all this?" he muttered. "What's all this?"

"It's your birthday; many of them," said Mr. Bear in high feather, stepping forward. "And here are a few old friends come to wish you joy, and here,"—and he handed over the red morocco collar—"is a little gift from your true comrade Ursa Major Bear, Esq."

Well, Mr. Dog was pleased, I can tell you. He had the new collar on in a jiffy, and it was greatly admired.

And then the fun began. They played games,



The Old Woman who lived in a Shoe, danced with Mr. Peter Rabbit

MR. BEAR'S SURPRISE PARTY

“Stage Coach” and “Follow My Leader”—Mr. Owl won that, sly old bird, by flying up on the chandelier, where nobody could follow—and “Post Office,” where Miss White Goose was kissed by Mr. Gray Goose and looked too silly for anything. Dr. Racoon was as full of fun as the rest, and Mr. Dog was the life of the party. The Old Woman who lived in a Shoe danced the Virginia Reel with Mr. Peter Rabbit, who put in all kinds of new fancy steps, and Mr. Pig made them all nearly die laughing telling them the story of how neatly he fooled Mr. Wolf. About ten o'clock they all sat down to supper, and by ten-thirty every bit was eaten up. Dr. Racoon *would* wash all his food in the finger bowl first; but then, that was his way, so nobody minded.

At last they all went home, after drinking Mr. Bear's and Mr. Dog's health in lemonade for the tenth and last time; and after their merry voices had died away, Mr. Dog and Mr. Bear began to lock up and put out the lights.

“Thank you a thousand times, Mr. Bear, for all

MR. DOG AND MR. BEAR

your kindness," said Mr. Dog, night cap on head and candle in hand as he stood at his chamber door.

"Not at all, Mr. Dog," answered Mr. Bear politely; "but it was a good party, was n't it? And oh! Mr. Dog, the best of it all is, I never saw anybody so surprised as you were in all my life."

PART III

MR. DOG BECOMES AN INVENTOR

AFTER the famous surprise party, Mr. Dog and Mr. Bear passed a quiet but happy time together, and things would have probably gone on in just that fashion had not Mr. Dog begun to grow rather conceited. The beginning was that he thought himself very clever to have found out about the birthday celebration before it happened, and then he went on to say to himself—and this was a pity—that he, Mr. Dog, was a very smart fellow, and Mr. Bear quite slow and stupid, even if kind-hearted. The truth is, Mr. Bear *was* slow, but he was n't stupid. He had more common sense than Mr. Dog, and this story will show it. By and by Mr. Dog began to fret because he felt his talents were being wasted, just living along doing housework, and the next thing that happened was

MR. DOG AND MR. BEAR

he took a trip to town and sold his every-day collar, so that he had to wear his very best red morocco one, Mr. Bear's birthday gift, every day as well as Sundays. Mr. Bear wondered very much what Mr. Dog did with the money, but Mr. Dog would n't say, but went about looking very important, and began to spend long hours alone, locked up in the woodshed. From thence would come sounds of hammering and sawing, and there began to be a lot of curly shavings in the stove, mornings. Mr. Dog also started to take trips to the village, and to come back with something queer and round tied up in a cloth bag he carried.

Mr. Bear began to feel hurt. He spoke once or twice to Mr. Dog about these secret errands and the mysterious work going on in the woodshed, which after all was *his* woodshed, but Mr. Dog only looked important and said, "My dear fellow, don't bother me. You could n't understand if I told you." And Mr. Bear after that was too proud even to look through the door when Mr. Dog, as sometimes happened, left it ajar for a moment.

MR. DOG BECOMES AN INVENTOR

I think Mr. Dog, for all his airs, was sorry when Mr. Bear stopped asking questions. Anyway, one day he began to hint and hint about the wonderful things he was doing, and when Mr. Bear only looked out the window and took no notice whatever, Mr. Dog at last talked straight out.

“Perhaps you did n’t know it, Mr. Bear,” he began, “but I am an inventor.”

“Are you?” said Mr. Bear, slowly uncrossing his knees and then recrossing them again.

“Yes, I am,” said Mr. Dog, plainly taken back by Mr. Bear’s lack of interest.

“And it’s a great invention, Mr. Bear—one of the greatest, if I may say so. In fact, I expect by it to make my fortune.”

“Do you?” said Mr. Bear, without so much as winking.

Mr. Dog got more and more excited, and began to hammer on the table.

“It’s the greatest thing you ever saw, Mr. Bear, and I guess you’ll think I was pretty bright when you see it.”

MR. DOG AND MR. BEAR

“Shall I?” said Mr. Bear, and he closed his eyes as though he were going off to sleep. Mr. Dog jumped up and down. Such conduct on Mr. Bear’s part was so unexpected and so truly disappointing!

“You come right into the woodshed, Mr. Bear, this minute, and I’ll show the whole thing to you,” he said, seizing Mr. Bear by the arm as he spoke.

“Will you?” said Mr. Bear, slowly opening one eye, and then he asked, “Won’t to-morrow do?”

Mr. Dog almost turned inside out. “To-morrow!” he shouted; “to-morrow! It’s the wonder of the age. I guess you don’t know what you’re missing, Mr. Bear.”

“Don’t I?” said Mr. Bear; but he got up for all that this time, for really and truly he was dying to know what was in the woodshed, only he wanted to punish Mr. Dog first a little for his conceited airs.

Well, Mr. Dog led the way and Mr. Bear followed, and when they got there, with a great flourish Mr. Dog pulled off the sheet that was covering the invention, and this is what they saw: A long

MR. DOG BECOMES AN INVENTOR



“There! Look at that, will you?”

flat board with sides to it, piled with stones, and a seat across one end big enough for Mr. Dog to sit

MR. DOG AND MR. BEAR

on, and on both sides a row of balloons, red and blue, that bobbed back and forth gaily in the draft that came when the door was opened.

“There!” said Mr. Dog. “There! Look at that, will you?”

“What is it?” asked Mr. Bear much puzzled.

Mr. Dog struck an attitude.

“It’s an airship,” he said proudly.

“What for?” said Mr. Bear.

“To fly in, of course,” answered Mr. Dog with dignity.

“Who’ll fly in it?” asked Mr. Bear.

“Why, I will,” said Mr. Dog.

“What’s the good of that?” said Mr. Bear.

“You’ll only go and get yourself killed, you know, but—” he added hopefully—“perhaps it won’t fly after all.”

Mr. Dog was very angry.

“Yes, it *will* fly,” he snapped; and then he began to talk very fast and loud, in his excitement.

“It’s all fixed up with Mr. Red Fox, Mr. Bear,” he said; “he’ll be gate-keeper: let the people in and

MR. DOG BECOMES AN INVENTOR

all that. Yes, I know you don't like him, but he is n't a bad fellow, and he's smart; he saw right away how very clever I am. Did you ever hear of a balloon ascension? Goes up in the air, you know. Well, to-morrow all our friends are coming. Tickets, of course; one penny apiece lets grownups in, and children two for one; you see, that way, 'most everybody will bring at least two; and *I'm* going up in this airship. Throw over the stones and away I'll fly, see something of the world, and make money doing it. How's that for an idea, Mr. Bear?" And Mr. Dog, quite out of breath, stopped and clapped his friend on the shoulder.

Mr. Bear sat down heavily on the saw-horse. He felt very badly, and he did n't know just what to say. He saw at once that Mr. Dog and he would quarrel if he was n't careful, yet he could n't let himself think of his dear friend running such a dreadful risk. So he did n't say anything for a few moments, and Mr. Dog was delighted. He thought he had made a great impression, and so he had, but not in the way he thought.

MR. DOG AND MR. BEAR

Well, as I have said, Mr. Bear sat breathing loudly, and Mr. Dog frisked about his invention, patting this thing here with his paw, and pulling at that thing there, all with the greatest pride of ownership.

“She ’s the thing,” said Mr. Dog; “she ’ll take me up all right, eh?”

“Yes,” agreed Mr. Bear, “but—but how about coming down?”

“Oh!” said Mr. Dog readily, though he had n’t really thought about that part. “That ’s easy. Anybody can come down. It ’s going up that ’s the hard part.”

“You ’ll be killed,” said Mr. Bear in a voice at once weak and gruff. Only a bear could have talked that way. “Oh, dear Mr. Dog, don’t do it; I beg of you, don’t do it.”

“I shall, too,” said Mr. Dog, quite upset at Mr. Bear’s protest; and the silly thought came into his head that Mr. Bear was jealous.

Mr. Bear began to get angry at Mr. Dog’s foolishness.

MR. DOG BECOMES AN INVENTOR

“I never heard of anything so senseless in all my life,” he shouted.

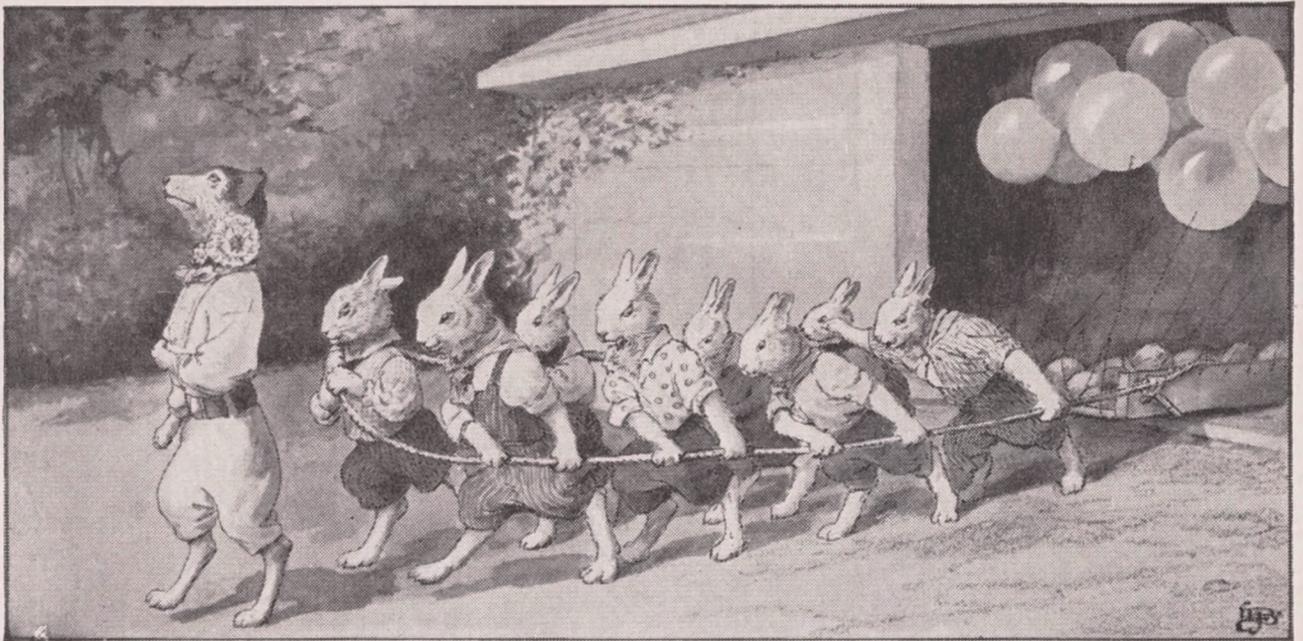
“You mind your own business,” answered Mr. Dog, rudely.

Truly, was n't it a pity? such talk between old friends. And, of course, after that, Mr. Bear felt there was nothing more to be done about it. He just turned and walked straight out of the woodshed, and he only looked back over his shoulder once.

“Mark my words, Mr. Dog,” he said slowly; “if you trust that Mr. Red Fox you'll be mighty sorry,” and Mr. Bear went into the kitchen, and shut the door firmly behind him.

Well, the next day was clear and pleasant—real Indian summer; and by ten o'clock in the morning the grass plot in front of Mr. Bear's house was thick with the forest and farmyard people. Everybody was there except Mr. Bear, who had shut himself in his room, and Mr. Dog, who was in the woodshed with his invention, waiting to make a great entrance. Even Mr. Owl sat on a branch

MR. DOG AND MR. BEAR



After Mr. Dog came eight Jack Rabbits who pulled the great invention

overlooking the place that had been roped off from which Mr. Dog was to make his wonderful trial at flying. It being daytime, Mr. Owl could n't see a thing, but all the same he wanted to come, though he said it was only fair for him to pay but a half-penny admission.

Mr. Red Fox was in fine spirits, and his money bag grew heavier and heavier. He was to have every twentieth penny himself for his trouble, and I fear that he did not count quite honestly, his own pockets looked too full.

MR. DOG BECOMES AN INVENTOR

Well, as I say, this great crowd was gathered together, and presently Mr. Red Fox cried, "Silence!" in a loud voice, though nobody was talking, and out of the woodshed stepped Mr. Dog, his red morocco collar ornamented with a big rosette of red, white and blue ribbon, and after him came eight Jack Rabbits, who slowly pulled into its place the great invention.

Mr. Red Fox then made a speech; all about Mr. Dog and how smart he was, while Mr. Dog stood with his paw on his heart trying to appear modest, but really looking very conceited. And then with much ceremony Mr. Red Fox attached the money bag to Mr. Dog's collar. Everybody gave three cheers, though Miss White Goose was heard to say that flying was n't so much after all. The eight Jack Rabbits with a will threw off the stones that held the airship down, Mr. Dog made a bow but nearly tumbled over as the airship tilted a little, the balloons swayed in the breeze, and up he went!

Everybody watched till the airship was only a

MR. DOG AND MR. BEAR

little speck in the distance and then all departed to their homes—that is, all except cunning Mr. Red Fox who had watched longest of all, noticed how the wind blew, and was now loping along toward the river, chuckling as he went in a very disagreeable manner, and only stopping to take breath and feel the good pennies in his pockets.

Meanwhile, what of Mr. Dog? He was a very different animal by that time I can promise you. In fact he was about scared to death, and all or nearly all the conceit was fast oozing out of him.

In the very beginning it had been quite fun. It was so new, the feeling of flying up, up, up in the air and then to watch the trees getting fast as small as bushes, and at length becoming little green blots on the brown earth, which was racing along so strangely beneath him. Mr. Bear's cottage seemed as tiny as a white sea shell on the beach, and the animals about it were only little black dots running along and resembling beetles scurrying through the grass. But pretty soon the wind rose. It took Mr. Dog's airship in its teeth and shook

MR. DOG BECOMES AN INVENTOR

it, and Mr. Dog's nerves were a good deal jarred. Then it gave the balloon ship a gay little toss, and Mr. Dog went head over heels, and came right side up with every hair standing on end with terror. And then off it broke one bright red balloon and then it snapped the string of another, a blue one this time, and then another and another. The airship began to sink, and Mr. Dog, looking anxiously over the side, saw the brown earth coming up to meet him in a hurry, and the winding river coming too. The playful wind gave a last push to the few remaining balloons, and the airship tipped up first one way and then another, and at last there came one great final tip and off slid poor Mr. Dog, his claws scratching the planks, as he tried vainly to hold on, and then splash! off sailed the airship lightened of the inventor's weight, and down came Mr. Dog into the very middle of the river he had seen from his wavering perch in the sky. Down, down he went and came up choking and splashing, and began to swim feebly toward shore. And on the banks of the

MR. DOG AND MR. BEAR

river, who should be sitting as large as life but Mr. Red Fox! And he was laughing fit to kill himself.

“Ha! Ha! Ha! Mr. Dog,” he called out, as soon as he was able to speak, “you do look silly up to your neck in water.”

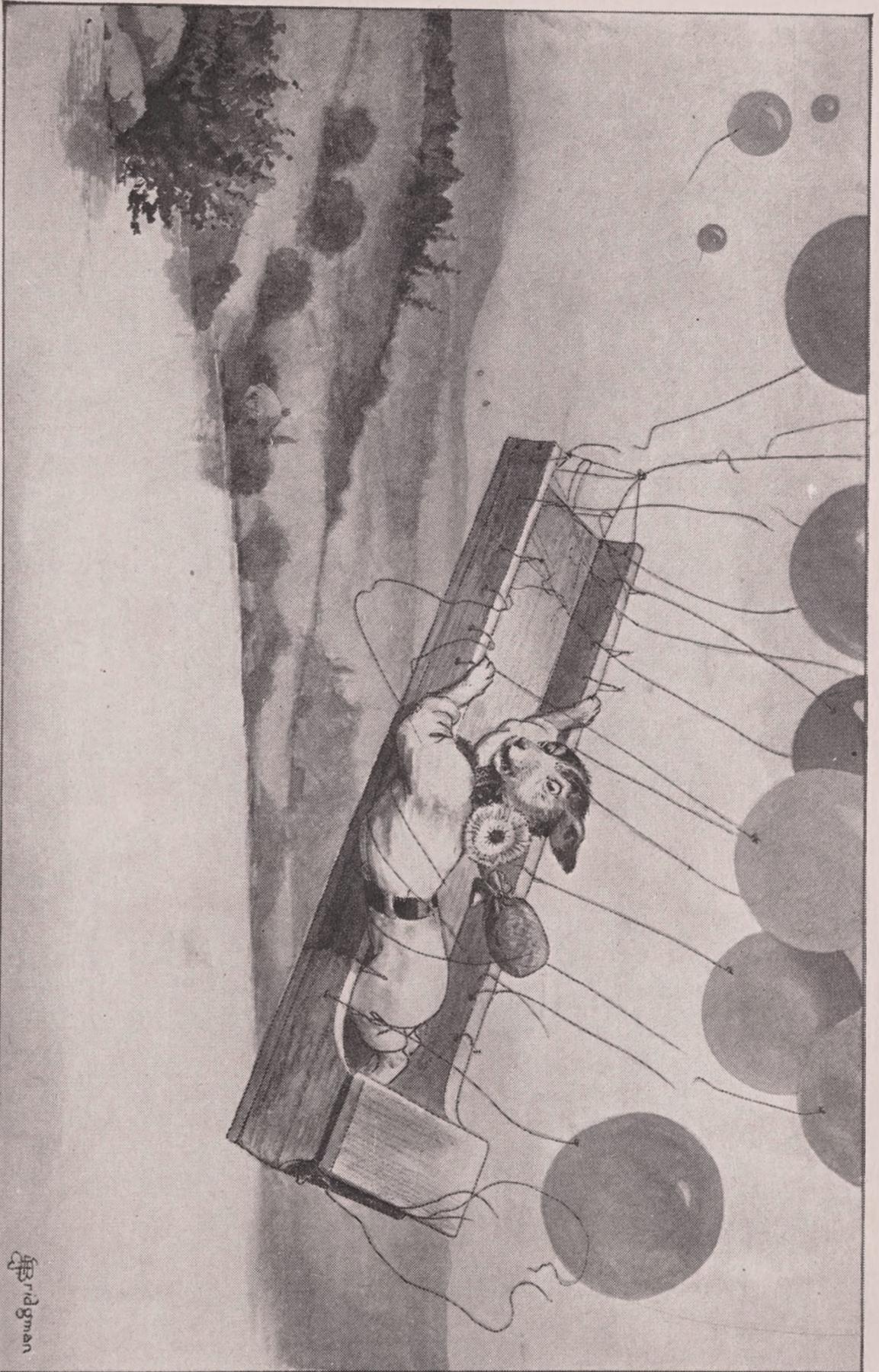
“Help, Mr. Red Fox! Help!” called back poor Mr. Dog, barely able to keep up his desperate paddling toward land and safety.

“Serves you right!” went on Mr. Red Fox without moving an inch. “A great inventor *you* are. I knew when I first saw your silly airship that you’d surely come to grief.”

“You did n’t talk so then,” said poor Mr. Dog, swallowing, as he spoke, a lot of river water that went down the wrong way and made him cough terribly; “anyway, help me now! Help me now, please, I’m sinking!”

“Sink away,” said bad Mr. Red Fox. “It’s your own fault. I shan’t get *my* brush wet to save you from your own foolishness.”

And I don’t really know what would have happened only the river was all this time getting more



There came one great final tip, and off slid poor Mr. Dog

MR. DOG BECOMES AN INVENTOR

and more shallow and just then Mr. Dog struck a mud flat and began to slowly make his way to firmer land. But near shore he stuck fast and began to sink again. Lower and lower he went and at last with shaking voice he begged Mr. Red Fox once more for help.

“Well,” said Mr. Red Fox, picking his way daintily through the shallow water to where poor Mr. Dog was stranded; “I suppose I must help you this once. You’re too heavy, Mr. Dog, that’s the trouble. I’ll just take your collar off and your money bag. They’ll both come in handy for me, and then you’ll be lighter.” And so saying wicked Mr. Red Fox coolly did as he had suggested. And the worst of it was Mr. Dog could n’t help it.

“Stop, thief, stop!” cried Mr. Dog, but Mr. Red Fox only turned his back and, making for the forest, was soon lost to sight.

In one way this dreadful behavior was a good thing for Mr. Dog, for he got so angry his strength came back, and he floundered about with so much spirit that in the end he reached the river’s bank.

MR. DOG AND MR. BEAR



“Ha! Ha! Ha! Mr. Dog,” he called out

Safe and sound at last; but my! was n't he a sight!
All covered with mud and torn with briars, for he

MR. DOG BECOMES AN INVENTOR

had been forced to make his way through a thorny patch before getting on the right road to home.

And oh! how far off Mr. Bear's beautiful house seemed! But there was nothing for it but to set out, and weary and footsore he was, I can tell you, before he reached there.

Meanwhile, good Mr. Bear, who was very anxious about Mr. Dog and very lonely, had just got ready for bed since the moon had risen but no airship was to be seen, and it seemed foolish to wait longer. But just as with a heavy sigh he turned to lock the door, there came through the still night the sound of faltering steps, and poor, tired, muddy, sad Mr. Dog came in sight. Mr. Bear was



MR. DOG AND MR. BEAR

so glad he almost cried, and he quite forgot the hard things that had been said at their last meeting.

“Welcome home! welcome home!” he cried out as Mr. Dog limped slowly up the path.

Now Mr. Dog had been foolish, and he had been vain, and he had been selfish, and he had been rude; but he was mighty sorry for it all, and now he did a really fine thing. For he was willing to own up he had been in the wrong and that is generally hard to manage. He hung his head but he spoke up bravely.

“Please forgive me, Mr. Bear,” he said, “for all my foolishness. I won’t come in till you do. And as for my silly airship—”

“Nonsense,” interrupted Mr. Bear in his kindest, gruffest voice, “come right along, Mr. Dog; I’ll get some hot supper ready in a jiffy, and I’m sure it was a very nice airship indeed. But it’s nicer still to have you home again safe and sound,” and so saying, Mr. Bear led the way into the house, and Mr. Dog followed.



And oh! how far off Mr. Bear's beautiful house seemed

PART IV

MR. RED FOX GETS MORE THAN HE COMES FOR

WHEN Mr. Bear had heard all Mr. Dog's adventures and the mean way Mr. Red Fox had treated his friend, he was very angry and he made up his mind that

SOMETHING SHOULD BE DONE ABOUT IT

That's just the way Mr. Bear said it to himself. And he thought and he thought and by and by he fixed on the most beautiful plan. When he told it to Mr. Dog, I remember they were having afternoon tea in the garden, Mr. Dog fell right off his chair he laughed so hard and he had to stuff his napkin into his mouth before he could stop laughing.

"That's perfectly fine, Mr. Bear. You certainly

MR. DOG AND MR. BEAR

are a wonder," he said when he could speak. But Mr. Bear modestly shook his head.



"Now the very first thing to do is to put up the sign"

MR. RED FOX

“I hope it works right, that ’s all,” he answered; “and now the very first thing to do is to put up the sign ‘Fresh eggs for sale.’ ”

Now of course you wonder what eggs had to do with Mr. Bear’s plan about punishing Mr. Red Fox for his bad conduct toward Mr. Dog that time he fell into the river, but you must just wait patiently and listen, for if I told you right out now the way Mr. Bear told Mr. Dog, you too might roll off your chair laughing and stuff a napkin in your mouth and I ’m afraid your dear mothers might n’t like it.

Well, they put the sign up where it could be plainly seen by any of the forest or farm-yard people who passed, and then they got out all the newspapers for a week back and began to read over again the thing that everybody in the woods and out of it was talking about. To put it into a few words, a number of Mr. Bear’s and Mr. Dog’s friends had begun to lose valuables, and in a very queer way. First, an oddly dressed fellow with a long green coat and a slouch hat tied with a ribbon tight under his chin

MR. DOG AND MR. BEAR

so you could only see the top of a pointed nose—such a fellow would call with some story at this one's house or that, and right afterwards it would be found that something very nice indeed had disappeared. Sometimes it was the dinner, which is always annoying, sometimes it was a beautiful warm muffler or a pair of boots. The most expensive thing was a silver teapot belonging to Mrs. Opossum, a widow with a large family, who had, she said tearfully, just turned her back on the stranger for a moment. Now nobody knew just who the thief was, but many guessed.

Wise Mr. Owl for one had seen a fine red bushy tail one evening when the green coat had caught for a moment on a hedge, while the odd stranger was passing through.

Mr. Gray Goose said, "Of course he did n't care to have the thing repeated as coming from him, but he must say there were a great many more feathers in Mr. Red Fox's back yard than could easily be explained away." This was the first time any one had said Mr. Red Fox's name right out loud like

MR. RED FOX

that, but the forest people who heard it all nodded their heads. Only Miss White Goose, who was a silly, ventured to remark that for her part, she thought Mr. Red Fox a very dashing fellow and it was a pity to condemn him unheard, and that she did know for a fact that the Old Woman who lived in a Shoe had children who would nibble anybody's crumbs that came their way, whether their own or not. This made the Old Woman who lived in a Shoe very angry. She said crumbs were quite different from silver teapots, which was true, and for her part, she thought she brought her children up very well indeed and if whipping them all round every night without fail was n't doing her duty, perhaps Miss White Goose would teach it to her.

All this gossip had come back with more besides to Mr. Bear's attentive ears, and at last the thefts got so bad that they got into the newspapers.

"We 'll have to get the police; that 's what we 'll have to do," sobbed Mrs. Opossum. "My beautiful silver teapot! What would my dear husband have said if he had been alive! But a poor widow

MR. DOG AND MR. BEAR



“There, there, don’t cry, dear Mrs. Opossum”
has nobody to look out for her,” and she wiped her
eyes on the corner of her shawl.

MR. RED FOX

“There, there, don’t cry, dear Mrs. Opossum,” said Mr. Bear in a comforting voice, for it was to him she had been telling for the tenth time of the loss of her beautiful teapot the day the stranger had called and asked for a drink of water and she had just turned her back for a moment.

“No, no, my good woman, we don’t want the police. If it is Mr. Red Fox who is doing all this, as people seem to think, he’s so sly he would only make us all look foolish if we came out with any such story to the police without any proofs. What we want is to catch him in the act and make him give back the things, and make him so sorry and ashamed of himself besides that he’ll leave the forest for good.”

“O dear Mr. Bear,” said the widow, sobbing harder than ever at the thought of getting back her teapot; “blessings on you forever if you can do that, Mr. Bear, but do it as soon as you can, won’t you?”

“Yes, indeed,” said Mr. Bear; “I’ve a score of my own to settle. Mr. Dog has been robbed and

MR. DOG AND MR. BEAR

badly treated too, and whoever touches Mr. Dog, touches me." And he looked so fierce that the Widow Opossum scurried home without any further leave-taking.

Mr. Bear went into the house and with the help of Mr. Dog he fixed some very heavy window weights on the pantry window. Then he and Mr. Dog arranged a cord in such a way that the window could be easily opened or shut from Mr. Bear's chamber window which was directly above. Then Mr. Bear got about two dozen nice fresh eggs and put them in a market basket on the pantry floor just under the window, which he left about six inches open. Then he and Mr. Dog pulled a board over near the house and left it there just outside, where it would be extremely handy for any one trying to get into the house to use. And last of all, Mr. Bear took out his jackknife and went into the forest nearby, and when he came back he had several nice, limber, birch switches without any leaves or twigs on them. These he carried carefully into the house and then locked up as usual for it was

MR. RED FOX

getting dark and he and Mr. Dog went to their rooms for the night.

Meanwhile Mr. Red Fox was at home and a snug little place it was. Just two rooms and a lean-to with crimson window curtains now tightly drawn so that nobody could peep in, an open fire where some nice stew was slowly cooking, sending out the most attractive odors, and Mr. Red Fox himself in a cushioned rocking chair with his feet on another, and drinking a cup of tea which had just been poured from a fat silver teapot that looked for all the world like the one that Mrs. Opossum was always talking about.

Mr. Red Fox ate his supper with relish, washed his whiskers, let the fire die out, washed the silver teapot and put it away—where do you think? Not on a shelf, oh no! not in plain sight anywhere, but under the mattress of his bed. From this strange place Mr. Red Fox also took a bag of money. The very bag of money that he had stolen from poor Mr. Dog the day Mr. Dog almost drowned in the river. He also took out several other articles and

MR. DOG AND MR. BEAR

last of all the red morocco collar with its burnished brass plate that winked merrily in the light of the lamp on the table.

Mr. Red Fox put on the collar and then walked up and down before the mirror, admiring himself. By this time it was getting quite late. Mr. Red Fox opened the cottage door just a crack and looked cautiously out. Not a sound or sign of anything. He locked the door again, and went to the cupboard where he pulled out a long faded green coat and an old slouch hat that he tied firmly under his chin so that only the end of his pointed nose showed. Then he went and rolled in the ashes that were now only pleasantly warm in the fireplace. Yes, he did! and when he stood up he was not Mr. Red Fox but Mr. Dingy Gray Fox, and that suited him better. He put on his old green coat, tucked the money bag and other things away beneath the mattress, all but the collar which he forgot he had on, opened the door, went out after listening a moment, locked it, put the key in his pocket and sauntered off in the direction of Mr. Bear's cottage.

MR. RED FOX



Mr. Red Fox sauntered off in the direction of Mr. Bear's cottage
You see Mr. Red Fox had read the sign I told you
about.

MR. DOG AND MR. BEAR

FRESH EGGS FOR SALE

and if there was one thing more than another that he just doted on, it was fresh eggs.

Meanwhile Mr. Bear was sound asleep in his four post bed and Mr. Dog was asleep, but not so soundly, in his white iron cot. Mr. Bear, some people have said, could sleep through a whole winter without waking up. That seems a pretty long nap to me, but I'm sure of one thing, Mr. Dog could n't even get through one night without waking a half dozen times at least, and listening to make sure that everything was as it should be. It was clear starlight and you could see quite plainly all about the cottage. Mr. Dog went to the window to glance about, and as he did so, he drew softly though quickly back, for something or somebody below was stirring.

Mr. Dog hardly breathed for fear of making a noise, but the stranger beneath, after looking care-



"Sh-sh," said Mr. Dog in a whisper

MR. RED FOX

fully around, went and got the wooden board that Mr. Bear had left so near the house, put it softly against the side of the cottage, scrambled up without making a single sound, and squeezing through the opened window, disappeared into the pantry. It was too dark for Mr. Dog to be perfectly sure, but he thought the intruder had worn a long coat and a slouch hat well tied on over his eyes. Mr. Dog ran quietly but swiftly to Mr. Bear's chamber and bit Mr. Bear gently on the ear, for this was the best way to wake him up in a hurry.

"SH-sh," said Mr. Dog in a whisper, "he 's there, he 's in the pantry."

"Good enough," whispered back Mr. Bear, and he walked, for all his great body, as lightly as ever Mr. Dog could do to the window of the room.

Nothing to be seen and nothing to be heard unless a faint crunching of eggshells might be possibly noticed.

Mr. Bear was smiling. He had the slender rope that went from the pantry window up into his own room firmly held in his paw. He was watching

MR. DOG AND MR. BEAR

and so was Mr. Dog, who was as still as a stone dog on somebody's lawn, for he never even so much as wagged the tip of his tail.

So they waited, and by and by the hall clock began to strike: one, two, three, four, five, six, seven, eight, nine, ten, eleven, twelve! Midnight! and then from below came the least little bit of a noise. The pantry window moved just a trifle, somebody with a slouch hat on stuck his head out, waited, and then very cautiously stole down the board that had been left tilted against the cottage wall beneath the window. Out, as I have said, came his head, and out came his body, long coat and all—all did I say? No, not quite all, for the stranger's bushy tail was still within and at that precise moment Mr. Bear let the cord loose in his hand that held up the window weights and down came the window and held the stranger fast. And oh, how he struggled and kicked and pawed the sloping board! No use, there he was held fast, high and dry, head down and tail up and no prospect in sight of getting away, to say the least.

MR. RED FOX

Mr. Bear stopped long enough to get his beautiful limber birch switches and then he and Mr. Dog made their way outside.

“What ’s this? What ’s this?” said Mr. Bear in a loud voice. “Why, it looks like Brother Red Fox. Upon my word, Mr. Dog, it does. Is that your opinion?”

“It certainly is, Mr. Bear,” said Mr. Dog, “but what is Mr. Red Fox doing here?”

“If you please, gentlemen,” said the stranger, who was really no stranger at all, as you know, and talking in a high, squeaky voice, “I ’m only a poor wayfarer in search of a crust of bread. Let me go, gentlemen, kindly let me go and I ’ll trouble you no more.”

“Wayfarer, indeed!” said Mr. Bear with a grunt. “We know you too well for such tricks, Mr. Red Fox.”

“Red Fox!” squeaked the intruder in pretended surprise. “Red Fox! My dear sir, I never even heard of him, and I could n’t be him anyway. See how gray my fur is.”

MR. DOG AND MR. BEAR

“Yes,” said Mr. Bear shortly, “I see, and I think I can soon change it back to its right color.” And without more words Mr. Bear took the birch switch in his great paw and began to give Mr. Red Fox the most thorough thrashing he had ever had in all his life. The wood ashes flew up in a cloud so that it made Mr. Dog think of what happened when you beat a very dusty carpet, and Mr. Bear sneezed and coughed, but never stopped for a moment till the switch broke fairly in two.

Mr. Red Fox was begging at the top of his lungs to be let off, and making promises without number, to which Mr. Bear paid not the slightest attention.

“Be so kind, Mr. Dog, as to hand me that other switch,” was all he said, and at this Mr. Red Fox redoubled his cries and prayers.

“So you feel you ’ve had enough, Mr. Red Fox?” Mr. Bear asked sternly.

“Oh, yes! quite too much,” answered Mr. Red Fox promptly.

“Well,” said Mr. Bear, “this last was just a little matter of business between you and me. It helps



"Be so kind, Mr. Dog, as to hand me that other switch"

MR. RED FOX

to even things up for the way you treated Mr. Dog here. But now there are other matters. What about the stolen muffler? What about the boots? What about Mr. Dog's collar and money bag? What about the silver teapot?" And with each question he gave Mr. Red Fox a reminder that his arm was as strong as ever, and the second birch switch just as limber and useful as the first.

"Oh! oh! oh!" said Mr. Red Fox, and his slouched hat fell off and his green coat was split right down the back by his frantic struggles. "Never took 'em. Give 'em all back," he panted.

"Very well," said Mr. Bear, pausing and wiping his forehead with the back of his paw, for though it was a cool night he was quite heated with his exertions. And the end of the matter was, Mr. Red Fox had to tell Mr. Dog and Mr. Bear just where he kept all the things he had stolen and promise to leave that part of the country just as soon as he could sell his house and pack up his belongings.

"And just make sure they are *your* belongings," said Mr. Bear in a terrible voice, "for if you take so

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much as a pinfeather that does n't belong to you, Mr. Red Fox, I'll find it out and then—"

"I won't," interrupted Mr. Red Fox hurriedly, "I won't, I won't!" And the end of it was, Mr. Dog was sent to fetch the money and the boots and the muffler and the teapot and all the other articles, having first put on his own red morocco collar taken from Mr. Red Fox's neck, and mighty glad he was to get it.

While he was gone, Mr. Bear sat comfortably down beside unhappy Mr. Red Fox, who was still pinned fast by his brush to the pantry window, and who had to listen to such a long moral lecture from Mr. Bear that, taken with the beating he had received, had the effect of making Mr. Red Fox forever dislike above everything the very sight or smell of an egg.

And when Mr. Dog, heavily laden, did come panting up there was nobody in all the wide world so glad to see him as this same Mr. Red Fox, who lost no time, I can tell you, in running for home just as fast as his aching bones would let him.

MR. RED FOX

And that is the story of *how Mr. Red Fox got more than he came for.*

After this, Mr. Dog and Mr. Bear lived on together very happily and comfortably, and were everywhere much respected and liked by the forest and farm people. They all considered that Mr. Bear had been very remarkable in getting back everything, excepting dinners, that Mr. Red Fox had stolen, and in getting rid of Mr. Red Fox himself, and as they never knew the sad ending of Mr. Dog's ride in the airship, they thought Mr. Dog a very wonderful person too.

And it is really true that Mr. Bear was only a little lazy and Mr. Dog only a little vain, and that both grew less and less so as time went on, and that each day found them always and always better and better friends.

PART V

MR. DOG AND MR. BEAR GO TO SCHOOL!

ONE lovely fall day Mr. Dog and Mr. Bear were sitting on the porch, and Mr. Bear was reading the newspaper. Mr. Dog felt rather impatient. He did not like to keep interrupting Mr. Bear, who was busy with the animal sporting page, and yet he very much wished that Mr. Bear would hurry up and finish, for there was something very important that Mr. Dog was anxious to talk about. I suppose he must have coughed and sighed, and moved about a great deal without knowing it, in the manner of people who are uneasy; at any rate, pretty soon Mr. Bear did stop reading, and looked up over the top of the newspaper at Mr. Dog, who that moment was discontentedly biting his paw.

Mr. Bear slowly took off his spectacles and put

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them in their case. He was very particular to always wear them for real work. He had bought them of a peddler not long before and though they were only of plain glass, Mr. Bear was very proud of them and said while they did n't exactly make him see better, they did make him feel better and he was sure they improved his looks.

Now, having laid them carefully one side, he began, "Well, Brother Dog, out with it; what's the matter?"

Mr. Dog was much surprised. Mr. Bear was so slow in some ways that his quickness in others was something of a puzzle.

"Why, what makes you think there's anything wrong, Mr. Bear?" asked Mr. Dog.

"Well, I've watched you, out of the corner of my eye, fidgeting about," said Mr. Bear, "for the last twenty minutes. You've moved the porch rug to at least four different places, and you've watered that geranium twice and you've even been reading a book upside down."

"Yes," said Mr. Dog in a low sad voice, "that's

MR. DOG AND MR. BEAR

it; that 's it exactly. You see I was trying to see if it was easier reading that way."

"Easier that way!" exclaimed Mr. Bear. "What nonsense!"

Mr. Dog said nothing, so Mr. Bear went on a little impatiently, "Well, was it?"

"No," said Mr. Dog, "it was n't nonsense; for the point is, it is n't easy for me reading things right side up either."

Mr. Bear laid the newspaper right down and sat up pricking his ears so suddenly that off went his red bandana handkerchief put on to keep the flies away.

"What do you mean, Mr. Dog?" he said.

Mr. Dog opened his mouth and then shut it. Then he opened it again and began, "You see, Mr. Bear, it 's this way. I was always a poor dog till I met you, and you were so good to me—"

"Nonsense," growled Mr. Bear, blushing very hard under his fur.

"And," went on Mr. Dog, "the long and short of it is I never went to school. You see, I never really

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got a chance and I've just picked up a little here and there. But as to sitting down and enjoying the paper the way you do, why, Mr. Bear, I think it's just wonderful!"

"Nonsense!" said Mr. Bear for the third time, and feeling really uncomfortable, for somehow things did n't seem quite fair. Then he brightened up.

"Why not practise and get so you do enjoy it?" he asked.

Mr. Dog shook his head.

"You can't teach an old dog new tricks," he said.

"Yes, you can," answered Mr. Bear quickly and quite excited. "Don't tell me a bright dog like you could n't learn to read and read well. All you need is a first class teacher." Mr. Bear scratched his head and thought a while in silence, then he jumped up and clapped Mr. Dog on the shoulder. "The very thing, old fellow," he said. "I've got it. We'll have a school. We'll have it right here in my woodshed and we'll have Mr. Owl for

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schoolmaster. There you are. I guess there won't be much trouble now about a little simple reading, and writing and arithmetic too, Mr. Dog." And Mr. Bear fairly beamed with joy.

But Mr. Dog hung his head.

"I'm ashamed," he said, "to be going to school at my age."

"Ashamed," said Mr. Bear stoutly, "of course you're not ashamed. Why, I'll go—you see, winters when school kept I slept most of the time when I was young and there's simply hundreds of things I don't know. Why," went on Mr. Bear, warming up to the subject, "I guess, Mr. Dog, there are questions about 'most anything you could ask me that I could n't answer; and as for the people in this forest, they'd be a lot better for a little schooling. Look at Miss Gray Goose. Would school hurt *her*, I'd like to know? Look at those young rabbits growing up without any education and no manners! Why," said Mr. Bear, wiping his forehead, for he was getting really heated with the idea of all the ignorance around him, "I wonder I never



Miss Gray Goose quite talked the hens and turkeys into coming

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thought of it before. It's a crying shame, Mr. Dog, that's what it is, that we've had no school in this forest, and it takes a clever fellow like you to think of having one."

Mr. Dog began to cheer up.

"Well," he said slowly, "if you think Mr. Owl would do it."

"Do it," said Mr. Bear, "he'd just jump at it. Nothing he likes better than telling other people what to do."

"And," went on Mr. Dog, "if you think the forest people would come—"

"Come!" said Mr. Bear in his biggest voice. "Come! You'd better believe they'd come. It will be in my woodshed and I shall personally invite them. I guess they've come quick enough to any parties I've given."

"Yes," said Mr. Dog, "but this is different. This is school."

"All the more reason," answered Mr. Bear quickly; "what's a party anyhow? Anybody can go to a party and after it's eaten up what have

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you? But school, why, you generally have to pay to go to school, and what you get there you take away with you."

"Well," said Mr. Dog, "I'll do everything I can to make it a success. And speaking of the woodshed do you think the rabbit family could sit on the wash bench, where I keep the tubs, you know? It's pretty long and there are such a lot of them."

"To be sure," said Mr. Bear, "and Miss Gray Goose and her kind can perch on the saw-horse. The Old Woman in the Shoe can have the parlor armchair and she can have her switch handy and keep those young rabbits in order."

"I'll sit on the sugar bucket," interrupted Mr. Dog, "I would n't trust any of that kindergarten lot with it."

"And I guess I'll have to bring out my own rocker for myself, I'm so heavy," finished Mr. Bear.

"We'll have to fix up a table and put the short step ladder behind it for Mr. Owl," went on Mr. Dog, getting more and more interested. "That'll

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be handy for him, for he will need to get up and down a lot to keep things going right in the beginning, and if Mrs. Opossum and her family come, we can manage to use some of the kitchen set, and the chairs from the front chamber.”

Mr. Bear rubbed his paws together and chuckled. “All we need now is a blackboard, some chalk and a book or two and the school is as good as started. Let’s have an early lunch, Mr. Dog, and then we ’ll go together to Mr. Owl, make the arrangements and get the people together. I do believe we can begin this week and by next, Mr. Dog, you ’ll be reading the news with anybody.”

The two friends therefore made a hasty meal; so hasty, in fact, that Mr. Dog was wiping his whiskers with the back of his paw when on his way to the forest, which was n’t good table-manners, but perhaps may be excused on account of the many things that had yet to be arranged before school could be started.

Mr. Owl was asleep when they got to his hollow-tree home, and to tell the truth he was not at all

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pleased at being waked up. However, when he found out how really important the errand was, he smoothed his ruffled feathers and promised to do his best. But there was one thing that Mr. Dog and Mr. Bear had quite forgotten. Mr. Owl could and would only teach school at night. They begged him to try it for once in the daytime but without success.

“Impossible, my good friends,” he said, blinking his great yellow eyes as he spoke. “I *never* work daytimes. My family is nocturnal in its habits: altogether so.” And, as neither Mr. Dog nor Mr. Bear had the least idea what “nocturnal” meant, they said rather sadly that Mr. Owl must have it his own way, and arranged with him to begin school that very evening, for Mr. Owl was secretly delighted at the chance of being schoolmaster to the whole forest, and said they must certainly lose no time in commencing the good work.

You can imagine how busy this made Mr. Dog and Mr. Bear. They put their heads together as soon as they left Mr. Owl, and Mr. Dog decided

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to get back to the cottage as fast as his four paws would take him, and fix up the schoolroom, while Mr. Bear went around and got the pupils.

Of the two, it was really Mr. Bear who had the hardest time. You can take quite a big table and make it go where you like, even if it hangs back and is heavy, but it is hard making animals do something different from anything they have ever tried in their lives before. However, Mr. Bear had pretty good success on the whole. Only the Educated Pig refused flatly to come, because he said he knew enough already. Mrs. Jack Rabbit was quite upset also, in the beginning, at the idea of having her young rabbits up at night, and she said she did n't see how she was ever going to get through the work if she had to cook breakfast twice and extra lunches, for she knew that Mr. Jack Rabbit, who was very particular about his meals, would never consent to his children going to school without their breakfast even if they had just got through supper, and then think of the dinner pails she would have to pack, for of course her family would

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expect their fresh lettuce as soon as school was over, no matter what the hour. She called after Mr. Bear, who was hurrying down the road after



Only the Educated Pig refused flatly to come

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more pupils, that she feared also she would oversleep the next day, and then when would the washing get hung out to dry, but Mr. Bear only waved his paw at her and disappeared at a turn in the road. To tell the truth, Mr. Bear was beginning to feel that sometimes you had to pay too great a price for knowledge and he did n't want Mrs. Jack Rabbit to guess his secret thoughts.

Miss Gray Goose, on the contrary, was delighted at the idea of going to school, for she always loved anything new and was as vain as she was silly; she was very sure she would shine as a pupil, and she quite talked the hens and turkeys into coming, though not one of them had ever sat up after seven o'clock at night in their lives.

Mrs. Opossum said she did n't like to leave her house alone now that she had got her silver teapot safely back, the one Mr. Red Fox stole, you remember, but Mr. Bear told her it would be all right for her to bring it to school with her, and then she consented.

The Old Woman who lived in a Shoe said she

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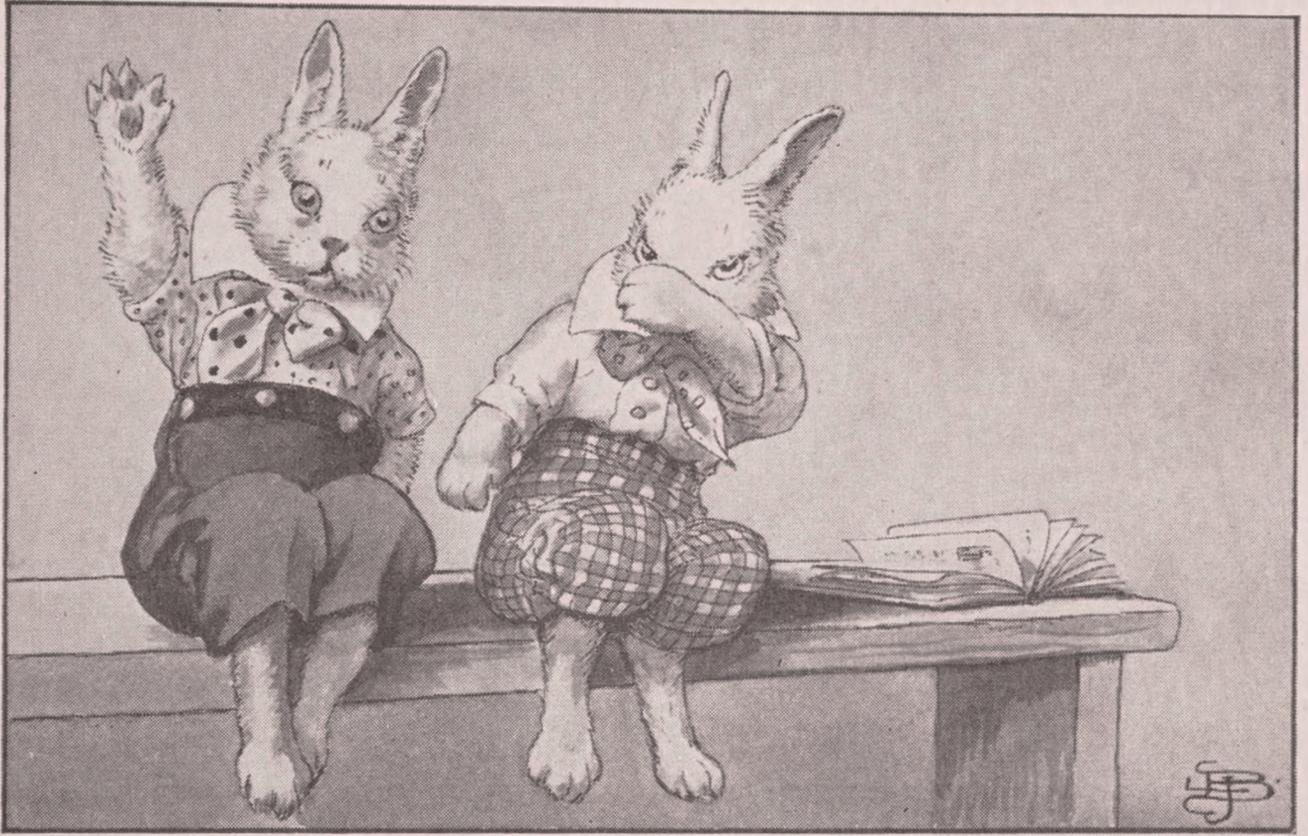
would n't bring *her* children, that was flat. Mr. Owl was not to be trusted with young mice. Indeed, she had heard tales, and she thought she was too old herself to learn new-fangled ideas. Still she might look in provided she got the children fed, and spanked, and put to bed in season.

On the whole, Mr. Bear, footsore and weary now, still felt he had got things well started.

He found Mr. Dog with his head tied up in a duster sweeping out the woodshed, which was in apple pie order, but Mr. Dog was dog-tired, if you know what that means. In fact neither of the friends really felt like doing any further hard work, even for the sake of getting to know much more than any animals of their kind had ever learned before.

It was pretty late by the time their simple tea was over, and several young rabbits with spelling books and arithmetics had already arrived, and were playing "Bye, Baby Bunting," a favorite rabbit game, while waiting for their anxious mother, who was following with the rest of her family. In

GO TO SCHOOL!



“Please, teacher, Benjamin Bunny is pinching me”

the game we speak of the hunter *never* gets the rabbit skin to wrap the baby bunting in, and that is partly why the young bunnies like to play it. In fact, they liked it so well that Mr. Bear had to really growl, and Mr. Dog had to make believe snap, before the youngsters were driven into the woodshed and seated on the wash bench. There were in fact so many of them that you could n't have got in another young rabbit to save your

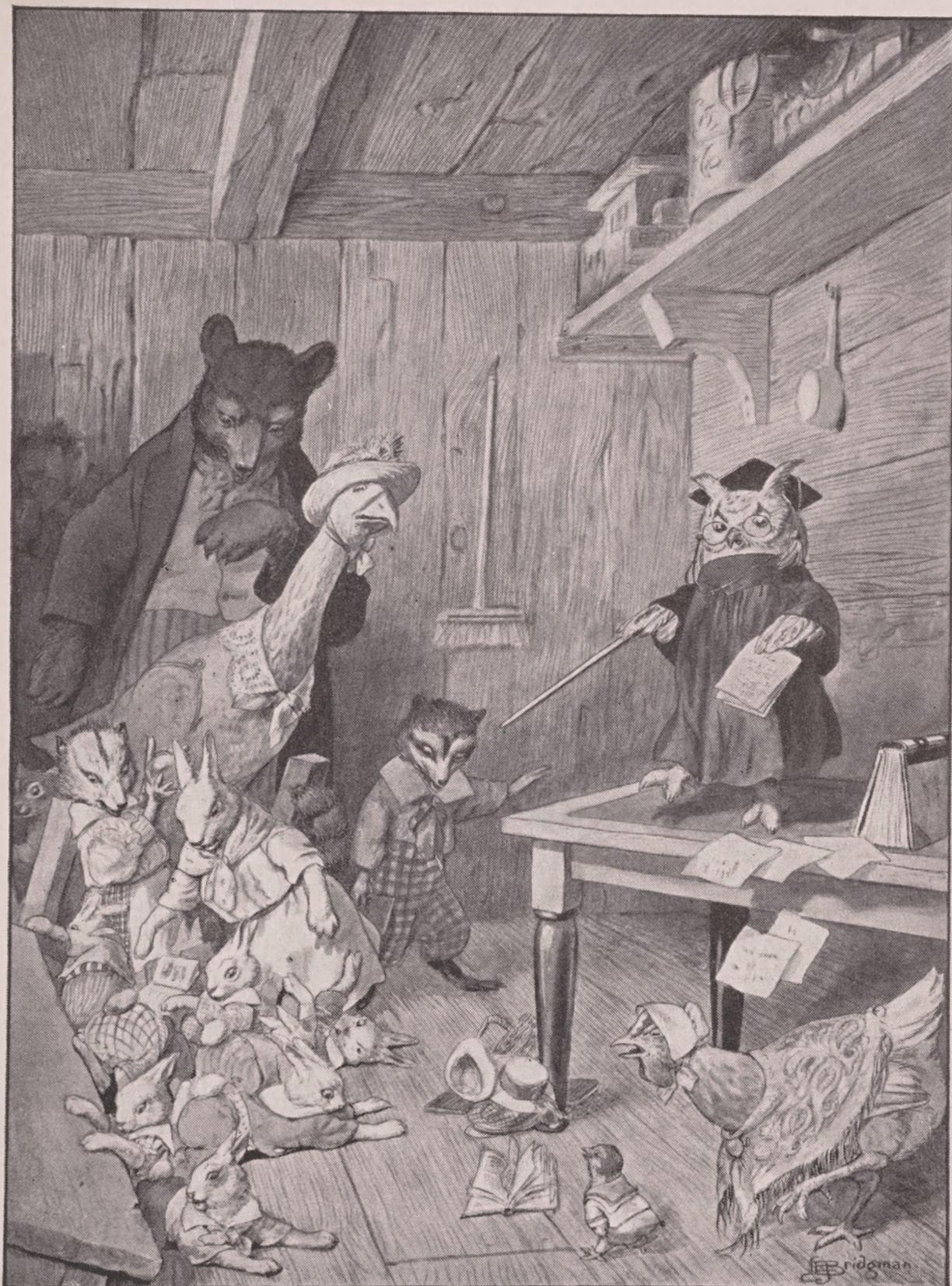
MR. DOG AND MR. BEAR

life, and if one in the middle so much as giggled, the end one promptly fell off and Mr. Bear had to seat them all over again.

Well, at last they got settled and then the other pupils arrived. Miss Gray Goose wanted a very front seat and insisted at first that she perch on the teacher's table. Mrs. Opossum was so busy settling herself comfortably where she could keep an eye on her silver teapot, that she made the whole second row change their places three times.

The Old Woman in the Shoe did come after all, looking very hot and cross and tired, and was beginning to make a fuss about the teacher's not being on time, when just then Mr. Owl arrived, looking so wise and important that even the Old Woman stopped talking and the whole school sat with its eyes wide open, and those having ears had them well pricked forward.

Mr. Owl brought a pointer and some chalk which he placed on the table. He then settled himself on his perch, opened his beak, and began—"The object of this school," said he, "is to teach all branches



“Order,” he said in a stern voice

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of learning. I will begin with simple reading, writing and so on and go on to—”

“Please, teacher,” interrupted a young rabbit, “Benjamin Bunny is pinching me.” Mr. Owl rapped smartly on his desk with his pointer. “Order,” he said in a stern voice. “The first class in spelling will now recite.”

Nobody moved but everybody looked at his neighbor.

“How do you expect me to teach,” said Mr. Owl crossly, “if no one recites anything?” He looked about and caught Miss Gray Goose’s eyes fixed upon him.

“Spell ‘fox,’ Miss Gray Goose,” he said.

Now Miss Gray Goose had n’t an idea in the world how to go about this and she was ashamed to confess her ignorance, so she just drooped her head and repeating, “Fox! oh, that name! that name!” fell limply off her perch as though she had really fainted. As water runs off a goose’s or duck’s back without making any impression, at first nobody knew quite what to do to revive her.

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You can imagine the disgust of Mr. Owl, of Mr. Dog and of Mr. Bear, the delight of the mischievous young rabbits, and the confusion this caused in the school. But after a time Miss Gray Goose, after weakly fluttering her wings, got slowly better, and went back to her perch, and lessons began in earnest. That is, they were supposed to have begun, but really I don't think there was much work accomplished.

In the middle of a learned lecture on "bird seed" by Mr. Owl, who, having no use whatever for this form of food, was giving his ideas with much force to his pupils, the whole front row of little rabbits who had gone sound asleep fell with a crash to the floor. Then indeed there was wailing and weeping, and the most terrible disorder, in the midst of which Mrs. Jack Rabbit indignantly marshaled her family into line, and took them home, followed by Miss Gray Goose, who said she did n't feel very well and thought school too confining for any one of delicate nerves like herself, and by Mrs. Opossum, who at the sound of the crash had gathered

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up her precious teapot, and left by the nearest window. As for the Old Woman in the Shoe, a clap of thunder would n't have disturbed her. She was sound asleep, and snoring in the parlor armchair while her neighbors, the hens and turkeys, were squawking and running hither and thither, to the profound disgust of Mr. Dog, Mr. Bear and the schoolteacher. In fact, Mr. Owl was so really disgusted that as soon as he could make himself heard he declared that school was over—for that night, and as far as *he* was concerned for ever. "It is quite impossible," said he, "to teach a school where every few moments the pupils fall off their seats to the floor." And despite the entreaties of Mr. Dog and Mr. Bear, he spread his wings and flew majestically away, followed in silence by all those who had remained after the mishap of the young rabbits. Mr. Dog and Mr. Bear were quite alone and for a few moments neither spoke.

Then Mr. Dog gave a heavy sigh and wiped away a tear. "And to think," said he, "that after all

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that work and trouble I shall never learn to read the newspaper.”

Mr. Bear went up to him and laid his paw on his shoulder. “Mr. Dog,” said he, “dry your eyes.



“Mr. Dog, dry your eyes”

GO TO SCHOOL!

As I said before, all you need is a good teacher. Mr. Dog, I think we are well rid of these silly forest people, and even of Mr. Owl, who does not understand us. I said all you needed was a good teacher. Now, Mr. Dog, I fear I may not be that, but at least I know what you want, and I will try my best to give it to you. After this we spend five evenings a week in study, just you and I, and, Mr. Dog, you are such a bright fellow I do not fear but that before winter has gone, you will be reading as well as any one."

"Hurrah!" said Mr. Dog, his eyes sparkling. "Hurrah! Perhaps I can!" and it only remains to be said that he did, and that neither regretted the sudden ending of Mr. Owl's night school.

PART VI

MR. BEAR TELLS A STORY

YOU remember how badly the young children of Mrs. Jack Rabbit had acted that only night of theirs at school in Mr. Bear's woodshed. Well, after they got home and had had their supper, and gone to bed, and slept soundly till late the following morning, they woke up and began to talk things over. Peter Rabbit was rather ashamed of himself for one, and he reminded the others of how kind Mr. Bear had been to them, and how, though he spoke so gruffly, he generally had a few choice carrots in his coat pocket for them when they met. The others hung their heads, and even Benjamin Bunny, who was the most mischievous of them all, seemed really sorry for having bothered good Mr. Bear, and when Peter Rabbit proposed they should bring him up a jar of preserved blue-

MR. BEAR TELLS A STORY

berries, for which Mrs. Jack Rabbit was justly famous, and make a handsome apology that very day, they one and all agreed.

Mr. Bear was strolling up and down his gravel walk watching Mr. Dog, who was sitting on the front porch book in hand saying over and over to himself, "d-o-g—dog, b-e-a-r—bear," and other words, a list of which had been given him by his new teacher to learn perfectly before evening.

Mr. Bear saw the young rabbits timidly approaching two by two, in a procession that was unusually orderly in its arrangement, and at first he scowled, for he thought they must be up to some new mischief.

But Peter Rabbit, cap in hand, came up promptly if politely and giving Mr. Bear no time to speak, told his errand, and before he had done, Mr. Dog had stopped lessons to listen, and Mr. Bear was beaming on the whole party. He accepted the jar of blueberries and the apology together, and invited them up, and was looking about for something with which to entertain his guests, when Mr.

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Mr. Bear saw the young rabbits timidly approaching two by two

Dog suggested that Mr. Bear tell his famous story.

“A story! a story! O dear, good Mr. Bear, please do tell us a story,” clamored all the young rabbits, and in less time than it takes to write it, Peter Rabbit and Benjamin Bunny had Mr. Bear’s favorite rocker out on the porch, and in another minute every little rabbit present was seated as close as possible to the story-teller. Some on the piazza steps, some on the walk, and others overflowing onto the grass, but as near together as they could well manage. Mr. Bear, seated comfortably above them with Mr. Dog, who was now preparing the

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potatoes for dinner, looked down on a row of eager furry faces, every ear lopped forward, every pink topaz eye fixed on Mr. Bear. No wriggling and giggling now, as in school, I can promise you. In fact when Peter Rabbit happened to sneeze, and he really could n't help that, the other young rabbits were quite annoyed and his cousin Benjamin gave him an angry shove and told him, "to please keep still." Mr. Bear cleared his throat, wiped his spectacles, and began as every good story-teller should with "Once upon a time."

"Once upon a time, my dear young rabbit friends," said Mr. Bear, "I am cinnamon color as you see, but once upon a time there lived in a magic wood far, far away, another bear who was a relation of mine and he was snowy white. This was the more strange because he was the only one of his family to be like that. All the others were black, or dingy brown, and while their fur was rough and shaggy, Polo's fur, for that was what they called him, his real name being Roly Polo, had fur that was very soft and silky. This made

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his brothers and sisters and even his father and mother jealous, and they treated poor Polo cruelly. They pretended to be ashamed of him on account of his white coat; they made him do all the dirty work and nothing pleased them so much as to roll him in the ashes, and send him out into the forest covered with soot."

"Shame," said Benjamin Bunny, and the other rabbits nodded their heads.

"Yes," went on Mr. Bear, "it was a shame and after a while, if you will believe it, the bear family really got to thinking their own coats the handsomest and were dreadfully mortified if any of the neighboring wood folk saw Polo when, as it sometimes chanced, he had had a good bath and was white and shining. They kept him out of the way as much as possible, they made him eat the left over scraps, and they never let him play any games with them, unless it was to be something that none of the others liked to be. In short they were just as unfair and mean as possible. Poor Polo was very unhappy and wished every day that he had



Mr. Father Bear did so at once, bowing down to the ground

MR. BEAR TELLS A STORY

been born just a plain, ordinary, brown bear. If he could have changed himself over he would have done so, but as he could n't, it did seem rather hard to have his whole family dislike him for something that really was n't his fault."

"I should think so," said Peter Rabbit.

"Well, one day, who should ride by," continued Mr. Bear, "but the King of the country; and he caught sight of Polo, who was doing the family washing on the back porch of the Bear House. The King could n't see the little white bear very plainly because there was a latticed screen in the way, but he was very much pleased with what he did see, so he reined in his horse and called out to Mr. Father Bear to come out.

"Mr. Father Bear did so at once, bowing down to the ground as he approached the King, for it was a great honor to have royalty stop at the house like that.

"'My good bear,' said the King, 'I have long been looking for some one of your kind to take to court with me, to be my friend and companion.

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For such a one I have a diamond collar, a bed of down with a satin cover, and much honey on a silver plate, besides a purse of gold which may be spent freely, as whenever it is gone I shall fill it full again.'

"Mr. Father Bear could hardly believe his ears.

" 'Myself and my family are yours for the taking, great King,' he said hurriedly.

" 'Oh,' said the King, 'that is very good of you, I am sure, but I want something a little different from the common run of bears. Have you by any chance a very handsome son?'

" 'Yes, indeed,' answered Mr. Father Bear promptly. 'I have a very handsome one. Ursus, my eldest, is both strong and beautiful.'

" 'Well,' said the King, 'I am busy to-day, but to-morrow I will come and inspect your family.' "

The young rabbits shivered with excitement. "I just hope he sees Polo," said one.

"Don't talk," said another; "we want to hear what happened."

Mr. Bear smiled at the delighted interest of his



Then Ursus was combed and brushed

MR. BEAR TELLS A STORY

hearers, and thought in his heart that they were really a bright lot and not nearly as troublesome as he had first believed them.

“So the King rode on,” Mr. Bear continued, “and Mr. Father Bear went into his house and, calling the family together, told them the great news. Even Polo, who was, you remember, working outside, heard it also.

“Then Ursus was combed and brushed and had yards and yards of bright orange and red ribbon made into bows and pinned all over his best clothes, to make them still more beautiful. Nobody paid any attention to Roly Polo except to cuff him about, which they did from force of habit. Ursus looked very important, and was given the best of everything to eat at supper, while the others of the Bear family looked on with envy. You would think that the eldest son was already King’s favorite, and the idea did not greatly improve his manners. In fact Ursus gave himself such airs that Roly Polo had to go out of the room and stuff both paws into his mouth to keep from laughing out

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loud, which would not have been a good thing to do, as you may imagine.

“The next morning was one of the busiest in the little white bear’s life. It was ‘Polo, bring this,’ ‘Polo, get that,’ with never so much as a ‘thank you’ but only ‘you lazy beast’ and ‘you great good-for-nothing’ to help him along, and a shove here and a cuff there, till he was ready to sit down and cry in good earnest.

“Fortunately, before it was very late, up rode the King. Polo had been hurried into the coat closet and locked up there for safe keeping, at the first sound of the Herald’s silver trumpet, for Mr. Father Bear and his mate could not dream of having their white offspring disgrace them by being accidentally seen.

“But when Ursus came out very slick with bear’s pomade, and very fine as to orange and red ribbon rosettes, the King burst out laughing.

“‘Surely,’ he said, ‘this is n’t the handsome son you promised me. Then out with the rest of the family.’

MR. BEAR TELLS A STORY

“In a moment there they all stood for the King’s inspection; Mr. Ursus Bear in the background, furiously biting off his gay ribbons, and the others, black and dingy brown, all bowing and showing their white teeth in the very pleasantest smiles they could manage.

“But the King did not seem at all taken with their looks. He appeared, in fact, much annoyed and even cross, and he spoke sharply to Mr. Father Bear.

“ ‘Is this quite all the family?’

“ ‘Quite all,’ said Mr. Father Bear, which was a dreadfully wrong story.

“ ‘Are you sure?’ said the King.

“ ‘Sure, your Majesty,’ answered the wicked father bear again for he was prepared to say anything rather than have Roly Polo get any kind of a chance to be King’s favorite. You see his conscience troubled him. If Polo did get such a wonderful position what would become of the Bear family who had so ill treated him? Besides that, Mr. Father Bear could n’t make up his mind to let

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the King see that one of the Bear children was so very unlike the others, with not even one spot of brown to take away from that staring whiteness of his furry coat.

“The King looked very much disappointed, but he felt that he must have been mistaken after all in thinking he had seen something so different the other day. So he signed to his guard to start and picked up the reins which had been hanging loosely on his horse’s neck.”

“Oh dear!” sighed a young rabbit.

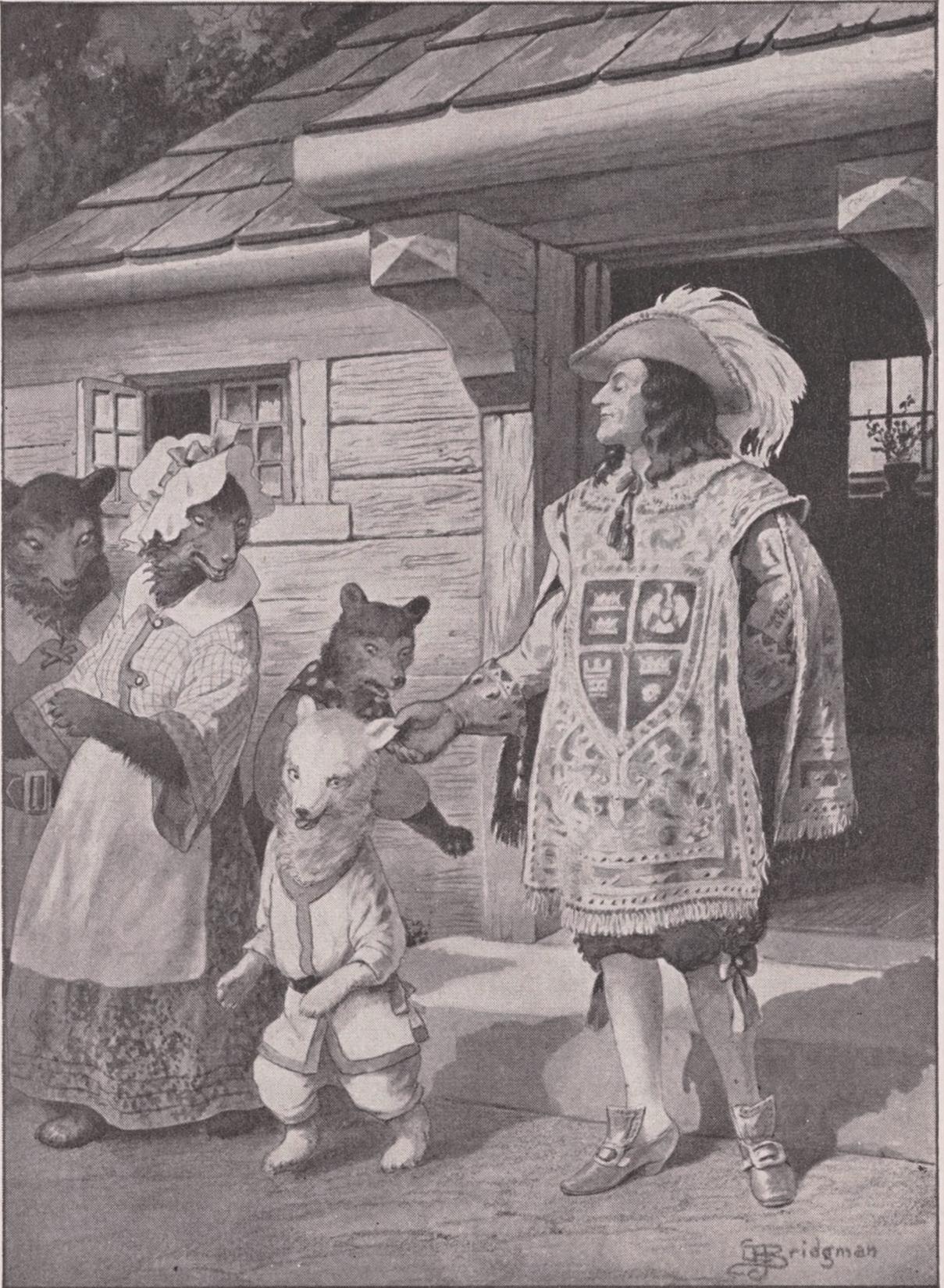
“And then,” said Mr. Bear, smiling at his anxious listeners, “then there came the funniest noise, scratching and squealing, for I will tell you something that nobody there knew. It is this:—

“The coat closet door did not fit quite tight.

“In fact, there was as much as half an inch of space at the bottom and the windows of the Bear house being open, Roly Polo had heard every word.

“‘What’s that?’ asked the King, pausing.

“Mr. Father Bear answered quickly. ‘Oh, that



The gorgeous Herald in blue and silver

MR. BEAR TELLS A STORY

is—that is hens,’ he said, for that was the first answer that came into his head.

“ ‘Nonsense,’ said the King. ‘Hens may scratch but they certainly don’t squeal. That noise seems to come from inside the house. Herald, search!’ he commanded.

“ ‘O your Majesty,’ pleaded Mr. Father Bear in a great state of fear and excitement, ‘please don’t. I think that noise may come from my unhappy son. He is so very ugly I did n’t want to offend your Majesty’s eyes with the sight of him. And besides that, he has such a bad temper he is really dangerous.’ ”

“The wicked old thing,” murmured Peter Rabbit.

“So he was,” agreed Mr. Bear, “but as you will see it did n’t do him a bit of good. Lies seldom do, you know. For the King paid not the slightest attention to Mr. Father Bear’s entreaties, and the royal commands were at once obeyed, and in a few moments the gorgeous Herald in blue and silver came forth leading by the ear a little white bear,

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none other than our friend Roly Polo. But he was n't so very white, because, you see, he had been doing a lot of work all the morning and had n't had time to wash up. Besides that he had been crying in the coat closet and his tears had made two grimy streaks way down his small face. All the same the King liked his looks immensely. Even under all the dirt he was a very attractive little bear and his dark eyes were full of intelligence. His pink tongue showed just a little also, for all this was so surprising that he forgot and kept his mouth open, and the King thought his smile very sweet.

“Meanwhile, Mr. Father Bear was trying to edge away, and all the Bear family were looking guilty and most unhappy, and the King was glad they felt so. In a few words, for Kings are apt to come straight to the point, his Majesty told Mr. Father Bear exactly what he thought of him, and then he ordered him and his whole family sent into the neighboring country with strict orders never to return. That is, all but Roly Polo, who was first

MR. BEAR TELLS A STORY

to have a perfumed bath, and then to be installed in the Palace as King's high favorite.

"The Bear family wept and wrung their paws."

"Served them right," said Benjamin Bunny.

"And Roly Polo, who had a sweet forgiving nature, begged the King to pardon them, but he would n't. And when he was told later of how badly they had treated his little white bear, he was so angry that perhaps it was best for them that they were by that time all far away. But Roly Polo went back with the King to the Palace," ended Mr. Bear, "and lived happily forever after."

"My," said the young rabbits, "that was a fine story!" and they one and all thanked their kind host, and were preparing to take their leave in their best manner, when out came Mr. Dog with a plate of lettuce sandwiches, and a big pitcher of lemonade, and that really turned the whole thing at once into a party.

It was nearly an hour later when the gathering broke up. Mrs. Jack Rabbit had come anxiously seeking her children, for she could n't imagine what

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was keeping them so long. And Mr. Bear walked half way home with her, and before they parted they were friends again, and Mrs. Jack Rabbit, who was really a good soul though of a nervous disposition, said several times that she thought it very kind indeed of Mr. Bear to entertain her children so beautifully, and that not one of them had been seriously hurt by falling off the wash bench in Mr. Bear's woodshed that one night of school.

PART VII

MISS GRAY GOOSE FOLLOWS HER OWN COUNSEL

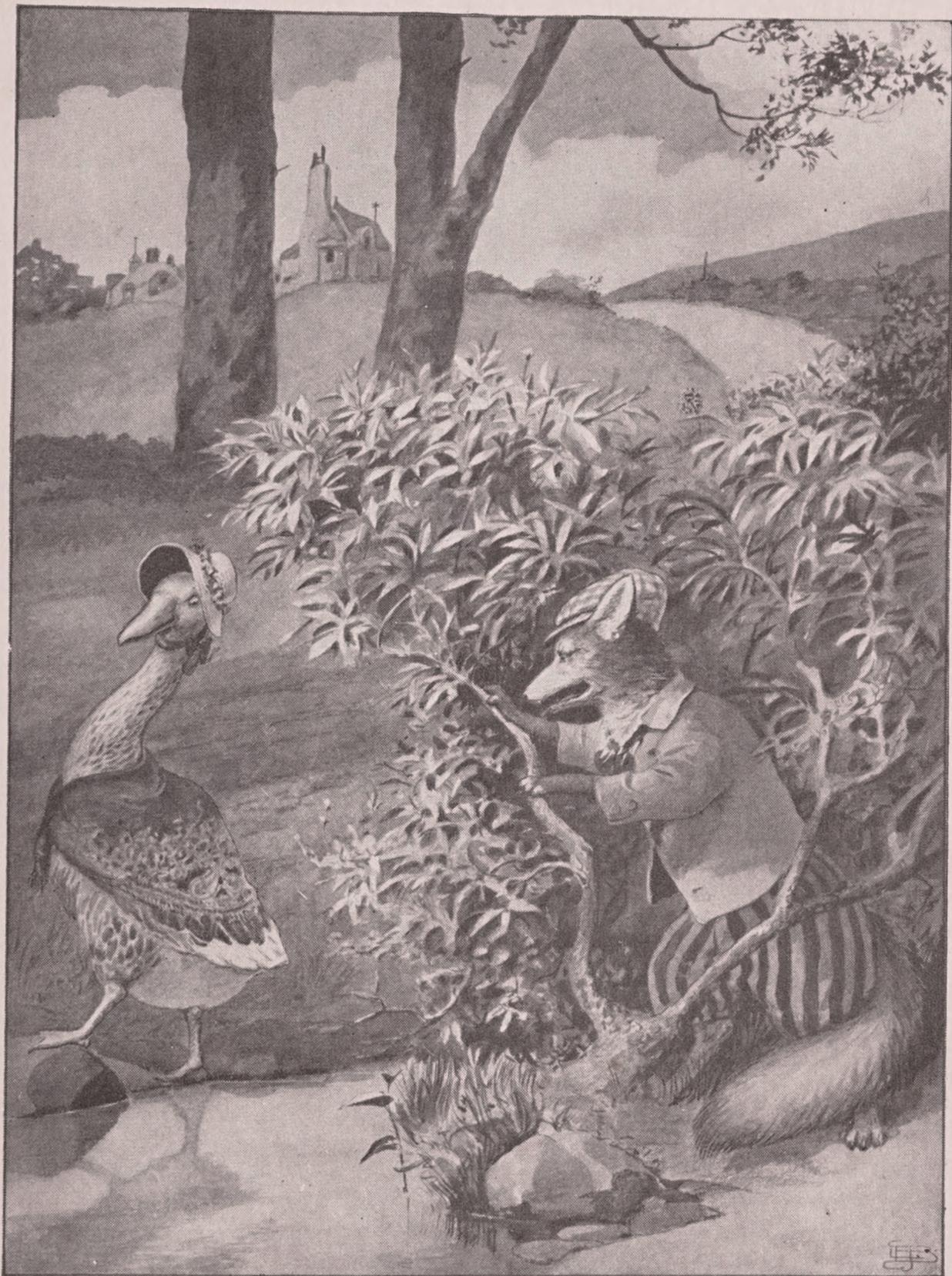
DO you remember Mr. Red Fox, how meanly he had treated Mr. Dog, how he stole and got punished by Mr. Bear, and how at the end he had been driven out of the forest on account of his evil doings?

Well, all that was a good while ago, and Mr. Red Fox began to hope these things were forgotten, and that he might safely venture to return once more. He was so afraid of Mr. Bear that he did n't dare come right back to the forest to live, but by watching and hiding around he found out that his old home was vacant and then he thought that he would ask the silliest of all the animals some questions that he very much wanted answered. I wonder if you can guess to whom he went.

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It was Miss Gray Goose. She alone of all the wood people had not been glad of Mr. Red Fox's exile, and some foolish remarks of hers had reached Mr. Red Fox's sharp ears, and been laid away in his memory for further use.

So it was that he waited patiently behind some thick bushes near the roadside until the silly bird should pass by alone; and one morning she came, and stopped to admire herself in a convenient puddle. Miss Gray Goose was going to pay a visit to a neighboring farm. She had on her best bonnet trimmed with blue and yellow, and her cashmere shawl had a gay flowered border. Her tail feathers glistened in the sunlight. They were really dazzling white although the rest of her was gray, and were very pretty, and Miss Gray Goose was so proud of them that she kept her head turned a good deal of the time, so as to look at and admire them. She was thinking what a really lovely creature she was with her yellow beak, and snowy plumage, for she never thought about her gray feathers if she could help it, and Mr. Red Fox was think-



Miss Gray Goose stopped to admire herself in a puddle

MISS GRAY GOOSE

ing exactly the same thing, though for a different reason. It was her plumpness that he most admired, and as he had had but little breakfast, her appearance was so tempting it made his mouth water. But Miss Gray Goose was altogether too near home and friends to make it safe for Mr. Red Fox to dream of showing his admiration in any such way as seemed good to him. He could be patient as well as crafty, as we know, when it seemed worth while, and in his wicked mind a plan had already formed, that to him seemed very worth while indeed.

So he put his cap on a trifle to one side, since he knew Miss Gray Goose admired a rakish manner, and, coughing gently to prepare her, he stepped out from behind the thicket.

Miss Gray Goose gave a frightened squawk and her eyelids fluttered rapidly. It was all very well to say at a distance that one admired Mr. Red Fox, but to have so bold a fellow with such a bad reputation so near, when one was unprotected, was quite a different matter.

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But Mr. Red Fox pretended not to notice her surprise or fear.

“Good-morning, Miss Gray Goose,” he began in his smoothest manner. “I only stopped in passing to thank you for allowing a poor wanderer like me to see so beautiful a picture. I hope you do not think me impertinent, dearest Miss Gray Goose, if I say openly that I never saw a more lovely costume, and to be still more personal, how in the world do you manage to keep your tail feathers so beautifully white?”

By this time Miss Gray Goose had got partly over her terror and she thought to herself in her silly head that she had been quite right in thinking Mr. Red Fox was not so bad after all. “It was really strange,” she added to herself, “how often she was right and the rest of the world was wrong, and yet few people seemed to realize it.”

“I hope,” said Mr. Red Fox, looking sweetly at her but coming no nearer, “that you are as well as you look, Miss Gray Goose.”



So he put his cap on a trifle to one side

MISS GRAY GOOSE

"Thank you," said Miss Gray Goose in a faint voice, "I am pretty well."

"I suppose," said Mr. Red Fox, "that with your sensitive nature you are often misunderstood and so of course you cannot be quite well. Ah!" sighed Mr. Red Fox, laying his paw on his heart, "I know how that is. People say such dreadful things of me, but dear Miss Gray Goose, I have heard of the noble way in which you have answered them. If only I were back in my old home I would show these stupid wood people how much I value you, my dear brave Miss Gray Goose."

And so he would, but not quite in the manner Miss Gray Goose thought. The silly bird was enchanted by these soft words. She raised her bill with quite an air and looked coyly at Mr. Red Fox. There was something about him that much attracted her. He was such a dashing fellow, quite unlike plodding Mr. Bear or that Mr. Dog who was always giving his betters good advice, and who really had no idea of what was due to a lady.

Imagine it, Mr. Dog had really had the impu-

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dence to laugh at her for defending Mr. Red Fox, and he had gone so far beyond his rights as to say, quite roughly, that the more she kept on her side of the farmyard wall, and left Mr. Red Fox on the other, the better it would be for her.

But perhaps he was jealous. Miss Gray Goose looked again at her lovely white tail feathers and decided that was probably the reason for Mr. Dog's remarks.

Meanwhile, sly Mr. Red Fox sighed heavily and Miss Gray Goose wanted to know at once what the matter was.

"Dear lady," said Mr. Red Fox, "you have such a kind heart, and so I will make so bold as to tell you my troubles. While you have been standing here making, if I may say so, such a lovely picture against the green trees beyond you, I have been thinking of many things, and I wondered if I dared ask your advice about doing over my parlor should I, as I now hope and expect, return to my old home."

"Why, Mr. Red Fox, if I can be of any help I'm

MISS GRAY GOOSE

sure I am quite at your service," said Miss Gray Goose, much pleased to have her taste consulted.

"I said to myself just now," went on wily Mr. Red Fox, "that anybody who could pick out such a beautiful bonnet and shawl must have the right ideas on house furnishing, so if you would just slip home with me I think we could settle everything between us in a few minutes." And, oh, how hungry Mr. Red Fox looked, to be sure!

Miss Gray Goose was a little troubled by this unexpected turn to her conversation with Mr. Red Fox. She knew that his house, like its owner, had a very bad name. Old Mr. Turkey Gobbler had even said one day that he had been told that *loose feathers had been seen there*.

Miss Gray Goose shivered.

"I don't believe I can to-day," she hesitated, when just then Mr. Red Fox, who had been uneasily pricking up his ears, and sniffing the air with his long pointed nose, gave a quick leap in her direction.

"Dearest Miss Gray Goose, please come," he

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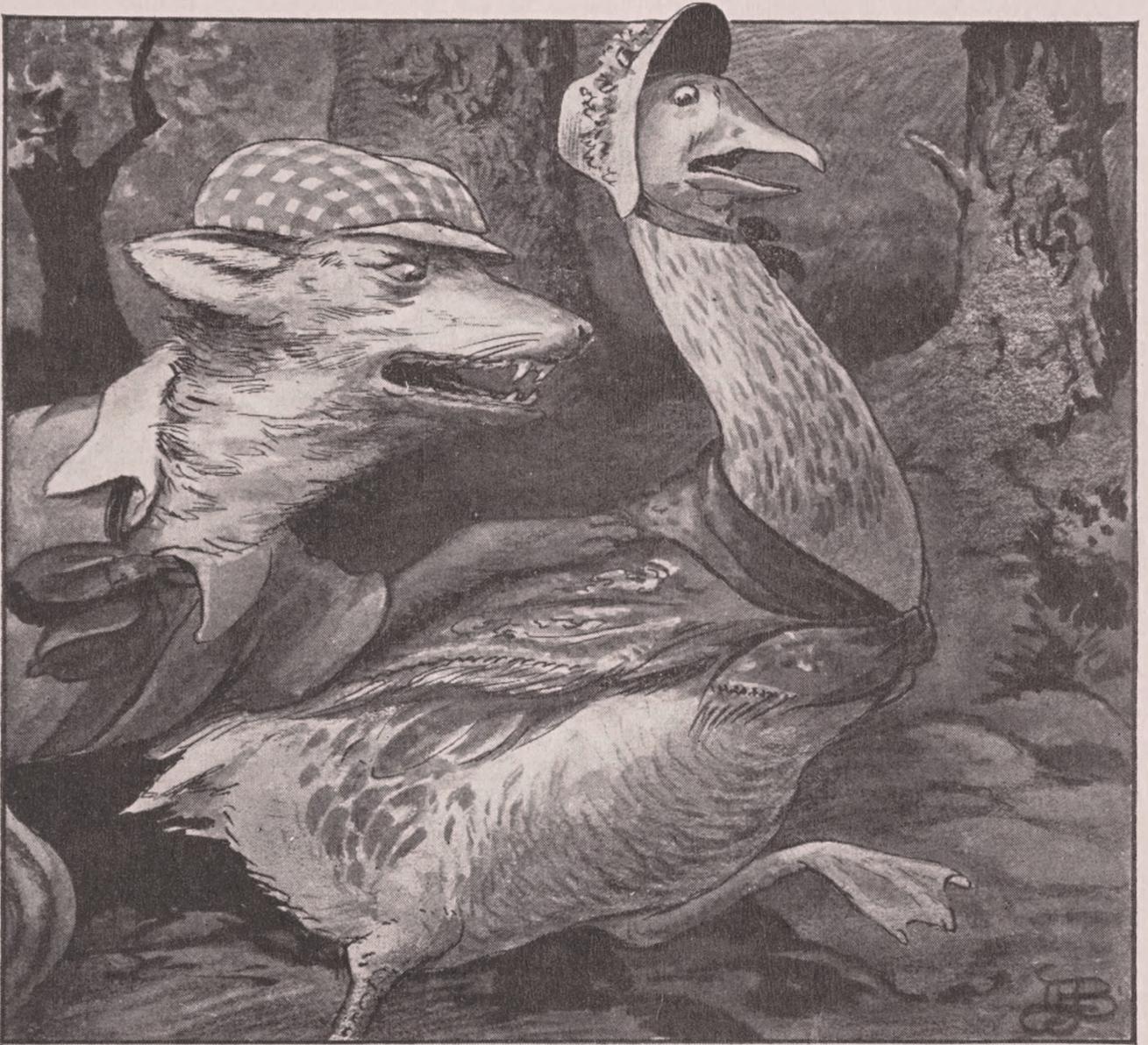
said; "that tiresome animal, Mr. Dog, is running this way. He'll be sure to be rude if he sees us talking together. Anyhow just come a little way into the forest till he gets by, won't you? Do now, like the sweet kind creature you are." And before Miss Gray Goose quite knew how it all happened she found herself hurrying along the narrow path which led to Mr. Red Fox's residence.

She did n't half like it, but Mr. Red Fox gave her no time to think, for taking her by the wing, to help her, as he said, over the rough places, he went rapidly onward, deeper and deeper into the forest, and the farther he went, the more his eyes glowed like twin coals of fire, and the sharper showed his long teeth as he smiled in a peculiar manner on Miss Gray Goose, who was by now quite frightened, and wishing herself safe at home in the farmyard.

"Please, dear Mr. Red Fox," she panted, "don't go quite so fast."

"Oh," said Mr. Red Fox, not slackening his pace in the slightest, "you are so fat, my dear creature,

MISS GRAY GOOSE



“Please, dear Mr. Red Fox, don’t go quite so fast”

I ’m sure a little gentle exercise will do you good.”

Miss Gray Goose was much offended, but she did n’t dare to reply.

“And there ’s my house right at the turn of the

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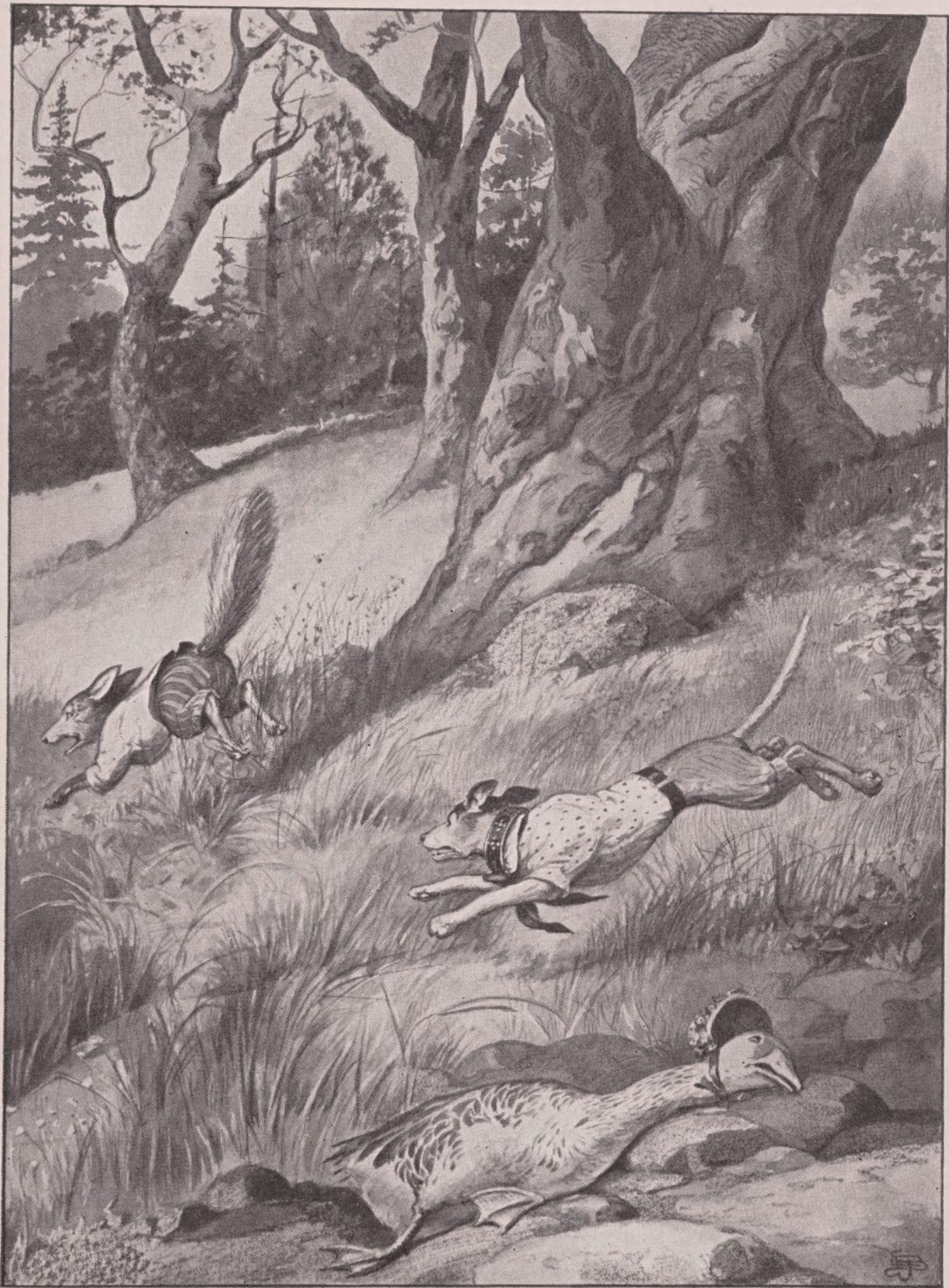
road.” Mr. Red Fox lapped the end of his nose with his tongue.

“Fat! yes, my dear, you are fat—a most beautiful thing in a goose—and sweet, yes, I’m sure you are sweet also. Here we are at last. Come in, come in, Miss Gray Goose, and lunch will soon be ready.”

And that, I am afraid, would have been the end of this story and Miss Gray Goose together, only Mr. Red Fox’s door happened to be latched, and Mr. Red Fox had to loosen his grasp on Miss Gray Goose’s wing for the moment, as he needed to use both paws to get the door open.

Miss Gray Goose dropped her beautiful cashmere shawl and started down the winding forest road as fast as her two yellow legs and her wings, which were unfortunately clipped, would take her. Mr. Red Fox gave a nasty snarl and started after.

Miss Gray Goose ran for dear life, and that is pretty fast even for a goose, but Mr. Red Fox ran for his dinner and he went faster. Miss Gray Goose got to the turn of the road first but Mr.



Mr. Red Fox was off in the very opposite direction

MISS GRAY GOOSE

Red Fox was close behind. Miss Gray Goose gave a despairing leap in the air just as Mr. Red Fox's teeth went "click" behind her. She felt a terrible pull and gave one fleeting look. She did not see her white tail feathers—they were gone, but Mr. Red Fox, with a very wry face, was pulling them out of his mouth as fast as his paws could take them. Miss Gray Goose gave up all hope; her legs began to wobble in a distressing manner. She felt Mr. Red Fox's hot breath on her very neck, and then—then just at that exact instant out from the bushes bounded something, it was black and white, it had gleaming eyes and sharp teeth and when he saw it Mr. Red Fox gave a kind of double summersault and was off in the very opposite direction before you could say "Jack Robinson."

"Oh, Mr. Dog!" murmured Miss Gray Goose, and then she fell over limply on to her side, just as she had done at night school, only this time she had fainted away in sober earnest.

When she came to herself Mr. Dog was fanning her with a large leaf of a skunk cabbage. The

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forest was very quiet; one or two white goose feathers were floating in the breeze or caught on to the neighboring shrubbery. Miss Gray Goose shut her eyes—the sight of them was so painful—but Mr. Dog had seen that she was herself again, and he told her in a few words they had best be getting home. It was a sad journey. Miss Gray Goose with her bonnet all on one side, without her shawl and without her beautiful tail feathers, was hardly the same creature that had gone forth from the farmyard so gaily that morning. She never said one word all the way home. She was never so ashamed in all her life and Mr. Dog, marching beside her like a soldier guard, never spoke either. To tell the truth he was hoping the whole thing would be a wholesome lesson, and he thought it best to say nothing, but when they reached the farmyard there indeed the silence was broken. Every fowl broke into a perfect babel of questioning, and some of the little chickens and the younger ducks were so rude as to plainly make fun of Miss Gray Goose's sadly altered appearance.



I have been told that the uniform was most becoming

MISS GRAY GOOSE

Miss Gray Goose almost wished Mr. Red Fox, while he was about it, had finished the rest of her, as well as taking her beautiful tail feathers.

I should like to add that she changed as much for the better within as she had for the worse without, but I must be truthful.

In spite of her terrible lesson Miss Gray Goose did not grow less silly. She only kept much closer at home, and in fact it was only necessary to call "Mr. Red Fox is coming!" to make her retreat, squawking with fear. And this, I am sorry to say, was something that the young bantams used in fun to do, just to have the pleasure of seeing Miss Gray Goose drop her conceited airs, and run like any ordinary, frightened fowl to the nearest coop for safety.

But the animals of the forest were so pleased with Mr. Dog's gallant behavior that they voted to make him special policeman. I have been told that the uniform was most becoming, and that it was one of Mr. Bear's greatest pleasures to see his friend inside it, and I am sure that Mr. Dog wore

MR. DOG AND MR. BEAR

it worthily, and performed all his duties in a satisfactory manner. At least it looks that way, because Mr. Red Fox took himself and his hunting to other forests and the wood people were never troubled by him again.

PART VIII

THE CHRISTMAS TREE

NOBODY in the forest was troubled in any way for a long time after Mr. Red Fox had gone, and before winter set in the people began to leave their doors unlocked and their valuables about just as they had done in the days before so many things were carried off by the sly thief who was caught and punished in the end for all his naughtiness, as we know.

Mr. Bear was looking forward to the first real snow storm because Mr. Dog had made a fine double runner, and they were both planning for light housework, and a lot of coasting. Mr. Bear's fur suit was just the thing for winter sports, but Mr. Dog had been obliged to go to the village and buy himself a sweater. It was a bright crimson and was very becoming, and Mr. Dog, who loved

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Mr. Dog had purchased a scarlet and white skating cap fine clothes, had purchased as well a scarlet and white skating cap with a tassel that hung down over one ear in a most engaging manner. So both Mr. Dog and Mr. Bear could hardly wait for cold weather to set in, and they spent a great deal of

THE CHRISTMAS TREE

time running out to the porch and looking at the out-door thermometer. When they were not doing that they were reading the weather reports in the newspapers with attention, or scanning the clouds, and at last their earnest watch was rewarded by the sight of large feathery flakes of snow lazily floating downward from a cold gray sky.

But alas, there was to be no coasting that day for either of them, or for that matter for many days to come; for Mr. Bear, who had not been feeling like himself for some time, came down with the mumps and Mr. Dog had his paws full with the cooking and the nursing, and the bed making, and the carrying up of trays to the invalid.

Now I suppose you never saw a bear with the mumps! It is a sad sight at best, I assure you, and the cottage was a sad place now with only the doctor's visits for company and Mr. Bear in the dreadfulest state with his poor neck so swollen that none of his collars would fit him—he had lately, to please Mr. Dog, taken to wearing them—and for daily use a red bandana handkerchief became the

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only thing possible. Well, Mr. Dog was a pretty fair nurse, though he did bring Mr. Bear some lemonade the first day and if you've ever had mumps you will know how Mr. Bear felt after he



Now, I suppose you never saw a bear with the mumps

THE CHRISTMAS TREE

got a real good taste. But Mr. Dog was more careful after that, and never so much as said "pickles" or brought Mr. Bear anything that was sour or puckery, and they got along quite nicely.

Still for the patient there was a lot of time for thinking, and Mr. Bear, looking wistfully out on the snowy landscape, began to plan for Christmas. He decided that he would surprise Mr. Dog again; you remember about the party, and this time the surprise should take the form of a Christmas tree. There were plenty of dear little firs growing about near, each one holding up its tiny branches as if begging for the honor of being chosen, and Mr. Bear knew Mr. Dog, who was something of a carpenter, was just dying to have a complete tool chest, and what a fine present that would be. And how beautifully the awl and saws and other tools would glitter hung from the branches in the light of the Christmas candles.

Mr. Bear would also see that Mr. Dog had a wonderful big bone, the best in the market, and tied with scarlet ribbon and holly, and a bottle of

MR. DOG AND MR. BEAR

perfumery, for Mr. Dog was more than a bit fond of just such things, as we have said. Oh, yes! and a dozen handkerchiefs with colored borders and "Mr. Dog" in fancy letters on their corners. Mr. Bear had to get his notebook down and write the things as fast as he remembered them, and the best of it was Mr. Bear was determined, firmly determined, as he was in the matter of the surprise party, that Mr. Dog should know nothing whatever about the whole matter. Besides, it was their first Christmas together, and it ought to be properly celebrated.

Now the funny part of it was that Mr. Dog had been thinking also, and the end of his reflections was pretty much in the main what Mr. Bear's had been. He too looked at the snow, and the fir trees, and he remembered how cold and lonely he had been last Christmas and how Mr. Bear had met him in the forest and offered him a home, as we have seen. And take it altogether, Mr. Bear had been wonderfully kind, and now he had the mumps. My! it was hard luck to have mumps when you

THE CHRISTMAS TREE

wanted so dreadfully much to go coasting, and the best slide anywhere round right under your very windows. Well, Mr. Dog would certainly like to do something about it, something that would help to pay a little of his debt to his kind friend, Mr. Bear, and something that would in a measure make up for these days of illness. He had it! And I wish you could have been there to see how fast his tail wagged! He would give Mr. Bear a Christmas tree and *Mr. Bear should know nothing whatever about it.*

Mr. Dog was so excited (did I say he was making a pudding at the time?) that he put salt into it instead of sugar and never knew the difference till he and Mr. Bear sat down to dessert together. By this time Mr. Bear was well enough to go out again, and pretty soon he was well enough to go coasting, and by then he was well enough to do anything at all that he wanted to.

His actions began to puzzle Mr. Dog. In the first place, Mr. Bear began to make a lot of mysterious trips to the village, and then he was always

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getting a lot of catalogues, which he was careful to keep locked up. One day Mr. Dog found him measuring the height of the parlor ceiling and he looked very much embarrassed when asked what he was doing; and yet Mr. Dog had n't the slightest idea of what was going on. You see, he was so full of his own plans to surprise Mr. Bear that it never crossed his mind that Mr. Bear might have secret holiday plans of his own. Mr. Dog was chiefly concerned that Mr. Bear should n't find out what *he* was doing and as he was much more careful than poor, dear, blundering Mr. Bear he never gave his friend the slightest idea of what was in his mind.

After a lot of thinking, Mr. Dog decided to cut the prettiest little Christmas tree you ever saw, that he had found near by in the forest. He would trim it with popcorn and cranberries and little candles, and he would give Mr. Bear a half dozen jars of the finest honey, because Mr. Bear loved honey best of anything, and a big blueberry pie tied up with scarlet ribbon and holly, for Mr. Bear



Mr. Dog found him measuring the height of the parlor ceiling

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liked blueberry pie next best, and a muffler, a beautiful warm plaid muffler, because Mr. Bear was n't stylish but loved to be comfortable. Oh, yes, and a white and gold book for the parlor table. Mr. Dog did n't care at all what was inside the book but he wanted a very handsome cover. It would look awfully well under the best lamp and as the only book in the house was a cookbook, Mr. Dog felt it would lend quite an air to the whole cottage, and was, in a way, really needed. To do all this would take every penny Mr. Dog had earned by his flight in the airship, all the money in fact that he had got back again from Mr. Red Fox, as we saw in another story; but Mr. Dog did not grudge a single cent of his hoard.

Mr. Bear did n't tell anybody of his plan and Mr. Dog did n't tell anybody either. They both gave very good reasons for refusing a number of invitations that they received for Christmas parties; Mr. Bear, looking very wise, said he felt rather old for romping about, just a quiet evening in slippers at home for him, and Mr. Dog said

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what with the mumps and all he was behindhand now with his work, and he thought he would rather spend a quiet day resting, just slippers and an evening at home for him.

Their friends asked, but what were they going to do about Christmas?

Mr. Bear looked up in the air and scratched his head and finally said something about wreaths in the windows, and Mr. Dog answered briskly that he was going to make the finest plum pudding that day for dinner they ever saw and if that was n't celebrating Christmas, what was?

Still, it did seem as if the time would never arrive, for you know yourself how slow Christmas and birthdays and vacations are about getting around; and how very quickly school days, and trips to the dentist and such things come, but at last it really was December twenty-fourth, and that very evening after sunset had been planned both by Mr. Dog and by Mr. Bear for their grand surprise.

Mr. Dog had all his presents on the top shelf of

THE CHRISTMAS TREE

his bedroom closet, and Mr. Bear had all his presents on the top shelf of *his* bedroom closet, and both of them had their closets locked and the keys in their pockets.

Neither of the friends talked much at supper that night for both were too busy thinking. Mr. Bear wanted to get some good excuse for leaving Mr. Dog and getting into the forest where the Christmas tree was to be found. It was already cut but it wanted trimming and Mr. Bear decided to trim it right where it stood, or rather where it leaned against another fir tree, and then manage some way to get it into the house without Mr. Dog's knowing it. Mr. Bear's pockets were full of tinsel and bells, gilt walnuts, golden and silver balls and such like ornaments. He fairly tinkled when he walked. Mr. Dog was so very busy thinking himself, he did n't notice, and Mr. Bear had to sit down very carefully indeed for fear of breaking his precious load.

At last supper was over and the dishes neatly washed and put away and with one accord the two

MR. DOG AND MR. BEAR

friends turned to each other, and as they both spoke at once and both said the same thing this is the way it sounded:

“I was thinking of taking a little stroll this evening,” said Mr. Dog, said Mr. Bear, all in a breath without pausing.

“Why, that ’s a good idea,” said Mr. Bear, putting on his cap and goloshes as he spoke. It was handy for him not having to bother with anything more on account of his fine fur coat, though he would rather have liked a muffler.

“I think so too,” said Mr. Dog, hurriedly getting into his coasting togs, sweater, cap with the tassel and all.

“Which way were you going, Mr. Bear? I was thinking of going west—”

“I was thinking of going east,” said Mr. Bear, much relieved at the turn things were taking, and so the two friends parted.

Mr. Bear called out over his shoulder, “No use, Mr. Dog, of being back before eight o’clock a fine night like this.”

THE CHRISTMAS TREE

“Oh, no!” said Mr. Dog, much pleased and inwardly planning to get his tree all trimmed outside in the forest for safety, and then to have it in the cottage and all set up a few moments before that hour.

So both friends walked hurriedly off and my, were n't they busy! Mr. Dog to the west to hang on his tree, as fast as ever he could, the strings of cranberries and popcorn with which his pockets were bulging, and Mr. Bear to decorate his tree in the most beautiful manner and as rapidly as possible, and you may not believe it, but each of them got through the very same moment, which was exactly seventeen and a half minutes to eight o'clock, and each of them were just, though in different directions, one half mile from home. Mr. Bear put his tree on his shoulder and started, Mr. Dog put his tree on his shoulder and started. Mr. Bear's tree was bigger and heavier than Mr. Dog's tree, but then Mr. Bear was stronger than Mr. Dog so they both covered the ground at the same rate of speed.

MR. DOG AND MR. BEAR

Now I suppose you are already guessing what happened. It was sure to, was n't it? And it just did.

Mr. Dog, stealthily coming up the back way, and Mr. Bear, stealthily coming up the front way, met right at the cottage door and I wish you had been there to see them. I don't suppose their eyes were ever wider opened in all their lives, and as for their mouths they were open too and both their tongues were hanging out.

And they were both surprised! Mr. Dog was the quickest so he began to laugh first, but Mr. Bear was not long in following and they both laughed so hard they had to lean their beautiful Christmas trees up against the side of the cottage, while they rolled over and over in the snow and neither one could stop.

But at last Mr. Bear caught his breath and sat up and Mr. Dog, still wiping away tears of merriment with his paw, sat up too, and then it all came out—their wonderful plans and all the doings.

Well, the end of it was, there were two Christ-



I wish you could have been there to see them

THE CHRISTMAS TREE

mas trees set up in Mr. Bear's house that night and two very happy people.

The presents were a truly surprise after all, and they were exactly right. Each said so to the other, I don't know how many times. Mr. Bear put on his muffler at once, though the cottage was as hot



And they both laughed so hard

as hot could be, and Mr. Dog had so much perfumery on his handkerchief that they had to open the front door to air off.

Mr. Dog began to do things with his tools at once, while gnawing ever and anon at his wonderful bone, and Mr. Bear ate a piece of blueberry pie

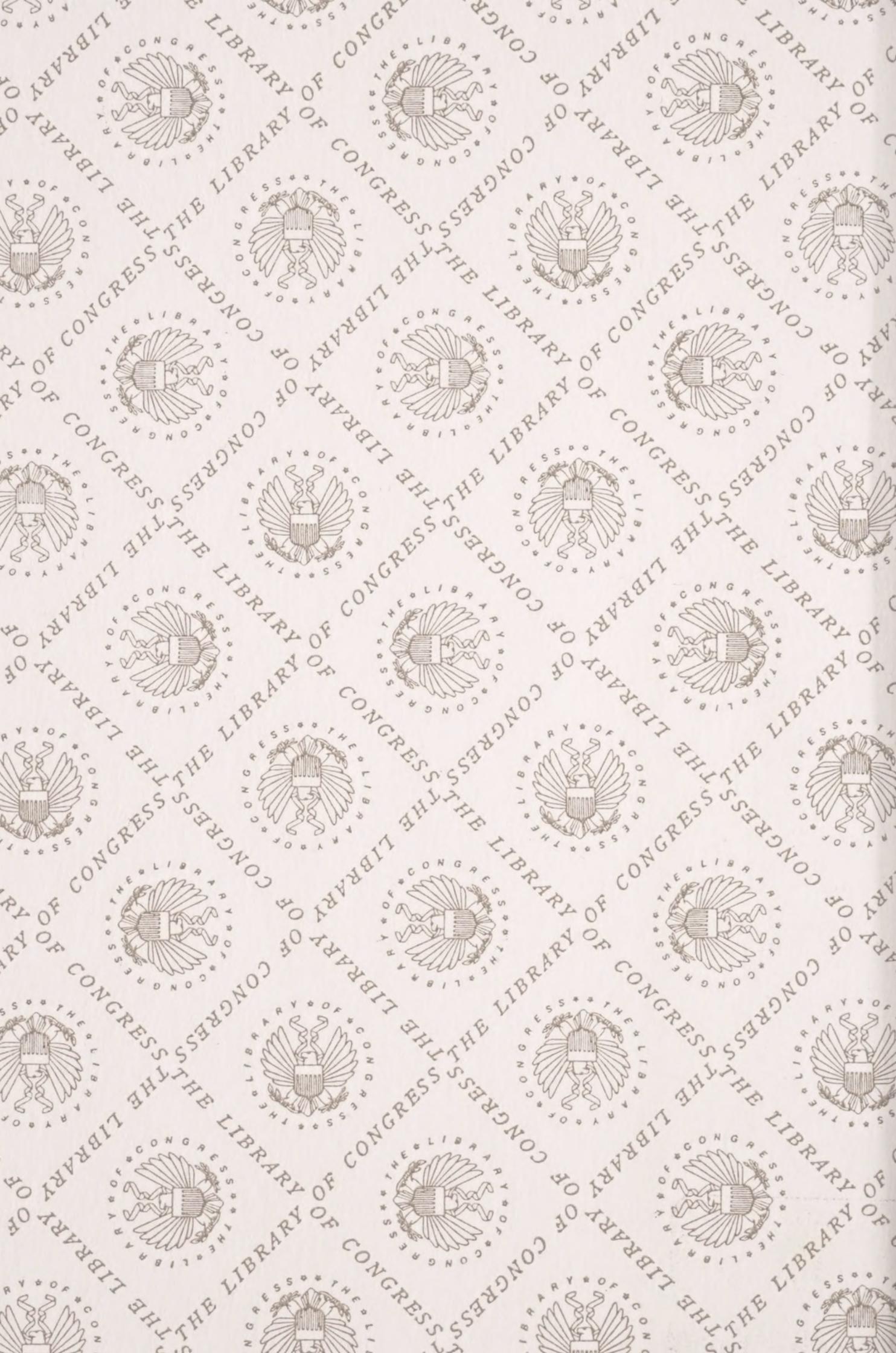
MR. DOG AND MR. BEAR

that was big enough to give him seven kinds of nightmare, but did n't.

In fact they both said there had never been such a Christmas and that it was the greatest fun having it that way all alone. I suppose they meant the forest and the farm people, but still, perhaps, this is a good place and time for you and me to leave them.

THE END

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