

QUEER PETS AT MARCY'S



BREAKFAST AT MARCY'S.

Frontispiece.

Mrs. Harriet (Mann) Miller

QUEER PIECE

BY



Live Thome Miller



E. P. DUTTON & CO
713 BROADWAY NEW YORK

No. 110220

NEW YORK

7
5530

[1880]

COPYRIGHT
1880
By E. P. DUTTON & CO.

QL 49
.M65

PRESS OF J. J. LITTLE & CO.,
NOS. 10 TO 20 ASTOR PLACE, NEW YORK.

PREFACE.

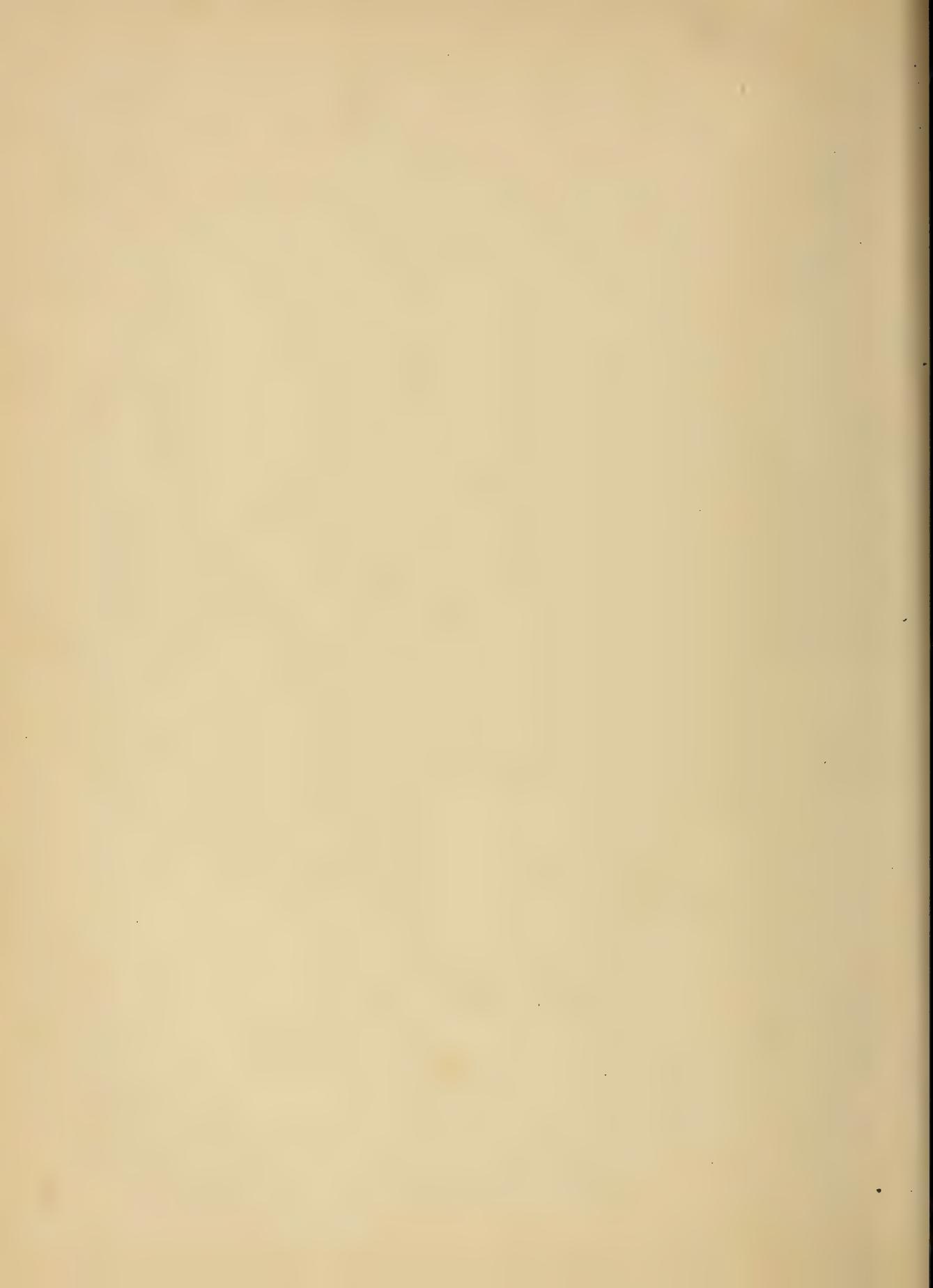
THE facts of Natural History in this volume are connected with a thread of story, to please the Little People, who delight in stories that are true.

Because of that form, let no one suspect they are in any way fictitious. The facts are carefully gleaned from the best modern naturalists and travelers, and the stories of pets are well authenticated. Most of the latter occurred within my own circle of acquaintances, and the others are credited in the text to the proper authorities.

To make a delightful story about animals is by no means the aim of the book, but to tell plain facts and true stories of animals in a way to interest the Young Folk for whom it was written.

Its value is greatly enhanced by the illustrations, which, with few exceptions, were drawn for the book, and from the very animals therein described, by Mr. Jas. C. Beard, of whose merits as a delineator of animal life no words of mine are needed.

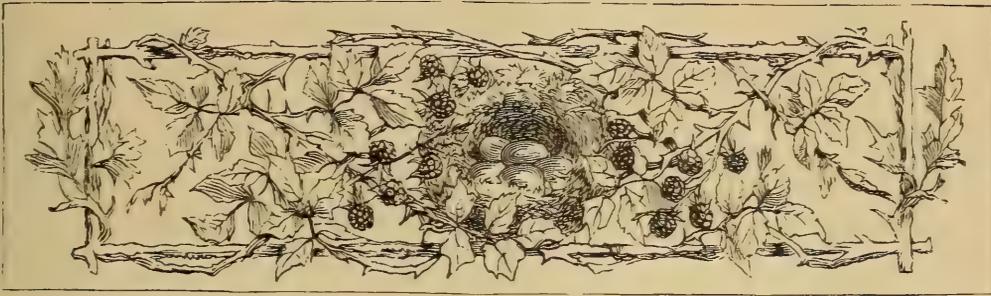
OLIVE THORNE MILLER.



CONTENTS.

CHAPTER	PAGE
1.—MARCY'S AND THE PEOPLE WHO LIVED THERE.....	9
2.—BORN IN A PRISON.....	27
3.—MARCY'S ODD PET.....	34
4.—DOCTOR DOT AND THE NEW-FASHIONED HENS.....	45
5.—A BLACK ROGUE—IN FEATHERS.....	56
6.—TWO GRAY BABIES.....	67
7.—LIVE TOYS.....	75
8.—QUEER FAMILY THAT LIVED NEXT DOOR ..	81
9.—THE NEW PET THAT ABBY CAUGHT.....	87
10.—GENERAL THAT LIVED IN A BOOT.....	97
11.—BUB.....	107
12.—A HOME ON THE PRAIRIES.....	116
13.—A JUMPING MOUSE.....	123
14.—THE HOUSE OF MUD.....	131
15.—ANOTHER LITTLE STRANGER.....	141
16.—A NATIVE AMERICAN.....	148
17.—THE BABY THAT LIVES IN THE SNOW COTTAGE.....	153
18.—NANNOOK AND BOB.....	162

CHAPTER	PAGE
19.—A SAILOR WITH WINGS	173
20.—AFTER HIS DINNER	179
21.—ALWAYS IN TROUBLE	188
22.—THE LITTLE HERMIT	195
23.—A DISTINGUISHED JAPANESE GUEST.....	199
24.—THE BABY THAT'S BURIED IN SAND.....	207
25.—LIFE IN A LACE HOUSE.....	218
26.—MOPSA, THE FIFTH CAT.....	233
27.—AN UGLY BABY	244
28.—TWO FUNNY FELLOWS	249
29.—WHAT THEY SAW IN THE PARK	258
30.—WITH A LONG NOSE.....	264
31.—PUSSY'S WILD COUSINS	275
32.—A MERMAID.....	290
33.—A STRANGE STORY OF A HORSE	297
34.—THE AIR CASTLE AND THE FAMILY THAT LIVED IN IT.....	302
35.—PLAY-HOUSE BUILDERS.....	310
36.—THE CURIOUS FELLOW THAT CAME IN A BOX.....	315



QUEER PETS AT MARCY'S.

CHAPTER FIRST.

MARCY'S AND THE PEOPLE WHO LIVED THERE.

I NEVER knew a house that was so full of animal pets as Marcy's. One needed to have his eyes open, to avoid stepping on a tame bird, or stumbling over a sleepy cat, and timid ladies were rather shy of it, keeping a sharp eye on dark corners and under sofas, for any strange creature that might rush out at them.

The house stood in the edge of a pleasant village near New York, and I call it Marcy's, because Marcy—or Marcia, to give her full name—was the elder of the two children, and the chief keeper of the family menagerie, about which this book is written.

Ralph was perhaps as fond of pets as she, but he was apt to get "tired" and to "forget," neither of which she ever did, so

long as a bird needed seed, or a kitten wanted milk. She never refused to sit up all night with a sick dog, and many a time was not able to sleep, because the affectionate cat insisted on bringing her whole family of kittens on to her bed, or some grateful, but lonely, four-footed friend would not rest easy except in her arms.

Many things the family suffered from their pets. Cats slept on the white counterpanes, and birds spattered the carpets from their baths; one dog insisted on sleeping between sheets, and a parrot nibbled the picture-frames; a canary picked holes in the plastering, and a kitten tore every newspaper to bits; foxes gnawed the shoes and rubbers; and the squirrel made holes in the carpets.

The house-mother was amused and annoyed by turns, and Patty, the cook, scolded roundly. The father only laughed, and Uncle Karl—but wait! a whole new paragraph must go to Uncle Karl.

This best of uncles was Marcy's great help and comfort. His home was with them, and it was he who brought the queer pets, made pictures, and told the children about them. He always knew what to feed the strangers, and how to treat them when ill. In fact, without him, Marcy's would never have been known as a home for pets, and you would never have had a book about it.

He had one habit that brought him many a curiosity. He visited every ship from strange countries that came into the city, to see what animals the sailors had to sell. On the day my story begins, he brought home from one of these visits two new pets, one of which he gave to each of the children.

Ralph's gift was a parrot, which had come in a ship from

Mexico, having sailed around Cape Horn, a good five months' voyage, and Marcy's was a Florida Chamelion.

Ralph named his Parrot Keeta, or rather, he named himself Parakeeta, and his master merely shortened the name; and it was not long before he distinguished himself as a bird of great perseverance and intelligence. When he set out to do anything, he meant to do it, and it took a great deal to discourage him.

One thing he had made up his mind to do, was to cross the yard on the clothes-line. He could climb a rope better than any sailor that ever lived; he had learned that on board the ship, where he would go up "hand over hand," as sailors say, using his bill as a third hand, to any height he chose.

Now, why should not so accomplished a climber be able to walk a clothes-line? Keeta decided that he could, and thereupon he began. He started out bravely, walking, of course, right side up, like a professional rope-walker. When he had gone a few feet the rope basely failed him, and turned over. Keeta suddenly found himself head down, holding on for dear life.

He was not discouraged, however. He made the most frantic efforts to get up; but no sooner would he succeed in righting himself than over it would go again. Again and again he tried it, getting quite ruffled up, and really furious about it, while the children looked on and laughed till the bird began to be tired, and then Ralph held out a finger to him, which he readily accepted, and so reached a steadier perch. As long as he lived he never really gave it up, and every little while he would have a serious time with that clothes-line.

His greatest passion was to throw things down, like a naughty

child, apparently to hear the noise, or to see what happened, for he would lean over and look with interest at the fate of the object thrown. When he chanced to get on the kitchen table or shelf, he would march along, and coolly push everything he could move over the edge, till Patty drove him out of the room in a rage.

Keeta's favorite place for playing pranks was in Ralph's shop. Ralph was fond of tools, and had quite a collection in an unused room down-stairs. His father had a carpenter's bench put in, and Ralph spent many happy hours, at work or play, in that part of the house.

Of course Keeta was often with him, and seemed to be as fond of the shop as Ralph himself, though not for the same reason. He would walk solemnly along the bench, picking up every nail or tool that he could lift, and dropping it to the floor, cocking his knowing head on one side to see where it went.

The chalk-line was his special delight. Yard after yard he would throw over, watching the tangle it made on the floor, and now and then giving a quiet chuckle of delight at the mischief he had done.

Ralph, who had it to wind up again, was not so well pleased with this trick, and he thought he would teach Master Keeta a lesson. So one day he wound the line in a coil and tied it, leaving a long piece hanging from the other end of the bench.

The next time the Parrot came in, Ralph went to work at the farther end of the bench, as though he did not see him, and Keeta at once spied the tempting coil of cord. Slowly and cautiously he drew near it, keeping an eye on his master all the time.

Ralph, however, seemed absorbed in his work, and very quietly Mr. Keeta crept up to the spot, and leaned over to seize it. At that instant Ralph gave a sly jerk on the loose end of the coil, and the Parrot, astounded to see life in what he thought was a dead rope, sprang two feet into the air, with a squawk of dismay.

He was suspicious, however, that Ralph had something to do with it, for he was well acquainted with ropes, and never saw one jump before. So he turned one eye on his young master, who seemed more busy than ever with his work.

The Parrot then made up his mind that he had been mistaken, and once more he turned towards the rope. Again he crept up in the most wary manner, and again it sprang from under his very claw, making him repeat his leap and cry. He tried it several times, till Ralph had to indulge in a good laugh; but he was still not convinced that he could not take hold of the line.

A favorite perch of the Parrot's was on the edge of an old refrigerator that stood in a corner of the shop. There he could watch Ralph at his work or play, and also keep an eye on the street, through a window near by. Now his wings were clipped, of course, and sometimes in getting off this high place, poor Keeta would fall down behind the box, where he could not get out.

Then would arise the most dreadful shrieks of "Ralph! Ralph! Parakeeta! Parakeeta!" till Ralph would come to his aid, letting down a rope, which the Parrot would seize, and climb out. He was a great talker, chatting to himself for hours; but his language was Spanish, and excepting the name Ralph, he never spoke a word of English.

What killed him they never knew; but one morning he was

found dead on the floor, and his pretty white bones joined the "collection" in the Den.

Parrots are very amusing pets, and have been kept as such almost as far back as history goes. The early Romans kept them in cages of ivory, silver, and shell, and hired tutors to teach them to say Cæsar. When America was discovered, they were found as pets in the huts of the natives.

They are not petted, however, in the country where they abound. They are as full of mischief when wild as they are when tame, and they destroy great quantities of fruit and grain—much more than they can possibly eat, though they go in enormous flocks, and have very good appetites of their own.

They are wary fellows, even before they have learned by sad experience how much they need to fear man. When a flock alights in an orchard or wheat-field, they keep the most perfect silence; they know they are stealing. But if the farmer comes near, and the watchers they always have, announce it by a scream, they all rise in the air with fearful shrieks.

The funniest thing about wild parrots is the way they live. They always have some spot for a bedroom. On the coast of Africa, as Du Chaillu tells us, there is a place of this sort called Parrot Island. In other places it will be in a bamboo thicket or some deep woods, generally where there are many hollow trees.

There they come every night, beginning to arrive at about four o'clock in the afternoon, and flying in vast flocks, so many and so fast that even the flocks cannot be counted. All are chattering and screaming, and making such a noise that they even drown the sounds in a noisy market.

The fearful din is kept up for a long time. Evidently they are telling the news of the day, where they have been, what they

have seen, where the wheat is ripe, and whose orchard has the most fruit. One by one they retire for the night, into hollow trees, where they will crowd till there's not room for another claw.

Early in the morning, before people want to wake up, the whole parrot city is awake, making plans for the day ; while one after another the flocks will go off in every direction, to eat and enjoy themselves all day. About noon they seek some water where they may bathe, getting soaking wet in the operation, and hiding during the hottest hours in the deepest shade they can find.

Noisy as they always are, they are not so careless as to let a stranger come near. They are as curious as monkeys, and the moment a person approaches the woods where they are, every sound is stopped as if by magic, not a whisper to be heard, and every parrot draws closer to the trunk of the tree, to be hidden. If the stranger shoots, they all fly with screams.

All these sociable and lively times cease when nesting time comes, and each pair finds, or makes for itself, a cozy home in a hollow tree. There the mother-bird sits on her two round white eggs, while the father feeds her, till the ugly little blind babies come out, and then she joins him in hunting food for the hungry little fellows.

They are not able to eat hard food, so it is softened in the crop of the parent, and the young ones are fed at regular hours, twice a day, at eleven, and at five o'clock. The parents are attentive and loving, and in eight or ten days the babies have their eyes open, and soon are able to fly about and help themselves. Then the families unite in flocks once more, and gay life begins in the parrot world.

Parrots, when tame, learn to eat and drink whatever people do, even coffee and tea and wine. They not only learn to talk everything, but they really seem to know what it means, and in fact they are extremely wise birds. One that I read of, put out a fire started by a cigar end carelessly thrown down, by turning over his drinking cup, and spilling the water on the fire.

One that Mr. Wood tells about, got away after being taught to speak, in Brazil, and was afterwards seen in the woods teaching a crowd of his wild relations to speak Portuguese. He would say a short sentence, and they would all say it after him; then he would give them another, which they would repeat as before. Then he would vary the lesson by dancing, and rolling his head, and at once the whole crowd would fall to dancing and rolling their heads.

It was the funniest sight you can imagine. Perhaps, with such a school teacher, the Brazilian parrots may all learn to talk Portuguese—who knows?

Another story that Wood tells is of a parrot who liked to be dressed in a doll's cloak and hat. He would strut around and admire himself, go to sleep to order, and in many ways show his delight. But when Dolly was dressed in the clothes herself, Polly was very angry; he would untie the strings, and jerk them off of her, as if she had been a thief. However, Dolly didn't care, so there was no harm done.

The parrot's greatest enemy, wild or tame, is a monkey, because of an insane desire in every monkey's mischievous head to pull out the beautiful tail feathers of the bird. Whenever they meet, the naughty monkey at once pounces on the feathers, and as he is the stronger, poor Polly has a sad time.

Parrots are affectionate to each other. If one is shot, out of

a flock, the rest will not leave him, but will hover around and show their distress, so faithfully, that the whole flock may be shot, one after another. Not one will fly away.

They nestle lovingly together in the trees, scratch each other's head and neck, and sometimes sleep with their heads under a neighbor's feathers.

Living in New York at this moment is a bird of the parrot family who has a strange story, which his master has written for a daily paper. I was about to say that he lives with a family, but it would be more correct to say that the family live with him, for if ever one small green bird ruled a household, and owned a whole family of human slaves, this is the bird.

He is a paroquet, six or seven inches long, and his name is Pick.

The way he came to adopt the family was this: He was one day flying about in the air of his native Florida, with a flock of his friends, screaming and having a fine noisy time, when a hunter came along, and—as hunters usually do—began to shoot.

One fell dead, and the rest came about him, for the parrot family, as I told you, never desert a friend in trouble. One after another fell before that terrible gun, till only two were left, and these were found clinging to the willows, one fatally wounded, but the other only hurt by the breaking of a wing feather. This is not a pleasant part of the story to any but a hunter. Let us hurry over it.

The unhurt bird was a little fellow, dressed in beautiful satiny dark green, with gold-colored cap on his head, and a sharp temper of his own. He had not yet fixed his heart

upon the hunter, and he fought and screamed when he was smothered in a handkerchief, and carried off to a house.

The captive was a bird of ideas, and when he reached the porch of the hotel, he had evidently made up his mind to submit to his fate, and see what would come of it. He stepped from his bonds with the most perfect calmness, picked up a straw and began to play with it, ran after a beetle, and in other ways made himself entirely at home. He was not afraid of anybody. He decided to stay, and he was at once named Pick.

What to eat was the first thing to be thought of, for the bird was not yet used to human food. Acorns were the only thing he seemed to like, and of course his devoted friend, the man who had shot him, tramped miles through the woods to get them.

One day Pick found a pine cone and ate the seeds, and after that he tried experiments. First he ate nuts, walnuts, pecan nuts, peanuts, and others, and at last he hit upon his choice of food, which he never changed, though before long he ate everything. His choice was almonds, and almonds are kept in convenient places to this day.

He never tried to get away. Before his wing was well, he had lost all desire to do so, and he never was tamed. His master, or more properly his friend, became his idol, and a more adoring soul never lived than this small green bird.

He learned to eat like anybody; came to the table, dipped into anything he chose, devoured onions, bacon, eggs, honey, preserves, and cheese. He drank tea and coffee hot, and lemonade cold. In fact, he did as nearly what his friend did as a small bird could, and attached himself to him in every way.

When he went out in a boat, Pick would climb to the top of the little mast, and enjoy the fishing in the liveliest and most excited way. His wing got well, and he could fly, and then he would go off on short excursions to the groves; but never out of hearing, and he always came when called.

Perhaps the greatest trouble at first was to find a comfortable sleeping place, and he never really suited himself till he shared the bed of his friend. He would creep under the blankets, and sleep close to his idol.

Pick was not gentle in his manners; he was a born tyrant. When he wanted his head scratched—which he often did—he would walk up to somebody and lower his head in a way that said as plainly as words could do, “Scratch my head.”

One day he invited a small dog to do this service for him. The dog of course paid no attention to the demand, and, after one or two sharp orders, Pick rushed at him, gave him a severe bite through the paw, then flew out of the dog’s reach, and watched his cries with delight.

Pick had one attack of homesickness—it was the last. His wing had been well for weeks, and one evening he flew away to the woods. He had tried human society for three months, and now he apparently longed for the wild, free life of his youth.

He was gone six days; but he did not find the old life, for his friends were all dead, and a flock of these birds will not let a stranger come among them. One evening he came flying back, and alighted on the shoulder of his friend, thin, worn, and rumpled, looking very little like the trim, well-fed little fellow that flew away.

He was nearly starved, too, and, after eating his fill of almonds, he went to bed under the bolster, and slept till ten

o'clock the next morning. That day he gave to making himself nice once more. He bathed twice, and spent hours cleaning and arranging his feathers.

After that time, Pick always insisted on a morning bath, and the wash-bowl was his chosen tub. He would walk up and demand his bath, and if there was no water, he would seat himself in the pitcher, and scream till some was brought.

After all, little Pickie, though he looked so wise and grave, was but a baby, and was fond of toys. Anything bright, like a silver thimble, a button, or a bit of tin, he at once pounced upon and carried off to play with. Finally, a basket was filled with little things he fancied, and set apart for him. He knew this basket, and knew that it was his, as well as any child could. He never allowed a stranger to touch it, and he amused himself by the hour, turning over the things and throwing them on to the floor. The favorite plaything was a steel watch-chain, which he would wind around his legs, or lie flat on his back and roll over and over on the floor to play with.

He was extremely curious, anxious to go through every door, and into every drawer or trunk that was opened. Whatever was going on, sewing, writing, or crochet, Pick had a hand in the business, and was always ready to express his opinion and give his help.

When the time drew near for Pick's family to go back to their home in New York, they began to prepare him for the journey by bringing in a cage. It was a strong affair of wire, and the bird at once looked on it with suspicion, and could not be coaxed to go near it. If he was put into it after dark, he would scream and work at the fastenings till he opened the door, or let down the bottom and got out.

It was three weeks before he would stay an instant in the cage, if he could help it, and it was months before he was contented to be left there. He would scream loud enough to alarm the household, and his voice was anything but pleasant.

By the patient work of his friend, who would lie on the floor and talk to Pick by the hour, he was at last brought to submit more quietly. He would cling to the wires while his friend wrapped bird, cage, and all in a blanket, and then sat down to play him to sleep with a guitar, of which he was very fond. Pick would listen and chirp, and at last go to sleep, and his tired—but always devoted—slave would slip out of the room.

Pick came to New York with his friends early the next spring. The sights and sounds of the great city amazed him. He would sit on the window-sill for hours, and watch the people, and listen to the sounds about him.

He was no more shut up in a cage, but flew about the house as he chose. Sand-paper was tacked to the wall, on which to sharpen his bill, and boxes of almonds were placed here and there in convenient places, and Master Pick set up housekeeping.

The next winter they all went back to Florida, and the bird knew the place as well as the man. He was not confined at all, and he visited his old haunts with delight, going out gunning with his friend, and calmly sitting on the gun while it was fired.

He made no attempt to go back to the woods; but one day two wounded paroquets were brought to the house. Pick was delighted, and at once welcomed them like a prince. He put the best of everything before them, and tried in every way to make them his friends.

The strangers were wrapped up in each other, and would pay no attention to Pick. He set food before them, which they did not eat; he offered to plume them, and in every way showed his desire to be hospitable and polite. But they would not look at him nor accept any civility, and at last poor Pick got angry. He bristled up and flew at them. He pulled out their feathers and pecked their heads, screaming at them like an angry child.

At this point the strangers were taken away, and Pick was once more alone. But it was a month before he became his old, careless, cheerful self again. His feelings had been deeply hurt, and never from that day did he ever pay the least attention to any bird.

Pick had adventures in the city. Three times he got out of the house and was lost. The first time he was found in a bird store, having been caught by street boys and sold. Another time he was found on the shoulder of a man in a tenement-house, and the third time, after being chased and stoned by boys, he came back himself.

He had several narrow escapes from death by hawks and cats, by closing doors and dumb-waiters. But the worst was death by poison. A meerschaum pipe had left on the mantel a little stain of nicotine, and in his curiosity Pick put his droll little thick tongue to it. In an instant he fell over as if dead.

There was great commotion in the house, and a messenger was sent to Pick's friend, who came in hot haste to his aid. Books were hurriedly searched, and finding that tea was an antidote, hot tea was forced into his mouth. He got well; but he never touched a yellow stain again.

Pick has spent five years with his friend, in the pleasant

country in the summer, and in Florida or New York in the winter, and he still has his home in New York, in a house carefully arranged for his comfort.

Every door and window is protected with wire or springs, for his safety. Not because he wants to get away, but he gets lost in the city. No cat is allowed to show her head inside the door, and no cook can stay an hour in the kitchen, unless she can cheerfully accept Master Pick's help in everything she does.

He insists on walking over the kitchen table, inspecting her work, tasting and pulling over everything she handles. If she objects, he will scream, and that brings the mistress from above, as quickly as if it were the cry of a baby.

There's no use denying it, Pickie rules that house from attic to cellar.

The devouring passion of the bird's whole life is love of his one best friend; from the first he has been his idol. While he is in the house Pick never leaves him, but sits on his shoulder rubbing against his face, creeps into his pockets or his bosom, or performs antics for his amusement, such as walking lame, fluttering his wings, bowing and twisting his body, and other things, always insisting on his notice.

At five o'clock in the morning he wakes and rattles the bars of his sleeping cage, till the door is opened and he can get to his friend in the bed, when he creeps close to him, or under the pillow, and is happy.

He takes his meals with him, trying every dish on the table, and determined to like everything his idol eats. He will obey him too. If told not to touch a certain dish, Pick will leave it; and when informed that he may chip the frame of a certain picture, he will exercise his strong bill on that one, and no other.

He likes to help in the toilet of his friend, bringing him a neck-tie, and trying to lift a hair-brush. The mirror is his delight; he passes hours before it, pluming himself, and seeming to know that it is not another bird, but himself, that he sees.

When his friend goes away in the morning, he screams his good-by, and then goes to the kitchen to spend the time. In that room, in a cage, lives a parrot big enough to eat Pick, who mocks and calls him half the time.

"Here, Pick! Here, Pick-a-wick!" it will call; "Get down Pick!" and it will mimic every word of the mistress, in almost exactly her tone. But Pick is not deceived for a moment, and he never deigns to notice it. He takes his nap serenely on a shelf near the range, helps the cook, not two feet from the cage, but the saucy Parrot who lives there he never sees.

He likes to spend the day in the kitchen; but when it grows dark, and home-coming time arrives, he gets upstairs, sometimes through an open door, and sometimes by means of the dumb-waiter, or by screaming at a door till it is opened for him. Upstairs he sits down to watch for his friend, screaming to him the moment the outside door opens.

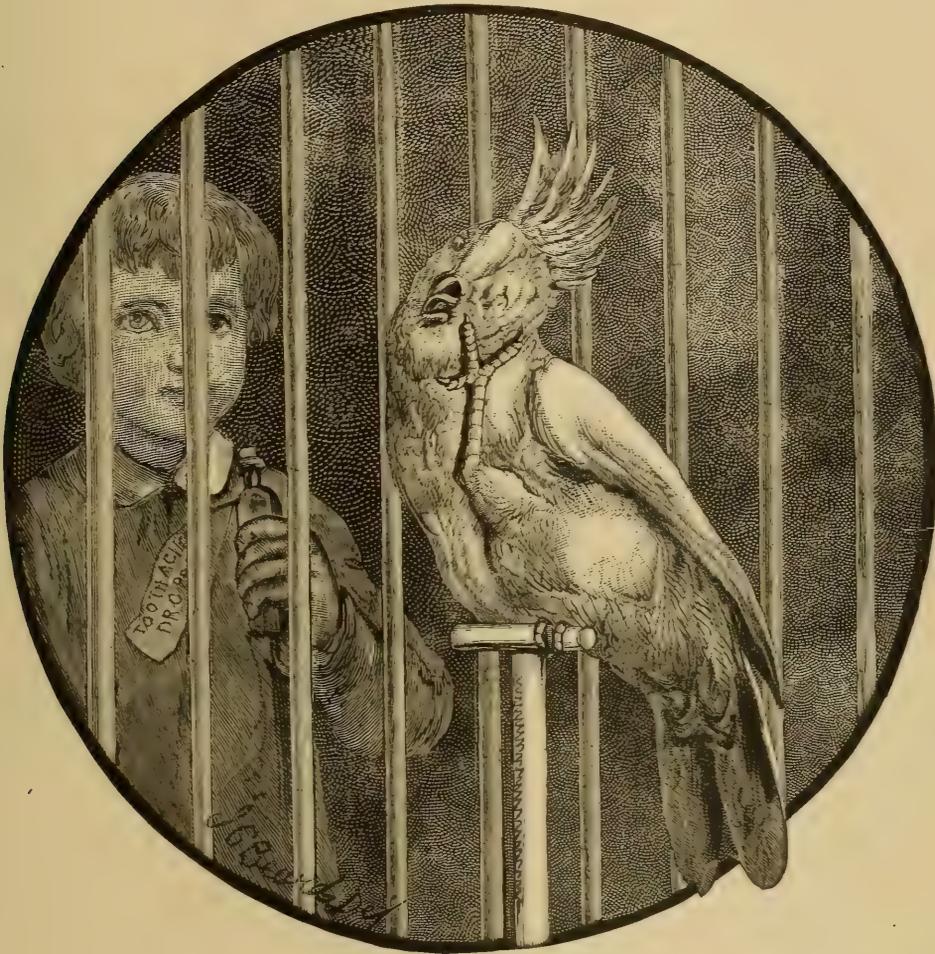
If he is late, and Pick is abed, where he goes at nine, he hears the click of the key in the lock, and chirps a sleepy welcome.

In fact, he is a civilized bird, and though he does not speak, he looks wise enough to do so, and one can't help feeling that he could if he would.

An interesting member of the parrot family is the cockatoo, and Lady Barker, writing from Australia, tells about a very wise bird of this kind who lived at a hotel in Melbourne. She says he would pretend to have a violent toothache, nursing the beak with his claw, as you see in the picture, and rocking back and

forth as if in the greatest agony, answering all offers of help and all presents of toothache drops with,

“Oh, it ain't a bit of use!”



“OH, IT AIN'T A BIT OF USE!”

Finally, he would come to the edge of the cage and croak out—the naughty bird!—“Give us a drop of whiskey; *do!*”

He would also pretend to sew, holding a bit of stuff under one claw on the perch, and pretending to use the needle with

the other, getting into trouble with the thread, and at last singing a song in praise of sewing-machines.

Another one was the pet of a family, and so fond of pulling flowers to pieces, that he was named after a celebrated botanist. He was a very sociable, good-natured fellow, and insisted on having a hand in everything that went on, even croquet, when he would follow his mistress about, and amuse himself by climbing her mallet.

His funniest trick was to imitate the cry of a hawk, and the time he chose to do it was when his mistress was feeding her poultry. A great flock of hens, turkeys, and pigeons all around her would be busy eating, when suddenly he would fly off in the air, sailing around and calling like a hawk.

In an instant there was consternation in the yard; every fowl would fly to shelter, calling the chicks, and squawking as if the dreaded creature already had his claws on them. When all were hidden the Cockatoo would alight on a hen-coop and laugh some time, and cry, "You'll be the death of me."

All the birds of this family are well able to defend themselves, for they have beaks strong enough to dig into wood, and to crack nuts, and they have a special spite against feet and ankles. It is important, therefore, that one intended for a pet should be good-natured, and there is as much difference in parrots as there is in people.

CHAPTER SECOND.

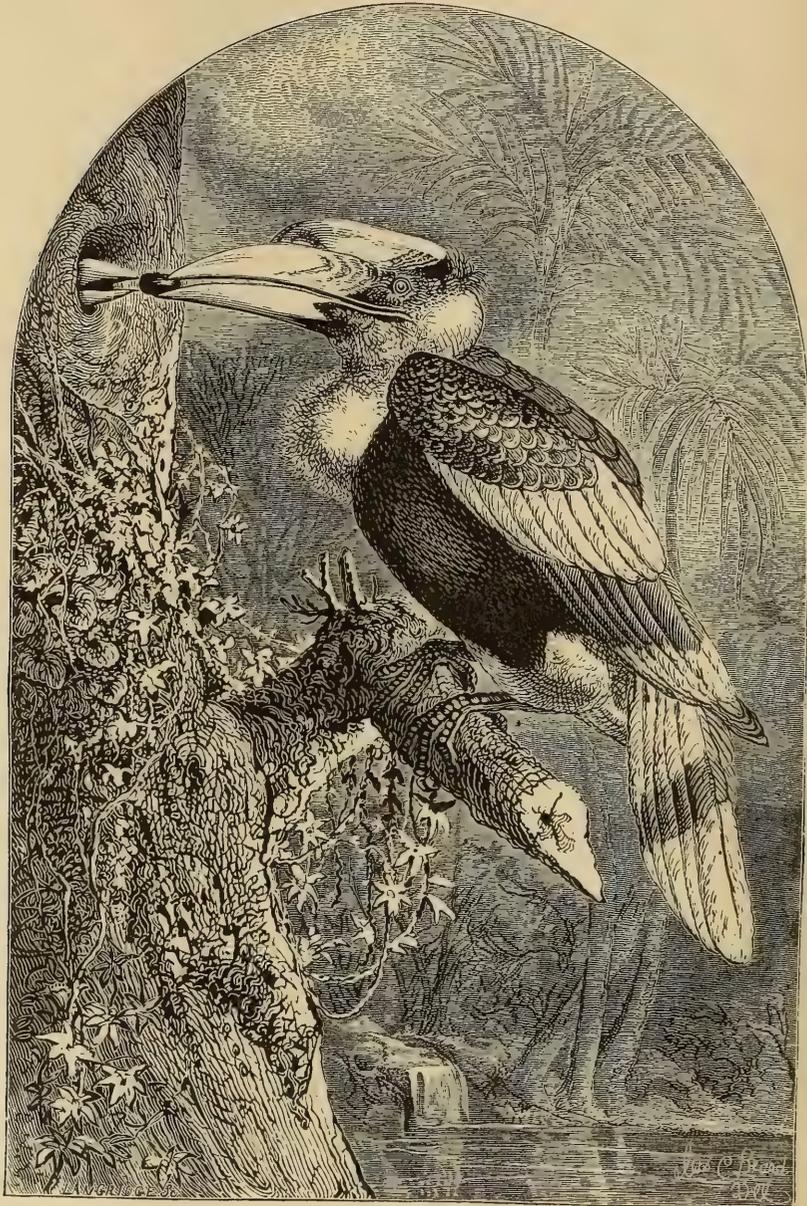
BORN IN A PRISON.

WHILE the children were looking over some pictures of parrots and cockatoos, Uncle Karl showed them one of another bird which is found in the same part of the world—Africa—and has an extremely curious way of making its nursery.

The bird is a hornbill, and the nursery is a prison. You wouldn't suppose, to look at the mild and dignified expression of this bird, that he would be guilty of walling up his wife and babies, would you? But you can see for yourself, on the next page, the bill of the prisoner thrust out for something to eat.

There is a good reason for this strange conduct, and you may be sure the bird outside doesn't have the easiest task in the world to keep his prisoners supplied with food. The country of the hornbills is also the home of those mischievous fellows the monkeys, and for breakfast nothing is quite so welcome in the monkey family as a fresh egg or two.

They not only like them, but they are very sharp in getting them, having four hands, and being able to climb anywhere they wish. So it is to keep the eggs and the young birds safe, till they are able to fly, that the hornbill mother consents to be walled up, and the father undertakes to feed her as well as himself. At least this is supposed to be the reason by men who have studied their ways.



FEEDING THE PRISONER.

To prepare the curious nursery, must first be found a hollow tree, where there is not only room for the nest, but space above

the entrance where the bird can go for safety, if any enemy does get his hand inside.

Having found a suitable tree, the opening is plastered up with mud, by both birds, till there is left an opening just large enough for the mother bird to go in. Into this place she goes, and makes her bed of her own feathers, while her mate outside brings more mud, and walls up the door till only a small hole or slit is left, big enough to pass in food.

In that dark room the eggs are hatched, and the little ones grow up, while the father finds his time well occupied in bringing food to his hungry family. Here the devoted mother spends nearly three months, getting very fat to be sure, but also very weak, from long confinement. Here also the queer little roly-poly babies, round and soft as lumps of jelly, big as a pigeon, and without a feather to their backs, grow into their first suits of feathers, before they get out into the light and air. You can see how they look in the picture at the end of this chapter.

There's another odd thing in the family customs; sometimes the little ones are made to take care of their younger brothers, in this way. While the first two are growing, another pair is hatched out, and the home in the tree seems small for so many. Besides, the poor father is nearly worn to skin and bones, hunting food for so large a family, for you know he can't take a market-basket and fill it all at once, as your father can; he must make a long journey for every mouthful, and bring them home one at a time.

So the door is broken down, and the mother hornbill goes out to help him. The entrance is walled up behind her, and both parents work hard from morning to night to feed the four hungry babies. You may think that birds have an easy life, with no

houses to keep, no clothes to make, and no schools to go to ; but remember how they are obliged to hunt for their food, and bring every bit of material for their nests, in their bills, and you can see that they have need to be busy.

When the youngsters are all grown, the family joins one of the great flocks of their kind ; for, like parrots, they are sociable creatures, and live a gay and merry life in the tops of the trees in the deepest woods they can find. They fly about in crowds, croaking, and clattering their great bills, making a deafening noise, which always alarms a stranger. Some writers say the sound resembles a sudden, violent storm, and others describe it as a blast of a bugle and the hiss of a sky-rocket together. That is a curious mixture of sounds, and it is rather hard to imagine what it would be like.

They seem to make all this noise simply for fun. One of the family, the Tok, makes a bow every time he croaks, and when he gets excited and says it rapidly, it is a very laughable sight to see him bowing as if he would jerk his head off.

You can see in the first picture what a great bill this bird carries. Some of the family have them much larger than this one, and it is thought it was a hornbill which was seen by an old traveler five hundred years ago, which he said was a bird with two heads. The bill looks like a terrible load to carry, for in some of them the upper part is as large as the lower, and does look exactly as if the bill of another had been fastened upon his own. But it is not so heavy as it looks, for it is almost as thin as paper, and of course extremely light. Moreover, there's a curious thing about birds' bones, which perhaps you do not know. Their bones are hollow, in some birds to the very toes, and the openings are so connected with the lungs that they can

be filled with warmed air, making them very light, as you see. Birds can even breathe through a broken bone.

What is still more wonderful and interesting, the microscope is able to show where a bird has lived, simply by looking at the bones. This is surely the last place one would think of looking for a record of one's life, but it is there—at least in birds. One who has lived in a house, among ladies, carries in its bones bits of gay silk and wool, from the dresses and embroidery. One whose life has been in a baker's shop, tells the tale by remains of meal and coarse clothes.

You know, perhaps, that the dust of our houses is merely the tiny bits of whatever is in the house—carpets, clothes, food, and so forth. As the substance wears away, minute particles of it are set free in the air, and of course we, as well as birds, draw them into our lungs as we breathe. But birds drawing the air even into their bones, the particles are left there, and, as I said, may be found after the animal is dead, to tell the story of its life.

Hornbills never walk, they hop. Big and dignified as they look, they go up the trees by hopping from one branch to another a little higher, and on the ground they hop along as if they were no larger than sparrows.

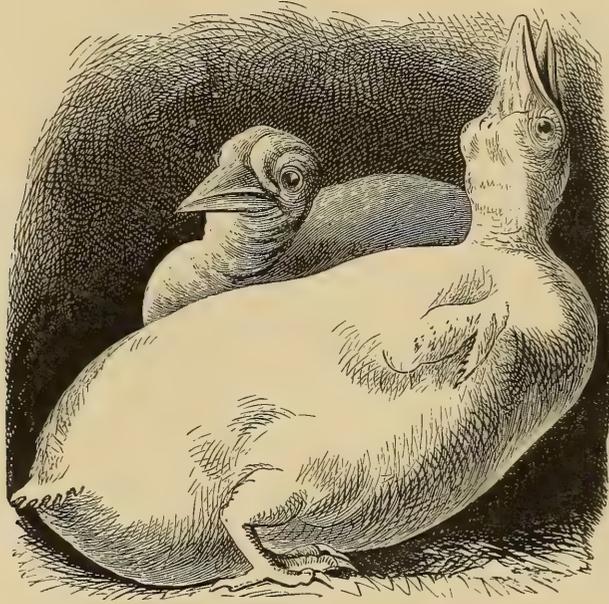
These birds eat almost everything—seeds and fruit, which they toss up and catch in their enormous bill, rats and mice, insects and snakes, which last they discover below the surface, and dig out to eat. Some of them eat nutmegs, which makes their flesh spicy and nice to eat; and if the fruit he desires is too tightly fastened to the tree, it is said the bird will seize it and fling himself off the branch, that his weight may break it off.

In Ceylon it is said, by the natives, that the hornbill never

goes to the water to drink, but catches the drops in his bill during a rain-storm.

A hornbill is as curious about things as a crow, and instantly gives the alarm if a stranger appears. Not that he is afraid, for he is a brave fellow, and does not hesitate to pounce on the largest birds of prey, and he torments the leopard nearly out of his wits.

They are affectionate birds; a pair of hornbills always perch close together. Dr. Livingstone tells a little story of one, which shows how fond they are of each other. A flock of hornbills were flying around the ship he was on, when a gun was fired,



TOO YOUNG TO GO OUT.

and a fine bird fell to the deck of the ship from fear. He was taken prisoner and kept on board.

When the flock flew away together in the morning, the mate of the captive did not go with them, but flew about the ship,

and called in the most pitiful way to her mate to join her. In the evening she came again, and repeated her cries and entreaties to him to come.

The poor fellow grieved himself to death in a few days, refusing to eat or be comforted. He had not been hurt by the gun, and there was no cause found for his death except that.

CHAPTER THIRD.

MARCY'S ODD PET.

I SAID that when Uncle Karl gave Ralph the parrot, he also gave a new pet to Marcy. It was a Florida chameleon, or rather, a small lizard which is called so, though it is really, in the books, the green Carolina lizard.

He was a pretty little fellow—for a lizard—about three inches long, with a very slim tail longer than his body. He was generally of a greenish brown color on the back, and greenish white on the under part. But the most curious part of him was his feet. The toes were spread widely apart, and the last joint above the claw on each was flattened out like a little pad.

He could walk up the side of a wall, or even glass, and he thought nothing of holding on for hours, head down, waiting for some wandering fly to come near. He could also jump, for which purpose he had very long hind legs.

Marcy was much interested in the lively little creature, named it Snap, because of the way he seized a fly, and tried to keep him supplied with food. She also found a book in the library that had an account of some of the same family that were kept by an American gentleman, and she made him a home, as near as she could, like the one his pets lived in.

She took an old gold-fish globe of rather large size, put moss in the bottom, and a little dish of water, and to keep Snap in, a

wire-gauze dish-cover fastened over the top. Then she spent a good deal of time catching flies for him and watching his ways.

I must say there wasn't much to watch, for he didn't seem to enjoy being in prison; he evidently preferred to jump about as he pleased, over the furniture and on the tables. Once, when the cover was displaced, he got out and ran away, and Marcy had hard work to find him. Not only to find him, but to catch him without hurting him when found; for he had no idea of giving up his liberty, and just as she would think she had her hand on him, off he would dart out of her way.

She caught him at last, by throwing a towel over him, and returned him to his home, where he was soon fast asleep in the sunlight.

I said that Snap was generally of a greenish brown color; but he got his popular name—chameleon—from the fact that he changes color. When he went to sleep, he turned bright green, and he did the same when he basked in the sunshine; also when he died, which he did before long, his body was of a beautiful green.

The gentleman—Mr. Lockwood—whose pet lizards Marcy read of, tells many curious things about them. Among the rest he describes the way they throw off their old clothes, which they do as they grow too big for them.

The operation begins by the head turning gray, and the skin splitting across the top. As soon as this happens, the little fellow rubs his head against something, pushing the old skin off from his head, and on to the neck, where it looks like a very large collar. A little while he sits up in the sunshine, and then goes to work again, pushing and rubbing it backward till it is as far as the thighs, though quite ragged.

He then takes a new way. He turns his head back, and, seizing the old coat in his teeth, pulls with all his might. After tumbling over once or twice, a big piece is jerked off, which he at once *eats up!* So he goes on, tearing off pieces of his old clothes, and swallowing them as fast as he gets them off, till all is gone, and he appears in a fresh, new suit.

The same gentleman tells of a lady in Florida who had four of these little creatures as pets. She kept them fastened to her head by silk cord, and let them run over her hair and shoulders as they pleased.

Let me copy for you a charming picture of lizard life in Florida, from one of Mrs. Stowe's letters:

“The lizards have certainly very confused notions as to the purpose of our house. As they view it, it was built for a lizard park. On a hot day there is a lizard to every shingle, sitting in every variety of quaint attitude, and winking at us with their gem-like eyes. Lizards live on flies. The chief end of a lizard is to eat flies. And oh! to see the gay assurance with which a thoughtless young fly will stand tattooing with his hair brushes, while a sly lizard is winking grimly at him close by. Snip! dart! and away goes my fly. It is the end of all things to the fly, but only a pleasant bite to the lizard.”

The real chameleon, after which this little American is named because of his changing colors, is quite a different animal, and has often been kept as a pet. He is, however, the most indifferent and stupid of pets, and was never known to get so tame that he wouldn't try his best to get away.

He is old from the very cradle, you may say. The baby chameleon, less than an inch long, is grave and deliberate as his mother, and she is noted for being one of the slowest of all liv-

ing creatures. One would suppose such an infant would therefore be a comfort to her; but I regret to say that she shows the most perfect indifference to her little ones.

She simply places the round, white eggs in the sand, and that's all the trouble she takes about them. This little fellow—like most reptiles—has to thank the warm rays of the sun for ever getting out of the egg-shell. No family cares for this strange mother! To bask in the sunshine, to have plenty of flies to eat, and to hide from her enemies are all she desires in the world.

The chameleon is chiefly interesting on account of its wonderful change of color, and to study that, it has often been made a pet of. Mr. Wood tells of one that he bought from a dealer in birds and animals in London.

The man brought a handful of them out of a bird cage, and a queer wriggling mass they were, some grasping each other, and some feeling wildly around in the air for something to take hold of, their eyes turning every way, and all rolling and unrolling their long, slim tails in disgust at this disrespectful treatment.

He selected a strong, healthy-looking one, and carried it home in a small cage. While he made ready a proper place for his new pet, he let it walk up on a curtain. The Chameleon liked this, and Mr. Wood went on to settle him, by fixing a forked branch of a tree into a board, which he hung upon the wall.

When all was ready, he took hold of the little animal to put him into his new home; but the Chameleon was satisfied with his quarters, and did not care to move. He acted like a naughty child, who is being carried where he does not want to go, and catches at everything he passes.

The Chameleon, when one foot was released from its grasp,

would hold all the tighter with the other three. Loosen the feet, and the tail would twine itself around a tassel, and hold on for dear life. In fact, as he did not want to hurt the little creature, the gentleman was obliged to climb up and remove him carefully from his hold.

On the tree branch he lived for some time, and it was all the house he needed. He required no bed, for they never lie down, and no dining-room, for they snatch their dinner wherever they see it.

For some time the only variety in his life was traveling the length of his branch and back, and traveling is a most absurd performance in a chameleon. When he made up his mind for a walk, he would first take an extra turn of his tail around a twig, and a tighter grasp with three feet, and then slowly and gravely raise one forefoot to proceed. Having poised it in the air, he would stop to consider. This moving about was a serious business, and required thought. Sometimes he would stay exactly in that position for hours, before he would take the step, and lift another foot.

If he was disturbed or annoyed, by rubbing with the finger, for instance, he would gather himself into a funny heap, swell out his sides, and try to look very dreadful. He would—if angry enough—make himself look really terrible, so that a dog would be afraid to touch him. One day a dog was found violently barking, and rushing towards a chameleon, who had raised himself in a threatening attitude, his fore-paws held up as though he would tear the dog to pieces, his harmless mouth open as though he would devour him, and swelling and puffing himself as big as his skin would hold, while he turned of the brightest yellow and black color, and hissed like an angry cat. No wonder the dog did not dare touch him.



THE DOG DID NOT DARE TO TOUCH HIM.

Mr. Wood's pet did not seem afraid, and would take flies from his hand the first day he had him ; but he never seemed exactly satisfied, and when left alone, made excursions about the room.

The first time he was found on the gas-pipe, but the second time he seemed really gone. Nothing could be seen of him, till, after a long search, his owner looked out of the window, and there, basking on the hot bricks, was the missing pet.

This got to be a favorite place of his, for there the sun was hottest, and the bricks grew so heated that a person could not bear the hand on them. Nothing can be too hot for a chameleon, and there he would sit, fairly baking in the sun, and never stirring till the sun went behind the houses in the afternoon.

He proved to be such a truant that he had to be tied up. Around one foot was fastened a long piece of scarlet silk braid, with a loop at the other end to slip over something to hold him.

So he passed his days serenely ; but there was one thing that excited him. One morning a big blue-bottle fly came buzzing and bumping his head against a pane of glass, too high for the chameleon to reach. He fixed one eye on the tantalizing creature, and he turned black and brown in streaks, till he looked like a jaguar. Changing color is the way a chameleon shows his feelings, and this color expressed the most furious rage, though his body was as stiff as if made of wood.

The thing most heartily despised by this odd fellow was to walk on the ground, and no wonder ! He was made to live on trees, and had no soles to his feet. In truth, you may say he had no feet, for they were much more like hands, to grasp with. When put on the ground, he made the most hurried attempts

to get away. He could hardly be said to walk, and he surely did not hop nor gallop. His gait was a sort of scrambling waddle or a hobble, with his tail held up from the ground like the handle to a pump, a very droll object indeed.

But place him on a tree, and he was at home. He would hurry—as a chameleon can hurry—to the top twigs, and there he would plant himself in some stiff position, flattening himself like a leaf, gathering himself into a bunch like a sprig of leaves, or in some other shape, that, being so near the color of the bark and leaves, he could hardly be seen. There he was happiest, and he would draw himself almost into a ball, as he always did when happy, and sit patiently all day.

In old times it was thought that the chameleon lived on air. He can do without food a long time, but he likes to eat as well as anybody, and this one, at least once, took a good dinner.

His master wanted to see how much he would eat, and he kept account. He ate several blue-bottle flies, several crane flies, a grub, some drone flies, and two or three caterpillars. Think of that for a little fellow only a few inches long!

He made a great fuss about his eating, chewing and gulping as though the mouthful was too big for him, even when it was only a common ant.

He came near having an untimely death for want of water, for, although plenty was kept before him in a dish, he would not touch it; but one day a few drops were spilled, and Mr. Wood noticed that he greedily lapped them up as they rolled down the pane, and when all was gone he climbed the window and stuck his tongue into the corners.

Of course a little more was spilled—on purpose—and the thirsty creature stood and lapped till he was satisfied. After

that he never wanted for drink, and his favorite way of getting it was from a branch which had been dipped in water.

I have read of a tame chameleon, belonging to a lady in Egypt, that would drink from a cup, lifting its head like a chicken, and also enjoyed mutton broth. This one lived on its mistress' head and shoulder for months, fastened by a silk cord to a button, and was a fierce little fellow to others of its kind, biting off their legs and tails when shut up with them. He had notions, too; he did not like to have faces made at him. If a person opened the mouth at him, he would puff and turn black, and sometimes hiss.

When he wanted to jump down—which he sometimes did—he would blow himself up like a small balloon, and then drop, and he never seemed hurt.

To go back to Mr. Wood's pet. He was fond of a shower-bath from a watering-pot. He would also hold up his head—mouth open—while water was poured down his throat, and when it rained he would go out the window and enjoy it.

A writer who has studied chameleons, says it is like two animals glued together, a sort of Siamese twin of a fellow, only the two sides seem never to agree on what they will do. One eye will roll up and the other down, one side turn green while the other is brown, and one side will sleep while the other is awake. I have told you more about this in another book.

This curious fellow did not seem to learn by experience, as others do. He would crawl again and again on to a branch which was covered with prickles, and hurt him. He always slept in a fork of a branch, with his tail tightly twisted around a twig; but some that were kept by Dr. Bacheler, a missionary in India, slept hanging by the tail, or the tail and one foot.

Those he had were brought by an Indian woman from the deepest jungle, where they spend their lives, and he kept them in a bird cage, though he let them out awhile every day.

When let out, they were put on the ground or a tree, and a boy was set to catch grasshoppers and feed them.

If left alone, they were sure to get on the trees and hide, by holding themselves perfectly still in some strange position. So he decorated each one with a tie of red worsted, and then he could easily find them.

The power this little animal has to change its form is as strange, Dr. Bachelier says, as its change of color. Sometimes it looks like a "disconsolate mouse, sitting mum in a corner; again, with back curved and tail erect, it resembled a crouching lion;" and sometimes it flattens itself like a leaf seen from below.

His chameleon would lie with mouth open, waiting for a fly or other insect to come along, while Mr. Wood's pet kept his mouth so tight shut that one could hardly see where it was. So it seems that chameleons differ, as well as people.

Many people have tried to find out how this queer little reptile changes its color, and why; but, except deciding that it is a display of his feelings—that he takes on stripes with one emotion, and spots with another, that he turns one color when angry, and another when pleased—they have not really found out much about it.

CHAPTER FOURTH.

DOCTOR DOT, AND THE NEW-FASHIONED HENS.

PERHAPS you would hardly call a chicken a queer pet; but I want to tell you of one that lived in the house at Marcy's, and also about a new-fashioned sort of wooden hen, that lives on Long Island, and beats Madam Biddy herself at her own work.

It was one fine day in the spring that Dot went to live in the house. The way it happened, Marcy had been to visit her Uncle Daniel, who lived on a farm, and on that day started for home. Her uncle noticed, as he went through the yard to take her to the cars, that one of his Bantam hens had just made her appearance with a fine family of little ones, the tiniest atoms of chicks that ever walked.

Knowing how fond Marcy was of pets, as a last joke on her, he hastily snatched one from the group, and carried it down to the cars. Then, telling her that he had something for her to remember them by, he carefully opened his hand, and, with a flutter and a faint peep, out popped the very littlest chicken Marcy had ever seen. It stood up quite pert and lively on her hand, and of course she was delighted.

After being assured by her uncle that the hen mamma wouldn't mind—that she had so many she would never miss it—she forgot in a moment her sorrow at leaving the country, and

began to look about for some way to make the little stranger comfortable, being so interested in the operation that she almost forgot to say good-by to Uncle Daniel.

The train was speeding through another village some miles away before she had settled the traveling arrangements of her new pet, by hastily throwing ribbons and ruches out of a small round box in her satchel, lining it with a soft pocket-handkerchief, and punching holes in the cover to let in the air.

Into this she put Madam Bantam's baby, naming it Dot—it was such a bit of a creature—and in this curious carriage it reached home before evening. It was at once put out on the table for the family to admire, fed with bread and milk, which it ate as though it was hungry, and again put to bed in the round box, on a fresh bed of cotton.

Dot was the roundest, the funniest, and the wisest of chickens, and she was never in the least afraid of any one. She ate bread and milk for awhile, then varied this baby food with crumbs from the table, and now and then a fly which was careless enough to alight near her.

She delighted to be on the table when the family were at meals. She would run from one to another and get a crumb of bread, a bit of potato, or something from each one. But as she grew bigger and took things for herself, as a nip of the butter, or a lump of sugar, or hopped up on the platter, getting her feet in the gravy, and doing other naughty things, a law had to be made that Miss Dot must take her meals alone.

Her greatest treat in these early days was to be put up on the window frame, in the middle, where the two sashes meet, and hunt flies, which delight in that spot. She would run after a fly as eagerly as any chicken ever ran after a grasshopper,

and was often so heedless as to fall off, so that Marcy had to stand by her when on that dizzy height, lest she should fall and break her neck.

As she grew taller it was decided that though Dot was very well for a pet name, it was hardly dignified enough for a full name, and after much thought, and perhaps a little help from roguish papa, it was enlarged into Dorothea Daniel Davidson, the latter after the uncle who presented her. She was generally called Dot, or D.D., or Doctor (which D.D. stands for), and at last, by this means, the name Doctor Dot was pretty well fastened upon her. It was rather a queer name, to be sure, but Dorothea didn't care; she would answer to any one of the whole string.

Perhaps you think it must have been lonely for one poor little chick in a house full of big folk; but she was not alone. She had one special playmate—Mother Bunch—and plenty of neighbors besides.

To begin with, there was Abercrombie Fitz Plantagenet, the cat, who lived in a basket that hung from the gas, and was never so happy as when her basket was set spinning by some kind hand. One would think that performance would have muddled her brains, and made her a dizzy, topsy-turvy, good-for-nothing; but so far from that, she was one of the gravest and wisest of pussies, as you might know from her name, and when not spinning around in her airy cradle, would sit for hours at a time on a chair by the window, looking at the passers-by, and evidently studying human nature, and making up her mind about many things.

Should no chair be near the window, or the blinds not be open, this wise cat Abbie (as she was usually called), would cry

and mew, and pull some one's dress until she got what she wanted, when she would take her seat with dignity, and "resume her studies," like the unfortunate young gentlemen of Dr. Blimber's school.

Very different from this stately puss was her baby, the only one which was left after a sudden calamity in her last family, and was named Mother Bunch, because she was such a funny bunch of a thing. From the first, Mother Bunch and the Doctor were the best of friends, and played together like two kittens. They would roll over and over together, and run after each other. The kitten would slap, and the chicken would nip. Dot seemed determined to do everything that Mother Bunch could do. When in the yard together, Dot would play with a bit of clothes line hanging down, exactly as the kitten did, taking it in her mouth and running around the post with it, and she often made most desperate efforts to climb the clothes post after Mother Bunch.

At first the Doctor would run from a rat, or a strange cat; but as they grew older, poor little Mother Bunch became blind, and then she seemed to know that she must take care of her friend. No strange fence-cat could more than show his head in the back-yard before she flew at it, screaming, with mouth open, as an angry chicken will, till the quiet-loving cat—though of course not at all afraid—would retire to a more peaceful yard.

Mother Bunch's favorite napping place was between the blind and the window, and if it chanced to be shut, she would cry and teaze till it was opened for her. The Doctor always took her place on Pussy's back during the nap, partly perhaps to watch over her friend, and partly to have a little nap herself.

Dot was fond of playing with children, as she saw Mother

Bunch doing. She would run after them and snatch at their clothes, and once she drove a little boy into a corner, and frightened him half out of his wits by jumping at him as though she would eat him.

She always thought the garden was made for her amusement. No sooner would a tiny plantlet show its head in the bed, than Dot would pull it out, apparently for fun, or to see what it could be doing there, and then she would scratch up the ground around it to see if any more of the saucy little leaves were coming up in her yard.

As the Doctor grew bigger it looked rather funny to see a hen about the house, though she was a small one, but she would not be driven out to live. If she found the door shut against her, she would fly up to window-sill, and peep and cry to be let in, till some kind heart inside would open for her; for, after all, how should she know why the cat could live in the house and she be shut out.

She settled the matter herself finally, for now that she was no longer a chicken, her frolics with Mother Bunch came to an end, and new fancies began to occupy her. She evidently thought it high time that she had a nest. She grew uneasy, clucked around like any old hen, and teased Marcy till she arranged a box with a nice nest for her. Into that Dot retired and laid her first egg.

Such a cackling and clucking over one small egg you never heard. So important and fussy was she, that it was almost impossible to live with her. Egg after egg was placed in the nest, till she had enough to suit her ideas of a family, and then she took to sitting in regular hen fashion.

When at last she came off with ten chicks, the proudest little

mother in the world, another decree went forth, that now, indeed, Dorothea Daniel Davidson *must* live in a small house in the yard. So, under a pretty tree, in a nice low-roofed cottage with lattice front, now went to live Doctor Dot and her babies ten, so busy with her cares, that she never seemed to regret her change of homes.

One thing more she did before she settled down into the life of a common hen. One night the door of the coop blew shut, and she and her family could not get in. It was cool weather, and she longed for her comfortable perch inside, so she came to the house for help. The door was shut, but she flew on to the old window-sill, and began to tap on the glass with her bill.

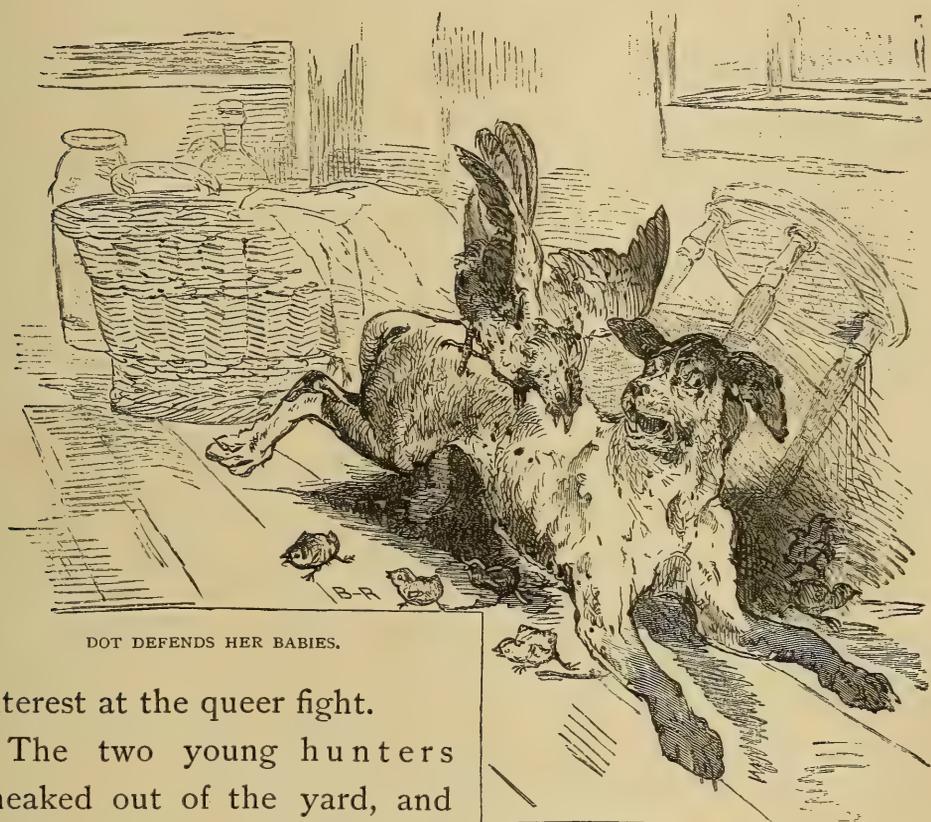
Some of the family, not seeing her very plainly in the twilight, were frightened a little, but her old mistress knew her at once, and opened the window to let her in. But that was not what Dot wanted. She pulled her dress, and tried to draw her toward the door.

"Perhaps she wants something," suggested papa, and Marcy at once started out to see. She opened the door, and Dot ran ahead eagerly. Marcy followed, and she led directly to the coop, where the whole Bantam family were collected around the shut-up door. No sooner was it opened than they all hurried in, and were soon fast asleep for the night.

Another time there was trouble in the family. A gentleman walked into the yard with two young dogs. They were hunters, and thought chickens were made to be chased, so they both started for Doctor Dot and her babies.

That plucky little hen did not run—not she! She was not afraid of a dog, nor even of two; on the contrary, she was enraged at their impertinence, and she flew at them like a small

fury. Perching on the back of the boldest one, she beat him with her wings, pecked his head, and scratched with her claws till he ran yelping back to his master. The other pup quietly retired behind his master at the first alarm, and looked on with



DOT DEFENDS HER BABIES.

interest at the queer fight.

The two young hunters sneaked out of the yard, and Madam Dot returned to her duties, shaking out her feathers and muttering to herself for some time.

What would the little hen-mothers say—do you suppose—if they should find out that a man has invented a new sort of mothers for the chickens of our day? The chicks of the future are to have no fussy, clucking, feather-bed of a mamma, but a—*machine!*

Joe Beard
J.C.

That man lives on Long Island, to be near New York, where he can sell his really motherless chickens, for, of course, he only wants them to sell. May be, after all, a wooden mother is good enough for a market chicken.

This man takes the eggs away from the hens, and how do you suppose he regards an egg, that wonderful pearly treasure in which lies cuddled up a pretty chicken? Merely as unripe fruit which must be ripened for market!

Let me tell you about his place, which though it is not a home is really a palace for poultry, where hens live in a three-story house, and take the air on a balcony. In one building two hundred feet long and twenty-four feet wide are two rooms, one upstairs and the other down. Down-stairs are the artificial mothers, and upstairs the nursery where the chicks go as soon as they leave the egg.

When they have outgrown the nursery, they go to live with the grown-ups in a grand three-story house, with balconies and verandas and long sloping stairways leading to the fields where the whole family go to catch grasshoppers and other things nice to eat. This chicken-palace is kept in very nice order. It is plastered to make it warm, and whitewashed to make it sweet. It has plenty of nice perches, and dishes of water, and is swept clean every day. In fact, the residents are the aristocrats of the poultry family, if they did have a machine for a mother.

But you must hear about these queer mothers, for there are two of them. The first one is nothing but a box in the shape of a barrel, with a chimney and a cover to come off. To hatch eggs are only needed two things—quiet and warmth. Now nothing could be more quiet than the bottom of a barrel, and the warmth is got by burying the box to its cover in the hot

sweepings of a stable, as the gardener makes a hot-bed, you know.

Twenty-one days the eggs stay there, one or two hundred to each wooden mother, instead of only ten or a dozen, as Biddy hatches them, and then the chicks step out.

Up to this time it doesn't make any difference to them whether they had a live mother, or only a warm place; but now who's going to cluck to them? and, above all, to cuddle them under her warm wings from the cold? I can tell you—the second mother, or step-mother she might be called.

The step-mother, then, who receives the big families of one or two hundred, as soon as they are out of the shell, is another machine, another wooden box, with a cover to come off. This cover is lined with something soft and warm, to take the place of old Biddy's feathers, and is made to slide up and down so that it may always be high enough to just touch the babies' backs, and not to press upon them. This mother is kept warm in the same way that the first one was.

It is funny to see how quickly the chicks adopt their queer wooden mother, and run under her warm—would you call it wings? The little creatures seem very happy, and never appear to have a wish to live in a cottage in the yard, with one fussy, clucking mamma to take care of them. They eat and run about, and soon grow big enough to roost on the low perches in the nursery, and when they do that, in about three weeks, they are considered too big for the nursery, and then go to live in the big house with the hens.

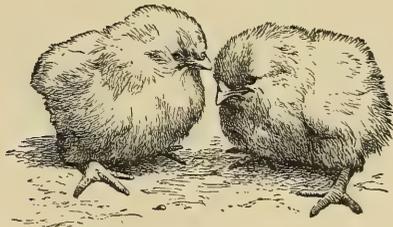
Sometimes in this place a queer thing happens to a hen. She takes a notion to sit, and she is not treated with a cold bath, nor set upon hot porcelain eggs, as many hens are. No indeed!

A very kind man at once provides her with a nest and a dozen eggs that have already been in the warm arms of the wooden mother in the house till nearly ready to break the shell. Madam Feather-top clucks her thanks, and settles herself for a three weeks' job.

In a few days, however, those precocious youngsters break the shell and insist on coming out, to the great amazement of the hen.

“Dear me!” she says—in hen talk—“who ever heard of such smart babies as these! Really I don't feel quite satisfied, and it seems a little strange, but—there's no doubt of it. Here they are, every one, and my duty is plain.” She shakes herself out, clucks, and starts off with her brood.

But wonders are not over in her experience. She leads her young family out to breakfast in the field, and, to her astonishment, they seem to increase. She started out with twelve, and before she knows it she has a hundred or two about her. It



THESE POOR CHICKS HAVE ONLY A WOODEN MOTHER.

seems strange certainly; but, after all, they must be hers, and so she runs about and clucks and scratches for the whole crowd. It is a very funny sight, and reminds one of the dear little “old woman who lived in a shoe, and had so many children she didn't know what to do.”

The truth is—as you have guessed—that man, who was so suspiciously kind about the nest and eggs, has slyly brought out all the others which the wooden mamma hatched on the same day, and completely fooled Madam Feather-top.

With these new-fangled mothers people may think they are independent of poor old Biddy's work, and it is true they are in a measure; but if she cares anything about it, she may console herself with the thought that, after all, they can't yet find any one that can furnish a hen's egg—except a hen.

CHAPTER FIFTH.

A BLACK ROGUE—IN FEATHERS.

THE next pet that I shall tell you about was Cudjo, the crow, who opened his eyes on this beautiful world in an airy home at the top of a big cotton-wood tree. In that retired spot, where the cradle was rocked by every breeze, Cudjo's father and mother had built a comfortable residence of sticks and other suitable things—without doors or windows, stairway or roof, to be sure, but amply large enough for the whole family, and as complete as any crow could desire.

The cotton-wood tree was not far from Marcy's, and was admired by the children as well as the crows. Under its broad shade they spent much time playing and watching the movements of the crow family.

The first thing that came to disturb the happy life in the tree was a railroad. Deep sorrow fell on the children when they heard the sad news that the great tree was to be cut down, and fears were entertained for the safety of the noisy little family on the top branch.

But no one could help them, so the children stood mournfully around while great gashes were cut into the heart of the fine old tree, shaking its leafy crown with every blow.

At the first alarm, papa and mama Crow, after flying around a few times, became alarmed and flew away, making noisy

complaint. When at last the tree fell with a terrific crash, the children hurried near, to see about the family in the nest. Alas! every crow baby—except one—was killed by the fall.

That one was Cudjo, and Ralph carried him carefully home. It must be admitted that he was not particularly attractive. He was nearly all mouth, there being only enough bird attached to open it frightfully. He was too young to be afraid; he had not learned that he was a crow, and that people were his deadly enemies.

His only feeling at that time was hunger. Ralph was determined he should not starve, so he fed him three times a day, a whole egg each time. He would drop the raw egg into the big, open mouth, there would be a gurgle or two, when it would be swallowed, and the bird would be satisfied for awhile.

On this food Master Cudjo grew rapidly, and before long had a fine, glossy, black coat of his own, and was promoted from the egg to a meat diet. He had his meals with the dog, but he most enjoyed taking dinner with the family, when he would take his place on the table and help himself to anything he chose. If one tried to drive him away, he would bite their fingers, and if too much annoyed, he would snatch a knife or fork, and fly away with it. When he did this, the thing was lost, for he never returned till it was completely hidden.

He soon learned his name, and would come when called, unless it was Patty, the cook, who spoke. He always had a suspicion that her intentions were not friendly, for she sometimes swept him out of the room with a broom, an insult that no crow could be expected to endure. When she called, therefore, Cudjo would walk out with great dignity.

He seemed to have a desire to improve his mind, for often,

when a book was left on the table near the light, he would take his stand by it, and look it over in the most serious and earnest manner, as though absorbed in deep study.

He was fond of Marcy, and would follow her everywhere, like a dog, catching her dress, and trying to play with her, but to his young master he gave the whole of his crowish heart. He delighted to sit on his knee or shoulder, and poke things into his pockets, rub his glossy head against his cheek, and in every way show his warm affection.

One day, after a good deal of poking and fussing, he left between Ralph's vest buttons a two-dollar bill. Perhaps there is never a time when two dollars would not be a convenient present for a boy to receive, but this time it was peculiarly appropriate, for, strange to say, Ralph had been loudly lamenting for some days that he could not join a certain society for want of money. Where Cudjo found the bill they never could discover, though they inquired of all the neighbors.

With all his solemn manners, Cudjo had some fun in him, and could appreciate a joke. One day, when he had no particular business on hand, he happened to see a man in a neighboring garden at work. He had a broad-rimmed straw hat, and Cudjo evidently thought here was a chance for fun. He flew across the field, and alighting on the rim began running round and round the man's head.

Naturally the surprised laborer put up his hand to drive him off, when Master Cudjo pounced on his fingers, and resumed his ring performances. Again the man tried to shake him off, and again his fingers received a nip that was not agreeable. At last he ran for help, crying wildly that a crazy bird was on his hat.

As soon as help came near, Cudjo quietly flew up into a tree, with an air that said as plainly as words, "Well, what are you going to do about it?"

Another day an organ-grinder stopped near the house, and began to grind out his doleful music. Cudjo didn't care much for that, but the man carried a monkey dressed in red coat and cap, and this queer-looking object attracted his earnest attention from the first.

He turned his head one side and then the other, to see if his eyes had not deceived him, and plainly could not decide to what species the strange animal belonged. He looked on quietly, however, till the poor little monkey took off his cap and made a low bow. That seemed to the bird a personal insult, and quick as a flash he swooped down, snatched the offensive cap, and flew into a tree.

Neither scolding nor coaxing could ever induce him to give up anything he had once taken, so the family paid the angry organ-grinder for the cap, and the monkey went off bareheaded, though I don't suppose he felt bad about that.

He turned the laugh one day on some young sportsmen who came into the neighborhood to shoot. Cudjo was enjoying the fresh air on the top branches of a tree, when he saw a gun pointed at him. Now he was not afraid of a gun, of course, but he probably thought a mistake might be made, for he deliberately flew down, and alighted directly on the gun-barrel, to the amazement and almost horror of the hunter, who had never before seen a bird come out of a tree and give himself up in that way. To drive him away was now the desire of the man, for Cudjo enjoyed the joke, and refused to leave his perch, defending himself with his strong bill against all attempts.

He had strong likes and dislikes, and taking offense at a young lady spending some days at the house, he resolved to play her a trick. One morning there was a great hue and cry through the house. Uncle John, an elderly gentleman, also a guest, had lost his false teeth; they had been stolen from the bureau, and the house was searched without success. Cudjo meanwhile sat grimly on top of the book-case and heard all the noise, but he only perked his head on one side, and looked saucy as usual.

At last the loss was laid to him, as was every loss in the house, generally with good reason; the turmoil subsided, Uncle John was attended in his own chamber, took his breakfast with a spoon, and sent for a dentist, while the young lady dressed for the street and started out on a shopping expedition.

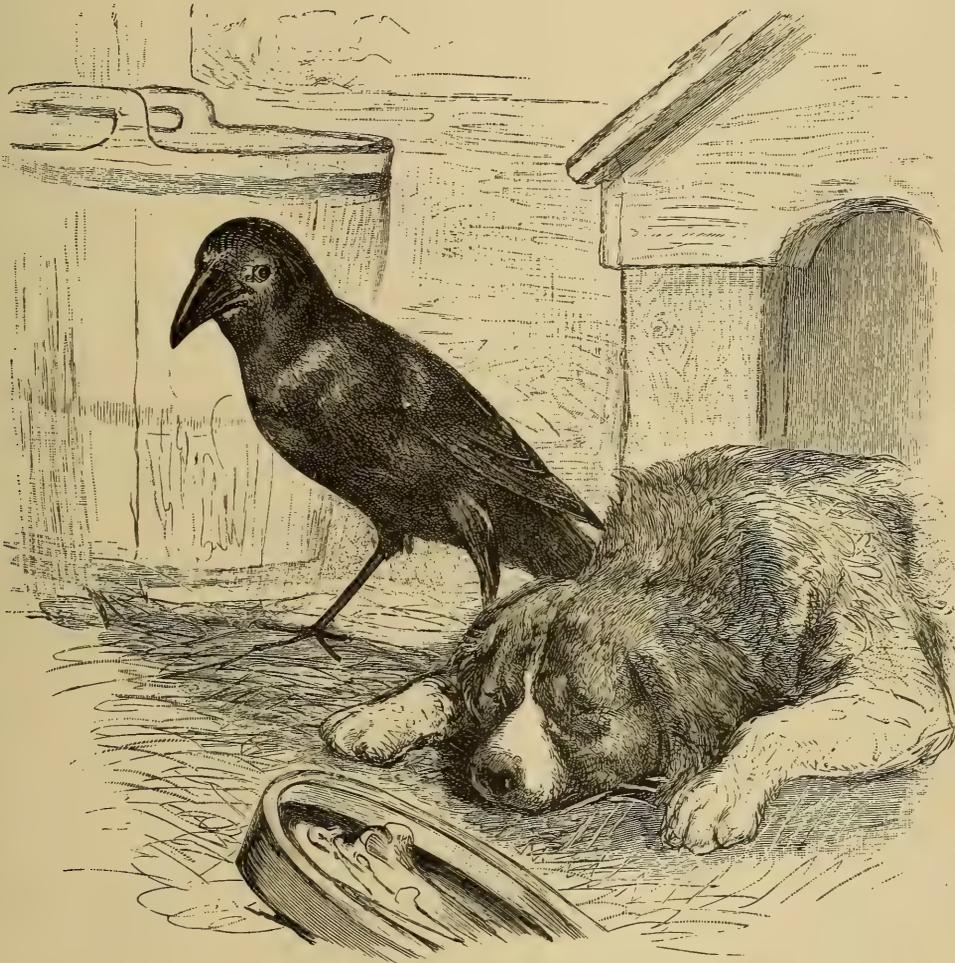
At the first place she stopped, wanting something from a small satchel she carried, she pulled out her pocket-handkerchief, and, to her horror, there rolled on to the counter, before the astonished eyes of the clerks, the missing set of teeth.

How they stared, and how she blushed and stammered an explanation, you can imagine. She hastily gathered up the obnoxious object in her handkerchief, stuffed it into the satchel, and hurried back to tell her mortifying story and scold Cudjo, who took it very calmly, dressing his feathers and peering at her excited face, with an occasional low "caw," when a reply seemed to be expected of him.

Not more agreeable, though perhaps less distressing, was the joke he played on a dandyish young gentleman who failed to win his stubborn heart. Sauntering down the street one day in faultless dress, and black shiny hat on his curling scented locks, the young gentleman felt something dangling over his ear, and

carelessly putting up his hand to remove it, took hold of something smooth and slippery, which, to his surprise, squirmed.

Regardless of everything for the moment, he snatched off his



IS HE REALLY ASLEEP?

hat, and there, hanging down from the lining, was a small green snake, which, of course, naughty Cudjo had stuffed into that snug hiding-place. Shaking out the snake and putting on his

hat, the young dandy, with a very red face, hurried home, and Cudjo, with his usual calmness, received another scolding.

As for the dog, it was always war to the teeth between them. When awake, the bird kept out of his reach, though he would now and then swoop down and snatch away a tempting bit of meat, which he would eat himself or hide away in the house, perhaps between the frame and mattress of a bedstead, where it would not be seen till its odor caused a close search.

But when the dog took a nap, Cudjo was happy. He would go about the sleeping monster in perfect silence, peering into his house, and carrying off every bone in it. Now dogs are fond of bones to gnaw, even when the meat is gone, and to him this was a serious loss.

Sometimes the dog would bury the bones he wished to keep, but that did not help him, for those bright, black eyes were always on him, and no sooner did he go to sleep than the bird would dig up the coveted objects and bury them in a new place where their owner could not find them.

Another enemy lived in the chicken-yard. It was a savage cock, who ruled the fowls with a rod of iron. Every feathered creature on the place stood in awe of him—except Cudjo. He seemed to regard it as his business to take the conceit out of the crowing fellow. Many and severe were the fights between them, but Cudjo always came off victor, and at last the brave cock owned his master, and would run the moment he saw his black tyrant coming.

There was something else in Cudjo besides fun, there was mischief. One day Uncle Karl brought into the house a thick photograph album, with places for large pictures. This seemed to trouble the Crow, who apparently thought the holes ought to

be filled, and that he must do it. He never shirked a fancied duty, so one day he was very busy, scarcely seen about the house, and not till Ralph went to feed the rabbits was it suspected what important business had so occupied him. To his grief Ralph found his whole family of little rabbits killed, and skinned, and gone.

Of course he knew that Cudjo was the guilty one, but where he had buried the bodies was not known for a day or two, till some one opened the new photograph album. There, between the leaves, in the holes kept for pictures, were found the unfortunate rabbit babies, sticking the pages together, and, of course, utterly ruining the book.

He seemed to especially hate all little creatures. He would go into the poultry-yard and kill chickens, and the family were often called out by cries and squawks of indignant hen-mothers who rebelled against having their chicks carried off before their eyes. His great delight was to fish in a little pond in the yard. It was full of minnows, and so shallow that Cudjo could stand in it and not drown. There he would take his position and catch fish by the hour, hiding the bodies, as usual, some under the eaves of the rabbit-house, and some in water-pitchers in the bedrooms. In fact, one could never know where he might find a dead fish.

The fun he had in this pond came near being the cause of his death; for, knowing nothing of deep water, he once alighted in the middle of a stream. He could not rise, and was struggling, and would have drowned, but some boys who saw him went out in a boat and rescued him.

Cudjo was always ready for mischief, but there was one day of every week in which he was worse than usual, and that was

“dough day.” It was Friday, and got its name from the fact that on that day no market was held in town, and Cudjo could have no fresh meat, so had for dinner a piece of dough.

He would take it and fly up into a tree and eat it, but he did not enjoy it, and he was always cross after it. “As cross as Jim Crow on dough day,” was a family byword, for though his name was Cudjo, he was often called Jim Crow.

The worst fault of poor Cudjo remains to be told. He was what is nowadays tenderly named a *kleptomaniac*! that is, he had an intense longing to carry off for his own use anything that struck his fancy. Being strong and quick, he generally succeeded, though the only object seemed to be to hide it away. He had the real miser spirit of hoarding. The neighbors all feared his ever-ready beak, and if he came into a house through door or window, no one ventured to touch him. Every one stood back while he hopped around and took whatever he chose—a thimble, knitting-needle, piece of money, or silver spoon—and carried it off to his hiding-place.

One day, poking about the bureau in Mrs. Raynor's room, he took a fancy to pull the pins from the cushion. Scolding did not stop him, so she rose to drive him away, when, quick as thought, he seized three new neckties that Mr. Raynor had just brought home, and flew out the window with them, and of course they were never seen again.

For a long time it was not known where Cudjo hid his treasures, but one day one of his mounds was found under the piazza and dug up. Should you like to know what a crow would consider worth hiding away so carefully? These were a few of the things:

A six-bladed knife, a rosary blessed by the bishop (belonging

to a servant), some copper cents, a glass eye from the stuffed owl, a small china dog from the mantel, bits of glass from a kaleidoscope, a few silver spoons, a fine-tooth comb, and a gold ring. A fine variety, surely.

The object most offensive to Cudjo was a negro, and his hatred was fully returned. They would go barefooted about their work, and their black feet aroused him to fury; he would peck them unmercifully.

One little colored boy, who had to come into the yard for water, and whose heels were a never-failing temptation to the bird, thought he would be revenged. So he and his brother stole Cudjo, and carried him home. He was not missed, for he did now and then go off for a day or two; but one evening an old negro woman was seen coming toward the house, with a big bundle of what looked like old clothes.

When she reached the steps she began to unroll the package, and from the middle of it hopped out the lost bird. He was all ruffled up and very indignant, as was also Ralph when he heard the story of his being stolen. The boys had found him too much for them. He would only sit on the fence and cry "Get out, Jim Crow," which he could say quite plainly, and bite any one who came near him, till they were glad to send him home to get rid of him.

He was generally cunning enough to keep himself from hurt, but once he made a dreadful mistake. He saw some beautiful red things in the kitchen, that the cook seemed to prize, and he determined to have one. He watched his chance, and suddenly pounced on one, swallowing it in an instant. It was a red pepper, and it was not long before the poor fellow saw his error. It began to burn inside, and he became uneasy, and then flew

around as though he was crazy, squawking and gasping, and at last fell quivering into a corner as if dead.

He received no sympathy from Patty, who remembered the many bites he had given her.

“It’s good fur yo! good fur yo!” she said between her laughing, “yo done fool yoself.”

He got well after awhile, but he was now five years old, and his career drew near its close. His last piece of mischief was one of the most provoking, and was against his warmest friends—the children.

It was Christmas morning, and the roguish fellow found his way into the room where the children’s stockings hung full of presents. Here was something out of order, which Cudjo felt himself called upon to straighten. He deliberately emptied the stockings, and hid everything in them, some here, some there, but fortunately, since the doors were closed, all inside the house.

Great was the disappointment when the naughty trick was discovered, and most thoroughly the house was searched, but it was two weeks before the last missing article was found.

Not long after this, Cudjo fell a victim to his own curiosity. He found a lot of soft cement, which he ate up. Of course it hardened inside him, and put an end to his mischievous life; but his bones were carefully wired up, and added to Uncle Karl’s museum in the den.

CHAPTER SIXTH.

TWO GRAY BABIES.

ONE day Ralph ran into the house from school, in great excitement, holding in his arms two little gray-coated creatures about as big as kittens, and with their eyes tight shut. He had bought them with a new knife that his uncle had given him, but knowing how soft was Uncle Karl's heart toward all animals, he did not hesitate to make the purchase.

He triumphantly announced that they were baby foxes, and he was going to bring them up tame. That was very well, but the thing was to make them eat. He tried them with everything, the most tempting bits of meat, the softest bread, the sweetest milk.

They would move about as if seeking something, but not a bit would they eat, and Ralph went in distress to his mother, who laughed at his tale of woe, and advised him to see if Abby wouldn't adopt them.

Now that very morning one of the usual calamities had befallen the promising young family belonging to that wise cat. She had gone to breakfast, leaving six of the loveliest kittens in her basket, and on her return had found but one. After seeking them awhile she calmly made up her mind that it was just as it had always been, and so resigned herself as soon as she

could, though she moped some, and came up to her mistress with a long story of her griefs, told in cat language of course.

Ralph now hastened to her basket, and beside the one forlorn kitten laid the two little foxes, and waited for the cat to return. In a few minutes she came to see after her baby, and was evidently surprised to see the strangers. She looked, and smelled, and after a moment's hesitation settled down beside them, and began to lick them as if they were kittens.

The children were delighted, and so Madam Puss brought up the gray babies with her own, treating them exactly as she did the kittens. When they were big enough to eat them, she would bring in a bird or a mouse for dinner, and the little foxes always had their share.

They were named Faust and Marguerite, out of a book Marcy and Ralph found in the library, and became great pets in the family.

When they grew bigger they began to hunt for themselves, and now they showed, for the first time, the wild fox blood. They passed by birds and mice, and began on chickens, Faust bringing into the house one of Doctor Dot's precious babies. This was too much, and Marcy, their best friend, begged that they might be shut up.

They were put into an old dry-goods box which had no top, and stood under a tree in the yard, and there they stayed awhile. Puss would jump in and feed them, but one night the naughty babies dug a hole under the box, got out, and ate up two more chickens.

Now, indeed, something must be done. So a house was made like a dog-house, and the two mischievous foxes were chained to it. Chains were unknown in the cat family, and now Abby

began to suspect that she had been imposed upon, and that her foster-babies were rather queer. She still carried mice to them, but if they were impertinent at all, she would box their ears smartly.

They didn't mind the slaps though; they would dance around her as if she had invited them to play. Still they hadn't forgotten how nice chickens were to eat, and they soon learned to twist the chain around till the snap gave way, and off they would go to the woods, or to a neighbor's poultry-yard. Marcy's chicks were safely shut up at night.

They were fond of their home though, and would always be there at daylight, asleep in their house, and ready for the breakfast Ralph would bring. He thought he would end their night pranks, so he fastened the chains to their house with stout staples. But the next time the wild fit seized them, they gnawed the wood around the staple till they could pull it out, and away they went, the chains at their heels.

Ralph always knew, the moment he saw them, whether they had been out. If they had, they would lie quietly in the doorway, looking very sheepish indeed, with paws crossed and heads resting on them, whereas if they had not been out, they would come out to meet him, wagging their tails in welcome.

They had fine times with the dog, whose house was near theirs. They would play together, and bark, and have regular frolics, never quarreling at all, but always in the friendliest way. The poultry they were fond of, naturally; but the wise mother-hens never responded to their advances toward friendship. In vain would the foxes scatter corn in front of their door and lie down, looking as innocent as two lambs. The knowing fowls would daintily pick around the edge, but carefully keep the length of

the chain between them, and every chick was taught to do the same.

Faust was full of fun, and delighted in playing jokes on Cudjo. He would lie quietly on the ground and gently wag his tail. Cudjo always regarded this as an insult, and furiously he would pounce upon the offending tail. Then Faust would wheel and seize the Crow by a wing, while he squalled and screamed with terror. It was only a joke, however, and in a moment Faust would let him go, when he would fly up into a tree, scolding and smoothing his ruffled feathers.

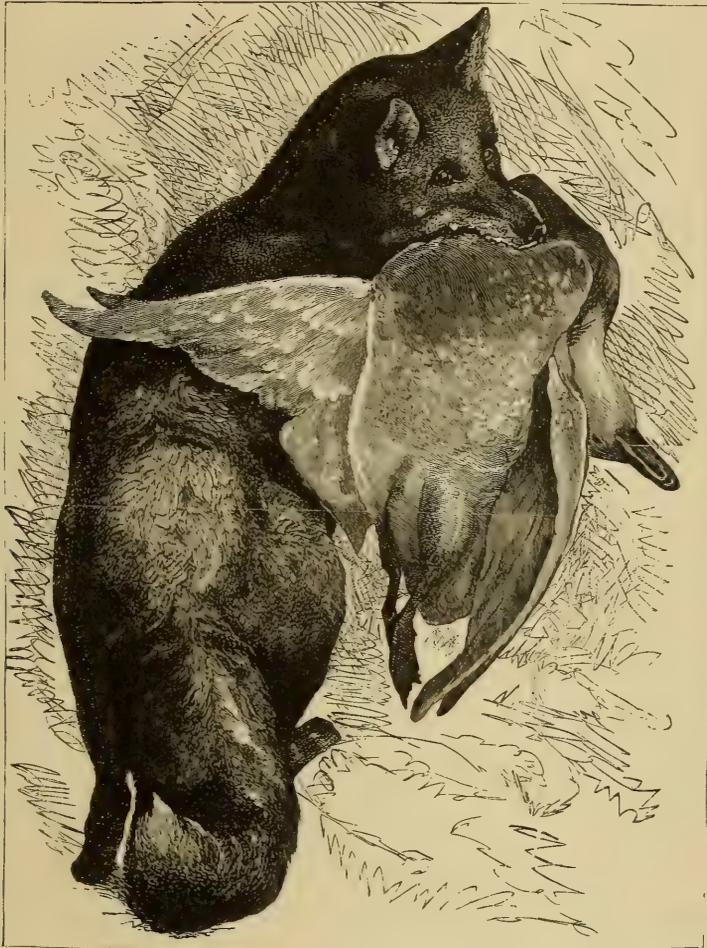
He could hardly be blamed for playing a joke now and then, for, after all, life was very dull compared to the life of their wild relatives. No wild animal makes a more comfortable home, or takes better care of her babies than the mother-fox. She has a cosy, warm house in the ground, out of the reach of dogs and other animals.

The door of this house is carefully hidden under the roots of a tree, or among rocks, so it will not be easily seen. Next to the door the watchful mother has her vestibule, or reception-room you might call it, where she lies and looks out to see if any one comes near. Beyond this is a passage, eight or ten feet long, opening into a store-room where food may be kept.

At the very last end of the house is the nursery, where the pretty little snub-nosed babies stay, till big enough to come out and play around the door. Every fine evening they may be seen—if one is careful enough to draw near without alarming the extremely wide-awake mamma—playing like so many kittens, and even inducing their dignified mother to join in the fun.

It is a pretty sight, and worth the trouble it costs. But by

and by it comes time for baby foxes to go to bed, and for mother to go to market. Night is of course the best time for marketing, for then her enemies—men, boys, and dogs—are sound asleep in their houses.



COMING HOME FROM MARKET.

Towards morning the mother almost always brings home a rabbit, a chicken, a goose, or sometimes only a field-mouse.

Whatever she brings, the family have to eat for breakfast, and then all go to sleep for the morning.

As time goes on, and the babies grow, the loving mother begins their education, for she wants them to be the wisest and most cunning of their race, and nothing can be more cunning than a fox, unless it may be a crow.

She teaches them how to get food, to crawl on the ground quietly, so as not to alarm a flock of geese or chickens, till near enough to catch one. If it is rabbit they want, she shows them how to save the trouble of digging out one of their long burrows, by following the scent above-ground with their keen noses, till they find out where the nest is, and then digging directly down on the family.

Then, if food is scarce, and they must fish, she teaches them to splash in the water, and when the curious little fish come to the surface to see what's the matter, they may be snapped up.

But the hardest thing they have to learn in getting food, is to catch that wily fellow, the crow, for even crow is better than no meat. This Mother Fox does by making bait of herself. She lies down in plain sight, stretched out as if dead, eyes shut, tongue hanging out, and looking dismal enough.

Then she lies perfectly still, till a flock of crows come by and see her. Clever as they are, they are completely deceived by this; they cannot believe that so knowing a creature as a fox would lie down in an open field, in sight of enemies, unless it was dead. So they fly around a few times, for dead fox is good meat to crows, and at last they alight all about and over her, when up she will spring, and seize one or two before they can get away.

But there are other things for little foxes to learn, since for

hundreds of years people have delighted to hunt their race. They must know how to avoid traps, to get the meat and not be caught, and to get away from their worst enemies, men and dogs.

The mother teaches them to be wary of any strange object, especially if there is a string or a wire about it, or the scent of a human being. She shows them how to dig under the bait, and pull the meat off the wrong way, when the trap or the gun may go off, but catch nobody.

To cheat the dogs she shows several tricks, for dogs are as keen of smell as a fox itself. One way is to run on a fence or rock, and then take a tremendous leap to one side, so as to keep the enemy hunting for the scent till she has time to get away. Another is to make them run in a circle, as over and under a jutting rock, where she will run several times till the scent is very strong, and then leap one side, leaving the dogs to follow their noses round and round for half a day.

One of the most cunning tricks she teaches them, is to get away from a man if they do fall into his hands. She deceives him as she does the crows, by playing dead till he gets careless and throws the supposed dead body on the ground, when she hastily comes to life, and runs as she never ran before.

Learning all these things, the days pass quickly, and life is merry and happy to the little gray babies in the green woods.

But our two friends at Marcy's, though they lost the training needed by wild foxes, never missed it, for being fed every day they had no need to hunt, and in fact only did so for fun, as people do also; and not being afraid of men and dogs, they had no need to learn how to avoid them. To be sure they lost the wild free life of the woods, and spent many weary hours chained

up; but then they never knew the terror of a pack of fierce dogs, and a dozen or more men, with horses, in full chase, all after their one, solitary, poor, little, bushy tail!

But what became of Faust and Marguerite?

Well, they came to a sad end, as those who are fond of mischief are apt to do. Once too often they visited a neighbor's poultry-yard, and that time he was there himself to welcome them.

They never came back.

CHAPTER SEVENTH.

LIVE TOYS.

NOTHING made the children so unhappy as to see, in their visits to the city, that unfortunate class of dogs known as ladies' pets. Dogs brought up in drawing-rooms, fed with a fork upon the daintiest food, washed, combed, and curled as often as a baby. Dogs that sleep on satin and lace cushions, in half-covered "dog baskets," and take the air in their mistress' or her maid's arms, dressed in blanket and shoes, and sometimes wearing collars set with diamonds. Dogs that travel in a "dog's satchel," and have in every way their natural life distorted to please the taste of people.

Some of the smaller of these creatures are called—very properly—"toy dogs," and you may find it hard to believe that there have been real living dogs that were only three inches tall, when they were two years old, and of course full grown.

It is not uncommon to see in the Park, or on a fashionable street, an elegant private carriage, with fine horses and liveried servants, slowly passing along, and in the carriage, sitting up on the seat alone, a dog—often an ugly-faced bull-dog, or a snub-nosed pug—out for his morning's airing.

One day Marcy saw a carriage of this sort, but the dog, elegantly dressed in overcoat buttoned at the neck, with "gold

collar and bell," was apparently not yet toned down—or up—to the perfection of "deportment" expected of drawing-room dogs. He did not sit up properly, but resting his forepaws on the edge of the window, was looking out, with envy in his eyes, at the happy vagabond dogs in the street, who ran about at pleasure, stepped in the mud if they liked, gnawed a bone and enjoyed it, and never slept on a velvet cushion. He was just as doggish in feeling as they, but he was a prisoner, in chains of silk.

Tip is a happier dog than those city pets, for although he is petted he still has his own doggish ways, or he would not be interesting enough to have his story told.

His name is Tip Tatters, and he is called Tip, or Tat, or Tatters. He is a wise fellow, and understands talk as well as anybody, as he shows by his intelligent looks, and doing the thing that is suggested quietly, and not in the loud, ordering tone usually considered appropriate to dogs.

Sometimes he is told to go and see if Marcy is in the yard. He will start off on a furious run, scamper to the corner of the house where he can see the yard, give one glance, and then run back, wagging his tail and almost speaking.

He is fond of barking at strangers, and one day he heard the gate shut and started off at the top of his speed, barking like mad. The visitor, though a stranger to him, had heard of Tip, so, as he came tearing at her she said warmly, as though delighted to see him,

"Why, Tip Tatters! how are you? Aren't you ashamed to bark at a friend? Come and see me, Tip."

Tip understood. He evidently thought he ought to know one who knew him so well, and the look of shame and perplexity that came over him was funny to see. His tail dropped, his

mouth closed, and very meekly he trotted into the house behind her, crawled under a chair, and refused to be coaxed out for some time.

Tatters has made himself special policeman of the yard, and plainly considers it his business to keep the peace; so whenever he sees two cocks fighting, as those quarrelsome fellows delight to do, he at once pounces on them, and separates them, dragging them away, and forcing them to behave themselves.

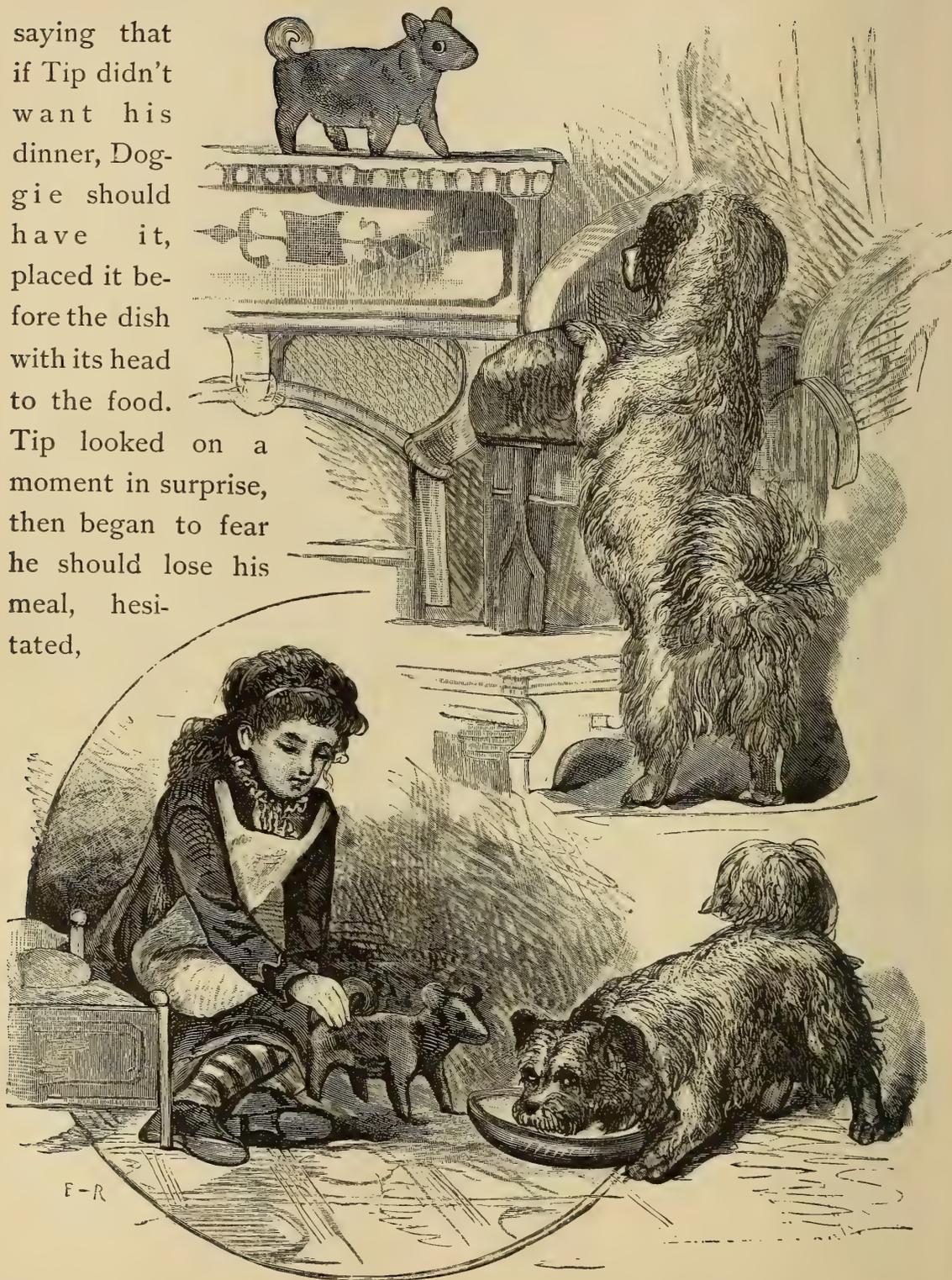
Never was a child more fond of play than he. He has his toys like anybody, and when Marcy goes out she generally brings him something, a ball, a rubber ring, or animal. He has a regular place for his toys, and will bring them out or put them back when told to do so.

The one he likes best is a flannel dog, made by a friend, and given to him. At first he seemed to think it was alive, and a rival, for he growled and barked furiously at it. But finding that it was a meek little creature, and never talked back, he grew fond of it, and began to lick it, as he would have done to a young dog, jumping about it also, and from that moment regarding it as his choicest plaything, though he never seems to be quite sure that it isn't, after all, more alive than it pretends.

When the flannel dog is put on the table, Tatters will jump at it and bark, coaxing it to come down and play, and at last, getting impatient, he will leap up and pull it off, lie down with it and cuddle it in his paws, or challenge it to a frolic.

One day Tip was naughty. He had notions about his dinner, preferring cake, or something rich, to the food that was given him. After coaxing in vain, Marcy took the flannel dog, and

saying that if Tip didn't want his dinner, Doggie should have it, placed it before the dish with its head to the food. Tip looked on a moment in surprise, then began to fear he should lose his meal, hesitated,



TIP AND THE FLANNEL DOG.

then sprang to the dish, and fairly gobbled it down to the last crumb.

Though Tip cannot talk, he can make himself understood as well as if he could. He specially hates to be left alone, and one of the family always has to stay at home with him, for if he is in the least lonely, he will howl and cry till they are glad to come back and devote themselves to his amusement.

He has been taught to cry in polite society, on occasions when he naturally desires to howl, for instance when he is hurt. It is the drollest sound, between a whine and a growl, showing his teeth, and uttering a sort of "E-e-e-e" quite unspellable. Once Marcy stepped on his foot by accident, and he at once ran to another of the family, holding up his foot and crying bitterly.

He was of course pitied, and he went around the house till every one in it had sympathized with him. Even the next day, when one said to him, "Tatters, did you get hurt?" he burst out into a wailing "E-e-e-e," holding up the injured foot.

Once Tatters was ill, and the excitement in the house could hardly have been greater if half the family were so. He had three doctors! The truth is, he had been a little greedy, and his food disagreed with him. He began by moaning and crying like any child. Uncle Karl had a "dog book;" so he got it out, studied up the case, went to a drug store to have some pills made up, and gave him two before he went to his studio.

In those pills was morphine, though the family did not know it, and soon the Dog began to act very strangely. He lay with his eyes half open, trying to go to sleep. Suddenly he would start up and bark furiously, then sleep coming over him, he would drop his head again.

He did not appear to know the family, who stood around him in distress. He was evidently "out of his head," and he looked so queer they were afraid of him. Marcy went into the den to see if she could find out what medicine he had taken. There was the box of pills, marked POISON, and two were gone!

Horror! Tatters was poisoned!

A few shrieks rent the air, and the nearest doctor was sent for in haste. Fortunately he was fond of dogs, and he very good-naturedly came to see what he could do. He gave the Dog some more pills, and went away.

Before long, Uncle Karl, getting anxious about his little patient, came home to see how his pills had worked, and heard the dreadful story of Tip's conduct. He was struck with horror. If he had killed Tatters he should feel like a murderer. He hurried out after another doctor, a friend.

The two did what they could for some time, and then the physicians, disliking to have the responsibility of such a pet, advised them to send for a regular animal doctor. He came, and the three worked over poor Tip all the afternoon. At night he was out of danger, but as limp as a dog could be, and it was weeks before he was well and strong as before.

I can't tell you the end of Tatters' story, because it hasn't ended yet. He is now in full strength and health, as fond of fun as ever, and likely to live many years.

CHAPTER EIGHTH.

THE QUEER FAMILY THAT LIVED NEXT DOOR.

ONE day in the summer, there came a queer family to live next door to Marcy's. The children felt the deepest interest from the first, and kept close watch to see how they lived and what they did, and even searched in books for their history.

That seems somewhat rude, I must admit, but this is so very queer a family that they don't care a bit, and in fact never take the least notice of anybody, so it cannot be considered gossiping if I tell you what the children found out.

In the first place, there is no father to the family, that any one could discover, and the mother herself doesn't live at home, though she worked hard to make it, in the neatest and most comfortable manner.

The truth is—and that's one of the most curious things about it—nobody lives there, except a large family of babies, each one locked into a room alone, with food enough to eat till it is able to take care of itself.

They are nice, quiet babies, and they never cry, but simply eat and grow as fast as they can, till the food is gone, and they are full grown. Then they wrap themselves up in a silk quilt, each one by himself, and go to sleep for awhile.

But I must tell you about the strange mother, and how she built her own house beside the country road. She is a grace-

ful, pretty creature, dressed in violet blue, with yellow trimming. But, nice as she looks, and careful as she is of her children, she is rather a savage little person, and always carries a sharp dagger, which she is apt to thrust into any one who disturbs her.

Perhaps you have seen her, or one of her family, for she has cousins all over the world. She has, of course, a high-sounding name in the books, but her common name is all the children cared for; it is Mrs. Sandwasp, and she is not much more than an inch long.

When she was ready to build her house, she looked about till she found a sunny bank of soft sandy earth, and then she went to work with all her strength. Perhaps I shouldn't say *build* her house, since she does not exactly build, she digs. A quiet, dark nursery underground is what she wants for her babies, and that she quickly made with her own sharp jaws, which you may think are curious tools to work with.

When she had finished a cozy, little, oval-shaped room, ready for a wasp baby, she shut the door very carefully by piling bits of sand and stone before it, and went off to get food for the baby to eat when it came out of its egg-shell. She closed the door, because, you must know, the Sandwasp family have an enemy, called Madam Ruby Tail, who is too lazy to make herself a house, yet wants her babies to have a comfortable home. She admires the house the Sandwasp makes, and so she is always looking about for one, and if she finds a door open, she will be sure to go in and lay one of her own eggs snugly away in the house. When the little mother-wasp comes back, she does not notice the strange egg, but puts the food and her own egg in, and when the baby Ruby Tail begins to eat, it first of all devours the baby Sandwasp beside it, and then the food its

mother provided. It is to keep this naughty thief baby out that the Sandwasp so carefully shuts the door.

Madam Ruby Tail herself is a great beauty. Her dress is of the most brilliant blue or green, and fiery ruby color. But there is an old saying that "Handsome is that handsome does," and looking at her in that light, she is far from being beautiful, for she and her whole family are parasites: that is, they do not feed their own young, but put them where they may steal, as I have told you.

Now what sort of food does the wasp baby have? The mother herself eats honey and tree-sap, but she knows very well that such delicate food will not do for a growing youngster. So she provides meat, and the way she manages to have it keep fresh, and yet not be able to run away, or to hurt the little one, is a wonderful thing.

First, she goes out to hunt it, and she prefers a certain sort of a caterpillar. When she finds one that suits her, she first stings it in some strange way, so that it will not die, yet will be helpless and stupid as long as it lives. You needn't feel sorry for the caterpillar; it does not suffer—at least so say those who have watched them closely.

After finding the meat, the busy little mother has to drag or carry it home, and that is often a long and hard operation. However, she never gives up, and at last she reaches home, finding the door without trouble, though it is so small, puts the caterpillar into the nursery, and again shuts the door, or rather walls it up, for she knows the baby will not want to come out for awhile, and will need only to have its enemies kept out. A lady—Mrs. Swisshelm—has already told how one that she saw did this:

“First she got a little stone and fitted it nicely over the hole; then brought smaller stones, and built them all neatly around the edge, like a mason making a wall. When any stone did not fit into its place to suit her, she would lay it as well as she could, then walk backward, rush up and strike it with her head to drive it into place. Sometimes she rushed at one stone and struck it several times before she got it firm enough to suit her ideas. The first time she would, may be, not go backward more than an inch; but if that did not do, she went farther, so as to get more force, using her head as a man would a mallet to drive a wedge. When the wall was finished, she wheeled around and began scratching like a dog, throwing fine dust backward on her new wall to fill up the cracks.”

In this way the hard-working mother goes on, till she has provided homes and food for her whole family, and then she goes away. I suppose she returns to eating honey till she dies, or perhaps drinks the sap from some tree till she loses her senses and falls to the ground, as her family are said to do.

But what happens to the babies in their funny little nurseries? Well, when they come out of their shells they are not neat little sandwasps like their mamma, but fat grubs, or larvæ, as they are called, and they care for nothing but eating. No matter that outside their little dark rooms are sunshine, and sweet fresh air, and flowers; eat, eat, eat is all the greedy creatures care to do.

After stuffing themselves till they are full grown, and nearly as big as their mother, though so different in shape, they at last have enough, and each baby wraps itself up tightly in a silk cover, which it spins for itself, and goes to sleep—or any way keeps very still, while its pretty wings and its six legs grow, and

it changes from an ugly fat grub to a lively Wasp like its mamma. Some bright sunny day in the spring, out of every one of these snug nurseries will come a pretty creature, and fly away to eat honey and build houses like its mother.

Some of the little wasp mammas lay up other food than caterpillars for their babies. One that lives in France prefers spiders, the bravest and most dangerous creature she can find. I'm afraid this little mother rather likes to fight; at any rate she has to fight, for the spider has no notion of being made food for wasp babies. In fact she likes wasp for dinner herself, and if she can manage to throw a few threads over Mrs. Wasp, it is all over with the poor little creature. However, the wasp is wary and quick, and usually succeeds in stinging Madam Spider in her own house, and then, of course, she has only to drag her home.

I once read a story of a Sandwasp which a gentleman saw on a hunting expedition. First he saw a spider run quickly across the window-sill, crouching down as though dreadfully frightened. He hid under the edge of the sill inside, and in a moment a large Wasp flew in and sailed about the room as if looking for something. After awhile she settled on the sill, and ran around on it, exactly as a dog will try to find the track—or trail—of an animal.

Soon she seemed to catch the trail of the spider, for she went at once after him, and probably stung him. He seemed not much hurt, and ran away, going one side and then the other till at last he went under a bed and hid himself on the frame, below the mattress. But the Wasp did not give him up. She ran around the floor in circles, as hunting dogs do, and soon struck the trail again, when she instantly started upon it, turning exactly as the spider had turned, and in a moment found him again.

The spider was not an easy victim ; he ran again, out of the room, across a hall, into another, but every time, though the Wasp did not seem to see him, she followed his track and came up to him. At last he gave up, and rolled himself into a ball, when Madam Wasp took him up in her arms (or legs), and prepared to fly away with him to the comfortable home she had no doubt already made.

There are many kinds of wasps which live alone like the sand-wasp, and are called solitary, besides those which live in large companies. There is the mason-wasp, who builds her baby houses in keyholes, and cracks, and any snug tube she can find, making them of nicely worked clay ; and another one, who selects the stems of a wild rose-bush, which she hollows out and partitions into tiny nurseries, and fills with flies ; and a third, who makes a funny row of clay bottles in a line on a twig ; and a fourth, who hangs her babies up in a clay purse.

Now isn't this one of the queerest families you ever heard of ? and are you surprised that Marcy and Ralph spent many an hour watching the little house next door, and asking dozens of questions about them ?

CHAPTER NINTH.

THE NEW PET THAT ABBY CAUGHT.

ABBY was accustomed to go to a grove near the house, where there were many birds, to get fresh meat for herself, and she often brought home her prey to amuse herself with for a little time before eating it, after the fashion of cats.

One morning Marcy saw her come over the fence with something in her mouth, and she hurried out to see what it was, and if it was still alive. She could not quite blame Abby for eating birds, so long as we eat them ourselves, but she could see that the cat did not torture them.

This time when she reached Puss she found something quite different from a bird, though she could not tell what it was. It seemed to be alive, and Abby gave it up at once. Marcy carried it into the house, having first brought a piece of fresh meat to pay for it.

He was a curious-looking creature, about as big as a mouse, and of a reddish color. His tail was a long, bare object, like the tail of a rat, with a row of thin hairs standing out on each side, as though Nature proposed to make a feather for this little fellow to carry.

When Uncle Karl came home, she carried the strange object to him, and he told her at once that it was a baby squirrel. A squirrel is a very amusing pet, and the children were of course

delighted to have one. But the first trouble was to keep him from starving to death. He would not drink, and Abby had no kittens to share their dinner with him, as in the case of the fox babies, besides being perhaps not quite a safe foster-mother, since she had caught him for her own use.

At last, after much talk, mamma laughingly suggested that it might be brought up on a bottle, and Marcy at once thought of something.

Marcy, you must know, was fond of dolls. Though she did not play with them now, being rather too tall, she still cherished all her old dolls, and one drawer of her bureau was full of them, of all sizes and kinds, carefully dressed and laid away with their own belongings.

Now Uncle Karl was fond of a joke, and on her last birthday, stepping into a shop to buy something to carry home to her, he saw a funny new toy among the dolls' treasures. It was a small "feeding-bottle," exactly like those used for babies to drink from, and of doll size. The bottle was about three inches long, the rubber tube as many more, and the mouthpiece at the end perhaps as big as a baby's little finger.

This was too good a joke on a doll lover to be lost, so after buying a pretty writing-desk, he added the bottle to the package and took it home to her. It was so cunning that Marcy didn't mind being well laughed at, but laid it away in the drawer beside the big Japanese baby doll, which was so natural and baby-like that people seeing it in one's arms thought it was a live baby.

It was this bottle she thought of now, for the Squirrel baby, and she at once ran upstairs and got it, filled it with warm milk, and put the mouthpiece into the orphan's mouth. Ah! this

was a success! In two minutes he had made a good supper, and was fast asleep in a small basket of cotton, which had been arranged for him.

There was no more trouble now about feeding Nip—as he was named. He had his bottle as regularly as any baby, and very funny he looked, hugging it up to him with his little paws, and drinking away for dear life.

He was not a lively pet at first. Squirrels are sober and dull in the cradle, and frisky in old age, which is different from most creatures. To roll himself into a tight ball, with his ridiculous bare tail wrapped around himself, was his great delight, next to hugging his bottle.

But he grew fast, and it was not long before his fur was thick and long, and his tail bushy and fine, and he frisked about like any wild squirrel. So lively and sudden were his movements, as he skipped from one thing to another, that it seemed as if he must fall and break his neck. But if he did make a misstep, he would spread out his legs and broad tail, come down in a sort of flying position, as though he did it on purpose, and alight quite safely on the floor.

He was a wary little fellow, and though perfectly tame so that he would run all over people, he did not like to be caught. If any one tried it, he would run with a sort of a gallop, quick as a flash, across the room, and behind a book-case or bureau, or, by way of the sofa and a picture-frame, to the top of the bookshelves, or window-frame near the wall, where he would turn and look at the clumsy attempts of his pursuers, and “laugh in his sleeve” no doubt that one should dream of putting a hand on him.

The nest of a wild squirrel is made in the fork of a tree, where

it is almost impossible to be found. It is of leaves, moss, grass, and other things, woven into a ball, and in this cozy home three or four little squirrels may be found every summer. By the time they are big enough to work, nuts and acorns are ripe, and the whole family is busy laying up food for winter.

Every day, from morning to night, the pretty little creatures may be seen gathering nuts from the trees, letting them fall as they cut them off with their sharp teeth, and then running down and carrying them off, one or two at a time, to hide in some safe place where they may be found when needed.

Though so shy and quick to scamper away, squirrels would not be much afraid of us, if they were not hunted and frightened. Uncle Karl told the children an interesting story of one of the cunning little fellows whose home was in the Adirondacks. It happened the summer before when he was up there to fish and rest.

One day he was crossing a little lake in a boat with a guide. They noticed in the smooth water a slight ripple which went out each way from one point, where stuck up a small brown nose.

"I wonder what that is," said Uncle Karl.

"That's a squirrel," answered the guide. "I've seen lots of them crossing lately."

The little fellow was laboring hard, with nothing to be seen but his nose, and he seemed to be getting tired. Uncle Karl suggested to the guide that he should hold out an oar to him, and see if he wouldn't like a rest.

Jack—the guide—held out a dripping oar, and said hospitably, "Come aboard, old fellow. You may have a ride, and rest as long as you choose. We're friends, and you shall not be hurt."

Whether he understood English, or trusted Jack's honest face, or was too tired to go further, he did not tell, but he did accept the offer. He seized the oar, mounted upon it, and dragged his wet bushy tail after him to the boat. He rested a minute on the edge, then ran up the guide's arm, over his shoulder and down the other arm, and finally settled himself on the farther edge of the boat.

He was a pretty fellow, with sleek red coat and bright black eyes, and he at once began to dry himself, warm his toes, dress his fur, and refresh himself generally. Meanwhile Jack had resumed his rowing, and the boat and the talk went on, without disturbing the little wild passenger in the least. After sitting awhile, he ran about a little more, and at last plunged off and went on with his voyage.

Squirrels are easily tamed, and are amusing pets, and very happy ones too, unless they are shut up in a cage. They are ardent lovers of liberty, and they must have exercise. So true is this, that they will even gallop for hours in those hideous turning cages for the sake of it, though, if allowed to spend their energy running about, they would be a thousand times more entertaining.

Marcy's pet, Nip, soon grew too old for baby food, and tried his sharp little teeth on acorns and nuts. He never missed a meal, but always took his place *on* the table, where he would help himself to anything he liked, then sit up, curl his long tail against his back, take the lump of sugar, or whatever it was, in both little paws and nibble away.

He was very tame, and accepted pockets as his special napping places. Whether in a garment hanging on the wall, or traveling about on some one's back, made no difference to him,

he would curl himself into a round ball and go to sleep at once.

From the top of his light little head to the tip of his toes, he was full of fun. When he got into a real frolic—which he was always ready to do at a moment's notice—one needed to look out for frail things. He would go over and behind everything—on the mantel, over the picture-frames, on top of a door or window, behind the bookcase, under the sofa, or up in the folds of the curtains.

Hunt him out of one place and there would be a flash of red fur, a scramble of little claws, and Master Nip would look out at one saucily, from another safe place. If the frolic began in the kitchen or the green-house, great was the fun. He could hide all day on the pantry shelves, and clatter the pans and the dishes enough to drive cook crazy, and in the green-house would be a rustle of leaves, a shower of blossoms, and a general upsetting of small pots.

One day when on a mad frolic in the green-house, the little fellow slipped into a pipe for carrying off water when the plants were watered. To his surprise and joy he found it an open door to the outside world. One flash and he was out, and scampering for the grove where Abby had found him.

There Nip spent the rest of his life, and there the children often saw him. He would come down from a tree when called, and cautiously take a nut or a lump of sugar, but on the slightest movement to catch him, he would be off in a twinkling. He never ate on the ground, but would carry the gift away up in the top of a tall tree, where no doubt he had a nest of his own.

I have read of a Squirrel which was taken from its nest in England and made a household pet. When he was brought in,

a sorry little bundle of reddish fur, he did not know how to eat, and his mistress had the same trouble that Marcy did, till she provided a curious feeding arrangement. It was the stem of a clay pipe.

The pipe was drawn full of warm milk, with the mouth, one end put into the Squirrel's lips, and the milk blown down his throat. He began to be brighter, and soon grew very fond of his pipe. He ate so much that they tried to wean him from it; but no, the pipe he must have, or he would starve. After many attempts he was coaxed to drink milk held in the hollow of a hand, and from that cup only would he take his meals.

He was full of frolic as other squirrels as he grew up, and did so much mischief that at last it was decided that he must have a house of his own, where he could be shut up. A mansion was built—of wire, and very large, larger than a big dog's house—and in this Master Tiny was shut up. The house was comfortable, but it was a prison, and the little fellow did not like it. When he found that he really could not get out, he came to the front of the cage, and standing on his hind feet, began to swing his body and fore-paws back and forth in such evident misery that some tender heart would open the door for him.

One day, when thus let out, he crawled under the edge of his big new house, perhaps to hide away for a nap, and there he was found—dead. There was mourning in the family, and poor little Tiny was buried with honor in the garden.

Though squirrels are among the prettiest creatures in the woods, and they would seem deserted enough without them, much complaint is made of the mischief they do. It is said that they drink sap from the sugar-maple trees, cutting the twigs with their teeth, and catching the sap as it runs out. For

my part, I think there's sap enough for squirrels as well as for us; and if there is not, perhaps their claim to it is as good as ours.

Then they are said to eat the eggs of birds, and even the young ones. Even that seems rather absurd to complain of, while every man that owns a gun, and every boy that can throw a stone, is at liberty to kill any number of birds they choose, without even the excuse of wanting to eat them; excepting, of course, the few which are called "game," and protected part of the year.

Cunning as the squirrel is, he doesn't always get away with the eggs he desires. Many birds are able to protect their own homes against him that cannot prevent human robbers from emptying their nests. A curious fight was once seen between a Squirrel, who wanted thrush eggs for breakfast, and the mother thrush, who did not approve of the plan.

He drew near the nest in the most cautious way, running along *under* the branches so as to be hidden, and stealing quietly up, intending to spring into the nest, snatch an egg, and get back again before he could be touched. But the missel-thrush is a particularly fierce bird, and not at all averse to a bit of a fight herself, and the first thing that outraged mother did, was to knock the egg-lover off the branch, so that he fell to the ground.

Very much surprised looked the Squirrel, as though that was the first time he ever had a tumble. But that was not enough for the enraged Thrush. Before he recovered his spirits she was upon him. She pounced on his back and beat him with her wings, and pecked with her bill, screaming all the time, no doubt calling him all sorts of names.



much for him—wings are a great advantage. She did not meet his fists, but pounced on his head, and again he had to run. Three times before he reached his tree did she attack him so furiously that he had to sit up and de-

The amazed Squirrel replied by a furious scolding, and there was a violent scuffle among the dead leaves for a moment. Then he got away, and ran up another tree, but she was after him, and drove him down again. He ran a few feet, and then planted himself in a good place for a fight. It was an angle made by the roots of a tree, where he could have his back protected. There he took his stand, sitting up like a kangaroo, and pawing and boxing with his two hands.

But Madam Thrush was even then too



PUNISHING A THIEF.

fend himself. When he did reach it, he ran up like a flash, and in a moment got to the top branches, but everywhere the furious mother followed him.

She would swoop down on him and try to knock him off the branch ; he would dodge and spring to another branch, and she would pounce again. So she followed him a long time, the gentleman who tells the story keeping near them all the time, though they did not notice him. At last the bird left him, and went back to her nest, and there she sat muttering to herself, and arranging her ruffled feathers for a long time.

The half tame squirrels of the Boston Park are accused of being too fond of fruit seeds. It is said that one squirrel will pick and break open seventy-five pears in a morning, to get the seeds. If this is true, perhaps it is because they are not well fed, for in a Memphis Park, where they have lived for twenty years, there is no such complaint. They are fed every day, and they know their breakfast bell as well as you do yours. They are so tame they run all over people, take nuts from the hand, and sit on shoulder or knee to eat them.

These squirrels live in boxes in the trees, and the babies can come to the ground when they're two months old.

CHAPTER TENTH.

A GENERAL WHO LIVED IN A BOOT.

A BOOT is a curious home, I must say, and it is not the usual residence of the little General's family. A hollow tree, or some similar snug spot is preferred by those of the family who live in the woods, but this particular fellow was born in a pretty white cottage in the yard, and in every way his life was different from the lives of his wild relatives.

His mother was a pretty little Opossum, dressed in a suit of shaggy gray fur, and being caught alive by some one who knew the love of pets at Marcy's, was given to her, to add to the family menagerie.

The wild creature soon felt the influence of kind treatment. She became very tame, and finding how nice it was to eat without the trouble and danger of prowling about for her food, easily gave up all idea of returning to her home in the woods.

She was an amusing pet, but sometimes, when teased, she had an unpleasant odor, which made her not always welcome in the house. Marcy named her "Mrs. Johnson," and made her a nice home in an old beehive, among the branches of a tree in the yard.

That is how my hero came to be born in a cottage, for he was the son of Mrs. Johnson, the only one who survived his babyhood.

A few days after Mrs. Johnson went to live in the Beehive Cottage, Marcy discovered that she had a family of babies, all snugly packed away in the nursery. Perhaps you know that the nursery of baby opossums is a sort of fur bag on the under side of the mother's body. Like other little folk, they spend the first weeks of their lives in that warm place, doing nothing but eat, and sleep, and grow. They have more growing to do than most infants, for they're not an inch long at first, and they are unusually helpless for four-footed babies, being not only blind, like little kittens and puppies, but deaf also, both eyes and ears being closed for many days; and worse still, they have no signs of a warm fur coat like their mother's.

Well, Mrs. Johnson's babies stayed in the nursery till they were four or five weeks old, and big enough to look about a little, when they began to come out now and then, and take the air at the cottage door. There were eight of them, and they were named after eight famous American generals. There were General Buel, General Fremont, and others, and, most important of all, General Grant, who, like his great namesake, survived when other generals went down.

They were an interesting family, though their greatest delight at that early age was to hold on to something by the tail, which was scaly and bare of hair—even in the mother herself. Marcy often hung several of them by their tails to a lead pencil, and carried them all about the house in that position; droll enough they looked, too, as you may imagine. The mother's way of carrying them about, after they were too big for their warm fur cradle, yet not quite old enough to go alone, was on her back, where they would cling with sharp claws all together, and make a curious-looking family party.

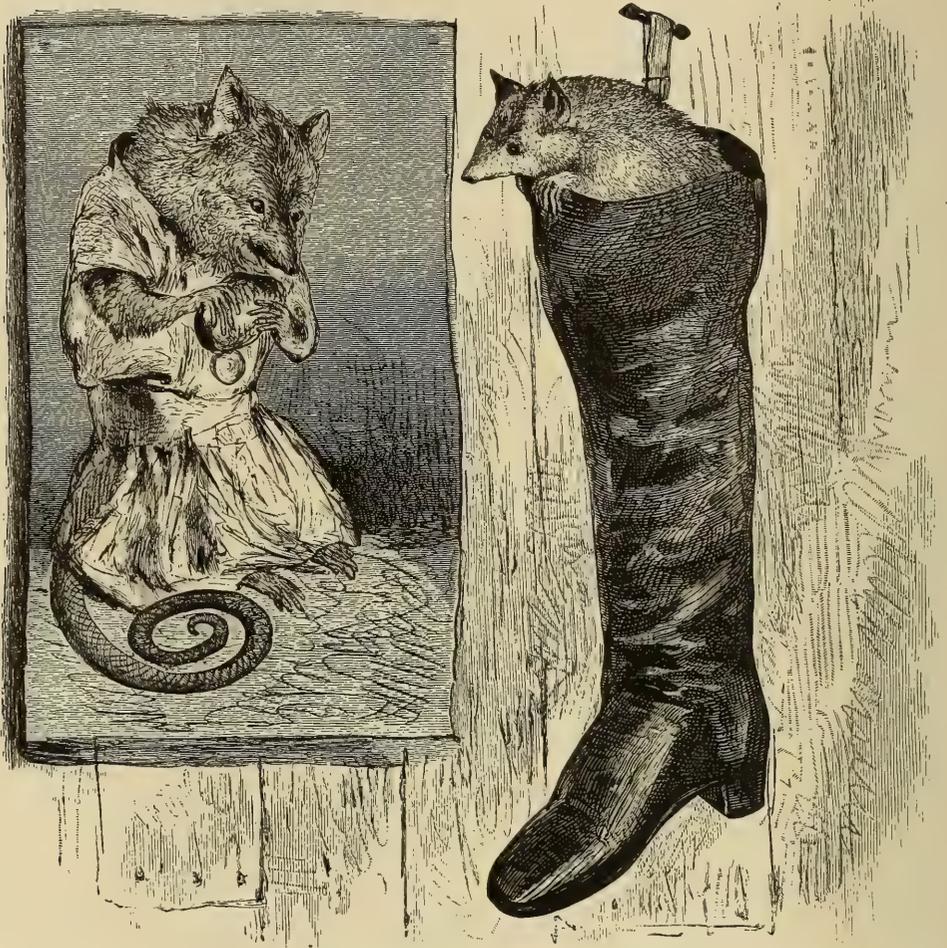
But about this time in my story something very unusual happened at Marcy's; the whole family went away for a week, and the house was shut up. The pets, which must have food and care every day, were scattered among the kind-hearted neighbors; but all who could take care of themselves were left at the house. Among the latter were Mrs. Johnson and her family, who were left in the Beehive Cottage, with—for their only neighbor—the dog, Shot, with whom I regret to say, Mrs. Johnson had many a quarrel.

When, after their short absence the family came back, and collected their scattered beasts and birds in the neighborhood, they found that there had been a catastrophe in the yard. A violent storm had swept through it, and the Beehive Cottage was a sad wreck. It had been thrown from the tree and totally demolished, with—as they supposed—the whole Opossum family.

But while the children stood about, mourning for the lost babies, Shot came joyfully out of his house to welcome them, hungry, but very happy, and, to their amazement, they saw in the spot where he had been lying, the only survivor of the Johnson family, General Grant, curled up in blissful content.

What had passed between him and the hereditary enemy of his family can never be known. Whether, finding wars and storms about them, they had decided upon peace, or whether the sufferings and helplessness of the orphan had touched Shot's doggish heart, no one can tell. However it happened, there it was—they were friends. Shot had evidently cared for the little General, and their friendship never cooled from that day; the little fellow's favorite napping-place was always upon the good-natured dog's back.

The General was now about the size of a rat, and having survived the disasters of storm and hunger, became an important personage in the house. Like other people of his age, he was



THE GENERAL IN HIS NEW HOUSE.

fed on bread and milk, of which he was fond, was petted to his heart's content, and became perfectly tame, much more so than his mother had been.

His first cottage house having been destroyed by the storm,

he soon began to look about for another, and found one exactly to his taste. It was a cast-off cavalry boot, a relic of the war, that hung upon the wall in a room not often used. It was reached by its new tenant, by means of an old musket left standing near, which made as easy a stairway as any opossum could desire.

Having settled himself in the boot, the next thing to complete his comfort, was a warm, soft bed. The General was used to helping himself, so he never thought of asking, but quietly looked about the house, till he found in the room of a young lady guest, an article that seemed to him just the thing, and carried it off at once.

It was soft and warm, and could be easily fitted into the bedroom of his house. How was he to know that a grown-up lady wanted it for herself? It was a thing much worn in those far-off, benighted days—a switch of false hair. Its loss made a sad gap in the young lady's toilet, until they discovered the thief and bought another, since—happily for him—he had ruined it for her use.

The General was happy in his new home, and perfectly good-natured in every other part of the house; but disturb him in his private quarters, and all the savage blood of his ancestors rose within him. It is said that no men fight so desperately as those who defend their homes, and the same is true of many animals. The General, when he felt that his castle was attacked, fully justified his military name. He could not chatter and scold, as a squirrel would have done, but he would rush to his door and glare furiously upon the enemy, and if within reach, would give him a savage little bite, as a warning.

Everywhere else he was tame as a cat. He went all over the

house as he pleased, and wore on his neck, for a collar, a General's military shoulder-strap, fastened to a ribbon. At meal-times, if hungry, he would climb by a convenient dress skirt up on the table, and coolly help himself to whatever pleased his taste; and if he saw the cat eating he would quietly walk up to her, as if to see what she had for dinner. Now Abby was the pink of dainty sensitiveness; she had a great disgust for the odor of an opossum, and an equally great respect for his claws, so she would always retire when he came near, and he—seeing that she had left it—would finish her meal for her.

This was a little mischievous, and he did some naughty things, too; he gnawed slippers and other articles, and once he nearly broke his mistress' heart by tearing to pieces her favorite doll, and scattering the bran which formed her internal organs all over the floor. Sometimes, too, he would help himself to a dinner of young chickens from the poultry-yard. These little unpleasant habits of her pet Marcy tried to cure by always keeping him well fed.

Besides young chickens, he was fond of rats, and would hunt and kill them more easily than Shot, whose regular business it was. One of his greatest delights was to climb a cherry-tree, hang by the tail to a branch, pull off ripe cherries with his paws, and eat them in that unnatural position, upside down.

But the little General—like bigger ones—had his ups and downs; he had a fit of sickness, measles, the doctor said. Now, whether wild opossums ever suffer from measles, or whether this was an unpleasant result of civilization, the fact is the same. Poor General Grant was really ill, and the doctor was called. He prescribed little pills (which, by the way, he did also for people), and the General in due time got well, to the delight of

the children, whatever the rest of the family, and Abby, may have felt.

Marcy had a great deal of fun with him. She used to dress him up in a suit which she made for him, with a standing collar or a ruff, a ribbon on his neck, and a cap on his head. In this dress he would sit up "like folks" while she fed him with his favorite dainties, or spend some time carrying about a small doll, also his property. He would take a turn around the toy with his useful tail—made to hold on by—and have all four legs for other uses. His paws were much like baby hands, and nothing could be more funny than to see him sitting up, holding the food in two little bare hands, and eating like a good child.

But an end came to these happy times. Marcy went away for a long visit, and none of the family wished to take care of so mischievous a pet. When Cudjo died, Mamma had declared that though she was long-suffering, she could not endure another such troublesome creature. So that when Marcy made up her mind to go, she had to consent to the loss of the General.

He was now quite old, for an opossum, and as large as a common cat. He could not, of course, be turned into the woods to take care of himself, like his wild relatives, for he did not know how to do it, and besides, he would not stay. Marcy—with tears—gave him up to Uncle Karl one morning, and he carried him off to the city, to a pleasant new home he had found for him, where pets who get troublesome are always welcomed, and are made happy for life.

It was a Zoological Garden, and there he was left, perfectly contented, for he had not an affectionate disposition, and never attached himself to anybody in the house; and for all I know he may be there to this day.

You have heard, no doubt, of the opossum's great trick, "playing 'possum;" and perhaps you know that it is simply pretending to be dead. When the animal is caught he will lie perfectly limp, and not stir, though handled and thrown about, worried by dogs, and even very much hurt. Many wild creatures do the same, though perhaps none are so obstinate in holding out as the opossum.

Poor little fellow! in the hands of men, and the teeth of dogs, he knows it is his only chance for life, and he will endure torture and not flinch. But let his tormentors throw him carelessly one side, and when he finds himself free, he will suddenly come to life and take to flight.

True opossums are found only in America. In their native woods they spend most of the day in sleep, and at night go out for food. Squirrels and frogs, young rabbits or mice, almost any bit of meat, is welcome; but if these are scarce an opossum always knows the way to the poultry-yards near his home, and a young chicken or a nest of eggs makes him a nice supper.

Meat is not all his food, and the farmer loses something besides chickens when the opossum goes out to eat. Growing corn he is fond of, and if he doesn't want the trouble of climbing the stalk, he will gnaw it off near the ground, and when it falls over, feast on the sweet ears. All sorts of nuts he likes, too, and many fruits, especially persimmons.

Now in Virginia and other places where the opossum lives is a large class of people who almost live on corn, and who also delight in persimmons—the negroes. To them, of course, he is the worst of thieves, and nothing pleases them better than a 'possum hunt, with dogs. They go out on a moonlight night. The dogs chase the little fellow into a tree, and the

men shoot him or shake him down, and then take him home, and pay him for eating their corn by eating him.

There is a little creature in Australia called an opossum, though it is not really one, but belongs rather to the vulpine or fox family. It is common there, and is often tamed, running about the house like a cat. One of the little creatures was sent to England, to a lady fond of pets, who named him Marco Paulo, after the great traveler.

When first caught, there were two besides Marco, and they were put into a room to stay till the ship sailed. Like all youngsters they were fond of play, and their frolics were very funny to watch.

But they were apt to get into trouble, because of a naughty trick of eating everything they could get hold of. One night they lunched on a box of matches, and the next morning were all violently ill. Marco Paulo got well, but the others died.

When the time came to go to the ship, a wire cage was brought for Marco, but he did not like it, and refused to go in. In fact, he had to be knocked on the head, before he would give up his notions, and enter the new home.

At the end of the long voyage he was full-grown and tame, and his new mistress was delighted with him. He was as big as a cat, with a face and ears like pussy's, and of a gray and brown color. But his eyes were what won her heart. They were of a soft brown color, and gentle and wistful in expression. When she lifted him out of his cage, he put his pretty little black hands on her arm, and gazed into her face as though he would speak.

She gave him a new house, and often let him run about the room in the evening, for that is his natural playtime. He

would run and scamper over the furniture, while his eyes shone like lamps. He ate bread, and also vegetables and fruit, but never meat, and he grew tamer and more affectionate all the time.

In the pleasant summer days his house stood under a tree in the yard, though he didn't care much where he spent his days, for he always curled himself into a ball and slept, till evening roused him to his play.

As winter came on, Marco Paulo was taken to town with the family, and now spent his time outside the dining-room windows, and at night had a piece of carpet for a blanket. But his mistress feared that he could not endure the cold and damp of winter, so she concluded to let him go to live with his wild cousins at the London Zoological Garden, though she felt almost as badly as though one of the family was going.

One morning, after she had sent word to the men to come for him, there was brought to the house a curious traveling carriage for Master Marco. It was a bag, though not one of the common sort. It was made of stout stuff, to resist little claws and teeth, and was set full of small eyelets to let in air. Into this Marco Paulo was coaxed; it was tied up and slung over the shoulder of the man, and he started on his second journey through London streets.

Some time afterward his mistress went to pay her old pet a visit. She found him very happy, in a pleasant cage of his own, with a wife and young family around him. She patted him and talked to him, and he looked up in the same old way, but he was evidently well contented with his new home and friends. She did not go again, but wrote his story for a newspaper.

CHAPTER ELEVENTH.

BUB.

WHEN Bub went to live at Marcy's he was one of the oddest-looking objects in the world. Though he was very young, and had just come out of an owl's nest, he didn't look in the least like a baby, nor was he at all shy. He was a small bundle of down, with no feathers where feathers are expected, and the wisest look in his face and big staring eyes.

From the first moment he never seemed to be afraid of anybody, nor struggled to get away, as other birds will. Bub was, plainly, a philosopher; that is to say, one who takes whatever comes, and makes no fuss about it.

The first thing he did when let out of the basket in which he was carried, was to walk gravely around the room and examine everything in it. His manner said as plainly as words,

"I see this is to be my home, and it may be well to know something about it."

The children were much amused with his sober, dignified ways, not in the least like any other young creature, and they ran to the kitchen for some supper for him.

They set bread before him, but he would not eat. They thought he did not like bread, perhaps, so they took counsel of their own tastes and offered him cake, and then bits of meat, and then corn, and then boiled egg, and at last Ralph went out

and dug up a worm. All to no purpose; Bub would not look at it.

Now, of course, birds must eat, or die, and the children were in trouble at once. Uncle Karl, however, suggested that Mamma Owl had always fed her baby, and probably he didn't know how to feed himself. They must do as she did—fill his mouth for him. They at once tried this, with perfect success, and by that means Master Bub had a plentiful meal. In spite of his wise looks, you see he was really rather stupid after all, while he was a baby, for they had to play mother owl, and stuff the queer baby for some time.

They were not exactly sure of what baby owls have to eat, so they tried nearly everything in the house, on this one. He swallowed everything, and seemed to thrive on it, growing very fast, and soon being covered with beautiful soft feathers, while his droll ways were more and more amusing.

Bub's home was in the Den, but since his master spent most of his days in the city, he did not stay there much. He roamed all over the house, upstairs and down; into the kitchen, when Patty would scream and drive him out; into the parlor, where he would perch on the end of a sofa, and sit there for hours, dressing his beautiful feathers, or shaking himself out into a soft feather ball while he took a short nap.

He was a sociable fellow, and always liked to be with the family. He was fond of sitting on Uncle Karl's shoulder, and rubbing his head against his face, as a cat will, and he often made quiet remarks, which, though doubtless full of wisdom, the hearers—unfortunately—could not always understand.

Once his sociable ways, and his attempts to make himself agreeable, caused quite an uproar. A new servant came into

the house one night after Bub was shut up, and went to bed without seeing him. Before quite light the next morning there arose a terrible scream, and the new girl burst into mamma's room in a great fright.

She was trembling and so alarmed that she couldn't tell what had happened, except that something dreadful was in her room, and said something to her. Mamma hurried into the hall, and the moment she opened the door she knew who was the culprit. There, on the foot-board of the bedstead, sat Bub, looking as calm as the morning, and as innocent as a lamb. He croaked his good-morning, and the girl had to admit that his was the voice she had heard.

When Bub was full grown, he was provided with a house of his own. It was two stories high, and he spent the daytime in the bedroom upstairs, after the fashion of owls, and at evening he came down ready for a frolic, or an excursion round the neighborhood, where he did a little hunting for himself.

He was fond of his house, and he had a queer fashion of keeping it neat, by sweeping it out with his wings. But he did not live there many months. One night he went out hunting and never returned. Whether he found friends in the woods and decided to stay with them, or whether some one shot him, was never known.

The children grieved sadly, and put away his house, hoping some time to have another of his family to pet. At one time they had so strong hopes of it that they got the old house all ready, for Uncle Karl had a present of one of the same species as Bub. The new-comer, however, was full grown, and rather wild, so he decided to keep him awhile at his office in the city, till he could be tamed.

But taming was not for this creature. He was savage as a tiger, and no amount of fond or kind treatment had any effect on him. Perhaps his temper had been soured by troubles, for he evidently thought everybody his enemy. If one came near his cage he would throw back his ears like an angry cat, and hiss, and his eyes would glare as though he would like to eat them.

If they attempted to touch him, he would fling himself on his back and hold up his terrible talons ready to tear any one to pieces. He was kept for some time in the hope that kindness would at last conquer him, but one morning when Uncle Karl reached the office, he found that the wild creature had hurt himself badly in trying to tear away from his chain. So he decided to give him his liberty after all.

His door was opened, and the window of the office also, the chain was removed, and the owl was free. Shaking himself to be sure that the good news was true, the savage bird tried his wings and then launched himself out into the morning air, taking his way up Broadway, as all the world were coming down at that hour.

Owls are funny, because they are so grave, and scarcely ever afraid of people. An English lady, who had one for a long time, tells his story in a newspaper.

When he first came to her he seemed so sad and unhappy that it almost brought tears to her eyes to look at him. She made him a cradle of a basket with a cover, and he spent much time in it, except at night, the very time when other people want cradles. Then he would stamp around the house, with such a heavy step that she could not sleep.

He was never young, and from the first looked so old and strange that she named him Pharaoh, and fed him on brandy and water from a teaspoon, to cure a cold he suffered from.

He was fond of going all over the house, climbing the stairs, perching on the foot of a bed in a chamber, or the back of a velvet chair in the parlor, or the top of a door in the library. He would sit for hours and plume his feathers, and make a sort of singing noise.

He was a pretty fellow, with soft, dove-colored feathers brushed back from his face, and his large, wise-looking eyes, and she became much attached to him. He took long journeys with his mistress in the cars, and he made long visits at strange houses. Everywhere he was at home and friendly, either in a station-house, a conservatory, or wherever he was put.

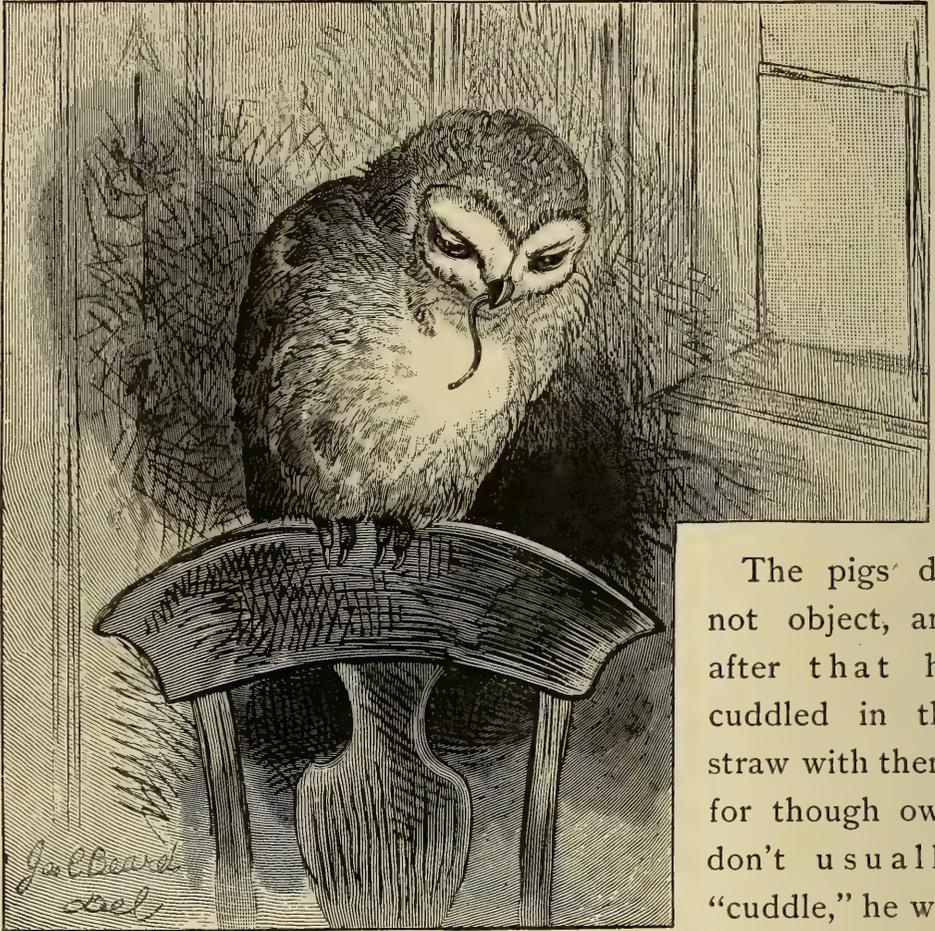
Only once or twice in his life did Pharaoh lose his calmness and get frightened, though he looked at everything with the greatest interest. Once a calf ran up to him, and he was so scared that he plunged into a tub of water. Sometimes, too, he would be afraid of a horse, and would run up his mistress's arm to her shoulder, which he considered his stronghold, or nestle under her jacket, and hide a long time.

He delighted in a bath, and best of all, a good shower. He would sit in the rain till he was soaked, and the most draggled-looking bird you can imagine. Then he would spend a long time in drying and arranging his feathers, and come out more beautiful than ever.

At first Pharaoh lived in a stable loft, with a summer bower in a wisteria vine, for he was never caged. But after awhile he was moved to a small house, where lived some bantam chickens.

This pleased him, and they were always very friendly, unless a chick took the liberty of perching on the spot he had picked out for his private use. Even then he only put it out, without hurting it.

As the weather grew colder, a new family came live in the poultry-yard—a family of guinea-pigs. They had a warm house in a barrel, with a door to keep out wind. Pharaoh took notice of the cozy house, and concluded to move.



A SLIGHT LUNCH.

The pigs did not object, and after that he cuddled in the straw with them, for though owls don't usually "cuddle," he was wise enough to know that it is

best "when in Rome to do as the Romans do."

This civilized bird lived on birds and mice, which other people caught for him. Birds he would take in one claw, pull off mouthfuls with the other, and feed himself like any baby, and

a beetle he would take in one hand and eat like a sweet cake; but mice he swallowed whole, with many jerks of his head. He would often sit with eyes half shut, in happy contentment, and the long tail of a mouse hanging out of his mouth.

His hearing was very sharp, and he liked to sit in the window, watching things in the street. He would turn at every footstep, and he had his opinions, too, for he made little remarks to himself at anything strange, and when he broke anything he would talk a long time, in the most troubled manner.

What finally became of Pharaoh his mistress does not tell, so we shall have to leave his fate in mystery.

Perhaps the funniest owl in the world is the little fellow who lives in the western part of our country, and is called the Burrowing Owl, though it is well known that he never burrows if he can find an empty house to go into.

Until lately this owl has been thought to be a regular member of a queer family that I shall tell you about soon—the prairie-dog family, and you have perhaps seen pictures of him, quite at home, with puppies and rattlesnakes all about him.

But closer study of his ways has proved that the owl contents himself with a deserted house, though often the entrance may be by the same door.

The truth is that the prairie-dog town is all out of sight, only the doors are outside. Underground there are many crooked passages, leading every way. Dr. Coues, who has written about it, says it is not unlike the plan of Boston streets.

The streets, of course, are all public, and all the prairie-dogs help to make them, but here and there are cozy nooks which are private residences, and into one of these he is sure the owl never goes while a family is in it. Sometimes a whole village is

deserted by the dogs, and there will be found a great colony of owls.

Whatever may be their family relations, the owls are droll little creatures. They delight to sit in the doorway, in the position of making a speech. They gaze about calmly, and seem to be in a brown study—like other owls. But suddenly, if any one comes near, they will make a low bow, then jerk back and begin to twitch the face and roll their eyes in a queer way.

Dr. Coues says they “gesticulate wildly, now and then bending forward till the breast almost touches the ground, as if to give more effect to the argument; then face about to address the rear, and drawing up to their fullest height, pause as if to observe the effect on the audience, then suddenly turn tail and dive into the hole.”

Sometimes they sit outside all day and think, at least they seem to be thinking, for they sit like statues, gazing with great staring eyes on nothing, and not moving for hours.

When engaged in these deep studies, he happens to be in the doorway, and a prairie-dog wants to pass him to go in, he is much annoyed at being disturbed, and I regret to say he uses his sharp beak in a very unpleasant way, making her wait till he chooses to move. Nearly always, however, they have no quarrel, but live very peaceably in the same town.

At night the owl is quite another fellow. He then goes out after his food, flying about, with his soft feathery wings, so silently that it seems as if he was blown by the winds like a thistle-down. This soft flight, of course, does not frighten the sharp-eared mice, which the owl hunts for his dinner.

The owl babies are tucked away in one of these cozy nests underground. They are odd little things, sometimes as many

as six or seven in a house, and they chatter and squeal about the door when big enough to go out.

One would think they must be glad enough to get out, too, for the mother owl isn't a very neat housekeeper. She—like some people—delights in getting together all sorts of old rubbish, and hoarding it up carefully in the house, and they do say she isn't always careful to clear off the dinner table, and remove the scraps.

This owl does not hoot. He has a cry like the American cuckoo, but when one is caught he will give a hoarse scream.

They do not like to be caught, and if wounded they run for the door and dive in, so it is very rare to catch a Burrowing Owl alive.

CHAPTER TWELFTH.

A HOME ON THE PRAIRIES.

I MUST tell you now, about the little creature who makes the house where the owl delights to live, and save himself the trouble of building—or digging—for himself.

It is the Prairie-Dog, found only on our wide western prairies, where he makes a warm and cozy, though perhaps rather dark, home underground. The house itself has but one room, with a hall long enough for a prairie-dog palace, if the little fellow had need of such a thing.

They are pretty, little, red-coated animals, about the size of a cat. The Indians call them the Wish-ton-wish, but we discard that pretty name, and call them dogs because they bark, though they are really no more dogs than Puss herself. In fact, they're more nearly related to the squirrel family.

They are sociable, and live in regular villages of their own, where hundreds of families are near, and they can enjoy visiting and chatting together as much as they like.

Curious-looking villages they are, like the mud huts built by savages, and very small. The odd thing about it is, that the little huts are not the houses, but the earth taken out in building, and it seems to be left in that shape to make an observatory for each family.

On the top of the mounds they perch themselves, sitting

up to see what's going on in town, learn the news, and watch for enemies. They have many enemies, for they carry good "meat" on their bones; and a prairie-dog makes a welcome dinner dish in many a four-footed family of the prairies.

Perhaps the most troublesome enemy is one small enough to get into the house, yet large enough to insist on staying there, if he chooses, and even to help himself to one of the babies for supper—a genuine vagabond he is, too.

This is the rattlesnake, who carries on the end of his tail a curious rattle, which he delights to shake. Not for fun—don't fancy it!—but for a warning, to get out of his way or he will bite. Whoever hears that polite notice to leave, is usually very quick to do so, whether he has two feet or four. This handsome rascal is a nice person to have in the house, isn't he? Like it or not, the poor little prairie-dog has to submit, and happily, he doesn't seem to care much about it.

Prairie-dogs are found all over the West, even where it is so cold that nothing grows but grass and the sage bush, a shrub so strongly flavored with sage that few animals will eat it; and where it is so bleak that for six months they are obliged to stay in their warm houses or freeze to death.

Even here the hard-working little fellows manage to live, by turning hay-makers, and putting away a stock of food for winter. While the grass is plenty and the sun warm, the careful prairie-dogs cut great quantities, and spread it out to dry. When it is cured they carry it into their houses, both for warm bedding, and to eat, and people have seen them doing it.

Some writers say that prairie-dogs never drink water. Letters have been written to the newspapers, and much talk been raised about it. Other people insist, that although they drink

when tame, when wild they do not, and still others declare that prairie-dogs always drink, and moreover, that they even dig wells for themselves.

Digging a well is not more wonderful than many things done by these little creatures, and there's no reason why it should not be done; but it is certain that no case of well-digging has been proved, so that will, perhaps, be one of the things that grown-ups will leave for you youngsters to find out some day.

Prairie-dog babies are easily tamed, and are amusing pets. A story is told of one who went to live in a house when he was two months old. He was a wise little fellow, and learned very easily, especially where the cake-box was kept.

Like most two-footed young people, he was fond of cake, and also, like some of you, he soon found out how to teaze. He would go to the door behind which was the dainty he wanted, and there he would sit up and beg in his native language—which sounds to us like a bark—and refuse to go away, or to be disturbed, till the door was opened and he got the cake.

If he had been a child, so that he could be talked to, he would, of course, have been told how very, very naughty this conduct was.

Though he spent much time in the house, he had his own notions of a home to really live in, so he dug for himself a nice prairie-dog residence under the big house. But he was always within call, and his master had only to knock on the floor and call his name, when he would answer by a bark, and at once come up to the room, jump on his friend, and run up to his shoulder, showing his pleasure as plainly as a dog will.

He was fond of the dogs, would play and romp as they did, and when tired, jump on to the lounge, and stretch out for a nap.

He was generally amiable, but when teased too long he would snap at his best friends, and he came at last to a sad end, by means of a strange dog.

Another story of a family of pet prairie-dogs, was told by a



AT BREAKFAST.

lady in a newspaper some time ago. She started her village with six or eight of the little creatures. They were turned loose in the front yard of the house to build for themselves.

They made their homes and brought up their funny little

ones, and when she told the story there were about twenty of the droll prairie-babies, which played and gamboled like kittens, and were as amusing to see.

The whole family were tame; they knew their mistress well, and would run all over her, nibbling the buttons of her dress, and snuffing about for crackers or cake. But they did not fancy strangers, and always kept a watchman out to see that no enemy came near.

The watchman was always one of the wise old dogs, and he would sit up like a statue, watching with his sharp black eyes. If any one came near, he would give a jerk with his tail and a short, sharp bark, which meant "look out," and every frolicking little prairie-dog would take to its heels, and scamper to its home like a flash, diving into the dark hall with a funny flourish of feet, and whisk of a short tail, and instantly whirl and stick out its head to see what it was all about, anyway.

They were extremely fond of crackers and cake, but a ginger-snap they abhorred. At first they tasted it, as their mistress gave it, but in a moment the ginger began to burn, and they were furious. They scolded and chattered, no doubt using very hard words. They slapped their own faces and went away very much offended, refusing to eat at all.

One naughty thing they did, they quarreled at the table. Nothing looked quite so tempting to them as the morsel some *other* dog had taken, and so on that unfortunate fellow they would pounce, five or six of them scrambling over him, and all tumbled up in a snarl, though there was plenty of food for all of them.

Sometimes when the youngsters were too greedy, or forgot

the respect due to their elders, they had their ears boxed by their mamma, and were sent away in disgrace.

There was one good thing about them; they were not easily discouraged. No prairie-dog was ever known to whine and say, "I can't." I don't believe that cowardly word was in their language. When they made up their minds, they did not easily change them. Sometimes this was troublesome, and led to a sort of war with the people who fancied they owned the whole family.

At one time they made a new house, in a place which their big neighbors wanted for their own use, so it was decided to fill it up, and let the prairie-dogs build elsewhere. The war began, and no doubt the small family laughed behind their fur coats at the notion that they could be forced to move.

The contest seemed rather unequal. A big human family, with arms and tools in plenty, on one side, and a little prairie-dog family, not a quarter their size, with nothing but teeth and claws, on the other. So it was unequal, but the advantage was not on the side you would suppose. Not always the biggest wins.

War was opened by flooding the offensive house, a steady stream of water being forced into it for a whole day, and then filling it up with gravel and sand, pounded down and made very hard. The family went to bed, thinking they had settled that matter.

So did not think the small people outside. No sooner had the enemy left, than they went to work, tooth and nail. By morning the house was open as usual, with a big pile of wet sand and gravel beside the door.

"Ah, ha!" said the enemy, "we'll see about this! Next time you'll not find it so easy, Messrs. Prairie-Dogs!"

So the cunning people prepared a quantity of heavy wire, bent into odd shapes and coils, and altogether of most unmanageable form. This they packed tightly into the passage-way, filled up with gravel as before, and went to bed in triumph.

“Now we shall see!” said they.

And they did. The next morning, to their disgust, they saw the house open as before, and the babies having a fine frolic with the wires.

The third time is sure to succeed, thought the enemy, who scorned to be beaten by such little creatures, so they laid their plans deeply, and brought materials that they were sure no soft little noses could endure to touch, jagged and rough-edged pieces of tin, and ugly-shaped blocks of wood. These they packed and wedged in, till it seemed that nothing less than an earthquake could dislodge them.

However they did it, the persevering little fellows came out victors, and the war ended. The house continued a favorite residence, from which the dogs cleared away the snow in winter as carefully as they had the earth in summer, and the conquered people had to make the best of it.

It seems to me that a bit of a moral has smuggled itself into this story somewhere, but I haven't time to hunt it out.

CHAPTER THIRTEENTH.

A JUMPING MOUSE.

THE cat, as I told you, was a hunter, and always took care to supply her kittens with fresh meat. When Marcy saw her come in from the yard she always looked to see what Abby had brought, and, you remember, one of her dearest pets, Nip, was taken from her mouth.

You know cats have a fashion of playing with their prey for a while, before they eat it, and one day, when Abby was thus playing with a mouse she had caught, Marcy was surprised to see the half-dead creature give a jump to get away.

Now mice do not jump, they run, and Marcy at once went over to see what it was. Puss was astonished, too, at the queer conduct of the mouse. She sat in a dazed sort of way, looking as you might look if a piece of beef should jump off the platter and hide.

But Marcy saw where it went, and in a moment she had it, for it was too much hurt to get far away. It was a curious little animal, much like a mouse, yet of a prettier brown color, with white on the under side of the body, and white stockings.

It had short little forelegs, but very long hind legs, which explained the jump, and a tail twice as long as its body. Pert

little ears, and black eyes and whiskers, gave its little face a most knowing look. What it could be she did not know, but she put it in an old bird-cage, and went to the big books in the Den to see if she could find out what it was.

Uncle Karl had showed her how to use the books, and she was beginning to find them very interesting. Now she spent an hour or two with them, and decided, partly from the pictures, that the new capture was a Jumping Mouse. When her uncle came home and saw it, he said at once that she was right, which pleased her greatly.

She made great efforts to keep it alive, prepared the softest of beds, and the choicest food, but the poor little thing was so frightened, besides being hurt, that it did not live, and Marcy found it dead in the cage the next morning, to her great regret.

Uncle Karl tried to console by telling her about the jumping mouse, showing a picture of it from his Blue Sketch-Book, and finally telling a story about one, which I'm sure you'll be as pleased to hear as were Marcy and Ralph.

In the first place, he is one of the country cousins of the brown mouse that lives in our walls, though he prefers the woods and fields for a home, in which it must be admitted he shows good taste. The nursery made by the little mother is a cosy place under the ground, perhaps under a clod that has been turned over by a plow, or by a fence, or a brush heap; but wherever it may be placed, it is not more than six inches below the surface, and there she places three or four babies, funny little atoms of things, so small that a postage stamp would make a good blanket for one.

About these mouse babies there is only one thing specially

interesting, and that is the way their mother carries them off, if she is frightened and wants to hide with them. Let one disturb them when all together, and away goes Mamma Mouse in great leaps with all four babies hanging fast to her, two on a side. No matter how long her jumps, or how far she goes, every little mouse holds on for dear life till a safe hiding-place is found, and she can rest. It is a curious sight, you may be sure.

I spoke of leaps, and the leaps this little creature can take, are something wonderful. She gets her many names from that fact. Ten or twelve feet at a jump is nothing unusual for her to do, and when you remember her size, you will see how tremendous that is. Think of a common mouse jumping the width of a good-sized room at one spring!

She does not always go leaping about. When not startled, or in a hurry, she runs on all four feet like any mouse, and all through the country, where a good many of the family live, may be seen funny little paths under the grass and weeds, where they run about for food, and perhaps to make visits to each other.

But there are more interesting things about the house. In summer, when she wants it for a nursery, she makes the room near the surface, and lines it carefully with fine grass; and if she happens to find anything softer, like feathers, wool, or hair, she gladly adds it to make a softer bed for the little ones.

It is different when cold weather comes on, and the babies are all grown up, able to keep house for themselves. Then each pretty mouse makes a winter home for itself. Away down in the warm earth they dig a long passage till safe from the

hard frosts that will freeze the ground, and there, in a comfortable nook, they make another nest, warmer than ever. With the first cold breath of winter, each one retires to his own home, crawls into the soft bed, rolls himself into a ball, wraps his long tail around himself and—goes to sleep for the winter.

Pleasant way to pass the cold months, isn't it? I think some people would like to do so.

Sometimes the little sleepy heads are found in their winter quarters, and then they are easily caught, in spite of their long hind legs. Professor Tenney tells an interesting story of one that he found.

He was digging into an Indian mound in Indiana, when he tore open the home of a jumping mouse. The little owner was at home, and he seemed to be dead. His eyes were closed, and his two funny little hands—or paws—tight shut, and close together. The professor took it in his hands, and there was no sign of life, except that it was not stiff, as a dead mouse should be.

He thought he would carry it home, so he tied the mouse and its nest up in his handkerchief, and took it to the house of a friend. In a warm room he again held the little creature in his hand, and after a long time began to see life. One little foot moved, and then it began to breathe. It was several hours waking up, but by night it was lively as any mouse.

The Professor was on a journey, but he was so much interested in his little captive that he carried it with him. He got a tin box, for wood is of no use to keep a sharp-toothed little gnawer like a mouse safe. He put in some paper for a nest, and some corn to eat.

The little fellow seemed to be contented. He nibbled the

corn, and cut the paper to bits, to make a nest. The journey was to the North, and the weather was much colder.

When they reached a place to stay, the Professor put the



THE FIRST TOILET IN THE NEW HOUSE.

mouse into quite a big house. It was a glass shade of large size, and for a floor a newspaper and some cotton. He seemed to be pleased, and at once went to work to perform his toilet, and make himself fit for such fine quarters, and so much com-

pany. He carefully washed himself all over, doing it just as Pussy does, only drawing his long, slim tail through his mouth.

When it came bedtime, he went to work to make his home comfortable. All the paper of his floor he gnawed to bits, and with the cotton, made himself a snug nest five or six inches in diameter. Into the middle of this bed he crept towards morning, and went to sleep.

The next day he had a new paper floor, and the next night he nibbled that all up. But he probably stayed at work too long, for in the morning the Professor found him outside of the nest, and apparently dead. He took him up, and remembering how he found him first, did not throw him away, but kept him warm. Again he was all day waking up, getting very lively at night, and when let out for exercise, jumping about in such hops that it took two people to catch him.

But the Professor now had to go home, and again the Mouse had a journey, reaching the end of it as well as possible. Every time, however, that there came a cold night he would go to sleep in that dreadfully sound way that seemed so much like death, and if not warmed, no doubt he would have slept till spring. What became of him the Professor does not tell; perhaps he is still alive and frisky.

Another one, that was caught in a trap in the summer, lived in a cage till winter. This little Mouse had two young ones, and they had a house underground, with two doors, for their owner gave them a foot deep of earth on the floor of the cage.

He found one could dig a hole and bury itself, in a very few minutes. They were quiet pets, but once they were terribly frightened. He put into the cage one of their city cousins, a com-

mon mouse. Then there was a panic! The poor little Jumping Mouse ran about, and tried to get out, squeaked and chattered, and cried like a bird in distress. In his world, no doubt a brown mouse is a ferocious monster.

These pets were fed on wheat, and buckwheat, and corn. Whatever was put in by day, was all carefully stored away at night, in the underground house.

I haven't told you the many names that have been given to this little animal. To begin, the Mohican Indians called him the Wah-peh-sons; the men that first saw him near Hudson's Bay named him Hudsonian Jumping Mouse, or in Latin, *Jaculus*; in New York State he is called Deer Mouse, and Wood Mouse, and Jumping Mouse, and Kangaroo Mouse. Enough names for one poor mite of a creature less than three inches long, I should think.

Pretty and interesting as is the Jumping Mouse, he has plenty of enemies, for he is very good to eat, and can't do much to defend himself, except hide.

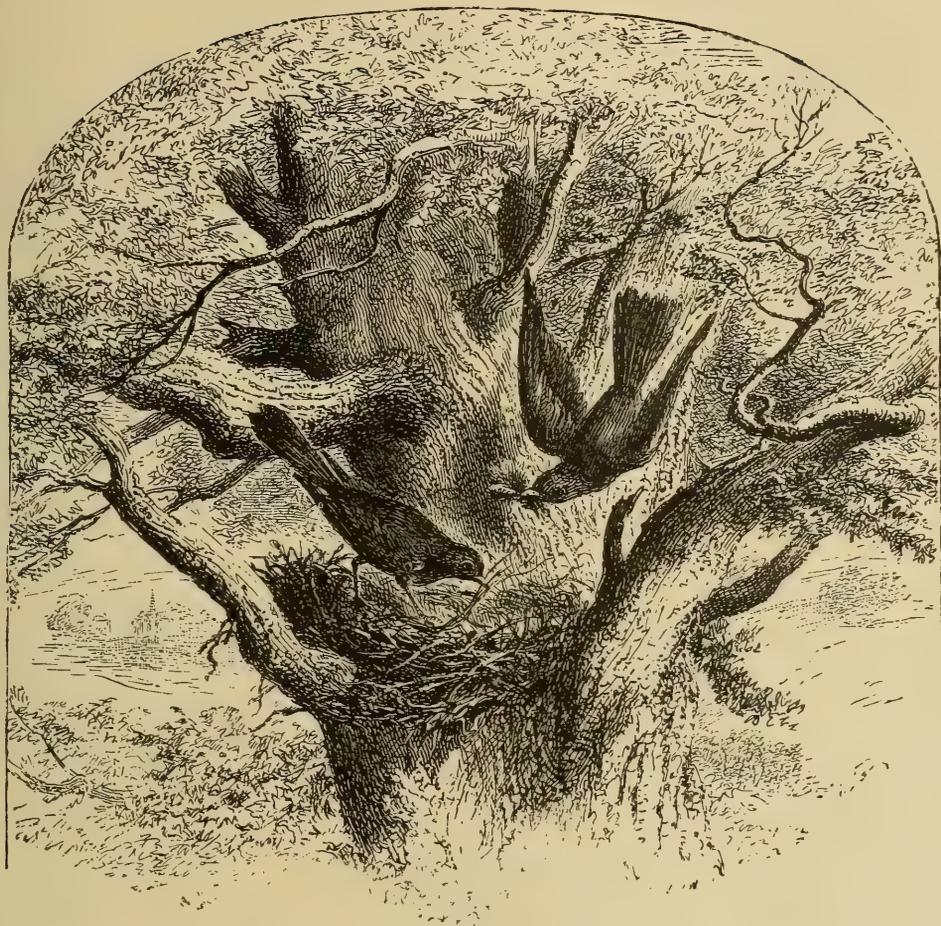
First, there are the owls, who go out to do their marketing at the same time the mouse does, in the evening, and who are so sharp to see and hear, that let but a blade of grass rustle or move, and down they will pounce, and carry off the mouse to feed their babies up in an old tree.

Then there are the weasels, still, sly fellows, so long and slim that they can creep into the very houses and snatch the mouse from its own nest. And the foxes, with sharp claws that tear up the ground, throw open the house, and devour the whole family. And the cat, who will sit still and patient before the door, till one sticks out its little head.

But perhaps worst of all is the butcher-bird, who pounces on

them from out of the air, and sticks their dead body up on a thorn of a tree, after eating what he wants.

Still, in spite of all these creatures, forever on the lookout for a poor little mouse for dinner, the Jumping Mouse doesn't trouble his head about it; he's a gay fellow, and has a very good time in the world.



THE HOUSE THEY SHOULD HAVE BUILT.

CHAPTER FOURTEENTH.

THE HOUSE OF MUD.

ONE spring there was great ado made, over the building of a small mud house in the backyard. It was in the strangest place you can think of, inside an old hat, which had been left hanging on a wall, and the builders were a pair of robins.

They were not the true English robin that you read about in

“The Babes in the Wood,” but an American namesake of his, whose charming song I’m sure you have heard, in the early mornings of spring.

The new home was made of mud and grass, lined with soft bedding, and when finished, the one room was about four inches wide, and two inches deep.

In this pleasant nursery were placed four or five lovely bluish-green eggs, and the pretty Mother Robin seated herself, to keep them warm till the little ones came out.

Everybody was glad to have this delightful family settle so near, not only because of their joyful songs, but for their usefulness, for what they like best to eat, is just what makes terrible mischief in the gardens—worms and various grubs.

It is funny to see a robin on the lawn looking for something to eat. He hops along on the ground in the most easy and careless way, looking this way and that, up at you, over at the street, anywhere, as if the last thing in his thoughts was a worm. But soon his bright eyes spy one, hurrying to hide itself in the ground. Too late, Mr. Worm! In an instant the bird seizes him.

The worm resists, Robin gives a good pull, which makes him stagger. The worm doesn’t yield; then comes a bracing of the strong little legs, and a stout jerk; out pops the worm, and away flies Robin to the mud house with the choice morsel, for the hungry mouths awaiting it.

I needn’t tell any of you, little people, how the robin looks, for I’m sure you know his ash-colored coat and reddish-orange vest, but he has been known in rare cases to dress in black. Why—nobody knows. And it is not uncommon to find them partly, and even wholly, white.

Mr. Lockwood—an American animal lover—tells the story of a tame Robin who was made very unhappy by the appearance of white feathers in his tail. He resolved that he would not endure it, and, like a brave fellow, went at once to work to pull them out. One long hour the plucky bird dragged, and jerked, and pulled at those hated feathers, and at last got them out, tired, and suffering.

Again they came in white, and again he pulled them out, till, after some weeks, he made up his mind that it was of no use. From that time he gradually grew more and more white, till he was eight years old, when he was nearly all of that color, and a queer-looking Robin indeed.

The whole story of the bird is very interesting, and as Mr. Lockwood has told it himself for the grown-ups, in the *American Naturalist*, I will repeat a little for you.

The bird was about a year old when he got him—a pert, saucy fellow, afraid of nobody, who ate nothing but meal and milk. He was fond of his cage, and for awhile would not go out when the door was left open for him.

But one day he went too far, far enough to meet a hungry cat, who thought she would have him for breakfast. She did catch him, but she did not eat him. He got away somehow, probably by beating her face and eyes with his wings. He had, however, a severe hurt, which he did not get over for a long time, though he had the most careful nursing by the family.

He was fond of play. As children “make believe” keep house, he would play “build a mud house.” He would bustle around with a straw or a feather in his mouth, twittering and chattering to himself as though this was serious business.

Some of the family were fond of jokes, and Rob was more

than once made a victim. A favorite thing was to tie a bit of rubber cord to a wire of the cage. The bird was fond of playing with a string, and he would at once pounce on this. Seizing the end in his bill, he would pull on it, bracing himself and drawing it out farther and farther, till suddenly it would snap back, and away would go Master Rob, heels over head backwards on the floor.

Never touched it again, you think?

On the contrary, he would instantly snatch it again, more determined than before, and again he would turn a complete somersault.

In the spring, when the wild robins were all in a flutter, preparing to move and to set up housekeeping for themselves, poor Rob would catch the excitement too, and for a few days would be very cross and wild. But before April this was all over, and he was happy as ever in his house of wire.

The robin is own cousin to the mocking-bird, and is able himself to do a little mocking. This one learned the whistle that called the dog, and would set poor Dick half wild till he found out that it was not his master but Rob who whistled. Then he would slink off, much ashamed that he had been so deceived.

But Rob learned other things. He mocked the peep of a distressed chicken so as to deceive his mistress, and even to disturb the sedate hen-mothers themselves. And when he mastered the cry of the hen who sees a hawk, the whole poultry-yard was aroused, and every chick ran for dear life to its mother's wings.

This wise bird was fond of meat, of course, and since he lived in a wire house, and could not hunt for himself, he was supplied by the butcher, like other people.

If a piece of his food happened to be soiled by dropping on the floor, he would actually wash it in his tub before eating it. Rob lived to be nine years old, and died at last from eating a string.

Another pet Robin, who preferred fresh beef to worms, was kept by Mrs. Holmes. He had curious tastes for a bird, and knew well how to make his wishes known. Not only beefsteak, but cake, he fancied, and after awhile he lived upon just what the rest of the family did, going to the table as regularly as any one.

Nothing pleased this erratic bird better than a hot dough-nut, and he would teaze for one the moment he smelled them cooking. Like Rob, his scent was wonderful. He could tell the moment a paper of raisins or fruit was brought into the room, and would begin to teaze at once.

He was fond of meat in any way, cooked or raw, and he would eat flies and spiders, though he didn't care for them particularly.

When his cake got dry, he would dip it into his water dish to soften.

He was a sociable fellow, and always greeted any of the family who passed his cage, day or night, with a pleasant chirp, though he never did it to strangers. He had his own fancies about people, strong as any person's, and could never be coaxed by one he disliked.

In winter our wild robins go to the South, and a story comes from there, that the pretty little fellows—like some bigger and wiser—are unable to resist temptation. They will eat certain berries of the China Tree, though every time they do so they become senseless for awhile, so that they fall to the ground.

The little colored boys, who delight in robin pie, take no trouble to catch them, except to hide near the trees till the foolish birds fall, when they can pick up as many as they choose.

There's another story told of this bird, and many people profess to have seen it. It is said that when a baby robin is confined in a cage, the parents will feed it for awhile, till they apparently make up their minds that the little one is a prisoner for life, and then they give it to eat a leaf which kills it.

It cannot be from cruelty, for robins are noted for their kind attentions to caged or deserted young birds, even when not of their own kind. They will bring grubs and worms, and feed the suffering creatures with as much care as though they were their own.

All this, and all these, are American robins, remember, and not the familiar Robin-Redbreast of England. His name—his book name I mean, is—but wait, I'll put it over in the index at the end of the book, with all the other hard names, and you may turn to that place and find it for yourself, if you like.

Interested as the children were in the family in the old hat, they never forgot their daily visitors, the sparrows. All the spring they kept the busy little mothers supplied with feathers, for there's nothing so welcome to the sparrow family as a soft feather-bed in the nest.

From the time that snow fell in the fall, Marcy always spread a breakfast of bread crumbs on the roof of a balcony under her window, and there the pert, saucy little fellows came, all the cold, long winter through. Sometimes the snow was deep, and she had to sweep a place for the crumbs, and sometimes the hardy little creatures would go up to their very necks in the

light, soft snow, but they never failed to come the moment she opened her window.

When the grass started up, and spring began, then Marcy would make the birds a farewell speech, telling them, that now they must feed themselves, and go to the work for which their grandparents had been brought from England, eating the caterpillars from the trees. That when snow fell again, she would be ready for them.

From that time she began to hunt feathers for them, and whether disappointed of their crumbs or not, they never said, but they greedily accepted the feathers, and always carried them off to their houses.

Uncle Karl, too, felt great interest in the lively little foreigners, and one day told a story he had heard, about a Sparrow that lived in Scotland, which so pleased the family, that I'm going to tell it to you.

The bird was taken from the nest very young so she never learned to be afraid of people, and was never caged. The family named her Philip, and she would come when called by that name, even when out in the trees, away from the house.

Philip always preferred to sleep in the house, and her favorite napping place was in the folds of a cambric handkerchief, worn around the neck of the house mother. At the back of her neck the Sparrow would nestle, among the soft folds, and there she would stay for hours.

She liked a variety to eat, and kept the house nearly free from flies and spiders, though she was always on hand at meal-times, ready for her share of everything on the table.

Sometimes the father of the family would decide that it wasn't quite the thing for a bird to come to the table, and he

would take Mistress Philip in hand, and drive her away. But that saucy bird was well able to carry her point, and have things as she liked.

No sooner was she insulted in this way, than she would pounce on the bald head of the enemy, peck at it, and pull at the scanty hairs that grew on the spot, till, big as he was, he was glad to give up the point, and let Philip return to the table-cloth in peace.

When winter came, Philip looked about for a warm house, and after much peering around, and many twitters and chirps, she chose an empty china pitcher, that stood as an ornament on a mantel shelf in the room of her young master. There she went to work, and made a comfortable nest, of strings and feathers, bits of thread, and anything she found lying about, and there she slept every night.

The shelf on which her china house stood, she regarded as part of her property, for she would defend it with scolding, and fluttering wings, when any stranger came near, and if one dared to lay a finger on it, she would peck it furiously.

The next spring Philip was a year old, and one day, after a long absence, she was escorted home by a spruce young Cock Sparrow. He attended her to the window, and then left her.

The next day he came again, leaving her at the window as before. He soon began to call for her in the morning. The sparrow family are early risers, as you know well enough, if you live in New York, or any city where they are plenty, and before any one was up in the house, he would come to the window-sill and call.

The moment Philip heard that, she would leave her nest and fly to the window. If it was open, she would go out, but if

closed, she would fly to the bed where her master slept, and pull his hair till he opened it.

After a few days of these close attentions, the family found



DEFENDING HER HOME.

out that Philip had decided to accept the little wooer, and was even making preparations for a new home in the trees. No doubt she had failed to convince him that the pitcher was safe.

When the new house was ready, Philip went there to live, and

the family saw her no more for three months. They feared they should never see her again; but the little creature had not forgotten them—she had only been busy.

One of the first cool days in the autumn, Philip remembered with pleasure her warm home in the pitcher, and surprised the family by making her appearance at the table, as cool and sure of her welcome as if she had never been away.

When dinner was over, she went at once to work to prepare for winter. It was evident that she had taken leave of her mate, and come back to stay. She flew to the pitcher, and busied herself at once repairing it, and fitting it for use, and then settled herself in it as before.

All winter she stayed there as of old, but in the spring came back that lively young mate again; and again Philip went to the trees for the summer. For five years she kept up this life, leaving the house in the spring and returning in the fall, and the whole family grew much attached to her.

But at the end of the fifth summer, Philip did not return. Perhaps she decided to keep to the sparrow life after all, and not desert her partner in his old age; or, perhaps, her life was ended.

Whichever it was, they never saw her again.

CHAPTER FIFTEENTH.

ANOTHER LITTLE STRANGER.

ONE evening Uncle Karl came home from the city with a new market basket, which he carried carefully as though something alive was inside. So there was, as the children found out after dinner, when the basket was opened, and out sprang something which ran like a brown streak across the carpet, and hid behind a big chair.

The poor creature was evidently frightened half out of her senses, and Uncle Karl made the children keep very still until he had soothed and quieted her, and held her in his arms, and then they drew near to look at the new pet.

It was a beautiful animal, and one of the most rare and curious ever brought to our country—the smallest deer in the world. She was only *six inches* tall at the shoulder, and *nine inches* long, though shaped like a common deer. Her color was shining red-brown on the back, and white on the under parts. She had large, expressive black eyes, and legs no bigger than a lead-pencil, with droll little black hoofs. You can see her picture here, drawn from the creature herself; and now I will tell you the story of her life.

Joan, as the little deer was named, passed her youthful days in the island of Sumatra, eating berries and fruit, and occasionally a sweet potato from somebody's garden, and in running

about among the grass and low shrubs of that summer-land, with others of her family. So shy are these deer, and so cunning to hide from men and dogs, that little is known about their



THE "DEAR LITTLE DEER."

wild ways; but the family of four, of which Joan was the last, were fated to have adventures.

One day they were startled by a dreadful monster—in the deer family—a dog. They at once took to their fleet little heels,

and in a few minutes were snugly hidden in a hollow log, where they crouched, trembling at the fearful bark of their big noisy enemy outside.

As it happened, the dog had a master behind him, who dragged the whole four, more dead than alive, out of their hiding-place. They are very cunning, and they pretended to be dead, but that did not deceive the hunter. He carefully secured them, and carried them off to the city of Singapore, where he hoped to sell them.

An American sailor, whose ship lay in the harbor, saw the pretty, strange creatures, and after the fashion of sailors, bought them to bring home, though he had to pay for them with his watch.

The strange new home of the timid little family was the ship "Janet." Their bed was made in a corner of the captain's cabin, under his bunk, or bed, and their owner gave them the not very pretty names of Jack and Jill, Darby and Joan. The vessel sailed, and their long voyage of more than four months began.

There was another pet in the captain's cabin, a parrot, who struck up a friendship with the new-comers at once, and evidently welcomed them as society for his somewhat lonely life. Finding that they were not hurt, the Deer after awhile grew quite at home, and Poll was on the most affectionate terms with them.

He delighted to perch on their backs, or their heads, and to talk to them, calling them by their particular names, or together, his "dear little deer."

A sad thing happened during the voyage. One day Poll was delighted to find added to the family of four, two "dear little

Deer" babies. They were about as big as very young kittens, though they did not look like them, having long legs, like their parents.

Poll was much interested in the little strangers, and stood nearly all the time perched on a box, where he could see them, turning his wise head on one side and the other, examining them curiously, and calling them also his "dear little deer." But the babies' savage father—whether jealous of the youngsters, or whether he thought a life of captivity worse than death, no one knows—put an end to their short lives, you'll be horrified to hear, by biting off their legs with his sharp front teeth!

This was the beginning of sorrows to the Parrot, for when the "Janet" arrived off Sandy Hook they found cold weather, which is deadly to delicate natives of the South, and though warm covering was provided for them, Jack and Jill got out of their bed while the captain was on deck, and soon died of cold.

This was a great grief to poor Poll, who sat moping on his perch, and mourned in silence. When, after reaching New York, Darby also died of cold, Poll became extremely low-spirited, and refused to say a word, even to bid good-by to the last of the family, who was carried off in the market-basket before his very eyes. To this little green-coated fellow the world seemed, no doubt, a hollow mockery.

Joan had become quite familiar with life in a ship, but a basket was new to her, and when she reached the new home, she was more timid than ever. Even after she had been quieted by Uncle Karl, she hardly dared to stand up, but crouched as if ready to run. Then she had new acquaintances to make. There was, first, the dog, of whose intentions she was always suspicious, and whose odor was terrifying to her. Perhaps even

worse was the cat, a fearful monster, who showed the greatest eagerness to get at her, no doubt with hope of a nice meal.

Besides these two, there was a new variety of the human species to get used to. On the ship were only men, and she had learned that they would not hurt her; but this new sort, with long rustling skirts, she didn't understand, and what she did not understand always frightened her. She was in a constant state of terror.

She would come to Uncle Karl when called, and allow him to caress her, even showing her affection by licking his hand like a dog; but the slightest noise would send her like a flash across the room, behind a table or chair, to hide, and the slam of a door would make her jump two or three feet straight up into the air. Her tiny feet made no noise on the carpet, and her movements were so quick, she seemed to fairly glide over it like a spirit.

It was not meant that this little beauty should die with the cold, so Marcy made her a bed in a basket in her mother's room, where she could never be cold, nor in danger from dog or cat, though she was not confined there, but ran all over the house.

She lived on vegetables, which her two sharp front teeth cut like a knife. Parsnips, carrots, sweet potatoes, and cabbage were her bill of fare, and the children never tired of seeing her eat.

She was the most quiet of pets, though when fed, she gave a sort of low whistle, and occasionally uttered a little cry, which in Borneo is considered by the natives an evil omen, so serious that a newly married pair, on hearing the sound, feel obliged to separate.

The pretty Deer lived several days in her new home. Marcy

and Ralph were her most devoted servants, and the whole family had become much attached to her. They hoped to make her tame, and also to teach the other animals that she was a pet, and must be respected. But their hopes were dashed one morning, by finding her dead in her basket.

Whether from a chill, or some sudden terror which had startled her sensitive nerves, was not known. Whatever the cause, poor Joan was now at rest, and Uncle Karl had only the sad satisfaction of adding her graceful skeleton to the grim array of departed pets whose whitened bones, wired into shape of life, adorned the walls of his room.

This little Deer, though so strange to us, is not a new discovery. It has been known for many years, though, as I said, it is so shy, that not much is known of its habits. It is found in India and the East India Islands, and it has names enough for the largest of animals. In India it is the Musk Deer, though it has no musk; in Ceylon the Mouse Deer, though it is not in the least like a mouse, and the Moose Deer, though still less like a moose. The books call it the Pigmy Musk, or *Moschus meminna*.

An old writer, in speaking of Ceylon, says: "There is a creature in this land, no bigger than a hare, though every part rightly resembleth a deer, of a gray color, with white spots and good meat."

Good meat! that is unfortunate for the little creature, for the good meat he carries on his bones is the cause of his being hunted with dogs, caught in traps, and killed by sticks thrown at his legs. He has no horns, but has very long and strong tusks, and some writers say, that when pursued by a larger animal, he will leap up and catch on to the branch of a tree, and hang there till all is safe; while if hunted by men, he runs

for the water or a hollow log. Whether the story is true or not, we know that he can make extraordinary jumps.

No animal, not even pussy herself, can be more graceful and elegant than this little creature, and like pussy, too, he can, if he likes, give a severe bite. Now and then a Mouse Deer is found of a pure white color, and that is at once adopted as a pet, and never, never regarded as "meat."

The babies of this family, if taken very young, are easily tamed, and become very interesting pets about a house.

CHAPTER SIXTEENTH.

A NATIVE AMERICAN.

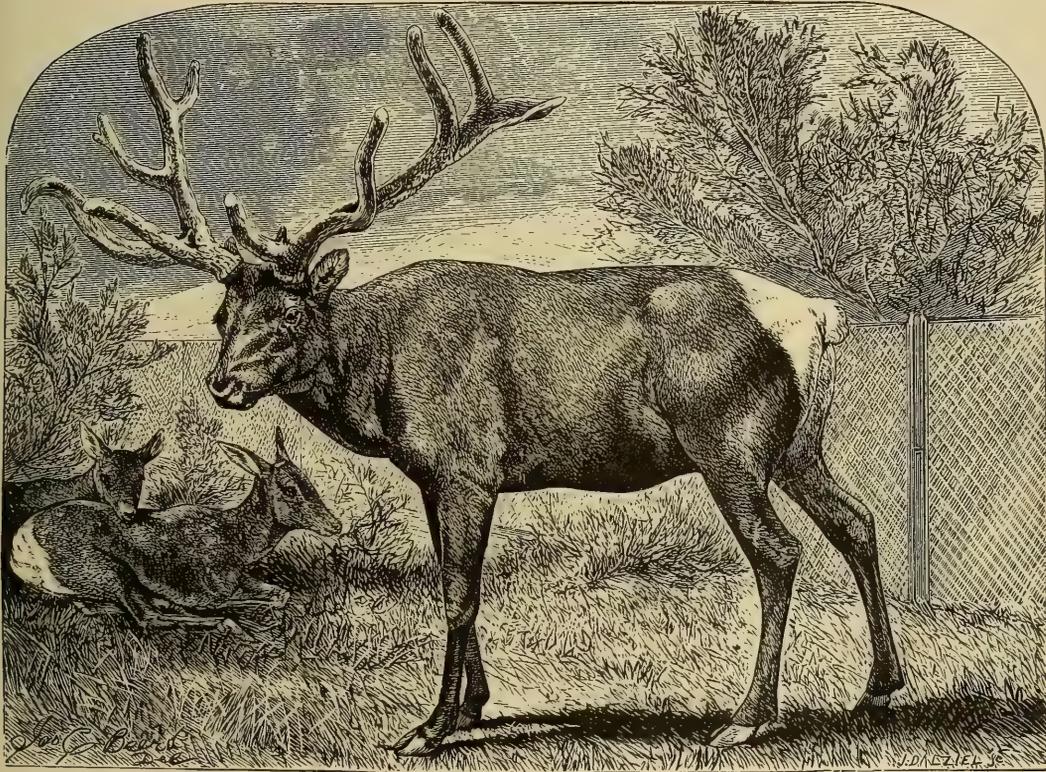
THE next evening after the sad death of Joan, Uncle Karl told the children that the Mouse Deer, though itself a foreigner, had one cousin a genuine American, never found in any other country, adding, that if Ralph would bring his Blue Sketch-Book, he would show them a picture of it.

Now to see the Blue Sketch-Book was a great treat to the children, partly because it was full of interesting pictures of animals, and partly because this uncle was rather an eccentric person, and never let them see more than one or two sketches at a time. He had a queer notion, that if they looked hastily through the whole, they would have only confused ideas, while if they looked at one, and learned about it, they would remember, and really know something.

Ralph ran upstairs to the Den, as Uncle Karl called his room, and soon brought back a big blue-covered book, closed with a small lock. Uncle Karl took from his vest pocket a little brass key and unlocked it, and the children drew near the table to see.

The sketches were loose in the book, and after turning over quite a pile of them, he took one out and laid it on the table. It was the picture that you see here, of the Wapiti, the American cousin of the "dear little deer."

It is much larger than Joan, in fact a baby Wapiti is many times bigger than a grown-up mouse deer, but it is an interesting animal, and a gentleman who has a large deer park in Illinois—Judge Caton—has kept Wapiti from their babyhood, so that we know something about their ways.



THE AMERICAN COUSIN.

The young Wapiti is a pretty, black-eyed fawn, with soft coat of golden-brown spotted with white. He is weak and helpless at first, like most babies, but is not at all stupid, for he knows very well how to take care of himself when men and dogs go out to hunt, and his mother has to run for her life. It is a cunning trick, and is simply to lie flat on the ground, and keep

perfectly still. In that way he is not often seen, and there he patiently waits till the hunt is over, and his mother comes back to him.

The babies born in the park, hide in the same way, though the mothers are tame and do not run from men. One may take the little fellow up, and handle him, lay him down and walk off, and still he will lie limp as a wet rag, not showing a sign of life, except—what is very droll—he does not shut his eyes, but watches every motion with lively interest. The first time the Judge saw one play the trick, he thought he was paralyzed, till he had gone away from him, and saw him spring to his feet as well as any one.

In the park the mothers, or Does, are often tame and familiar, eating out of the hand, and letting one stroke them; but when the babies are young they are more shy, though the mother of the paralyzed baby, not only let her master lift the little one and pat it, but seemed to be pleased and proud as some other mothers when their babies are praised.

But these amiable mothers have one special horror, and that is a dog. No matter how little, still less how big, no sooner does a dog show his head than every Doe throws forward her big ears, shows her teeth, and flies at him. Hear a story in Judge Caton's own words.

“On one occasion a stray dog got in when the Wapiti were around the gate, a dozen Does with Fawns by their sides. When they heard the dog, the Does stuck their ears forward, stretched out their necks, and started for that dog with an earnestness that meant business. The cur understood the situation, and wheeled and ran as never cur ran before. It was the most exciting and laughable race I ever saw. The exultant cry of pursuit, when he expected to be the pursuer himself, was fol-

lowed by short, quick yelps of despair, which escaped him at every bound, while he turned his head first one side and then the other to watch the progress of the pursuit, which was getting more dangerous every moment. The leading Doe was already close, and had begun making passes with her feet, but just at that moment he shot into the thicket, and was out of sight. The Does returned with ears thrown back, as if to challenge any other dog to come on. The Bucks did not care much about it, and often did not join the chase."

Forty or fifty full-grown Deer chasing one small dog must be a funny sight.

In winter the tame Wapiti come on a run to the keeper's call, and take the food from his hand. He can go among them, and put his hand on them as much as he likes; but in summer, when there are leaves and twigs in the woods to eat, they come if they feel like it. When comfortably settled in the cool shade, or lying in a shallow pool, which they are fond of doing, the keeper may shout himself hoarse, and they will not come.

They are not noisy animals, except when angry, and then they utter the most dreadful squeal, so loud and high, that it sounds like a steam whistle, and makes one glad to have a good wall between him and the fierce creature.

You've heard, perhaps, that deer shed tears, and then no doubt you've heard it denied. They may be like people, some cry and some do not. At any rate, Judge Caton declares that one of his shed many tears, when put in a cage, and much frightened.

They have rather a bad temper of their own, too, and when angry, one would better keep out of the way. They throw up the head, draw back the lips, and grate the teeth, as though they would like to crunch one's bones.

However tame the Wapiti gets to be, there is one place where he takes his stand. He will *not* be driven through a gate—he'll die first. One may leave the gate open, and if he chooses he will walk through when he gets ready; but try to drive him, and he's off like a shot.

Twice a year the whole family have new suits. In winter it is of soft, thick fur, with overcoat of long wavy hairs. When this falls off it is so matted together that it hangs in great patches, like a beggar's cloak; but once off, the summer suit comes to light, and that is fine and silky, of a bright russet-brown color.

The Wapiti has the finest antlers of the whole deer family. They are sometimes five feet long, and every branch has its name. Do you want to know them? Here they are: the body of the antler is called the *beam*, the large branches are called *tines*, and the small ones *snags*. The first pair of branches standing out from the forehead like cows' horns are the *brow-tines*, the next pair the *beg-tines*, the third the *royal-tines*, and the fourth the *sur-royal*.

Every year there comes a time, when even the half-tame Wapiti of the park retires to the deepest woods, and refuses to be seen or caressed. Seek him in his hiding-place, and one would hardly know him. He has lost his beautiful antlers, and a new set is growing, perhaps mere knobs as yet, but rapidly growing larger, and covered with what looks like black velvet.

It is a thick, soft fur called the velvet, and at that time the antlers may be bent in any shape, and they will grow so. When full grown, the velvet is rubbed off against the trees, and the proud Wapiti comes out to display his splendid white antlers, a little larger than those of last year.

CHAPTER SEVENTEENTH.

THE BABY THAT LIVES IN THE SNOW COTTAGE.

IT was one of Uncle Karl's peculiar notions to give each of the children some sort of an expedition for a birthday present, and to let the child choose what it should be. Marcy's birthday came in the summer, and then they usually had some delightful picnic excursion on New York Bay, up the Hudson River, or out to the sea-shore, while Ralph's came in winter, and suggested visits to something attractive in the city.

This winter, as the long looked-for day drew near, Uncle Karl asked Ralph to choose his present, and he instantly declared that he should like a visit to the New York Aquarium. He had read in the papers of the seals and monkeys, and other strange and curious creatures living there, and was very anxious to see them, especially the monkeys.

The birthday happened to be a sunny day, and the little party of three had a grand time. They spent several hours in the Aquarium, dined in style at a grand restaurant, and reached home at night, tired but happy, and full of the new things they had seen and heard.

For some time afterward, they were busy and interested in finding out about, and talking over the new animals they had seen, and in watching Uncle Karl, as he carefully finished up the sketches he had made on the spot.

They found the wild creatures perhaps even more interesting than their own pets, and there was scarcely one that had not been the pet of somebody. It is about these new acquaintances that I want to tell you now.

The Seals were the first objects of interest. They spent an hour by the tank, and this is what they learned about the baby that lives in a snow cottage.

It is away up North, among the icebergs of Greenland, that the pretty Seal baby lives, in a cottage of snow, with ice for a floor. You think it must be cold perhaps, but it isn't, for in the first place nothing is warmer than a covering of snow, and then you must think how it is dressed.

First, under his fur suit, he has a thick coat of fat, which is the warmest wrap he could have; half a dozen woolen blankets are nothing to it. Next comes his skin, with the soft, downy fur that you see in ladies' jackets and muffs, and outside of that a thick cloak of long hairs, which cling together when he goes into the water, and keep out every drop. Getting cold is the last thing he thinks of. He sleeps and eats and grows fat on his icy bed.

But now hear about this curious snow cottage. Seals, though they spend much time in the water, must breathe air, and so, in that cold part of the world, where the ice is several feet thick, they keep open holes through the ice, where they come to breathe.

It is supposed they keep these holes open, by always going to one spot to breathe. However that may be, it is a fact that it is done, and they always have tunnels to the air.

When the mother seal wishes to make a nursery for her baby, she comes to a breathing-hole, and makes the opening larger, so that she can climb up on to the ice.

Now over the ice there are several feet of snow, perhaps six or eight, and this she depends on to hide her little one from its enemies. So she is careful not to disturb the surface, but she digs out a little round room, four or five feet across, with a low, sloping roof of the snow, and the tunnel through the ice for a door.

In it she puts her baby, a pretty little fellow about the size of a cat, and dressed in a white woolly coat. Here he stays for two or three months, and here the mother comes to care for him and feed him, till he is big enough to swim and dive, and catch fish like a grown-up Seal.

Not all Seal babies are dressed in white, and live in a house of their own. Some dress in yellow, and some in black, and many have no house but a rock or a cake of floating ice. One that lives in the islands near Alaska has its nursery on a rock, and is taught to swim by its papa.

There are different ways among Seals, as there are among people, you see. Now the Greenland baby has a very rude father, who never thinks of teaching him. On the contrary, he worries and teazes him, taking him in his mouth and shaking him like a rat. His mother, however, is good enough to make up for everything. She makes his warm little nursery, and she pets him, and kisses him—that's true, though you may think it is queer—and no doubt she talks plenty of Seal "baby talk" to him.

Safe as seems his home under the snow, which extends for miles in every way, a flat, smooth roof, he has enemies sharp enough to find him out, and cunning enough to catch him. Great white bears, and hungry foxes, and Esquimaux dogs can all tell, by their wonderful scent, the exact spot where lies the

young seal. Bears and foxes hunt for themselves, but the dog leads his master to the treasure he finds, without alarming or disturbing it in the least.

Seals are the living of the poor Greenlander. Their skin he wears, their fat he burns for light and warmth, their flesh he eats. Without seals the whole race would die. A Seal nursery, therefore, is a great find for him, for the young one is as nice to eat as a chicken, and if careful, he can generally catch the mother too, when the whole village has a feast.

As soon as the dog points out the spot, the Eskimo goes back ten or more steps, and then runs, and gives a tremendous jump, crushing in the roof, and snatching up the Seal baby, before it has time to get away by diving through the door.

Then he digs away the snow, and waits for the mother to come and see after her baby. Sometimes he fastens a line to the little fellow's flipper, and lets him go into the sea, and when the mother comes, catches her with his seal hook.

If he finds a seal hole where there is no young one, the half-starved Eskimo sits down beside it, ready to strike. There he must sit, on the watch, without a moment's sleep, sometimes three or four days and nights. The moment the Seal comes up to "blow," as they call it, he must strike with his spear, or he will lose his chance.

What makes it worse, he often cannot see the hole; it is under the snow, and he thrusts his spear down till he finds where it is. He has only that to guide him. He must strike without seeing the game, but so expert do they become that they rarely miss.

Seals are curious creatures. Though they look like fish, they are no more fish than you are. They have four legs, but the

two hinder ones are so covered up by skin, that only the feet project, and look more like a tail. They can walk on all fours, humping up the back so that they look like huge caterpillars, and they can gallop in a scrambling sort of style, throwing up sand and gravel in showers as they go.

I have read of one that could climb a fence. He was living in an aquarium in Philadelphia, and he was anxious to get into another tank, to fight a rival Seal. He rested his forefeet, or flippers, on the fence, and flung his body over, as a man would leap a wall.

But their quickest way of getting along on land is to roll. Surprise one a little way from the shore, and over and over he'll go, like a barrel, till he plumps into the sea and is safe—from men at least. Of course he can swim as well as fish themselves, which is quite necessary, since fish is what he eats.

Seals have very pretty heads, with large black eyes, so intelligent looking that when one raises its head and looks at a person, it seems as if it would speak. They have no ears on the outside, though they hear as well as anybody, and when they go into the water they shut tight—not their eyes, as you do—but their nostrils.

They are frolicsome creatures. They play and tumble about in the water, come to the surface and make a great noise—that the sailors call a "Seal's Wedding." Even when they live in tanks in an aquarium, they will romp with each other, and play with a fish as a cat does with a mouse, throwing it out of the water, and barking with delight when it falls back again. They will dive and splash, and shake the fish as if it were alive, and all for pure fun.

They have much curiosity, and are fond of music. They will

come half out of the sea to listen to music, or examine any new thing. They are often caught by attracting their attention by some noise, which the Eskimo calls "seal talk," till the hunter draws near enough to strike.

I must tell you about this too enticing "talk." The Eskimo lies down on one side, and creeps toward a Seal napping on the ice. While the animal sleeps, which he does a few seconds at a time, the man draws nearer; but when the Seal lifts his head to look about, the hunter paws on the snow with one foot and hand, and makes the sound called "talk."

The Seal seems to be charmed. He rises and shakes his flippers, and rolls over in delight. Then he takes another nap, and the man hitches along a little nearer.

A seal can sleep on the water, lying on one side, with upper flippers out in the air, and it's well he can, for it doesn't seem very safe for him to sleep on land, poor fellow.

But fancy a Seal fanning himself! Funny as it seems, they like to do it, sitting up on a rock, with head dropped on one side, and for a fan, a hind flipper. Travelers do tell strange stories, I must say.

He has a voice of his own. He can bawl like a calf when angry, and he can bark, and cry softly to his mates. When an enemy comes near, a mother seal will sometimes cry so pitifully that even hardened hunters hesitate to touch her.

The seal family are easily tamed, and make gentle and interesting pets. They soon learn to love people and a fire so much that they cannot be made to go back to the sea.

Stories have been told of persons wishing to get rid of the trouble of feeding pet Seals, who have taken them out to sea and dropped them in. The animal would follow the boat and

cry to be taken in, and if its owner was hard-hearted enough to refuse, it would always find its way home, even in one case climbing through a window to get to the fire.

They are easily taught, and some of their tricks are very funny. They will climb to the back of a chair, bark when told, say "papa"—which is the bark trained a little—offer to kiss any one, and lay their flippers close to their side and whirl rapidly in the water-tub. They are very affectionate, and like to be petted.

Dr. Buckland tells of a tame Seal that was once in London. It was owned by a French sailor, who spent two years training it for exhibition. He made a play of the performance, in which the Seal volunteered to go as a soldier. He enlisted and was drilled, and he could fire a cannon.

He was generally good-natured, but there was one thing he could not endure, and that was—strange to say—white ribbons; if a lady came in with them on, he was very much annoyed. After all his master's trouble and teaching, he did not enjoy it long, for the Seal was killed by swallowing a hook in a fish.

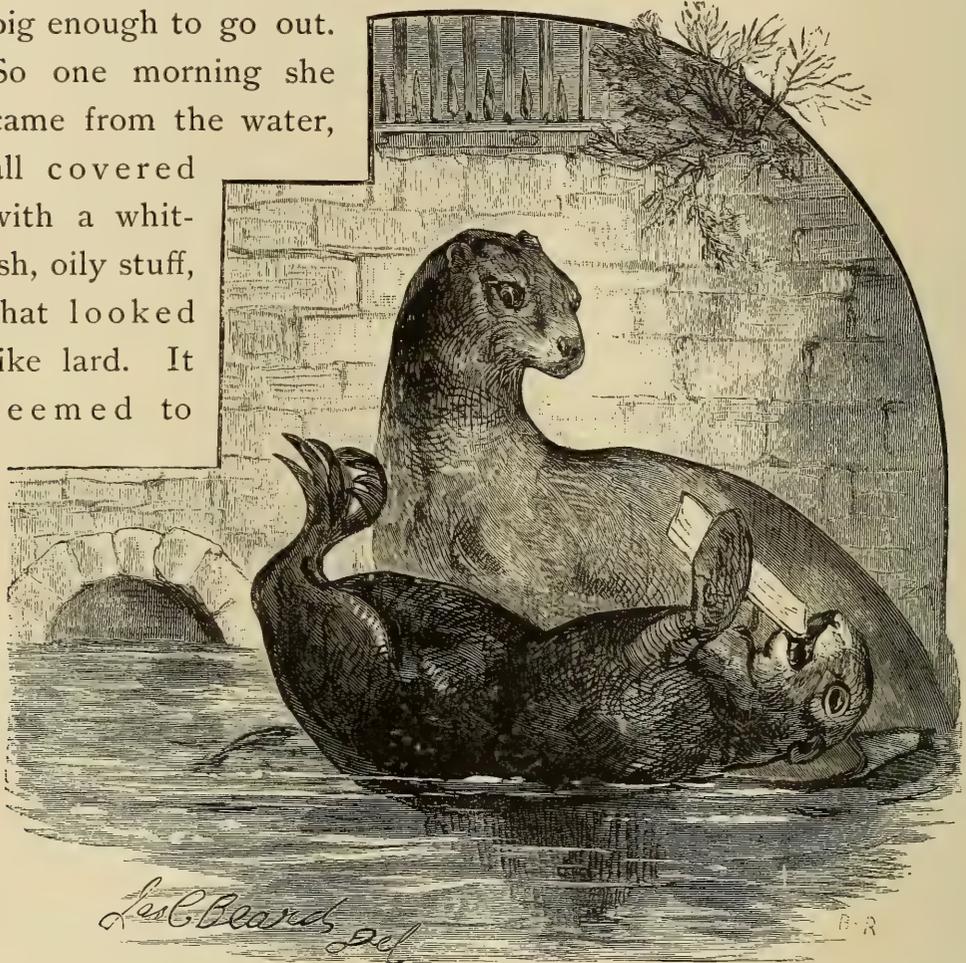
There is an interesting story about another baby of the seal family, one of the big cousins of the Greenland Seal, called the Sea-Lion.

This little fellow had a queer nursery. It was a small room in the Cincinnati Zoological Garden, opening into the tank where his parents spent most of their time. The baby was—I regret to say—a very cross one, and tried to bite everybody who came near him.

The mother spent most of her time in the nursery, only going out twice a day for a bath; but the father was not allowed to go in, for these wild fathers sometimes have very strange ways

toward the youngsters. This father seemed to be very good-natured, for every morning when Mother Sea-Lion went out, he would meet her at the door and kiss her good-morning.

When the Sea-Lion baby was five weeks old, the mother made up her mind he was big enough to go out. So one morning she came from the water, all covered with a whitish, oily stuff, that looked like lard. It seemed to



THE BABY AT PLAY.

ooze out of her skin, and she hurried into the nursery and began a strange performance.

She rolled about till everything in the room—walls, bed, and baby—was covered with grease. It didn't look very nice, but

no doubt it was necessary. The wise mother knew what she was about. The baby seemed to like it too, and the next time the door was opened, out he went after her, and plumped into the water.

The men came around to see him taught to swim; but he didn't have to be taught, he could swim as well as anybody. He played around as though he liked it, leaping and diving, and when tired he laid his head across his mother's neck and rested.

One way of playing was very funny; it was so like a baby with a rattle. He would take a chip which was kept for him, and lie on his back and play with it, using his fore-flippers and his mouth, as you see him in the picture.

The first time he went out he was rather shy of his big father, and kept behind his mother; but after a while he took a great liking to him, and delighted to swim around with him. He even tried to coax him to play, but though he seemed fond of the baby, the great Sea-Lion was too dignified for such amusements, and he would push him gently away, as though he said, "There! there! run away now."

These happy times came to an end. The mother died. The father took her loss very hard. He was ferocious for a while, and tried to bite people. Then he grieved and pined away, so that they feared he would die.

As for the baby, he simply insisted that his mother he would have, and no one else should make him eat. The keepers did everything they could, and tempted him with food in every possible way, but eat he would not, and eat he did not. And the obstinate little Sea-Lion baby starved to death.

CHAPTER EIGHTEENTH.

NANNOOK AND BOB.

THE baby that lives in the snow cottage has a worse enemy than the poor Eskimo, and that is a beautiful big fellow called Nannook by the natives, and the Polar Bear by the books.

He is dressed in a silvery white fur coat, and boots, with even thick fur for the soles, as some other animals of that cold country have.

Bears are very clever all over the world. It is said of them, that they have the strength of ten men, and the sense of twelve. Perhaps the terrible cold and the scarcity of food sharpen their wits, and at any rate—whatever the cause—the Polar Bear is one of the very wisest of his race.

He is so expert in hunting that the Eskimos have learned of him. Lying on the side and stealing up to a sleepy seal, and amusing it when awake with a monotonous noise called "seal talk," was done by bears before men learned the trick.

The Polar Bear also likes the baby seal, especially the Mother Bear, when she comes out of her winter's home with her cubs. At that time she hunts with special care for a seal nursery, that she may jump on the roof and break it in, as I told you the Eskimos do.

The little seal she gives her babies to eat, after she has caught

the mother by help of it, in the way that men do, that is, holding it in the passage to the water till its mother comes to take care of it, and then seizing her with the other paw.

Nannook's baby also has a nursery under the snow. In the fall the Mother Bear eats a big dinner of meat, and then goes to her den for the winter. Sometimes this retreat is a small cave under the rocks, sometimes under the roots of a tree, and sometimes nothing but a cave dug in a snow bank. Whichever it may be, it is a comfortable place, for more snow falls and covers up the door, leaving the sleepy Bear warm, and safe from all enemies, and she needs no more food till spring.

In this home the babies are born, and as soon as spring opens, and they are big enough to go with her, she leads them out to hunt a fat seal, or something nice to eat.

At this time Mother Nannook is savage, and it is particularly dangerous to meet her, though I heard an amusing story of one Bear who ran away from the hunters. She had two cubs, and they could not run fast enough, so this wise parent pushed them along with her nose. They were knowing little fellows, too, and when she pushed one far ahead, he would run along and put himself before her again, for another push. So they went on, and you'll be glad to know that the brave mother saved both her babies and herself from the hunters.

In his own cold home, the Polar Bear eats little besides meat, but when he is taken away and kept as a prisoner, he will eat almost anything. One in a zoological garden in London ate only bread, six pounds a day, and was specially fond of cakes that visitors gave him. This poor fellow suffered with the heat, and in summer had to have a cave made with ice, to remind him of his native home.

Our American Indians, who have many curious stories about animals, tell one of the most amusing on the origin of bears. Once upon a time, they say, a very long time ago, there was but one Bear, an enormous fellow, whose step made the earth shake and tremble, and whose howl was like thunder. He could easily drink up a whole lake at a time, and his drinking made such a current in the water, that men could not row a boat out of it, (something like that above the falls of Niagara, I suppose).

When at last this became too terrible to be endured, men came together, and by help of some "great medicine" managed to kill the monster. To make sure that he did not come to life, the victorious party cut his body into small bits, and scattered them to the four winds. But alas! in a short time they made the appalling discovery, that every tiny bit of the flesh sprang up and ran off, a perfect little Bear!

Bears have a hard name in stories, but in real life those who know them best say, that excepting one or two cases, they are peaceable, and will not attack men unless starving or wounded. If a bear is hungry, or if a man begins the fight, he is one of the most ferocious of animals. He will stand up on his hind legs, and use his terrible paws; boxing with them so severely as to kill instantly, and tearing with his long sharp claws. If he can come near enough he will grasp his enemy, and hug him to death at last.

Other animals are kept away by fires, but Bruin is much too knowing for any shallow trick. If he desires anything protected in this way, he simply goes to the nearest stream, soaks his shaggy coat with water, and then rolls on the fire till he has put it out. This is well known in Siberia, and the animal is highly respected, and spoken of politely, as an honorable enemy.

The strongest and fiercest Bear in the world is the American Grizzly Bear. He is monarch of the mountains and woods where he lives; all animals sneak away from before him, and few men care to meet him.

It has been said that he cannot be tamed, but there are few animals utterly insensible to kindness, if taken when young, before they have learned to hate men. The Grizzly Bear is not of this few. He makes a most amusing pet, though rather rough; and he's as fond of pranks as a monkey. I want to tell you a true story of one named Bob.

He was born in the mountains of California, and was still very young when he was out one day walking with his mother, and they were met by a hunter. The mother did not like hunters, especially when she had her baby with her, so she stopped and growled, and the little fellow crept close up to her side.

I needn't tell you about the fight, except that the mother was killed, and the hunter came up to take away the cub, which he wanted to have for a pet. The young Bear didn't understand much about the fight, nor feel much afraid of the man, but he tried to growl like his mother, though he had no teeth to carry out his threats.

The hunter, however, only laughed at his attempts to be a big Bear, took him up in his arms and carried him off through the woods and down the mountain, till they reached a little house made of boards and called a "Redwood Shanty."

This was the man's house, and it was where the Bear baby was to live, too. Before he got to the new home he had been named Bob, and a strange new life began for him from that moment.

His first and only attack of homesickness was that evening,

when he began to feel hungry, and mourned for his mother and his supper. His new master quickly gave him something to eat, something very nice and sweet, that he never had tasted, and he was comforted. Before long he forgot all about his home in the mountains, was tame and fond of his master, and pleased to live in a house where there was so much to be seen.



BOB.

He was frolicsome as a kitten, and full of funny pranks. Among other things he liked a doll-baby. He would take a round stick of wood, about the right size for him, hold it in his arms and rock back and forth with it, as though he was a careful mamma and that was his precious baby. He would walk around on two legs, holding the play-baby with the greatest care, and looking very droll indeed.

But—like some little girls—he became tired of a doll, and thought a live baby would be better. One day the idea struck him that Tom, the cat, was a suitable person for him to play with. Now Tom was a most dignified, large gray cat, who never forgot his sense of propriety enough to run after a ball, or in any way descend to frivolous amusements. He passed his days quietly in the Redwood Shanty, dressing his fur, and making his dainty toilets; but his nights he spent out in society, and he was thought to have a voice of wonderful compass and tone.

It was this important personage whom one day Bob suddenly

seized in his arms, and treated to a good hug, a real bear's hug.

This was too much! Tom regarded it as an insult, and resented it accordingly. With sharp claws he soon made Bob drop him, rubbing his nose and howling pitifully. He never meddled with Tom again, but returned to his wooden baby, which had no claws to scratch back.

Another of his enjoyments was to have something to suck; a blanket, a skin, or anything. He would spend hours in this curious amusement.

He was also fond of riding. Some of the neighbors kept pigs, and no sooner did one come near the shanty than Bob was out in a hurry, perched upon the creature's back, holding on with his sharp claws, and now and then boxing its ears, while the unhappy pig ran and squealed, and after a while shook him off, taking good care never to come that way again.

One of Bob's greatest pleasures was to look out of the window and see what passed. He would lay his fore-paws crossed on the sill, and resting his head on them look out by the hour, closely watching everything, much to the amazement of passers-by, who were not acquainted with him.

Bob was very fond of eating, and was afflicted with what kind grandmothers call a "growing appetite." He never liked to see nice morsels on the way to other mouths than his own. When the table was spread, and his master, and perhaps a visitor, sat down to their meal, Bob would get on to the table—since no chair was provided—and prepare to secure his share of the good things. In spite of raps on the paws, he would now and then slyly grab a tempting mouthful, and if a too delightful bit on a fork was in danger of being forever lost to him, in the mouth of

a man, he would suddenly make a dive, snatch it off, and swallow it before one could wink, looking all the time so wise and funny, that one could not help laughing at the naughty trick. But at last he was punished for this. His master took a very hot potato on his fork, and Master Bob seized it, and crammed it into his mouth. Of course it burned him, and after that he never put a potato into his mouth, until he had pulled it open and crushed it in his paws.

Sweets were his worst temptation ; the sugar-bowl was always irresistible to him. This taste once brought the little Bear into serious trouble. In his master's absence he found the molasses jug, and in his haste to get at the sweet stuff he broke the jar. He had his fill, to be sure, but he daubed his shaggy coat all over with the sticky mass, so that he was not fit to be near people, even in a shanty.

His master tied him to a tree outside, where he soon wore a smooth path walking around, for he didn't at all fancy being tied up. He would walk one way as far as his rope would let him, then turn a somerset and walk the other way ; when he reached the end that way he would repeat the somerset, and turn again, and so he would do by the hour. Of course, all this rolling caused the leaves and dirt to stick to his daubed coat, and made him look like a vagabond Bear, and not in the least like a pet who lived in a house. It was two or three weeks before he was clean enough to go back to the shanty.

Bob's master slept on a sort of shelf, hung to the side of the house, and resting on two legs in front, which in the day-time was shut up out of the way, in the small shanty, and Bob's bed was exactly under his master's, simply because it was the only spot in the house where he would stay.

That did very well while he was little, though he was full of fun, and often pulled the bedclothes off, as though for a joke. But when he grew bigger and could reach the bed, trouble began. Sometimes the master would be suddenly wakened by what seemed to be an earthquake, heaving up the very foundation of things. Clutching the side of the bed to hold on, and waking enough to see what was the matter, he would find Master Bob sitting up, and deliberately shaking the bed, to stir up his master. Of course he would get a scolding, and would lie down quite meekly, while his master tried to sleep again.

Several times every night the mischievous fellow would arouse the tired hunter, apparently for nothing but to see if he was there, and secure companionship for himself, for he was evidently lonely.

After a while he grew so big, that when he sat up—which Bears are fond of doing—he could throw his master fairly on to the floor, with all his bedding, and that seemed to Bob the greatest joke of the season. Scarcely a night passed now, without an episode of this kind, and the long-suffering master at last lost his patience, and made up his mind that Bob was too big to live in a shanty and be a pet.

He thought of a plan which would be comfortable for his old comrade, for he was very fond of him after all, and before long the time arrived when he resolved to send Bruin to a new home.

A man came along one day, who was a sort of a peddler between the towns and scattered shanties, and to him Bob was intrusted to be taken to the nearest railroad station, whence he was to go in the cars, to a park in a certain city, where a few animals were kept.

While the business was going on, Bob became suspicious that

something was wrong, and he retired to the corner under the bed, a sulky, regular Grown-Bear like his mamma. When his master fastened a rope to him he was rather snappish; but when the man took hold of it to get him out, he suddenly became a savage big Bear who would stand no trifling.

He refused to go. The man pulled, the Bear seized the bedding; off it came, and he felt himself going. He made a sudden snatch at the bed itself; down it came about his ears, and the rope still drawing. He made a wild grab and seized the table, where he had eaten so many nice dinners; it was a light affair, and came down in an instant, and a sudden jerk of the rope brought Bob to the door of the shanty. With a last plunge he caught the door-post, and there he held. The peddler could not stir him, so Bob's master and a neighbor took hold. With all their strength they pulled; with all his strength he held on. The rope was new; something must give. It did; it was the shanty, and down came the whole about his ears.

When he saw the ruin he had made, Bob was frightened, and he was quickly hauled upon the wagon, into a rough cage they had hastily made, and in a few minutes was driven off, leaving his master to begin life again by building his house over.

But this was not the end of the Bear. The insult of being in a cage and drawn off by a horse was too great, he would not endure it. So he curled up in a corner of the hated box, and refused to eat or to be comforted.

As quickly as possible the wild passenger was carried to his new home, and put into a nice large place in a pretty park.

His quarters consisted of a comfortable dark room underground, where he could retire when not inclined for society, and a large open yard in front, where there was a big tank of water,

a charming post to climb, and strong bars to keep strangers out. Now Bob had a pair of sociable black Bears for next-door neighbors, and every fine day he had visits from hundreds of people, who gave him apples and candy and cakes to his heart's content.

He soon recovered his spirits, and grew to be a great favorite with the children, and the last I knew of him he was an enormous, good-natured Grizzly Bear, and the pet of that park.

Another pet I want to tell you about, is called the Australian Bear. The animal looks like a small bear, as you may see by its name, but you know it is never safe to judge by the outside, and the naturalists, who decide "who's who" among animals, say that he is more nearly related to the kangaroo.

Bear, or Kangaroo, or whatever he may be, his name in Australia is the Koala or Bear, and a pretty little creature he is. He is somewhat bigger than a large cat, with long white fringe on his ears, and soft velvety nose.

The Mother Koala has a fur bag, like her cousin the kangaroo, in which she carries her babies till they are big enough to look around a little, and then she carries them about on her back, where they hold on for good, and see the world at their leisure.

In his native woods the Koala spends his life in the trees, eating leaves, and sleeping away the daylight, curled up in a bunch in the fork of a tree, where he looks like a fur ball.

He wears a beautiful soft coat, of reddish gray fur, and has no tail. He can snarl and scold, but his usual noise is a soft little bark, and he is so good-tempered and amusing, that he is much liked for a pet.

One gentleman brought up a Koala from the cradle (the fur cradle, you know), and he lived in the house with the family.

He always spent the night in his master's room, part of the time climbing over the furniture and on the shelves, and when tired, creeping into bed, and nestling up close to his friend for a nap.

Though living among people, he could not get over his love of sleeping in the day-time, so he would seize tight hold of something, often a servant's dress-skirt, and there he would hold on and sleep, while she went about her work, never being disturbed by her motions, and never losing his hold.

In fact, his paws were made more for holding on than for walking, having the toes divided into two sets, two on one side, and three on the other, that oppose each other as our thumb does the four fingers. So the little Koala can hang on to anything, a branch or a dress-skirt, and climb most rapidly; but his walk on the ground is a sort of crawl.

Sometimes he would take his place on his master's shoulder, sitting at the back of his neck and holding on to his hair, not moving, whatever his master did. One would not think that a pleasant load to carry about, but we all know how a pet-lover will allow himself to be imposed upon. I have known one to creep humbly into the back side of a bed, not to disturb a pet dog who occupied the front, and another to sit in a most uncomfortable position, lest the cat, who had placed herself in the way, should be awakened.

The pet Australian Bear had one curious and unusual taste. He was extremely fond of tobacco. He delighted in an old pipe to lick, and when sitting on his master's shoulder, would do his best to snatch away the pipe he was smoking.

CHAPTER NINETEENTH.

A SAILOR WITH WINGS.

WHILE the children were interested in seals and their neighbors in the sea, Uncle Karl showed them a picture of a bird that seals are fond of—to eat—and that made up his mind to be a sailor.

It is a droll-looking creature, standing up straight like a man, two or three feet high, and it is as odd as it looks. It is a Penguin, and it came from an island far off in the sea, where its family have their homes and build their nests in great crowds, like a large city.

One island has been lately visited by an English ship, and many new things learned about this curious bird, which does not fly, but swims. It is Nightingale Island, and it is told about in the late writings of Sir Wyville Thompson.

This small island seems to be the head-quarters for Penguins. The ground is covered with tough stiff grass, six or eight feet high, and called Tussock Grass, under which the nests are made. The whole place, six or eight acres, is divided, under the grass, into streets or passage-ways, and there are millions of families living in it.

Penguin City, as it may be called, is not a pleasant city to visit, for the streets are kept constantly wet and muddy, the grass is matted into a jungle, and the roar is worse than that of

Broadway. Besides, the old birds do not fancy visitors. Not from fear of them, for they scream and peck furiously, but because a visitor cannot walk without crushing eggs and babies at every step. No one can blame them for complaining, I'm sure.

The nests are all on the ground, each one has one or two eggs, and Mother Penguin sits up "like folks."

A funny sight is to see the birds go out to fish. A thousand or more will start together from the various streets of the city, almost always turning to the left when meeting another party. They are dressed in slate-colored coat and white vest, and they have red eyes with black pupils.

Down they march to the sea, in a sort of hobbling hop, bobbing their heads and wabbling their small flippers, or what would be wings in any common bird, looking wonderfully human as they jump down the rocks, both pink feet held close together.

But once let them plunge into the sea, and there's no more clumsiness nor awkwardness. The birds are as much at home as fishes, chasing and catching fish, swimming under water, and frolicking like a party of school-boys out for a swim.

The baby Penguins found on this island, are black, ugly-looking creatures, shaped like an egg, though of course they are lovely to their parents. They grow fast, and as soon as they are big enough to walk out, they are formed into parties, you might call them schools, and each party is in charge of an old Penguin, who looks after them carefully, though everybody feeds them.

As soon as they are able to take a swimming lesson, away they go to the water, where they plump in, and dive and swim like their mothers. Sometimes a mother Penguin will come to

the surface with two baby Penguins on her flippers, holding on for good, and having the greatest fun in the world.

Should a hungry shark come along and think he would dine on Penguin, they see him in an instant, and before you can wink, down they go to the bottom, where no shark can touch them, then quickly scramble up to the shore and come out of the water. On the beach they stand and chatter, and gabble a while, and then each one goes to its own nest.

Besides the shark, the Penguin has another enemy, much smaller. It is a bird who likes eggs for breakfast, and does not hesitate to go to the very nest to get them. These robbers, who are not nearly so large as Penguins, go in pairs when they hunt. One stands each side of Madam Penguin, sitting firmly on her nest, resolved to protect the eggs with her life. But they are too sharp for her; one teases her till she turns and leans over to give it a peck, when the other quickly tips out the egg, snatches it up, and is gone before the victim knows what she has lost.

I have told you in another book some curious things about the education of the young Penguin, how he never gets his dinner without taking a lecture too, so I will not repeat them here.

When Sir Wyville Thompson's party visited Penguin City, tramping through its crowded streets, and disturbing the homes on every side, the birds, who away from home are mild and dignified to the last degree, became perfectly furious, and drove their sharp red bills into every man that came near. But worse than men were the dogs which followed them. Such monsters were never before seen in their city, and every bird tried to thrust a bill into them.

Some of the later visitors found a wretched little dog in the middle of the main street. He had lost his master, and was howling pitifully. Around him in an excited ring stood the Penguins, scolding and threatening him. He dared not move, and he had to be carried out above the heads of the insulted birds.

The sleeping Penguin looks very queer, for he goes to bed standing up, only turning his head down, as though he had wings to put it under, as other birds have. He looks as though he had lost his head, and rather "uncanny" altogether.

Sailors call a Penguin a Woggin, and the story that Uncle Karl told the children, was of one which took a fancy to be a sailor. It was on an American whaleship, cruising about the coast of Brazil some years ago.

One day they had killed a whale and were cutting it up, when a Penguin swam up and tried to climb upon the creature. One of the sailors went to the bird, took him in his arms—he not making the slightest objection—and carried him on board the ship. After looking at him awhile, and having some talk about it, they decided not to kill so confiding a fellow, so they threw him overboard, never expecting to see him again.

Perhaps the poor creature had never been kindly treated before; at any rate he evidently made up his mind to live on that ship, for he soon came back, and begged, by his actions, to be taken up again. The captain gave orders to take him aboard and see what he wanted. He wanted to stay, as he plainly declared, by walking in the most dignified way to the after part of the ship, where the officers belong, and at once making himself thoroughly at home.

He was never in the least wild or afraid, but would let any

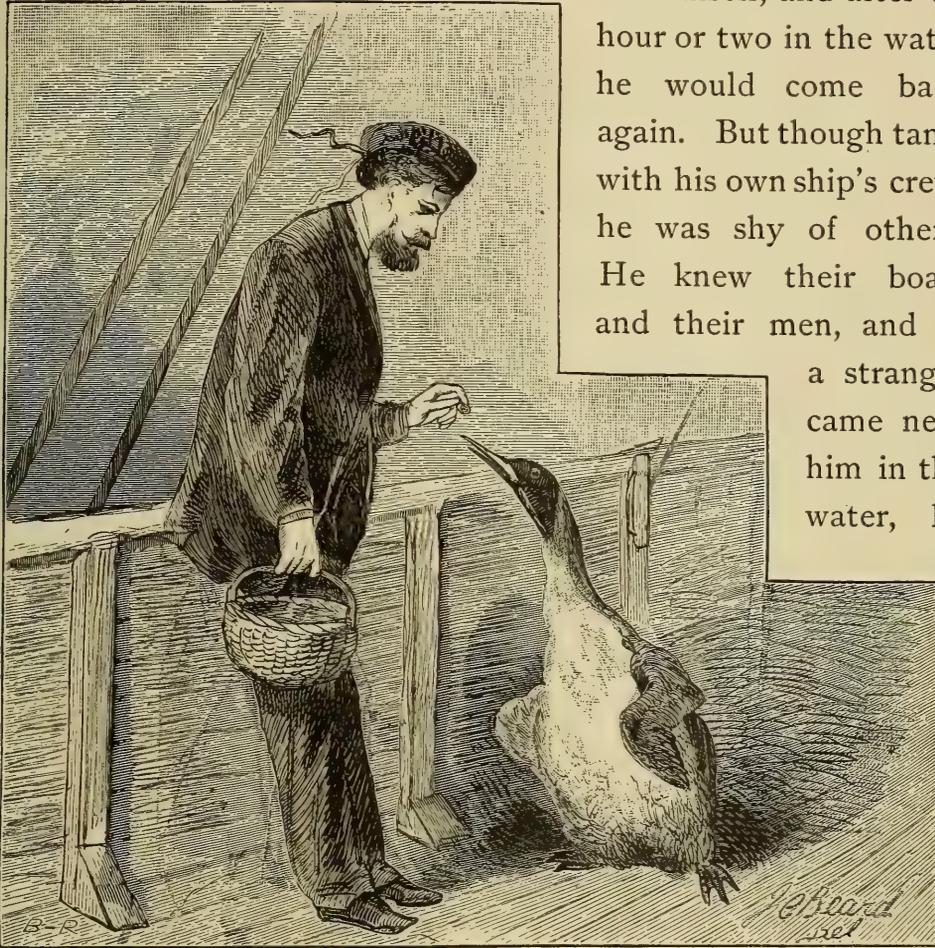
sailor come up to him, and of course he soon became a great pet. They named him Jack Woggin, and he seemed pleased with his name, coming, when called, like a dog.

Every day when it was calm, he was put overboard to fish for himself, and after an

hour or two in the water he would come back again. But though tame with his own ship's crew, he was shy of others.

He knew their boats and their men, and if

a stranger came near him in the water, he



DINNER TIME.

would dive and get away; but if his own boat came, he would get in.

One day he was dropped overboard to fish, and went off with some of his wild Penguin friends, no doubt astonishing them by

stories of men, and life on board a ship, when a sudden squall came up, and the ship was driven several miles away.

In the hurry and confusion Jack Woggin was forgotten; but after a while, when the storm was over, he was remembered, and the man aloft, whose business it is to keep watch for everything, had orders to look out for Jack, though no one thought he would ever be seen again.

In two hours, however, the joyful cry came down, "Jack Woggin in sight!" and panting, and tired out, the queer sailor reached his ship. He was taken aboard, welcomed, and petted more than ever.

When Jack was hungry he would walk up to the man at the helm, and look steadily and wistfully in his face, till he was fed with bread, or bits of beef freshened. Then he would walk to the water-tank, and wait till a drink had been supplied.

One day, after he had lived with them for three months, and all the sailors had become much attached to him, he asked for some dinner. There happened to be no freshened meat, so the captain, not to disappoint him, gave him some slices of salt meat. Alas! that was his last meal. In two hours Jack Woggin was dead.

The sailors took it almost as much to heart as if they had lost a friend, and buried their pet with all due sailor honors.

CHAPTER TWENTIETH.

AFTER HIS DINNER.

ONE of the funniest things the children saw on the famous birthday, was a little fellow on a hunting trip after his dinner. His home was among the stones in a big tank, in which lived also tube-builders, anemones, and other curious little fellows, and he was a Prawn.

He started out while they were looking, and they stood before the glass a long time to watch, in fact, until he found what he wanted, and ate it up.

He began by searching around the edge of the tank, stepping gingerly on his tiptoes, and thrusting his first and second pair of feet into every nook and cranny, under the pebbles, and into the shells of any little fellow whose door happened to be open.

If he had chanced to touch the owner, he would have dragged him out in an instant, for mild as he looks, he is fierce as a tiger when hungry. But happily for them, every little fellow retired into his back room, or shut tight his door, and Mr. Prawn found no one at home.

Now the scent of the Prawn is so keen, that he can tell when a bit of meat has merely fallen through the water, and before this one had got around the tank, he caught the odor of a bit of clam flesh that the keeper had a little before dropped in, to show the children how an anemone eats. The moment the

Prawn reached the spot, he turned and dashed in an instant at the Anemone, which was ten times as big as he was, and had dozens of long arms to take care of itself, and hold on to its food.

The Anemone was as large as a tea-cup, and had already seized the bit of meat, and being particularly fond of its dinner, had no notion of giving it up, so it held on for dear life. But the saucy Prawn, nothing daunted by its size and its swinging arms, pounced on the meat and tried to drag it away.

The morsel was already swallowed, but he didn't mind that; he thrust a pair of his longest feet down the Anemone's throat, and hauled it out, while his other feet kept the enemy's arms employed, so that they could not close over the mouth he was robbing.

Sometimes when the Anemone is very hungry, they have a regular fight over it, and now and then it manages to get its arms up and protect itself; but this time the impudent rogue got away with the food, and carried it off to his home in the rocks, where he coolly picked it to pieces with his dainty claws, eating the choice parts, and throwing the rest away.

A Prawn is a curious little fellow, two or three inches long, and so delicate in color, and so transparent, that he looks like a shadow gliding about in the water. He is an inquisitive little body, interested in everything that is going on. He has two large round eyes, standing up on stalks, and if you stare at him, he will stare back quite as boldly; but if you come too near, he gives one flirt of his tail and springs back out of sight, into some quiet nook, where he will gaze out curiously, to see what such a big fellow means to do next.

He is always wide awake at night, and if a light is brought

into the room, his two great eyes will be seen shining out of the dark water like round fiery lanterns, or globes of light, while nothing of his body can be seen.

Jerking himself backward is a favorite movement of his, and he does it by means of his strong, fan-like tail; but he can walk if he likes. He is particularly well provided with legs; five pairs he has for use, and five pairs for show, called false legs. He can walk about on the ten useful legs, and paddle about in the water—when not in a hurry—with the ten false ones, which are behind the others, and much smaller.

All these little creatures, who live in shell houses just big enough for them, have to grow, you know, as well as others, and as they do so they throw off each suit when they outgrow it, and another one, a little larger comes on them. To see this operation of getting out of the old clothes, is a very curious thing, and has been done in an aquarium.

When the hungry little Prawn stops eating, and seems uneasy and anxious, it is time to watch him. He will fidget about till he finds a place to suit him, perhaps a convenient piece of weed in a quiet corner, and there he will fix himself, tightly hooking two or three pairs of legs on to the weed, so that he shall not fall while he pulls off his coat. When well fastened, he begins to swing from side to side, to loosen his body from its tight-fitting shell, which, you must remember, grew on him, and so is really a part of him. While he is rocking about, his front legs rub against each other, as if to loosen them too, and his eyes roll from side to side for the same purpose.

At last, after some time of this work, the old shell breaks apart in the middle, and the delighted little fellow carefully draws back his head, antennæ, legs, feet, and everything, till

his eyes appear above the old shell. Thus having safely got out the most important part of his body, he gives a sudden jerk, and pops out of the rest in a flash, leaving the whole empty shell hanging to the weed, as perfect as when he was inside, even to the gauzy covering of the eyes, and the fine hairs on the legs. It is a wonderful and beautiful thing.

But the poor Prawn—though free from its cramped house, and of course very happy, is extremely soft and weak. He is unable to stand up, and falls helpless on the ground, and now you see why he was so anxious to find a safe place. This state lasts but a few minutes, however; very soon he gathers himself up, and swims off to his dark house in the rocks, where he stays till a new shell hardens over his soft body, when he once more comes out for something to eat, larger, as well as hungrier and fiercer than ever, but most beautiful, with colors clear and bright.

This interesting little creature has one admirable trait of character; he is extremely neat. One of his most important duties is cleaning house, and he is fully equipped for the work with a pair of scrubbing brushes. Water of course is always ready to his hand, his house is just big enough to cover him, and nearly every moment that he is not attending to the great business of getting his dinner, he is busily engaged in scrubbing his shell house.

His brushes never are lost, for they are fastened to the ends of one pair of his legs. Into every angle, under and over, inside and outside his house, he vigorously thrusts them, taking off every particle of dirt, and keeping it in a state of beautiful polish.

These scrubbing legs are curious affairs. Each one is covered with hairs, standing out every way, and at the ends a sort of

hand, or pair of pincers, which is used to pick off any object that the brushes will not remove. When his house is in perfect order, he turns his attention to his legs, and his long antennæ, and never rests till each one is clean and ready for use. This is done not by the scrubbing brushes, but by his foot-jaws.

Perhaps you have seen Prawns on the table, with their tails curled up under their bodies, and their shells of a bright pink color. They are not pink when alive; they are translucent, as I said, and sometimes they look as though they were lighted up inside, like a lantern. The shell house is a pretty gray color, with delicate stripes of black and buff, and bits of shining white, while his legs are dressed in bands of blue and gold.

His tail consists of plates, that slide back and forth over each other, and when spread out make a broad fan. They are edged and dotted with pale red and brown. In fact, there is hardly a creature in the sea, where there are so many strange objects, more beautifully dressed than this little Prawn.

The baby Prawn is very different from the grown-up. His body is shaped like an egg, and he has one eye in the middle of his forehead, and three pairs of swimming feet. But he grows fast, his shape alters, he casts off his skin, and after a while he has fringes on his legs, and a forked tail. After still more changes, he comes out a full-grown Prawn, as I have described him, with two eyes standing up on stalks, two ears in the highest pair of antennæ, and two noses in the lowest.

I have spoken of his being always hungry, and rather savage in his efforts to supply his wants. You must not think he is greedy; he was made hungry, and never to be satisfied while a morsel of food was to be found. It is his only business in life to eat, because, if the truth must be told, he's a born scavenger.

That is why he lives in the edge of the sea, to clear it of all unpleasant things, and it is partly owing to the prawn family being always hungry, that the sea water is so clear and pure, and so beautiful to look at.

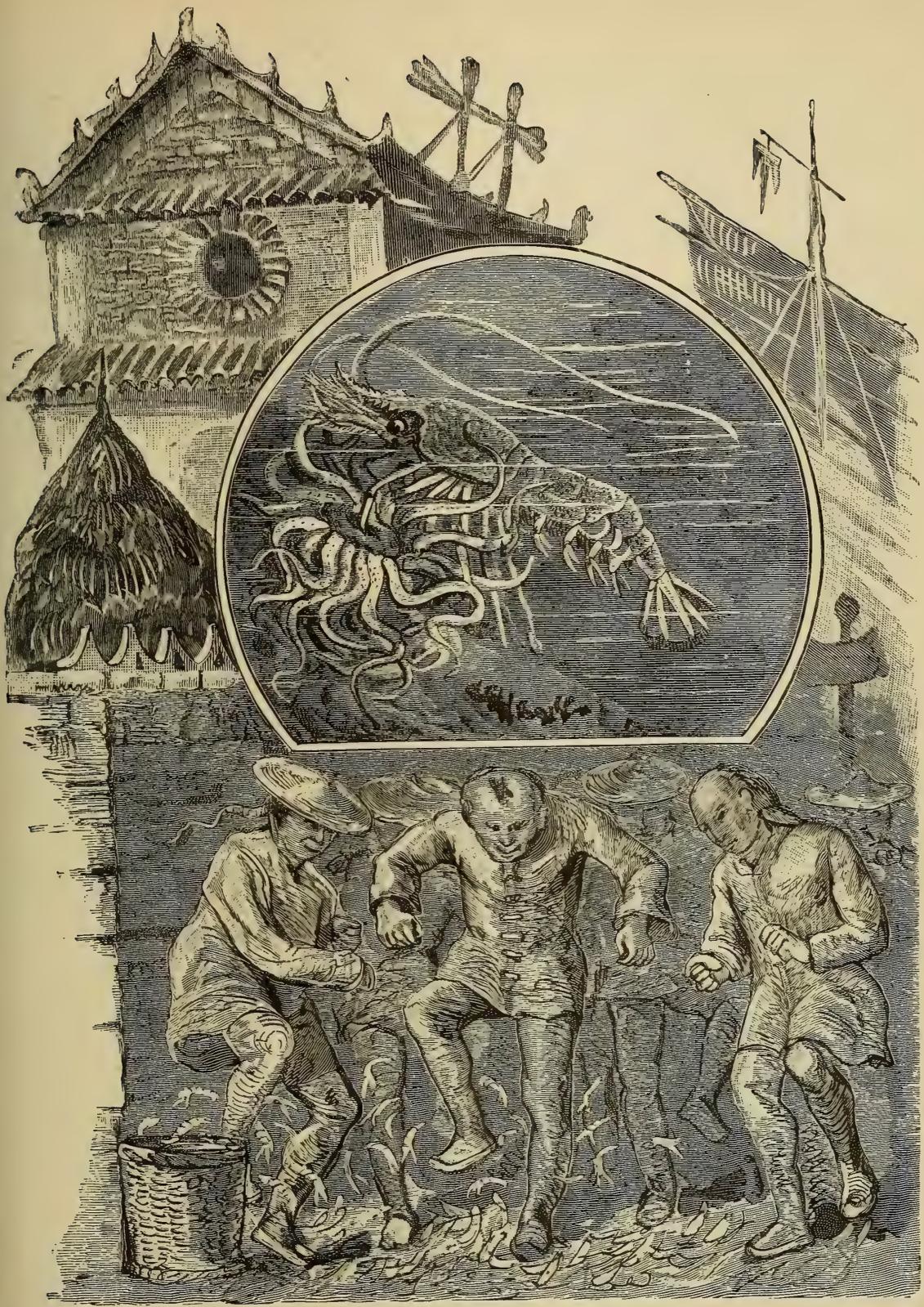
Prawns are lively in an aquarium, and their pranks and antics are funny to see ; and they are also said to be very affectionate, often holding on to each other, and walking or swimming about side by side.

One of the Prawn's nearest relatives in the sea is the Shrimp, which is also considered a nice morsel to eat, and is caught by people near the shore for that purpose. It is so much like its cousin the Prawn, that many people cannot tell them apart.

Shrimps are plenty the world over. They are caught in Borneo by a sort of big comb of bamboo, which a man in a boat drags along the sand, in such a way that when the little creatures jump away from the comb, they are nearly sure to fall into the boat. In England they are caught with nets, and sorted and boiled before leaving the boat, for a very curious reason—that their tails may be curled up! If they die (the shrimper says), their tails stand out as in life, and people will not have such unnatural monsters on any terms; but if killed by hot water, they “tucks their tails in tidy underneath 'em,” and then they sell readily.

Shrimps are common in New York markets, and in San Francisco the Chinese have made a great business of preparing them for the table. It is a curious operation, and perhaps you would like to hear of it.

To begin with, the lively little fellows are caught in great nets, and each boat that goes out brings in about a ton and a half at a time. As in England, the naughty little Shrimp has



FEET DO THE WORK

to be boiled to make him curl up his tail, and into big vats they all go for the purpose.

When well cooked, and turned of a lovely bright red color, the tons of Shrimps are spread out on a hard piece of ground, to dry and bleach for a few days, and then a party of our yellow-skinned fellow-men come on, to separate the shells and dirt from the meat. Remember the vast piles of them, and don't be surprised to hear that fingers are useless here; feet do the work! With their clumsy wooden shoes the Chinamen shuffle back and forth, till they have broken the shells, when the whole mass is put into a machine with three spouts, which does the work of thousands of the most nimble fingers. It separates the material into three parts, sending the whole Shrimps out of one spout, the crushed ones out of another, and the shells out of the third.

The dried and shriveled Shrimps are then sent to market in San Francisco, and sold for six or eight cents a pound, while the broken ones are ground into flour, and used in cooking by those who like it, and the shells are sent to China to enrich the tea-plants.

The Shrimp has many cousins; the Mantis Shrimp, who lives on the seaweed and catches little water creatures as the Mantis does flies; the Caddis Shrimp, who builds himself a house; the Gouty Shrimp, whose joints look swelled; the Scarlet Shrimp, who doesn't wait till he's boiled to turn red; the Sword Shrimp, from Japan; the Chameleon Shrimp, who changes his color; the Opossum Shrimp, who carries her eggs in a bag, and the Spiny Shrimp, who wears his teeth outside.

You see it is a large family, and a curious one to study, I assure you.

CHAPTER TWENTY-FIRST.

ALWAYS IN TROUBLE.

THERE was one fellow in the Aquarium who amused the visitors very much, by constantly getting himself into trouble. One would think he was an awkward creature, just learning to swim, instead of an old salt, born and brought up, you may say, in the briny deep.

He is a Horse-Foot Crab, or *Limulus*, and all his distress is caused by ambition. Not contented with the sort of life for which he was fitted, he sets his heart on doing the one thing impossible to him. His only desire seems to be to climb, and climbing is a thing that *Limulus* cannot do.

He spends his time in that pleasant home, in trying to scale the rocks, or the side of his glass house, losing his balance, and falling over on to his back, then wildly pawing the air—or the water—with all his many legs, and violently flapping the curious plates of which his body seems to be made, to turn himself over.

Neither pawing nor flapping are of the least use, and he slowly falls to the ground, where another member begins to help. This is the tail, long and stiff, and very strong. With the tail the Horse-Foot pushes on the ground, and perhaps after a long time he will get back to his natural position.

Now one would think he would be wiser about that climbing business; but no! away he goes, after a few minutes' rest, and

up that rock he is determined to walk. He gets up a few inches, till nearly straight, when over he goes again, flapping and struggling as before.

This he keeps up nearly all the time. Go to any tank where lives a *Limulus*, and there are several, and you will nearly always see one or more on his back, making the wildest efforts to turn over, and looking so distressed, that you feel as if you must run to the keeper for help. You see at once that this Crab is not very bright, and, in fact, the keepers say that he is perfectly stupid.

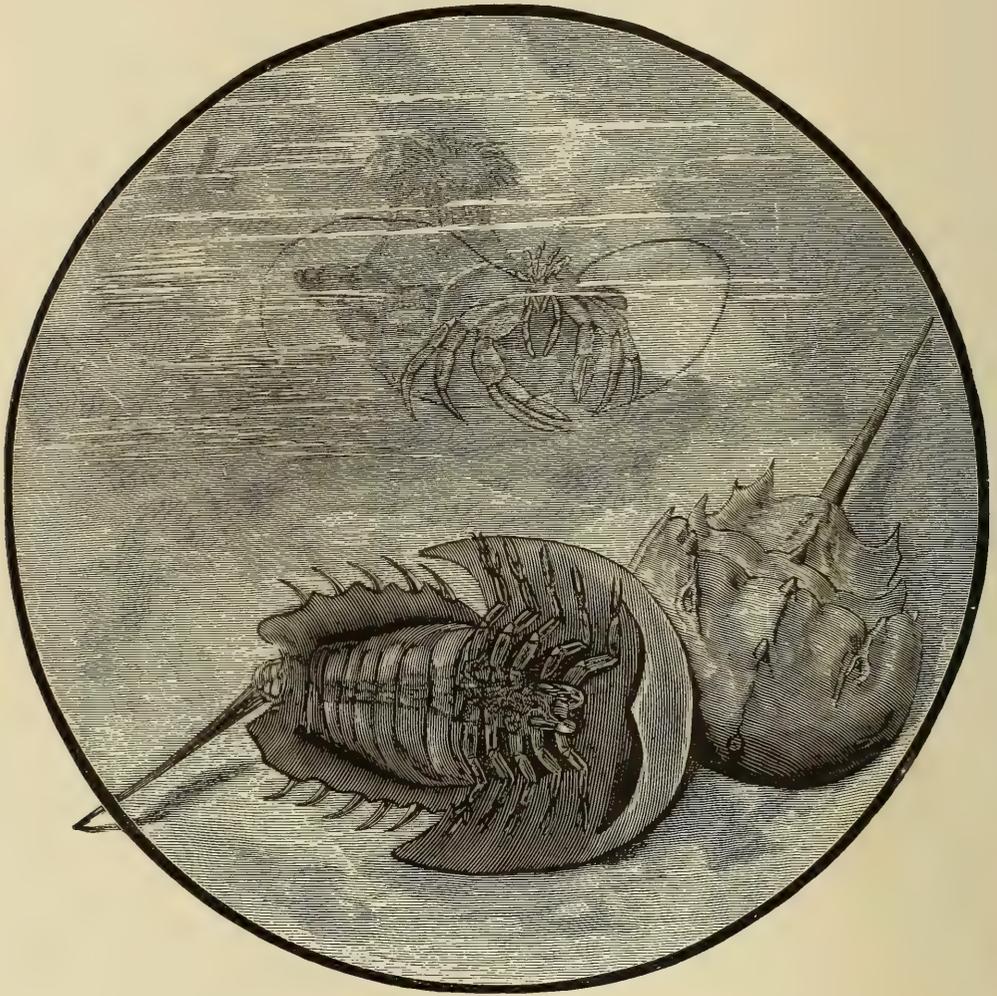
The day the children were there, however, they saw a curious scene, that looked very much like a kind and neighborly act, in one of these creatures, though the keeper insisted it was mere accident, and not in the least intentional. For my part I don't believe he knows, and I shall continue to believe that at least one *Limulus* has a notion in his head.

This is the story: A small *Limulus*, about the size of a silver dollar, lay struggling on his back, where he had fallen, when one of his brethren, a little smaller, started out for a walk.

First he paid a visit to a Hermit Crab, who was lolling out of his house—borrowed from a Whelk who doesn't want a house any more—looking about for any stray bit of food that might fall his way. Over the Hermit's big shell went *Limulus*, thrusting his feet into every crack and corner, when no sooner did he reach the door, with his long prying legs, than Mr. Hermit popped into his back room, away out of the reach of his impertinent neighbor, and pulled the open door of his house down towards the ground, so that no one could get in.

On went the Horse-Foot, and soon came to his bigger relative, struggling on his back. Walking up close to him, he

deliberately bent down that side, put his shell under the edge of the other, and gave a sudden push, as though trying to turn him over.



A FRIEND IN NEED.

The Crab went partly over, but fell back. Then the neighboring fellow backed a little farther off, and tried it again, with more force. This time he nearly did it, and a third time he made the attempt, starting further back, and moving much

more violently. This time the little fellow flopped over, and the other one walked directly away.

Now perhaps it was an accident, but Marcy will always believe that he knew what he was about. She was curious to see what the relieved little fellow would do, if he would know enough to keep right side up, so she watched him. He didn't; if you'll believe me, it was not one minute before he was back again, worse than before, for he was between a rock and the glass, where it seemed as though he could never get up, not even with the help of a friend. Marcy was disgusted with his stupidity, and left him, and he may be there yet for all I know.

The Horse-Foot Crab is a curious fellow. He is shaped like the bottom of a horse's foot, and his shell is in three parts, two covering his body, and the third, long and sharp, to cover the tail.

His eyes stand up on the top of his house, like a pair of dormer windows, and another pair of what are called simple eyes are in front of these. His teeth are—where you would never suspect teeth to be—on his legs!

He carries his house on his back, like most of the little creatures that live in the sea, and when he gets too big for one, he just comes out of it, and another one grows for him.

The baby *Limulus* is a quarter of an inch broad, or about as big as a small pea, and an old one is sometimes two feet, so you see he moves into a great number of houses while he is growing; in fact it is said that he never stays more than a year in one house. He would do to join the army of people who live in rented houses in a large city, and move every spring.

It is a curious thing to see him move out of an old house, that he has grown too big to fit. He has no trouble, as do others

of the crab family, no twisting and pulling for him; he simply opens the front door—as it were—and comes out. It is extremely funny; it looks as though he came out of himself.

Limulus, when he chooses his home, lives in the mud and sand, near the shore, and he's a famous digger. The front of his shell is shaped something like a chopping-knife, and when he braces himself with his stiff tail, and bends down this front, he can dig himself out of sight very quickly, especially as all his numerous feet help push out the sand on each side.

This digging is most useful when the Mother Limulus gets ready to make her nursery, in the spring. For some time she carries the eggs about with her, under her shell house. Sometimes there are as many as half a pint, or a coffee-cup full.

But at last she goes up on shore when the tide is in, that is, the water is high up on the sand, and digs a hole just under water, where part of the day it is dry, and the warm sun shines on it, and here she leaves the eggs. The next wave covers them with sand, and she goes away happy, knowing that the sun will hatch them out, and that the baby Crabs will be wise enough to take care of themselves the minute they come out of the shell.

She is quite right, of course. In five or six weeks, out of every one of those eggs comes a Limulus baby, as big as a very small pea, and like its mother, only without a tail. There must be lively times around the sand nest, for these atoms of creatures run then and swim at once.

Each young Crab leaves a funny little track in the mud when it walks, two rows of small foot-prints. But after it moves out of its baby house, in about a month, it appears with a tail, and then the track is changed by a small furrow between the foot-prints.

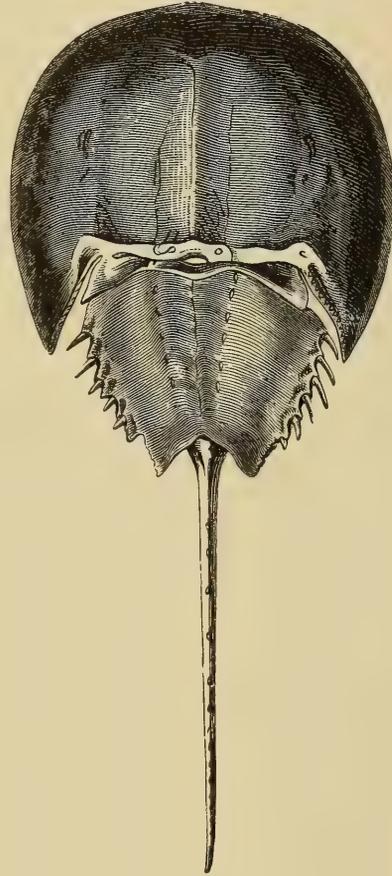
This family is carnivorous, that is to say, they eat meat, generally soft worms; and as I told you, they have teeth on their legs, and not in the mouth like other people. The mouth—you must know—is placed near the legs, to be handy to the teeth, and their way of eating is curious.

As they always draw the food under the shell house, and eat in private, no one knew exactly how it was done, till a gentleman—Rev. Mr. Lockwood—had one in his aquarium, and determined to peep into the house and see how the thing was managed.

He therefore let Mr. Limulus get very hungry, and then gave him a piece of meat which of course he at once pulled out of sight, and began to eat. When he had got well at work, Mr. Lockwood coolly tipped his house over, and since it is only a roof, he could see just how the operation was carried on.

The Crab was too hungry to mind, and went on with his dinner, and this is the way he did: With the claws of his two hinder legs he held the food tightly, and the teeth on the other four pairs rasped and tore it to bits, before it entered the mouth. He is well provided with eating tools, for he has eight jaws, and about a hundred and fifty teeth.

Limulus is the latin name of this curious fellow. He is also



FOR A SAUCEPAN.

called King Crab, and one of the family living in the island of Molucca is called in the books, the Long-tailed Molucca Crab, and the long spiny covering of his tail is made into a dangerous arrow tip. Another of the family living in the East Indies, is named by the people the Saucepan Crab, because, alas! when dead and eaten up, and robbed of his house, it makes—with the tail for a handle—a very useful saucepan, or ladle to dip water.

CHAPTER TWENTY-SECOND.

THE LITTLE HERMIT.

ON the side of a rock, in the same glass house with *Limulus*, lives a curious little fellow, who spends life entirely in fishing; yet—strange as you may think it—he lives in a small stone cottage of his own, and never goes out. He does his fishing by opening a pair of folding-doors at the top of his house, and throwing his nets into the water, and his whole life is strange and marvelous.

The children were much amused to watch this funny operation of fishing, and interested in the story of his life, which is more wonderful than a fairy tale.

He did not begin life as a hermit—far from it! He was a lively little atom of a creature, almost too small to be seen, and quite too small to be examined, without a microscope. He was an hundredth of an inch long. His dress was a fashionable smoke color, not *because* it is fashionable, however, but because all his family since the world began have worn the same shade. Fashions don't change under the green waves.

You have seen a baby who feels well throw his arms and legs, and act as though he wanted to fly?—just so the baby Hermit threw his members; and having the advantage over a human baby of six legs and a light body, he jerked himself about in the water in a very lively way. A strange-looking fellow he

was. He had a sort of shield rounding up over his back, and ending in a slender point, with teeth on the edges. Under this shield was his body, with a proboscis and six legs—queer legs they were too—without feet, claws, or even hooks. He could neither walk, grasp, nor climb.

Little did he care for that!—swimming was what he wanted to do, and for that use nothing could be better than the fringe of stout hairs along one edge of each leg. Flapping at the same moment his six fringed legs, the little fellow could jerk himself about as much as he liked. To tell the truth, he behaved more like a frivolous young water flea, than like a sedate hermit. I forgot to tell you that he had a pair of horns and one eye—only one, though it was a nice big black one, directly in front.

Perhaps the strangest thing about him, in those young days, was the habit he had of always swimming on his back. But before long he threw off his first skin, and came out somewhat larger (one-seventieth of an inch), and with some improvements. His sharp tail was longer, his horns had a delicate brush of hairs on the ends, and he had a new pair of spines in front.

Now he began to take a more serious view of life, and though he still frolicked about in the water, he did sometimes alight on a sea-weed. The next time he threw off his old clothes, he came out in an altogether new style, and the third time he was different still. He had now a pair of shells, hinged together like oyster shells, his head was larger, he had two more pairs of legs, and—strangest of all—his one big eye had divided and become two.

By this time he began to tire of his childish, playful life, and to long for peace and quiet. He looked around for a place to

settle. Settling is a serious matter for his family, for where he once fixes himself there he spends the rest of his life. He is not very particular, however; a good place to hold on to, under water, is all he asks. A rock, a ship's bottom, a floating bit of wood, the back of a turtle, a water-snake, or a whale—either of those will do. Our young hermit soon settled upon a spot, and proceeded to make life-long arrangements.

This was the most wonderful operation of his strange life. He put his head against the rock—or whatever he selected—the two large antennæ mysteriously poured out a quantity of natural glue laid up for the purpose, and lo!—he was fastened for life! The whole front of his head and his great antennæ were in a moment tightly glued, and there he was held by the head for life. No storm could tear him away, and even after death it is almost impossible to loosen the hold.

Now for the last time the little hermit threw off his dress, and a great change appeared. From that day he cared but for two things—to be quiet and to eat. Eyes were useless, so away they went with the old clothes. The two shells went also. The legs came out longer and more hairy, and in fact became arms, able to grasp things. The body was shrunk almost to nothing, and above all he had a new house. It was a stony shell, and about the shape of a hut, with one opening on the top closed by a pair of doors beneath (or inside).

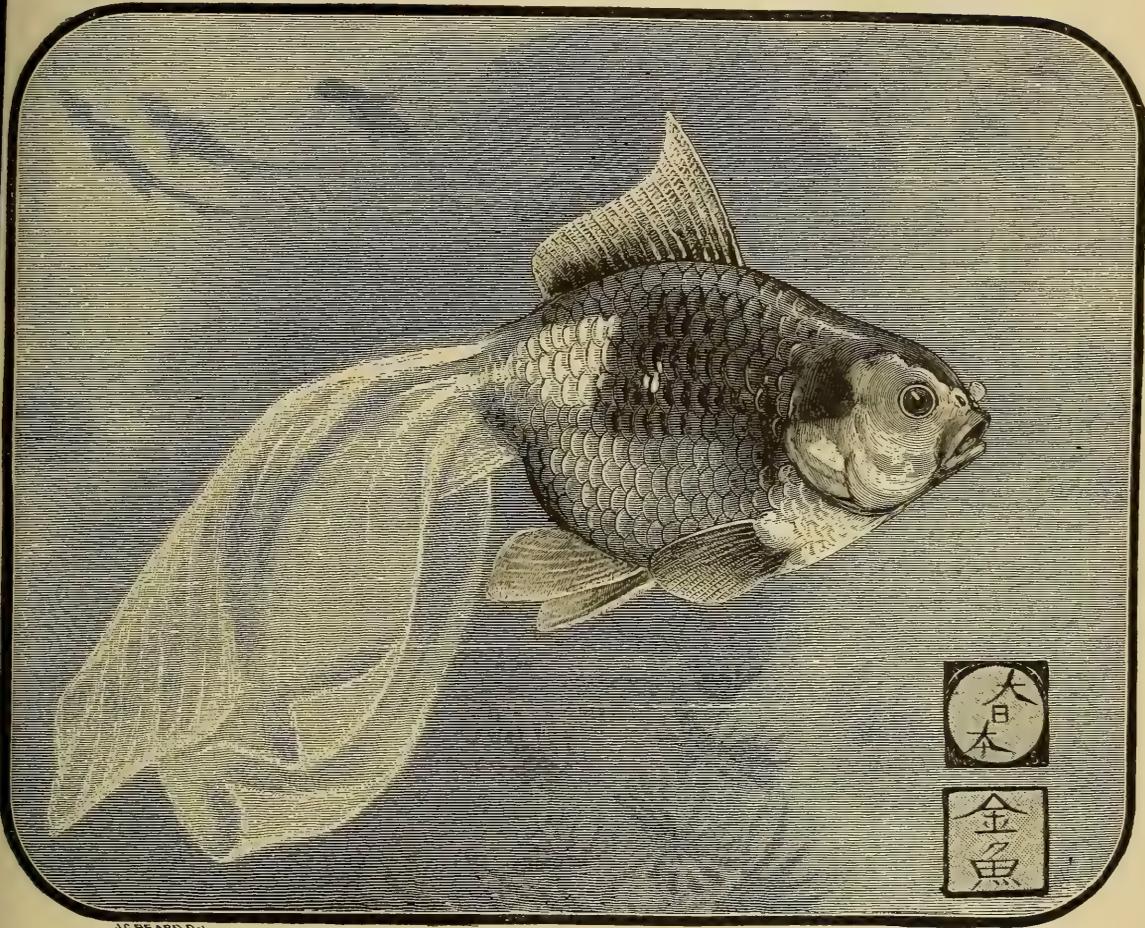
Now he was full grown, and how big do you suppose?—about the size of a large pea. He is called the Acorn Barnacle. He has become a hermit, and will never put his head out of doors. Let us see how he lives, and fishes for his dinner. This operation can be seen clearly, only by means of the microscope, when it becomes a beautiful sight. The folding-doors at the top of

the house open, and out comes a dainty hand of twenty-four long fingers. It spreads out like a fan for a moment, then shuts up and draws back into the stone cottage with whatever tiny atom it has grasped. The next minute it comes out again, makes another grab, and so it goes on.

That little hand is a marvelous thing. It has nearly five hundred joints, each of which is worked by its own muscles, which makes it very flexible. Then each joint has a good supply of stiff hairs, which stand out from it, and each hair has smaller hairs—also standing out. This forms the most perfect fishing net that can be made—all for the comfort of a little atom of a Barnacle, living in a stone house a third of an inch high! The finest hairs on his fingers are delicately sensitive. No sooner does the smallest object—so small it can only be seen through a microscope—touch the tip of one of these hairs, than the hand closes on it, and the morsel goes into the small stone house.

There are several different kinds of Barnacles, but they all go through about the same changes.

How were all these things found out? Not by spending an hour before the glass house on that visit to the Aquarium, but by reading and hearing about the work of scientific men, who have kept Barnacles in aquaria and studied their ways. Much study has been given to this one little hermit fisherman at the bottom of the sea.



J.C. BEARD, D.D.

OUR JAPANESE GUEST.

CHAPTER TWENTY-THIRD.

A DISTINGUISHED JAPANESE.

THE beautiful creature you see in this picture was the most distinguished personage in the Aquarium when the children visited it. She occupied the front tank, and had a crowd of visitors about her all the time. She was not in the least

embarrassed by the wall of staring faces. She swam easily and gracefully through the clear water, drawing her wonderful lace-like train behind her, and only now and then cast her eyes over the admiring crowd.

She had her glass house all to herself, and she was perhaps the most beautiful fish in the world, quite worthy to be called the queen of the Gold-Fish family, to which she belonged. Her body was of the richest red golden color, more beautiful than you see in the ordinary gold-fish, and her tail, in three divisions, was the most exquisite pearly white, so delicate and flexible, that, as she slowly and with great dignity sailed about in solitary grandeur, it trailed after her, waving gracefully in the water, like the daintiest of silk or lace fabrics.

Of course she came from that land of queer things, Japan, where she was a household pet, and she had some adventures quite different from the usual placid life of a gold-fish.

Her name was Kingiyo, which is Japanese for gold-fish, and queer as she looked to us, she left plenty of relatives in her own country, where her whole family live in ponds in the private gardens, and are carefully tended and petted by the family to which they belong.

An American gentleman, Mr. Gill, of Baltimore, whose business called him to that country, was so pleased with the beautiful creatures, that he resolved to bring some home, and try to domesticate them, so that we might have them for pets, instead of the common gold-fish.

After trying several times without success, he started with a large family of about eighty, among whom was the one in the picture. First, you know, they had a long sea voyage from Japan to San Francisco, and then—which was worse—a ten

days' ride on the railway, and all the time they must have plenty of water, or they would die.

They started on the long journey in a tank full of water, and trouble began with the motion of the ship, which spilled it out, and even slopped over the unfortunate fish themselves. Then their anxious guardian had built a smaller tank, which was hung up, so that it would swing like a hammock.

Next they must have been homesick, or at least seasick, for a dreadful fit seized the elders of the family, so that they fell upon the youngsters, and ate them up! Twenty fair young Kingiyos perished in that monstrous way, and though nearly all fish have a lurking desire to devour their own babies, these cultivated pets were supposed to be much too civilized to yield to the temptation.

However, on reaching San Francisco, there were left of the large party but seventeen, and these quite weak and miserable. And now came the worst part of the journey. As traveling arrangement for the cars, Mr. Gill provided a tin can, with holes for air, and cushions of sponges on the sides, so that they should not be hurt. The whole can he hung by India-rubber, and thus he hoped to get his troublesome pets home to Baltimore.

But it is a ride of several days and nights, and two or three times the whole party seemed nearly dead of exhaustion. They were revived by fresh water, and once by quantities of Rocky Mountain snow, and at last he reached Baltimore with eight fish, just one-tenth of the number he started with.

They were put into a large tank, fed with chopped liver, and he hoped his trouble was over. It was then that he sent the one the children saw, to make a visit to the New York Aquarium, so that we could all see the beautiful creature.

She was there for some time, but after a while went back to Baltimore, and on her return to the Aquarium was accompanied by several of her babies; funny little dots of things they were, but alas! without the beautiful, silky, triple tail of their mamma.

Some of the family in Baltimore, which are still living after five years, are partly gold and partly silver, and these are very rare, even in Japan. A pair of these were named Mr. and Mrs. He-No, and were treated with great respect and consideration.

One day, while the Kingiyo was in its tank in the Aquarium, a Japanese student chanced to visit the room, and came upon the native of his home. He tells how he felt, in a letter to Japan, and this is the bit, taken from a Tokio paper:

“Is it strange that I felt a sort of kinship existing between me and this lonely creature on that spot? I brought my face close to the tank, whispered, in Japanese, ‘Ohayan, Mr. Kingiyo!’ when lo and behold, Mr. Kingiyo made straight for my face, and seemed to make signs of recognition to me.”

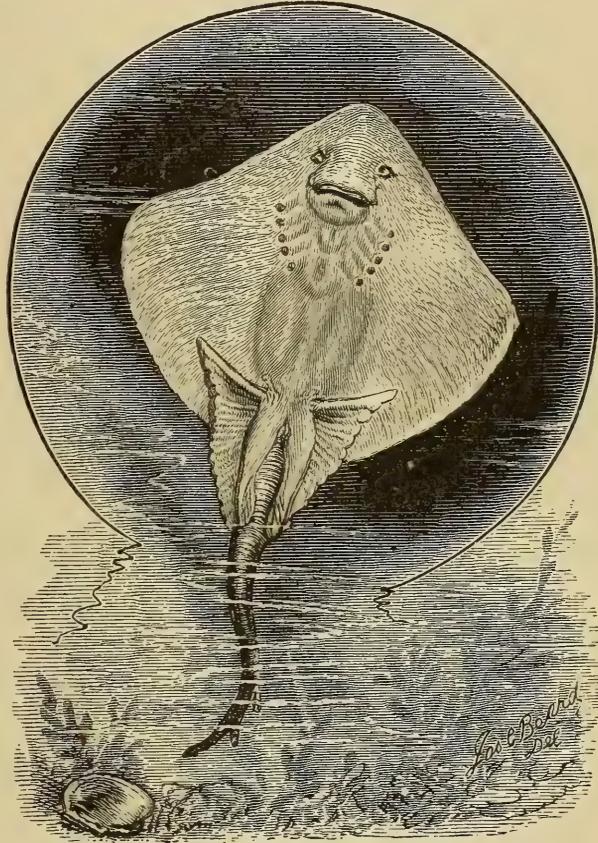
Of the eight fish that survived, though all were much richer and more beautiful than the common gold-fish, only two had the exquisite tail of the picture, and one of these was kept in a small lake in the yard of Mr. Gill. •Being always kindly treated, well fed, and, above all, never frightened, he soon became very tame, as indeed they all did. He would follow his master around the pond, take food from his hand, and even let him take him out of the water, without seeming at all alarmed.

His tameness was the cause of the death, I'm sorry to say, of the last of the Long-Tailed Gold-Fish, for a hungry pussy caught him out of the water and ate him up. How should she know what a choice pet he was!

In the lake are still left about fifty American-born Kingiyo

babies, now grown up, but though they are very beautiful, not one has the rare and wonderful silken tail of the Japanese parents. There are also two of the original family, as I said. They are about six inches long, of very rich dark color reddish gold, spotted with silvery white.

Next to the home of the Kingiyo were two tanks that interested the children, because of the strange creatures they saw there. The first one held the Skate, which you see in this picture. He has several names besides the common one of Skate, such as Thorn-back Ray, and Prickly Ray, all given because of the great number of sharp spines, or thorns, with which his back is covered, to the very end of his long tail.



SHOWING OFF.

The picture shows the under side of his body, which is a beautiful silvery white, having on it what looks like an old man's face, but is really the mouth, the nostrils, and the gill openings. The back is brown, and somewhat spotted.

The Skate acts as though he knew the under side of his body is the most curious, for he delights in pressing himself flat

against the glass, where visitors can look at him as long as they like.

But the most graceful thing is his swimming. He moves through the water simply by flapping his two thin, wing-like fins, and he looks as though he were flying, or waving his silvery cloak as he goes.

Pretty as he looks in the tank, he can be very angry, and he knows how to use his thorny tail as a weapon. He bends his tail towards his head, till it nearly touches and he looks like a bow, and then lets it fly suddenly back, like a whip lash, giving a terrible blow, and making painful wounds.

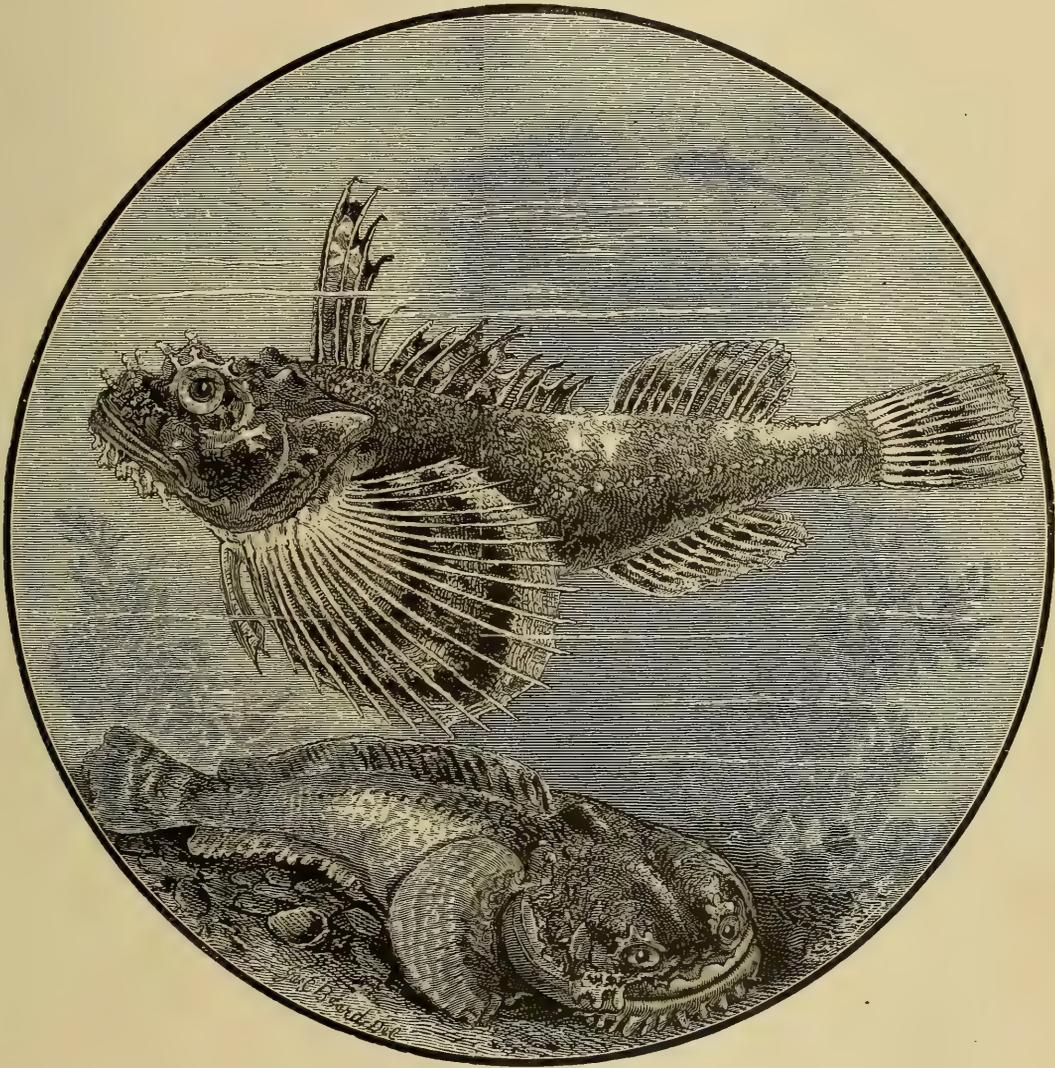
The baby Skate comes out of a most curious egg. It is shaped like what is called a hand-barrow, or, if you never saw one of those, like a flat, square pin-cushion, with a handle like a coarse string, at each corner. The whole egg, handles and all, is black and leathery, and empty ones are often picked up on the sea-shore.

Mamma Skate takes this egg in her mouth, and fastens the string-like handles to a sea-weed, or an oyster-shell, or a rock, to keep it safe. The baby himself, when a few inches long, is one of the most graceful and elegant creatures in the sea. His colors are beautiful, and his under parts look like mother-of-pearl.

The Skate eats crabs, and other little fellows who live in shell houses, and has a terrible set of teeth to crush them with.

The next tank held these two horrible-looking objects, perhaps as a contrast to the beautiful Skate and Kingiyo. The upper one, who looks about the head like a rag bag come to life, is the Sea Raven (and it's an insult to the bird to name it so), or the Deep-Water Sculpin, which sounds more suitable.

He's not more interesting than he looks. He is purple or red on the back, yellow below, and about two feet long. His body



NOT SO BAD AS THEY LOOK.

is soft, and covered with little knobs, and his head is decorated with spines, and hanging bits of fleshy skin, which give him a hideous look.

Fishermen sometimes catch him in the net with cod, and they hate and fear him, as though he was poisonous, though he is not known to be so.

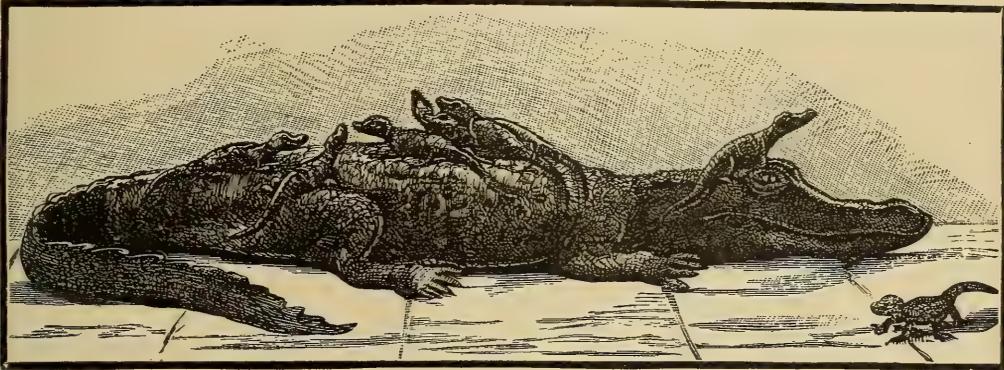
The lower fish in the picture, who lies grinning from ear to ear—you may say—on the ground, is the Toad-Fish. Though I can't say he is more beautiful than the Sculpin, he is more interesting, because of one rather odd habit, for a fish.

The Mother Toad-Fish takes care of her babies. At least so it is supposed, because when one is found in its home, a few inches under water at low tide, it is always lying under a rock, in a sort of nest it has hollowed out for itself, and fastened to the rock which forms the roof, are the babies.

There are generally several hundreds of these—you know fishes have large families. They may be tiny eggs, no bigger than small shot, or they may be lively young fish half an inch long; still there they stay, stuck tight to the roof, till they are big enough to swim around and take care of themselves.

Below this nursery roof is always found a grown-up Toad-Fish, probably the mother, lying with head out of the door like a dog in his kennel.

This fish also wears some of the rags of skin, hanging from the chin like a fringe, and it is of a yellowish color, with black spots and bands. It is not more than a foot long, and it has really beautiful eyes, which are the only things at all attractive in its looks.



THE WHOLE FAMILY.

CHAPTER TWENTY-FOURTH.

THE BABY THAT'S BURIED IN SAND.

ONE of the things most interesting to Ralph in the Aquarium, was a tank containing a family of Alligators. There was the old one, three or four feet long, lying half out of the water, and so perfectly immovable, that he could not at first tell whether it was stuffed or alive, and a troop of little ones, in every imaginable position, but as quiet as their ancient relative.

Seeing his interest in these creatures, a keeper pointed out to him a tank filled with little fellows, from eight to twelve inches long, which he said were ladies' pets, come there to board for the winter. Marcy was greatly amused at the idea of ladies being reduced to the necessity of making pets of these usually stupid animals, but she learned that it was fashionable for people who went to Florida, to bring back Alligators, keep them as long as they could endure them, and finally give them

to some naturalist, or hand them over to the Aquarium as boarders.

She had not then heard the story of Gus, which is true in every word, and which I'm now going to tell you.

The story begins in Florida, where his mother, in the odd way customary with her, buried the whole family of babies in the sand. Queer as this seems, it is the best way for Alligator babies, because it is the only safe place she can find for them, when wrapped up in their egg-shell cradles, and unable to care for themselves.

The sea is full of hungry creatures, and Alligator eggs are choice morsels to many of them. Moreover, the unfortunate mother would be worse off than the famous old woman who lived in a shoe, for she has fifty or sixty little ones, all babies together. Worst of all, the father, like many other wild fathers, is very fond of the children—*to eat!*

The wise mother therefore carefully buries the eggs in a sunny place in the sand; the warm sun of Florida hatches them out for her; and when the little fellows get out—only four or five inches long—they find her waiting to show them the way to the water. She takes care of them till their legs get strong, and their scaly coats grow hard and tough, and they can protect themselves. If an enemy comes near that alarms the babies, the mother opens her mouth, when they all run down her throat, and she swims off with them. At least this story is told by people who profess to have seen it.

The life of an Alligator in Florida is very pleasant—to him. When it is warm he basks in the sun, and only moves to hunt up a fish to eat, or to snatch a dog, or even a child, that chances to get too near him.

I read a little story of one about seven feet long, who took a fancy to have a calf for his dinner. Fortunately the calf's mother was a plucky cow, and she did not agree to this. He started for the little one, and the cow started for him. He struck at her furiously with his tail, and once knocked her over, and sent her rolling for ten feet. Then he rushed at her and tried to seize her nose, but she sprang to her feet, caught him on her horns, and threw him over backwards. Before he could get up she was on him again, and tossed him high in the air, when he fell into the water, and changed his mind about veal for dinner. The cow looked after him, but as he did not come out again, she and her calf walked off home.

If he cannot find any small animal, he will exert himself to catch a larger one, an ox, or a man. His appetite satisfied, he settles back into the quiet rest he prefers. When it grows cold he merely buries himself in the mud, and neither moves nor eats till the spring sun warms him to life again.

But to return to the story of Gus. He was caught before he found his mother, and passed his life in quite a different way from the rest of his family. He was sold to a young lady from the North, whom we will call Miss Laura, and by her was named St. Augustine, in honor of his native place.

She resolved to bring him home to New York with her, and for traveling arrangements she provided a long, narrow box, lined with cotton, and furnished with air holes, and in this comfortable style he took the long journey.

To be sure he could not move about, but the Alligator family are not restless, nor nervous. They delight to spend hours in one position, as the children saw them at the Aquarium, often indeed such as would appear to be the most tiresome they

could get into. No doubt the little fellow enjoyed his trip; but whether he did or not he never complained, and he arrived safe and well at his future home.

In Miss Laura's pleasant home Master Gus had free run of the house. His private treasures, always kept in his mistress's room, were a bed, with a regular bed-quilt, and a water-tank where he could bathe, or perhaps I should say soak, for lying in the water with only the tip of his nose out was one of his pleasures.

In this happy home the little fellow lived and grew for three years. At the end of that time he was sixteen inches long, tail and all. His mother was perhaps from ten to fifteen feet long; but alligators are slow of growth, and Gus was fully large enough for his age.

He was a queer pet. For one thing, he would never eat while any one looked on. His food consisted mostly of clams, of which his mistress bought half a dozen three times a week. The meat was made ready and put into his water-tank, and after a while it would disappear; but no one ever saw him touch it.

He was rather pretty for an Alligator, which looks, when full grown, like an old muddy log. His tight-fitting suit was of black, with pretty, bright yellow stripes running across, from his neck to the tip of his tail. His head was long, and looked almost exactly like a dried prune, while his dull eyes were so near the color of his skin, that at first they could hardly be seen. His mouth reached—you may say—from ear to ear, and when open, it seemed to fairly split his head. He had no teeth when young, but a nice long place for them. The mouth was curious inside; in the first place his tongue was fastened down its whole length, and then the opening of the throat was shut by a kind of door,

or plate, which covered it entirely, so that nothing could be forced down. The beauty of this arrangement is, that in the wild state, the Alligator family prepare their prey for eating by holding it under water till it drowns. In this process, of course the creature's own mouth is open, and but for the useful little door to the throat much water would run down, and be unpleasant.

His feet, of which he had four, you know, were partly webbed, to help him in swimming, and turned in when he walked, so that he was a clumsy waddler on land, and looked droll enough striding across the floor in his dignified way. He was quite lively in the water, however, and he *could* run very fast in his clumsy style on land, if he chose, though he rarely did.

His head he could turn to one side a little, but his tail was as useful to him as a whip. He could thrash it around furiously, and indeed, when full grown, an Alligator's tail is almost as much to be dreaded as his teeth.

He was quite a silent little creature; the only sound he ever made being a sort of hissing bark, like a bark in a whisper, which he would utter when tapped on the head.

Master Gus was a pet, and therefore, as I said, his life was not much like that of his brothers, which were left on the river bank in Florida. One thing he had, which they never heard of, and that was a regular bed, into which he was snugly tucked every night. The bed was of cotton, and the bedstead was a box. Under the bed Gus would creep, for he never grew civilized enough to sleep on it, and his kind mistress would spread a quilt or comfortable over him, and leave him for the night, with his droll black nose just peeping out, so that he could breathe.

He was fond of taking an airing out of doors, and Miss Laura often carried him out and let him walk about, though when he was nearly three years old, she was horrified one day to see him wheel around, and snap his jaws at a child who came near him, when she hoped she had cultivated all the wildness out of him. But "blood will tell," as the old saying is, and no doubt Gus was at heart a savage Alligator, though he never showed it to Miss Laura.

The most attractive thing about Gus, and the thing that won his mistress's heart completely, was his devoted attachment to her. He not only knew his name, and would come when called, but he would follow her everywhere, and go to meet and welcome her. The greatest happiness of his life was to lie on her arm, or her shoulder, where he would stay for hours perfectly motionless, and apparently almost too happy to breathe.

At last there came a crisis in the life of poor Gus. Miss Laura was going on a long journey, and thought she could not take a sixteen-inch-long Alligator with her, so she gave him away to a lady who she knew would care for him, and left him with Miss Dora.

In this lady's home, delightful quarters were fitted up especially for him, since the family were not so fond of Alligators as to like them all over the house. His new residence was between the chimney and the outer wall of his mistress's room, and was about two feet wide by six feet long; quite a spacious home for a little fellow not of a roving disposition. It was divided from the room by a board wall, over which he could not climb.

No sooner was Miss Laura gone, than Master Gus began to pine. He retired to the further end of his home, and put his

head in the corner, refusing to eat or to be comforted, which was his way of showing grief. Nothing could induce him to stir, until Miss Dora imitated his beloved old mistress's voice. When he heard that, he instantly turned his head and gave her one look, but, evidently disappointed, moved it sadly back to his corner, and could not be deceived again.

Some days passed in this sorrowful manner, but at last happiness came back to him. Something occurred to prevent Miss Laura's journey, and she came to pay him a last visit.

When she entered the room she was talking, and the instant her voice struck his ear, Master Gus was out of the corner, and hurrying to the wall, where he held his head up most imploringly, asking as plainly as words could have done, to be taken up. She could not resist the appeal, of course, and she took him in her arms and sat down, petting and caressing him.

As for Gus, he was evidently almost too full of joy to live. He held up his head and gazed in her face, "with his soul in his eyes," as Miss Dora said. He had recovered his idol, and evidently determined in his savage heart that she should never leave him again.

She never did; for whenever she attempted to put him down, he clung to her, and ran after her, with such a despairing earnestness, that she had not the heart to grieve him so deeply. Many times she tried to get him into his bed—for night came on—or to put him down, but every time his utter despair was so plain that she could not bring herself to do it.

Now so tragic an attachment in an animal of his family might become somewhat embarrassing. But a happy fate was prepared for the poor little fellow, the happiest possible for him. At about one o'clock that night he quietly died in her

arms. Whether of a broken heart, or of too great joy—who can tell?

He was, of course, suitably buried, and many epitaphs were suggested by friends, of which I will give you two, to show you both sides of the family sentiment about him, for—as you will see—not every one loved poor St. Augustine.

(By an Enemy.)

“HERE LIES A 'GATOR WHOSE NAME WAS GUS,
WHO DIED AFTER MAKING AN AWFUL FUSS;
HIS TAIL WAS LONGER THAN ALL THE REST:
FAREWELL, THOU HORRID, SCALY PEST.”

(By a Friend.)

“ST. AUGUSTINE, WE GRIEVE FOR THEE,
THY LOSS WE MUCH DEPLORE;
WE NE'ER SHALL SEE THEE SMILE AGAIN,
NOR SPRAWL ACROSS THE FLOOR.
THINE OPEN COUNTENANCE IS CLOSED,
THOU'LT NEVER BARK AGAIN,
WE'LL STUFF THY CARCASS AND WEEP WELL,
ALTHOUGH WE WEEP IN VAIN.”

Another Alligator baby that lived in a house, was the property of a youth, and was named Nebuchadnezzar (for short, I suppose). When first captured he was six or eight inches long, and after his journey from Florida to New York, was established in a glass tank, having water, and rockwork, on which he could sun himself.

Wishing to keep him small, lest he should get beyond home

management, he was fed but once a week, with any fresh meat that was convenient. When his young master took him into the country for the summer, he fed him on little minnows which he caught for him. These the Alligator was very fond of, and would snap at them, swallowing them instantly; but when his dinner was of common meat, he insisted on being fed with a spoon, or at the least a stick.

Alligators do not chew; they swallow their food whole; and sometimes—like children who try to do in the same way—they choke. When this happened to Nebuchadnezzar, his master promptly opened his throat with a hair-pin, and pushed the troublesome morsel down to its proper place, when the animal calmly went on with his meal.

Nebuchadnezzar learned to know his master, and to perform several tricks, which he showed off to company. He would lie on his back when put there, though it is a position an Alligator detests, and will never submit to, till educated. Moreover, he would lie perfectly still, till informed—by touching his nose with a straw—that he might turn over.

He would also open his mouth and bark to order. You may not think these tricks are much, but when you remember the creature who did them, and how sluggish and stupid he usually seems, you can see that they are quite wonderful.

He was fond of his young master, who carried him about in his pocket, and let him sleep in his bed, under the pillow, or by his side.

This little creature was very handy with his hind feet. He would scratch his head, and even poke his food into his mouth with one. His master had a fancy for trying experiments, to see what he would do, and a favorite one was to slip over Nebu-

chadnezzar's head a small skin case, in which he carried his knife.

No one likes his head in a bag, of course, and the Alligator would at once give his whole mind to removing the nuisance. First he would bring up one hind foot and give it a poke, and then he would try the other. If both failed, he brought around his most useful member—the tail—and with that generally succeeded in freeing himself.

He was fond of caresses, liked to be stroked as a cat does. The mother of his master (into whose hands fell many pets to care for) often made him happy in this way, and he repaid her by a pleasant noise, almost like singing, quite different from a cat's purr, yet used in the same way, to express content, and so unlike any sound we are familiar with, that I cannot exactly describe it.

When he was angry or teased, he would hiss like a snake, and when pleased he would bark, making a noise like the bark of a dog a long way off, or in a whisper, as I said of Gus.

This little fellow was different from the Alligators in the Aquarium, being extremely lively. He delighted to make tours about the house, though when allowed to do so, he collected on himself every bit of dust on the carpet. It seemed to stick to him, and he would come out from under furniture completely hidden under the load.

After this pet had lived in the glass house some time, his master brought him a companion or two, to relieve his solitude. The new-comers were Turtles, and Mr. Nebuchadnezzar at once declared war, considering them intruders on his premises. He made up his mind that Turtle was good to eat, and Turtle he would have, so he watched his chance.

But a Turtle is particularly well protected against disturbance, for he carries on his back his own shell house, into which he can instantly draw head and feet, if things look squally outside.

Moreover, the big Turtle had evidently decided to dine on Alligator meat, so they came to blows. Several times they had fights, and in every case the Turtle had the best of it.

At last, seeing that they would not be friends, their master divided the glass house in the middle, by a partition, also of glass, and let each stay on his own side. The result of this was, that getting used to seeing each other, they after a while became reconciled, and when the dividing partition was taken out, became the best of friends, eating together, and sleeping in a promiscuous pile, the Alligator, who had no shell house, being usually on the outside, in one of the uncomfortable positions an Alligator will assume to be comfortable.

Four years Master Nebuchadnezzar lived in this family, and he had grown to be about a foot and a half long, which, though quite large for an Alligator pet, is really hardly more than a baby, when you remember that they grow to fifteen, and even twenty feet in length. He never showed any savageness to people, no desire to bite, or even to be cross.

But in spite of the best care, like most pets, he died, and was buried with grand honors.

CHAPTER TWENTY-FIFTH.

LIFE IN A LACE HOUSE.

IN a house so full of pet-lovers, I need hardly say there was always at least one canary-bird. They were never closely confined to their cages, but flew about the house as they liked, excepting in the summer, when windows were open, and then they were kept in Marcy's room, where there were wire gauze windows, and the door was always closed.

Dick, the bird they had at the time I am telling of, was a knowing fellow, and exceedingly tame. On Marcy's head, where he could see all that was going on, was his favorite perch.

He liked to be concerned in everything that went on. If a trunk was to be packed, Dick was on the edge to look over the contents, and see that all was right. When Abby presented his mistress with a family of kittens, Dick was the busiest fellow in the house. Perching on a convenient place, he watched every movement of the sprawling little bundles of fur, with the greatest interest, now and then uttering a meditative little chirp to himself, as if wondering why they hadn't feathers and wings.

The most irresistible thing to him, however, was a glass of water. If any one carried one across the room, they needed to keep their eyes open, or they would be suddenly surprised by Dick's plumping into it for a bath. In he would go, sometimes head first, and sometimes with head and tail out, and feet splash-

ing in it like a duck. Then he would come out, shake the drops off—all over everything, of course—and settle himself on the gas-pipe, or on top of a picture-frame, or some other convenient place, to perform his toilet, which he did with nicest care.

Poor Dick had one trial in his happy life; he was lonely. When he saw sparrows flying about outside, he would sometimes stand on the window-sill, and look longingly out, and peep to them in the friendliest way. Perhaps they didn't understand his language—you know he is a foreigner—at any rate, the saucy little brown rogues took no notice of his advances. Sometimes he would actually try to get out by flying against the glass.

But there was a simple remedy for his loneliness, as Marcy soon found out. She put him in front of the looking-glass. The moment he saw himself in the glass he was happy. He would perk up, and plume himself, and peep and twitter most frantically. As the stranger in the glass, of course, seemed equally interested, Dick was satisfied. Soon he learned where to look for his new companion, and would come himself, take his stand on the cushion before the glass, and enjoy himself by the hour with this other self.

It was not vanity. He evidently thought, with the famous "Alice," that through the looking-glass was another room, where his lively, though silent friend lived, as the sparrows lived the other side of the window-glass.

The day that Uncle Karl brought home the Parrot, he saw a large emigrant party of Canary-Birds, just arrived from Germany, and still in their traveling quarters. How do you suppose that was? They came in *bales!* actually, live Canaries. Think of a bale of birds!

A curious sight it was. Each bird was in one of those

cramped-up wooden cages that we see in the bird shops, and one thousand of these cages were made into a compact package or bale, three feet one way, four feet the other, and eight feet high. In this shape they could be handled like other cases of goods.

Poor little creatures! How they all got food and water, and what sort of a dismal time the middle ones had, one can hardly guess. They seemed in pretty good spirits—at least the outside ones—when Uncle Karl visited them on the German ship. They chirped and peeped, and seemed glad to be at their journey's end.

He was so sorry for them that he wanted to buy the lot, and let them loose in a house, as were a family of Canaries that lived near Marcy's.

This is the happiest houseful of birds you ever heard of, and they live in a house of their own, with a lace front. There are two hundred of them, of all shades of yellow and green; every one is beautiful, and at least half are delightful singers. I want to tell you about them, and remember that every word is true.

The house with the lace front consisted of two rooms, big enough for people, and so very large for cage-birds. The living, or front room, is furnished with a fine Christmas tree, in place of sofas and chairs, and the dining-room opening into it contains two more trees, a dining-table always spread, and bath-tubs conveniently set about the floor. Both rooms are carpeted with clean sand, and both are full of birds, flying here and there, from parlor to dining-room, from tree to window-sill, from bath-tub to seed-dish, exercising their wings, eating, bathing, chatting, singing, and scolding, very like some families of larger growth.

Few in that home ever knew the misery of a cage. The old

maternal ancestor, the great-great-grandmother of the Canary babies, who are now sporting their first yellow and green coats, may have stories to tell, on a long winter afternoon, of her young days, when she lived in a wire prison; but to the young ones it is merely an interesting tale. That such a thing can happen to them they never dream, nor will it, while lives their best friend, who is fifty times as big as they are, and their most loving attendant.

She is the mistress of the big house, in whose third story is made this pleasant bird-home, and we'll call her "Mrs. Nellie." The first thing one notices on entering her house, at the front door, is the concert in full swing upstairs. Fifty, yes perhaps a hundred Canaries, singing at the top of their voices.

What a noise! a bird shop is nothing to it, for the unhappy wretches who live in the willow prisons of a shop, cannot rival the joyful song of the free.

They are much like people, these little creatures. They are very observing and extremely curious. Introduce anything new, and the whole family is at once agitated. Songs stop instantly; the greedy ones, who are always taking a lunch, are called out by energetic peeps; there's a great rustle of wings as the excited family gather around the wonder; and the liveliest interest is shown till the strange object is fully understood.

If it is a new dish to eat, like the end of a large watermelon, or a new pan for water, they will stand in a ring around it, stretch up on tiptoe, with necks craned out to look into the mystery, making a funny picture of curiosity.

If the intruder is a bird, things are not so easily adjusted. A Ring-Dove, which had lost its mate, and was put in for consolation in his loneliness, caused a panic as he walked in the door.

Every song stopped short, as though the singers were shot, and nothing was heard but loud calls to everybody to come and see this queer thing.

Hastily the scattered family gathered around the intruder, on the tree, however; not one ventured to the floor. The side toward the innocent widower became yellow with birds, every one with head toward the dangerous point, and every one eyeing with suspicion the movements of the stranger. When he ventured to hop up to the window-sill, there was a sudden, wild flutter of wings, and a stampede (if you could call it so) into the other room, whence they came cautiously back, on seeing that the Dove had no intention of eating them. After a few minutes they seemed to understand the harmless character of their visitor, for they returned to their musical performances, and hopped about the floor near him, even helping him to dispose of the cracker that was put in for him.

Not so easily were they reconciled to an unfortunate Bluebird, who fell into the hands of Mrs. Nellie, and was introduced into the lace house. His arrival caused a genuine fright, and a wild scattering. Innocent as the little fellow was, he was bigger than any of them, and he was blue; a fierce, dreadful color, no doubt, in the yellow family. They could not accept him; he was clearly an intruder.

The mistress thereupon hit upon a new device. She put Mr. Bluebird into a cage, and exhibited him to the happy home in the light of a prisoner. This was another matter. The Bluebird as a prisoner was not at all alarming, and on closer acquaintance, finding that he was not in the least bloodthirsty, they became so used to him that they let him be one of the family.

He is now free among them, and may be considered one of

them; but he's a sad example of solitude in a crowd. He flies with them, he sits beside them on the trees, no one disturbs him; but he recognizes his solitary position. He never touches food till the second table, nor bathes till every Canary has ended; and though he has lived among them two years, and is a handsome fellow, he has never found a wife among the demure little yellow damsels.

Another object of interest is the dog. This is an honest, though not very beautiful fellow, who was a sort of vagabond till he came of his own will to live with Mrs. Nellie, and has now become a self-respecting and eminently well-behaved animal.

It is the nature of Master Rover to kill mice, and when he first joined the family he did not see any difference between mice and birds; but his education was attended to, and he soon learned that the little yellow fellows were to be looked at and admired, but not to be touched.

Sometimes an inquisitive bird will hop up on the Dog, as he lies stretched out on the floor. It is a trial to his doggish nerves, but he endures it, breathless, as the bird goes up the length of his back, and on to his head. But the moment it hops off, with a sigh of relief Mr. Rover deliberately rolls over on to his back, and sticks his four paws into the air, to make sure that the intruder is gone, and that the liberty shall not be repeated.

He likes to visit the lace house, but usually stops outside. The birds are quite well used to him, and do not mind him, unless sometimes, in his clumsy way, he happens to lean against the delicate front of their house. The lace yields, and it does look as though Master Rover would burst through. Then

there is deep interest in the Canary family; all gather around the scene of the possible catastrophe, and stand with stretched necks, to see what's going to happen.

Things do happen, even in this happy home; tragedies take place, accidents, deaths by violence, hanging, even murder.

One little creature caught its foot behind a nail, and being suddenly frightened away, sad to say, left its poor little foot behind. Mrs. Nellie, of course, did everything possible for him, and he did not seem to suffer, but very soon was flying again, and hopping about on his stump of a leg, as cheerfully as any one of them.

Another, still more unfortunate, hung herself to a tree by a string, and was found in the morning hanging head down, apparently quite dead. Cold water revived her, however. She ate a little sponge-cake, and, in short, quite recovered, although the leg withered and fell off. Now madam goes about on one leg, coolly sitting *in* the dish when she wishes to eat, and quite able to attend to her own wants.

At another time there was great consternation in the family—Mrs. Nellie's family—when it was found that one of the babies, only six weeks old, in a fit of naughtiness had run away. It was sweeping day, and doubtless he slipped out the window, a cold, ugly day in April.

He was followed, and seen in the neighborhood, but he was pleased with his liberty, and refused to come back, being finally left a mile from home, and night coming on. Poor baby! little he knew of the cold outside world on a night in April. But he found out something before morning, namely, that running away is a foolish business, and what was more to the point, he found his way back; he actually came to the windows of his native

room, and tried to get in. But wire gauze that keeps birds in will also keep naughty outsiders out, and he could not get back till he flew into a neighbor's house, and was returned by one of the children, a wiser and a colder bird.

The deepest tragedy that has taken place in this carefully guarded home was a dreadful murder. The miserable assassin came into the house at the silent hour of midnight, as was proper on such an errand. He went quietly upstairs, tore a hole in the lace front, and so got into the house, where every one was puffed up into a soft feather ball, and fast asleep.

In a few minutes Mrs. Nellie, on the floor below, was awakened by commotion in the house, shrieks of fright, flutter of wings, and cries of distress. Aid was quickly called in, the domestic police appeared upon the scene, and made short work of Mr. Rat; but alas! not soon enough to prevent a ghastly tragedy, the death of more than one of the pretty little fellows.

Their bodies were tenderly laid away in the cemetery in the yard, with tears, no doubt, and all traces of the crime removed. Since then no enemy has molested them.

They have an enemy, though, or at least he is not a friend. He lives quite near—next door in fact—in an elegant but strong house of wire. It is four stories high, and quite grand, but the owner spends nearly all his time in the attic, because from that point he can look into the lace house. And to look in, and perhaps to dream of the delight of tyrannizing over the whole yellow family, is his delight.

He is a splendid, great fellow, in a rich, slate-colored coat, with black trimming, a magnificent singer, and a Mocking-Bird. His eyes are sharp and bright, and not a movement among

his lively neighbors escapes them. He turns his wise head first one side and then the other, watching in deeply interested silence everything that goes on. He might be a detective in disguise, by the way he watches.

The birds don't mind him when he is still; but let him speak one word, a sort of a croak, that sounds like "Get out," and there's a flutter and a scamper into the next room. The Mocking-Bird hops to another perch, flutters his wings, and looks pleased at the sensation he has caused.

Sometimes he plays a joke on them. He can speak Canary language as well as they can, and once when two birds sat alone in the parlor, he called out, "Tweet," with the perfect accent of a Canary. Each of the two thought the other had spoken, and each at once answered, and then looked with amazement at each other, as much as to say,

"Who *did* speak then, if not you?"

The Mocking-Bird saw their consternation, and laughed under his brown coat, no doubt.

When the day's duties are over, and the Canary family are safely in bed, every busy little head on its soft feather pillow, then Mr. Mocking-Bird makes the house ring with his music, barking till Rover is nearly crazy, whistling like a boy, shrieking like a car conductor, squawking like a hen, and now and then singing some delightful melody in an undertone, as though that was too choice to give the world at large.

This bird does not take a cheerful view of life. He is nine years old, and has seen the world since he lived in a wire house. He has been obliged to part with his dearest friends, and trouble has made him bitter, so that he is a cynic, or, in other words, a sour old grumbler, pleased with nothing. He is doubtless

the bugaboo of the Canary family. Who knows but Mamma Canary points him out to the babies, and holds up the old gentleman in brown as the ogre that carries off naughty little yellow birds who crowd in the nest or snatch their food.

And there are plenty of babies in that house, I can tell you. When nesting time comes, in the spring, every little fussy yellow-and-green mother begins to look about for strings and feathers, and other suitable house-building materials, and every fluttering young father bustles around and sings his sweetest, till Mrs. Nellie provides for their wants. Bits of string, feathers, fine horse hair, and plenty of things are on hand, while the most convenient of wire baskets suddenly appear all over the walls.

Never was so busy a household as this, never so earnest looking over of treasure, so careful selection of houses, so dainty building, with deep consultation over every point. But at last everything is arranged, every baby-house is built, the lovely white egg cradles are placed in them, and mamma settles down to her work of sitting, while papa does his share by the most delightful singing, the gayest movements, and the most devoted attention to keeping her fed.

When the little ones first show their heads—their mouths rather, for they are nearly all mouth—they are not pretty to look at, and nobody but their proud parents cares to see them.

Indeed, even their loving good angel, Mrs. Nellie, says they are not interesting. But they grow fast, and in a few weeks are hopping about as lively as possible, and full of fun and mischief.

Before the family grew so large, the nests were built in the trees, and were very pretty to see. They perfectly answered the purpose for the first babies; but those naughty youngsters,

when they had been turned out and left to take care of themselves, while the mother took care of their younger brothers and sisters, were full of mischief, and one of their favorite pranks was to seat themselves on a branch under a nest, and coolly pull out the bottom, to see the eggs fall to the floor. That was a grief to the little mothers, and had to be stopped, of course, and Mrs. Nellie provided wire houses after that.

Another bit of fun to the little yellow rogues, is to play practical jokes on their elders. A sedate elder sister sitting quietly on a branch, was suddenly disturbed by a jerk of one of her beautiful long tail feathers. On the branch below sat two giddy young things, a few weeks out of the nest; but she was on her dignity, and paid no attention to them.

Meanwhile Mrs. Nellie was watching, and she saw the young joker give a sly twitch to the feather, and then look away as innocently as though he never thought of such a thing. No response being given, he did it again, and again looked away.

Still no notice, and he grew bolder. He turned and gave a tremendous jerk, expressing as plainly as though he had said it, "There! I think that'll rouse you!"

It did. This was too much for any self-respecting Canary. The insulted bird leaned over and gave a great fierce peck, like a slap to a naughty boy, *to the wrong youngster!* The amazed look and the indignant cry of the wrongly punished Canary were droll to see, and the guilty one plainly chuckled as he made a sudden visit to the dining-room.

The family in the lace house has its share of people who like to try experiments. They have tried all sorts of things, such as having twenty bathe at once, in a tub only big enough for ten, and this they have not yet satisfied themselves about. They

have even tried to establish the tenement-house plan of living, several couples building and placing their cradles in the same house, with sad results of broken eggs and smothered babies.

Perhaps the most interesting personage in this family is the great-grandmother of all, who lives there still, though old age has crept upon her, and she is blind. She is as pretty as ever, and seems to enjoy life as much as anybody. Of course she is the object of special love and tenderness to Mrs. Nellie, and is very tame. She will readily perch on an offered finger, and never attempt to leave it, though caressed and talked to.

In fact she knows her voice, and will at once turn toward it, smooth down her feathers—which when alone are always ruffed up, as if to protect herself against possible unseen danger—and listening with close attention.

She has many privileges of age; not a rocking-chair in the warmest corner to be sure, but what she prizes more, a private breakfast dish, outside the lace house, where her hungry grandchildren cannot crowd. Not that they are rude to her. Far from it. Most of them respectfully get out of her way, and do not resent her hitting them, in her blind getting about, though now and then one will speak a little cross word to her, when she takes a bite from his bit of lettuce, or other dainty.

She is a wise little creature, and knows the feeling of every dish on the table. If she is put on the edge of the drinking cup, when she wants to eat, she will not even put her head down to see where she is, but at once hops down; while if put on the seed dish, she will immediately begin to eat.

Since she grew blind she has never built a nest; but before that, she and her mate, a faithfully attached couple all their lives, have raised at least twelve broods. It is pitiful to see her

shuffle around on the floor, trying to find a perch, feathers ruffled up, and evidently listening intently. By and by she gets under the tree, and a bird alights directly over her head, a few inches above. In an instant, as though she heard him, she hops to the perch beside him without mistake.

Mrs. Nellie has never made any attempts to tame or to handle her pets, and though they know her well, and are pleased when she comes in, often alighting on her head and shoulders, they are a little shy until they are in trouble. The moment one is in distress it seems to recognize its best friend, and comes to her, and allows her to do anything with it.

When she starts upstairs in the morning, to give them their breakfast, she calls at the foot of the stairs,

“I'm coming.”

At once there is a response of delight, and when she appears every feather head is clinging to the lace side of the house, to welcome her with twitters and flutters of joy.

House-cleaning day comes about once a fortnight, when paint is scrubbed and a new sand carpet laid down. But the great event of the year comes about Christmas time—as it does to you little people outside—when three grand new trees are set up in their house. They have no candles and no presents, but they have leaves, and to pull off every leaf and cover the floor with green, is the first work of the birds. Not till the trees are reduced to bare sticks, do they consider them suitable for Canary perches, and fit for their home.

So large a family has frequent need of a burial-place, and in the yard one is prepared, where the little bodies are laid when the fluttering life is out of them. Not long ago a little niece of Mrs. Nellie's happened to be there when a bird died. She made

a beautiful grave, and decorated it with dainty bouquets of a suitable size, and kept them supplied and watered for a long time.

This happy family—like others—was not made, it grew. It began with two birds, allowed to fly about in Mrs. Nellie's room. One day a new bird was brought into the house and introduced to the family of two. One of them at once opened her mouth in a very naughty way, as though you should make a face at a stranger, and rudely turned her back on him; but the other was more polite; she made friends at once, and before long they both deserted their unamiable companion, and set up housekeeping for themselves.

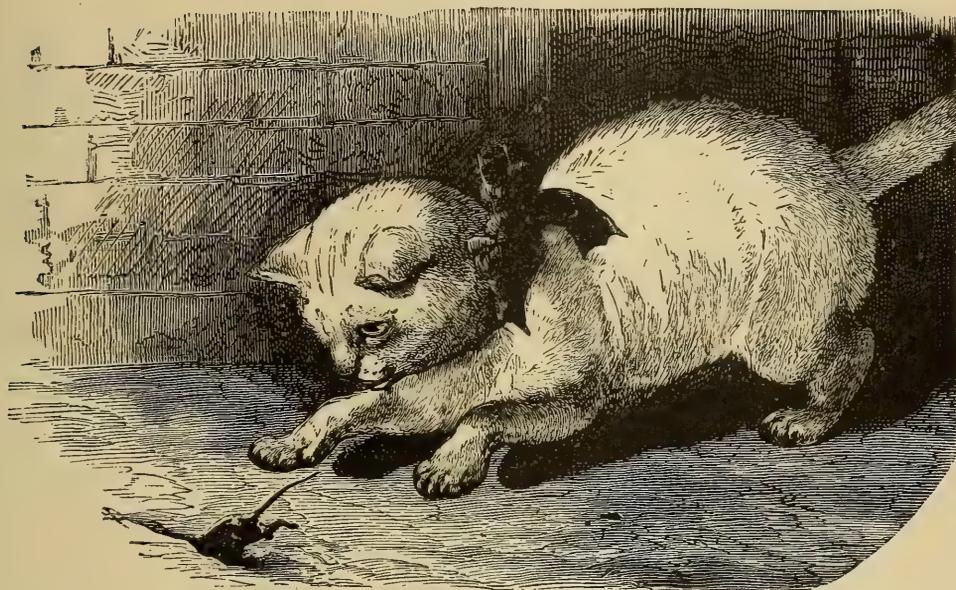
When they were ready to build they began to collect bits of thread from the carpet; but the favorite material was Mrs. Nellie's hair. That saucy bird would actually perch on her head and pull hairs from her frizzes, till at last she was supplied with other materials. In spite of that, however, the first nest, made behind a cologne bottle, on a bracket beside the mirror, was largely composed of her mistress's hair.

From that small beginning has, in four or five years, grown the present immense family, not more than five couples having been added. Let me tell you what a care they are. They eat and waste a bushel of bird-seed every month, and their bill of fare includes a half dozen eggs every day, bread and milk, sponge-cake, fresh lettuce, and many other things to make a nice variety. When the cradles are full of babies, they have soaked cracker and other soft food.

Besides the every-day care, they weigh on the mind like a family of babies; one that is ill draws upon everybody for sympathy. There is one now, who has suffered for weeks with

what seems like a bad cough. All day it sits ruffed up on the perch, with sick-looking bill, and pants of distress, and all night it coughs so that Mrs. Nellie can hear it in her room downstairs. Every night she thinks she will give it a dose of chloroform and end its sufferings, and every morning she thinks, perhaps it may get well.

There's a good deal of what we call human nature about these little creatures, and, after all, life in the lace house isn't so very unlike life in the houses of brick and stone around it.



TOO LATE.

CHAPTER TWENTY-SIXTH.

MOPSA, THE FIFTH CAT.

THERE were always plenty of cats and kittens at Marcy's, and really mamma had to be very severe in the matter, or cats would soon have crowded out the people, for every one of the family was fond of them, and neither of the children could refuse the offer of a kitten from any neighbor who wished to find homes for their spare ones.

Therefore a limit had to be fixed to the number of cats that would be taken into the family. The allowance was liberal enough, one would think ; four she would admit, but no more.

At the time I am going to tell of, there were already four in the house—in fact the ranks were always full, and only a death made room for a new one. There were Abby and Mother Bunch—now grown up—the parlor cats, and Nig and Miss Miggs, the kitchen cats. Of course, then, according to the rules of the house, no kitten, however irresistible, should be brought in.

But one day Marcy came from a visit to a friend, with a look of anxiety on her face and a bunch under her cloak. The moment her mother saw her she knew something was wrong, and remembering Marcy's weakness, she jumped at once at the truth, and said she "*hoped* Marcy had not brought home a kitten."

For reply, Marcy opened her cloak and showed the head of a bright little Maltese kitten, with lovely silvery white edges to her fur. She was exceedingly pretty, and she was Maltese, which they had wished a long time to have; and at last mamma consented to go over her rule for this once, especially as Mother Bunch, since her blindness, was ailing, and they thought she would not live long. So that's the way Mopsa came to live at the house and be the fifth Cat.

It was not long before she was the pet of the whole family, for she was a most affectionate Puss, and wanted to be in some one's lap every moment of the time.

She had the queerest fancy to lick an arm, especially the arm of one who wore no stiff cuff. She would begin at the wrist—scarcely ever touching the hand, which cats usually lick—and set up at the same moment a most happy and contented purr. Gradually she would work up on the arm, nosing under the sleeve, and at last settling down to a good nap, with her nose as far up the sleeve as she could get it.

This was often a great annoyance, and she would be put down on the floor, or the arm held up high, while she was remonstrated with. But she was so pleading, she begged so hard, jumping up again instantly and standing on hind legs to reach the arm with her fore paws, and pull it down, looking all the time so innocent and so eager, that the victim had not the heart to refuse, and generally ended with giving up one arm, and of course the hand, to her caresses.

Mopsa slept in a big arm-chair in the parlor, on a soft shawl; but her naps—when not in somebody's lap—were taken on the mantel-shelf. This particular shelf was across the chimney which came up from the kitchen, and the wall there was always warm. In wandering about over the tables and shelves, which she was fond of doing, Mopsa had discovered this delightful warm spot, and taken possession of it, coolly pushing off any articles that might be in the way.

Now the mantel was covered with light-blue satin, with deep fringe hanging, and the family tried to break her of this troublesome fancy. But they could not keep her off, for the piano stood where she could jump from it, and every night that the furnace fire got low, and the room rather cool, she would be sure to find her way to the satin shelf. At last—as usual—they submitted, since she was so neat a Pussy that she never soiled it in the least. They cleared that corner for her use, and left an arm-chair near, as a highway for her to get up more easily.

On the same shelf was a shell full of dried grasses, including wheat and oats, and Miss Mopsa soon found out that they were nice for a slight lunch. So whenever she wished, she would daintily seize one stem by the end, pull it out, and proceed to eat the grains, whether wheat, oats, or common grass.

She had several names, though Mopsa was the formal one. Marcy called her Kittena, and Sozzly, and Nipperkin. Mamma called her Kitchie, and Ralph, Poots, and sometimes her name was Toodlum or Petkins. She knew all her names, and would look around and turn one ear slightly that way, when one spoke to her, as though to see if the offered remark was of interest enough to notice; but she would never stir a peg to come, unless it was dinner-time, or it pleased her high mightiness to do so.

She knew the dinner-bell as well as any one, and the moment she heard it, though stretched out before the fire, or with head thrust far up a sleeve, fast asleep, she would jump as though shot, and start on a gallop for the dining-room door.

She had her meals in a closet, the butler's pantry, opening out of the dining-room; but as soon as she had finished eating she came out and scrambled up on some one's shoulder—which she could easily do, even when they were standing up—where she could look over the table and see what others had to eat.

Then she showed the deepest interest in every mouthful that found its way to the mouth she was near. She would stick her head forward to see what it was, and if too attractive she would put out a dainty paw to draw it her way, or gently pat the cheek as a reminder that she was there. I regret to say that proper table manners were not taught this petted kitten. She was often fed with a tea-spoon when in this elevated position, and she would empty it with ease and neatness, by means of her graceful pink tongue.

When Mopsa first came, and Marcy would bring her to the dining-room at meal-times to be fed, her father "set down his foot" that cats must not be fed at the table. But that wise

Puss seemed to understand that he had to be won over, so she would scramble to his shoulder and purr, and rub against his cheek, and be so coaxing, that at last, when she would gently mention that she too was hungry, even his sternness would relax, and he would say quite seriously, "Marcy, why don't you feed this cat? she seems half starved!" and Marcy, looking very meek, but laughing inside at Mopsa's wiles, would rise and feed her.

As I said, this Kitten was social in her tastes, and it was a trial to her to spend her nights in the parlor alone. So the moment Patty opened the door in the morning, she was down from her bed, and started on a search for the family. She knew all the bedrooms, and would go from one to another, mewing at the door to be let in, and jumping on the bed and purring, and licking the arms with the greatest eagerness; and she generally made the complete rounds of the rooms before breakfast.

She was fond of water, and had two ways to get it. When in the room with a hydrant, she would jump up beside it and wait for it to be turned on. It was always started very gently, so that a small stream fell, and she would drink it as it touched the bowl beneath. When she had enough she would sometimes play with the bright little stream, shaking her paw as though wondering how it got wet, yet unable to resist the lively running drops.

If she was in the parlor and wanted water, she went at once to the greenhouse door, which was always left ajar for her, and climbed a tree—that is, a tree fern, a foot or two high—to the edge of the fountain basin. There was always water, and she could drink her fill. She was fond of the greenhouse; it was

her outdoors. She would climb all around and among the pots, tasting and smelling the plants, and always digging up the new slips, which she seemed to think were pretending to be plants when they were not.

She had great curiosity. Carried about on the shoulder—her favorite post of observation—she would look at pictures on the wall, first at the lower ones, then stretch her head to see the upper ones, looking as wise as an owl, and no doubt having her own opinion as to their merits. Then the gas fixture would be closely examined, and if near enough, she would put out a paw to touch it.

But she was most amusing when let alone, and not apparently noticed. She would start out on a tour of discovery of her own. She would jump on to a bureau, look at all the toilet articles with interest, play a little with the pins in the cushion, and glance at herself in the glass, though she never paid much attention to that, evidently knowing well enough it was not another Kitten. If a drawer was a little open, she would put in her hand and claw out a ruche, or a ribbon, and examine it carefully.

Then she would leap on to a table to continue her tour. If anything moved from the force of her jump, as did once a mechanical toy velocipede of Ralph's, she would gently touch it with one paw to see if it was movable, and smell of the rider to see if it was alive. Then she would stand up on her hind legs to look on to the book-shelves above, and stretch back to see on to the upper shelf.

But the place she liked best was the desk, especially when mamma was writing, and had two or three drawers open. The wonders on that desk never tired Mopsa. Every small thing she would push to see if it would roll, and if it did, and fell to the

floor, she was happy, and would try the next ; a spool, a pencil, a bunch of keys, or a thimble were her delight.

Then she would insert a paw into the drawers and try to pull out things ; and if far enough open she would crawl in. In fact, to thoroughly investigate the mysteries of these odd little hiding-places seemed to be one object of her life. When the worker at the desk could not endure it any longer, and shut the drawers, Mopsa would coolly walk over and sit down on the lap tablet on which she wrote, and dispute possession of the pen, whose movements she evidently considered a challenge to a frolic. Driven off from this post, she would establish herself on the big dictionary, where the sun usually fell, and go to washing her face and hands.

Like other kittens, Mopsa was extremely playful, and she was kept supplied with marbles on the parlor floor, so that she could always find one to play with. She would roll it about a few minutes, dashing after it, and turning somersets in her eagerness to catch it, and then poke it under the iron hearth beneath the grate, or the edge of the rug, and sit down to wait for it to come out, as though it was alive.

Best of all she liked a newspaper, which she would go over and under, and pounce on and tear to pieces. That was so bad a habit, that after she had destroyed a few valuable papers and pieces of music, the family were careful not to let her have papers, and to take them away and reprove her—with a gentle box on the ear—when she began to tear one. So she took to a portfolio of engravings that stood on the floor. Into the ends of this she could reach, and claw and bite the margins of the pictures.

She delighted in odd nooks and corners. If she found the

library case open, and a large book gone, she would go through the door thus made, behind the books, and stay there a long time; and into the piano, on the strings, was a favorite retreat always.

Mopsa was rather jealous of any attention paid to books and papers. She would jump into the lap, thrust her head between the offensive object and one's face, nose about the wrist, and at last take possession of the shoulder, licking the cheek and lying down full length over the shoulder, if possible with her head under one's chin, so as to be in the way of comfortable reading. There she would lie an hour at a time, while the victim of her winning ways quietly rocked and read.

Her strongest desire was for fresh meat. She would sit in the window and watch the birds, and twitch her jaw in her longing to get at them, making a peculiar low cry at the time. She made the same sound when she saw a fly buzzing about, too high for her to reach, and then some of the family always came to her aid, holding her up to the wall, or the window, while she put her paws on him and ate him up.

If he was on the lower pane she asked no help; she could get him herself. She would jump and seize him in both paws, and once or twice was seen to snatch a fly from the air in one paw, springing up from the floor perhaps two feet to do so, and carrying it to her mouth in that paw, as handily as you can use your hand.

There was one place in the house forbidden to Mopsa, and she soon found it out, and at once decided that to be the most interesting place under the roof. It was the kitchen. Marcy feared she would find something improper to eat, as she had already shown a fancy for broom splints and bits of string, and

had made herself violently ill by them. And worse than that, she would have vulgar associates—the kitchen cats, who spent their evenings out on the roofs and fences, and would teach her who knows what vagabond tastes.

No sooner did this naughty Puss find out that she must not go into the kitchen, than she put in practice every cat wile to do so. She would seat herself by a door which led that way, and if it was opened would dash through like a streak, under the feet of the one coming in, and often narrowly escaping a terrible squeeze.

Down-stairs she would go like a flash, and hide in some corner till pursuit was over, when she would forage about for bits of food, and lie down on the hearth with Miss Miggs—her favorite below stairs—for a stolen nap. When her visit was over, she would go up the back stairs to mamma's door, and cry to be let in, and then she would lie down in the sunshine, perfectly satisfied with her exploits.

From the first she had a great fancy for mamma, perhaps because her arm was of a better flavor, but probably because only in her lap did she find absolute peace, and no teasing. She was so persistent in her attentions, insisting on being held by her, every moment they were in the same room, that poor mamma, who had spent time enough over kittens in her girlhood, and never expected to pet them again, was fairly won over, and yielded as amiably as she could to being herself petted by a Kitten.

She had always laughed at the rest of the family for making so much ado over Mopsa, but when, one morning, the poor Puss was found crouched behind the water-pipes in the greenhouse, howling dismally, and so weak she could not stand, mamma her-

self gave in to the family weakness. Marcy had to go to school and could not pet her, and petting was what she pined for; so she wrapped the sufferer in a shawl and took her on her lap, holding her all the morning.

Another time she was hurt. While prying around the sliding cupboard, Patty, not seeing her, sent it down. Poor Mopsa's head was caught, and for a moment they thought she was killed.

She was not, but she was hurt, and never was Kitten more tenderly nursed than she, held in arms and petted to her heart's content. All that day she never purred, nor tasted food or drink, nor scarcely moved. She lay still—poor dumb creature—and suffered it out. The next day she was better, and spent the time in a long rest on the mantel-shelf; and the third day she returned to her food and was well.

Perhaps I ought not to call Mopsa the fifth Cat, since she is yet only a Kitten hardly eight months old, and of course not half grown.

Before this time Mother Bunch was dead, and Abby had taken to queer ways. She deserted her bed in the basket, and insisted on sleeping upstairs in some of the rooms opening on a certain side of the house. For she had made the discovery that a long wisteria vine, which grew to the roof on that side, was a charming ladder, by which she could go up or down, at any time of day or night.

When it came bedtime, Abby was generally not to be found. Mamma—suspecting her—would look everywhere about her room, and decide that she couldn't be there. Sometimes she was not; she was already out for an evening walk, in the pleasant hours when boys are gone to bed, and dogs have to stay at home and watch the house.

But when she was ready for bed, hours after the family were asleep, she would climb the wisteria ladder to her mistress's window, which was always open from the top. On the top of this sash Abby would coolly jump, when her weight would send it down with a bang, and she would scramble in through the curtains, of course waking everybody and making a great noise.

If her mistress scolded her, she would set up her loud, happy purr, and what tender-hearted Cat-lover but would forgive her on the spot. If she happened to be shut in, she took the same way to get out, going through the window and down the wisteria ladder.

CHAPTER TWENTY-SEVENTH.

AN UGLY BABY.

WHEN the children heard, during their visit to the Aquarium, that there was a baby Hippopotamus to be seen, they naturally thought of something little and pretty, that might be taken up in the arms and petted; but when they saw it, there was first a cry of dismay, and then a shout of laughter.

Baby indeed! it was bigger than any dog, and the very ugliest-looking creature in the building. Short, waddling legs, big, clumsy feet, an enormous head nearly all mouth, and the most absurd little ears, about big enough for a cat.

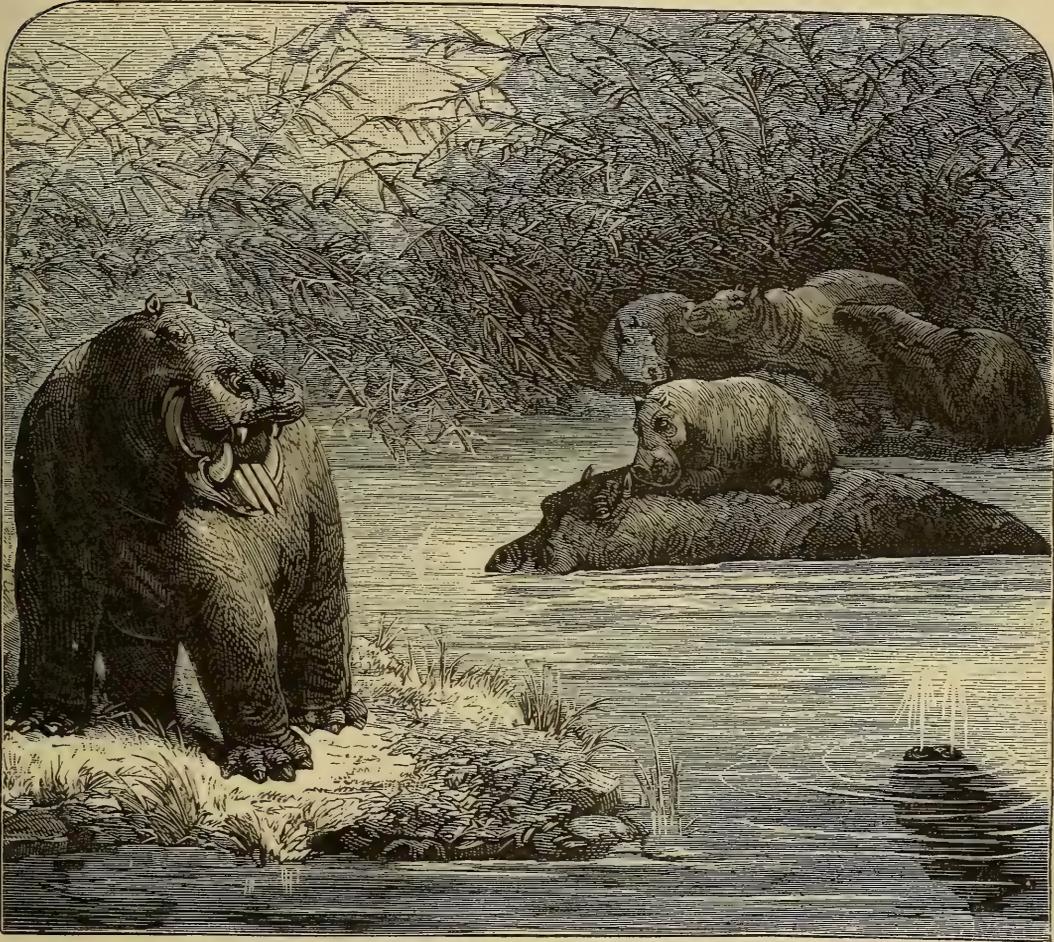
It was a great treasure though. A baby Hippopotamus is not seen every day, and people stood around in crowds watching its awkward movements and throwing bits of bread and cake, which it would catch in its mouth, when it felt like it. It was not particularly good-natured, and was specially cross to children, whom it sometimes tried to bite.

This baby came from Africa—the banks of the White Nile—and traveled across the country in royal state. Four camels brought it, in a tank which they carried between them; an army of twenty-five goats furnished it with milk, and of course all these animals required a small mob of men to look after them.

When they found the little creature it was very young, and

weighed ninety pounds ; but when the children saw it, it was a year-old baby, and weighed some hundreds.

Ugly and awkward as the Hippopotamus is on land, in the water, where it spends most of its time when at home, it is any-



THE BABY HIPPOPOTAMUS.

thing but clumsy. It dives and swims with the greatest ease, and the little ones are lively and frolicsome, chasing each other about like other little animals. The grown-up ones are harmless and good-natured, unless disturbed or attacked by men. Then

they become furious, and think nothing of dashing a boat to pieces and killing a man or two.

The flesh of this creature is very good to eat, and he carries in his enormous mouth fine ivory teeth, some of which weigh six or eight pounds, and are very valuable. His skin, which is an inch and a half thick in some places, is useful also to make whips and other things. Moreover, he is a terrible destroyer of crops, partly because he can eat five or six bushels; but more because in getting what he wants to eat, he tramples down and ruins a much greater quantity. So of course he is hunted in several ways, caught in pitfalls and traps, shot by the whites, and harpooned by the natives.

The Hippopotamus is a very affectionate mother, and carries her baby about on her back, as you see in the picture, where the father stands on the bank, and is evidently telling them to "hurry up." Very cross he looks about it, too; but perhaps—like some people—"his bark is worse than his bite."

The hunter who wants to carry off one of these mother's darlings has first of all to fight with that mother, and kill her, too; for she will never desert her little one.

A grown-up Hippopotamus is about five feet high, and nine feet long, and it sleeps nearly all day, partly under the water of a river or lake. At night it comes out on the bank to hunt for shrubs and plants, on which it feeds; for those teeth, savage as they look, are intended only to pull up the river grasses to eat. The name Hippopotamus means River-Horse, and some people call it the Sea-Cow. Its cry is generally a kind of grunt, and sometimes a loud, hoarse sort of snort or groan.

Mr. Buckland tells an interesting story of a baby Hippopotamus which was kept in the Zoological Garden of London. To

begin with his story, a party of travelers were one day rowing up a small lake in Egypt, which was thickly grown with reeds. Upon one of these beds of reeds they saw a small, black baby—a Hippopotamus baby—fast asleep and alone. This was a very rare sight, for usually the youngster rides everywhere its mother goes—on her back—as I told you before.

The men instantly thought of the London Zoological Garden, and its constant desire for curiosities, and they resolved to steal the unguarded sleeper while its careless mother was away.

No sooner said than done. He was somewhat larger than a terrier dog, and very young indeed; they supposed about two days. One of the men jumped into the water and carried him off in his arms. He cried and squealed like a young pig; but, happily for the men, the mother did not hear him, and they got safely off with their strange prize.

The first thing, of course, was to get a nurse for him, and they soon found an Arab named Salama who was willing to undertake the business. He took care of the baby as carefully as the mother herself could have done, and soon became very much attached to his charge, giving him the name of Bucheet, as a pet name.

For traveling arrangements on his journey to England, Bucheet had a box made without a top; instead of a lake or river to bathe in, which he would have enjoyed at home, he had only a pail of water thrown over him now and then.

He became intensely attached to his nurse, who succeeded in keeping him in good health, though his skin grew hard and rough for want of water. When he reached his new home in London, after riding through the streets of the city on a dray, he was as large as a full-grown hog.

He was a little frightened at the noise and confusion of London, though he followed his beloved nurse to his own quarters without trouble. In this room there had been prepared for him a nice bath. Bucheet had never enjoyed that luxury, so he smelled of it, but didn't quite know what to do with it.

The Arab nurse had to show him what water was good for, by walking himself into the tank. The baby followed, and in a few minutes, as soon as he found out how pleasant it was, he was splashing and frolicing, and having a grand time. After that he never needed an invitation to bathe; he was always ready.

After his first bath and the supper that followed it, during which he kept his eyes on his Arab friend, and cried if he went out of sight, Bucheet was ready for bed. This was always closely hugged up to Salama, and so affectionate was he, that if the keeper coughed or moved in the night, he would wake up and answer him in a social way.

The next morning he had another bath, and soon his skin began to grow soft and black, as it should be. Though so fond of his keeper, letting him do anything with him, he was not the most amiable baby in the world, and he had no fancy for strangers, but would snap at them if they came too near.

He had some curious ways for a wild beast. Among others he insisted on sleeping on a pillow, and he would cry, and carry on like a naughty child, if it was not given to him.

After this young Hippopotamus grew up, he started again on his travels. He came to America, and it is supposed that he traveled about the country for some time; but what became of him at last I never learned.

CHAPTER TWENTY-EIGHTH.

TWO FUNNY FELLOWS.

IN one corner of the large room at the Aquarium where all these creatures lived, was a strong cage of wood, and iron, and plate glass, before which was a long seat. On this seat Marcy and Ralph spent much time, resting after their running about, and watching with greatest interest the two little fellows who lived in the cage.

They were Chimpanzees, and as full of fun as any of the monkey family, to which they belong.

On this particular day their strongest desire seemed to be to swing. At one place in the roof of their cage was a bar, which they could seize in one hand and swing their bodies violently back and forth. Unfortunately, only one could swing at a time, and this of course made trouble.

They would perhaps both be sitting in front of the cage, next the glass, looking at their visitors in the grave sharp way of Chimpanzees, when all at once one would put out his lips and mutter something; a challenge, or a defiance perhaps. May be he said,

“I’ll have a swing before you do!”

Whatever it was, he would spring to the bar like a flash, and begin to swing as hard as he could. Seeing this always roused his companion to fury. He would set up the most violent chat-

tering, probably "calling names," or expressing his opinion pretty freely, and then he would jump fiercely across the cage, fling himself on to the other as though in a transport of rage, trying to pull him down or drive him away. They would grasp each other and fall in a heap on the floor, and after a few tumbles over and over, would come to the front again, to see if anybody had yet found a peanut or a cake for them. It was evidently more frolic than quarrel, for they did not bite, and came peaceably forward together after it.

The children had watched them with interest for some time, when in one of their tumbles one Chimpanzee bumped his head. For a moment he looked like a child, as he sat up and rubbed it ruefully, but the next instant he took a droll way to help it. He deliberately laid his forehead to the floor, and standing on all four feet—or hands rather—he plowed the length of his cage with his head, stirring up the straw and dust, and making a dreadful muss of himself. It seemed to relieve him; at any rate he paid no more attention to his head, except to brush off the loose straw.

The names of these two funny playmates were Jerry and Tom, and they wrestled, and tumbled, and turned somersets, and pulled each other's ears, and acted like a pair of frolicsome youngsters.

If a visitor offered one of them a nut or cake, or anything small, holding it up to the glass front in his sight, the Chimpanzee would put his hand out through a hole in the roof to take it. But if it was an orange or an apple, he would thrust his hand through a hole in the floor, which was larger than the other.

The children were so interested that Uncle Karl went out and found the keeper, who opened the door and took Master

Tom in his arms. No sooner did he find himself out of the cage than he resolved to have a run about the place. He tried to jerk away, he twisted his arm till it seemed as if it must break; he dragged himself one side and then the other, and behaved exactly as you've seen a naughty child who wanted to be free.

But the keeper was used to his tricks. He held him tightly, made him shake hands with Ralph, and tickled him to show that he could laugh as well as anybody. It has often been said that "Man is the only laughing animal," but this Chimpanzee laughed aloud, though not very loud, and when the man stopped tickling he had actually a smile on his face. It seems perhaps hard to believe, but I assure you it is perfectly true.

But how do you think Jerry liked seeing his companion at liberty? I'll tell you what he did. First he tried the door, and finding it locked he seized the swing bar, and began to swing furiously. At every swing he brought his two feet—or lower hands—bang against the door with an awful clatter, scolding away savagely all the time.

Finding that did not open the door, he turned the other way and gave the same sort of kicks against the glass in front. It seemed as though he would come through; but the glass was thick and it did not break.

They were very cunning, the keeper said, and could use tools as well as a man. Once when he left a screw-driver in their reach, one of them got it, looked about for a convenient screw, and coolly put the tool to its proper use. When it slipped out of the groove in the head of the screw, the Chimpanzee would put it in his mouth and wet it, to make it stick. He held it exactly right, and the only reason he did not succeed was, that he turned the screw-driver the wrong way.

The Chimpanzee is called also the Large Black Ape, and he belongs to the most knowing branch of the monkey family. He is almost entirely black, has no tail, and is found in Africa, where he is said to live more upon the ground than monkeys in general. In his native country he eats fruits and vegetables; but when living among men—which he likes to do, for he is easily tamed—he eats and drinks whatever they do, tea or coffee or anything, even having his notions, preferring roast meat to boiled, and one sort of wine to another, in countries where wine is commonly used.

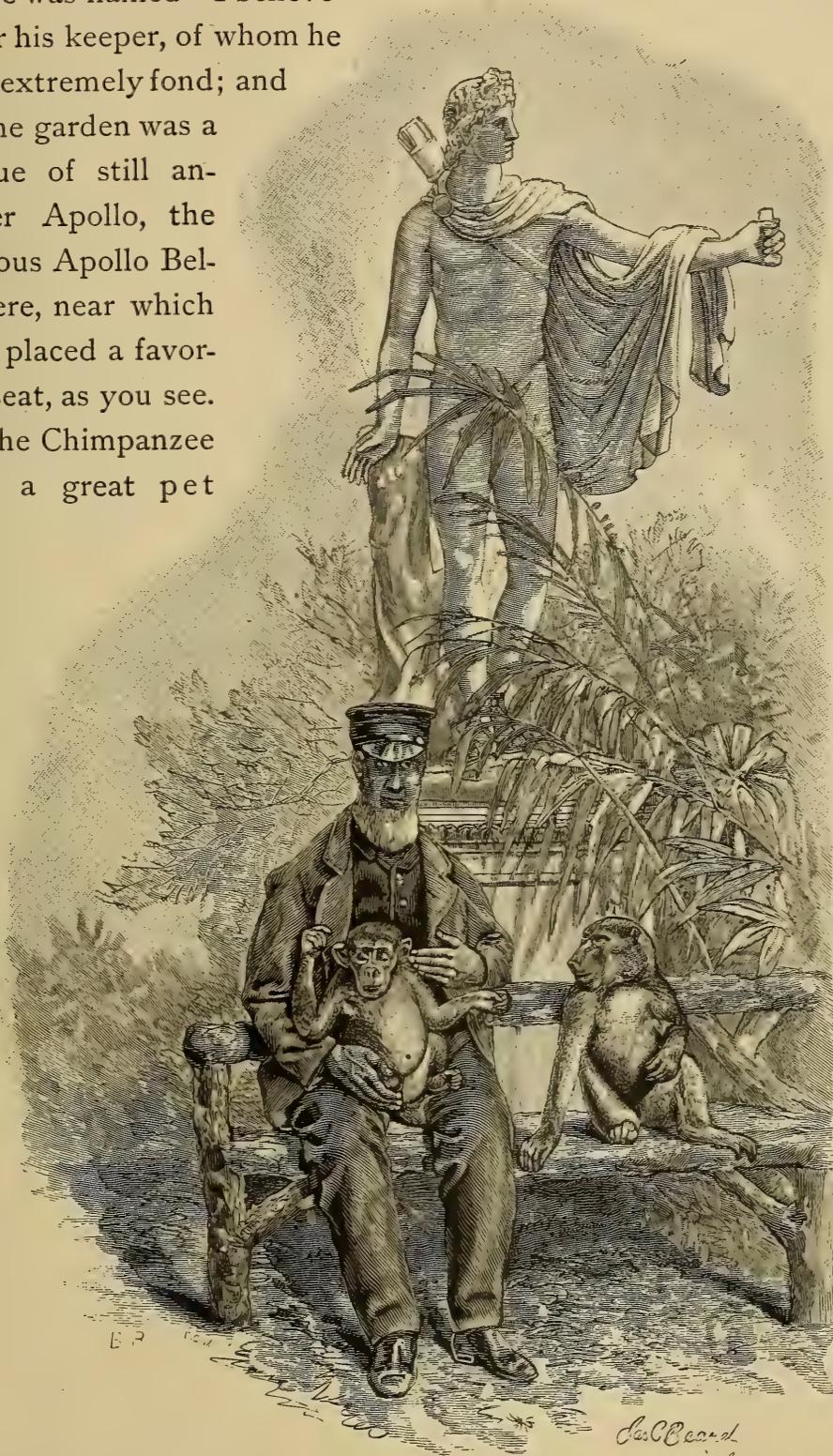
He can be taught not only man's ways of living, but to work for him. An Austrian gentleman who lived in Siam tells a strange story of the Ape's skill in knowing good money from bad. Whether true or not, a writer for a London paper affirms that the animal is kept in banks, to test coin, which he does by putting it in his mouth, selecting the bad instantly. This is no more wonderful than many things that we know to be true.

The same writer tells of a trick sometimes played by a Siamese fruit-grower, to keep these very troublesome fellows out of his garden. He catches, in some way, one of their own party, sews him up in the skin of a tiger-cat, and turns him loose in the orchard. Of course the disguised Ape in the tiger skin hastens to join his family, and also of course they mistake him for a tiger-cat, and run for their lives, screeching and chattering like mad. There is nothing they so hate and fear as one of these creatures, and it is said that they never again visit the garden where they have been so frightened.

The Chimpanzee in the arms of his keeper in this picture, has a story, and much has been written about him. He belonged to a Zoological Garden in Berlin, and his name was Apollo.

He was named—I believe—
after his keeper, of whom he
was extremely fond; and
in the garden was a
statue of still an-
other Apollo, the
famous Apollo Bel-
vedere, near which
was placed a favor-
ite seat, as you see.

The Chimpanzee
was a great pet



THE THREE APOLLOS.

among visitors, showing a partiality to ladies. He always slept in a bed, which he made up nicely himself, spreading the blanket and arranging the pillow. He drank like a person, ate at a table, and used a napkin at meals. He had his own tastes in food, and his pet dainty was a honey-cake, which would even cheer him when he was sad.

He was as fond of play and noise as a boy, and he wore a whistle hung around his neck, with which he amused himself exactly as you boys do.

Apollo was sometimes lonely; and once his keeper, thinking it would please him—as it does many animals—to see himself in a glass, put a mirror into the cage. The Chimpanzee was at first delighted, and much excited. He looked eagerly at his new companion, tried to make him play with him, and to get acquainted.

In some way, however, he became suspicious that all was not right. He examined the glass, looked behind it, and evidently saw that he had been cheated. He turned away disgusted, and took the disappointment much to heart, refusing for several days to be comforted.

His constant playmate was a Baboon, whom you see sitting on the bench by the keeper. So warmly were they attached to each other, that when Apollo died, after some years, his companion could not live without him. He died very soon, it is supposed of grief.

Another of the Chimpanzee family, which Du Chaillu tells about in Africa, he calls the Bare-headed Ape, because he is bald. This one—he says—builds for himself a roof of tree-branches, bound to the trunk of a tree, just above a convenient branch, which he can use for a seat.

This roof is shaped like an umbrella, and under it sits the builder, with one arm around the trunk to hold himself on. There he eats and sleeps, and is sheltered as long as he chooses to stay in that part of the woods, or until the leaves wither and fall off, and he makes another.

The natives call this Ape the Nshiego Mbouve, and the traveler had the good fortune to catch a baby of the family, which he kept some time as a pet.

When he caught it, it was very young, and had a face as white as any human white baby's. It was about a foot high, and it cried "Oo-ee, Oo-ee," over its dead mother's body. The poor little fellow looked so forlorn that he excited a great deal of pity among the men, and Du Chaillu took him to bring up. He was named Tommy, was soon as tame as a cat, and would eat everything the men did.

Tommy was very fond of his master, and followed him everywhere, climbing into his arms, and laying his head on his breast or shoulder. He liked being stroked and petted, as a cat does, and would keep still by the hour while it was done.

He soon learned to like a pillow that his master made for him, and dragged it everywhere he went. He would not go to sleep without it, and if it was lost, he would howl and cry till some one hunted it up for him, to stop his noise.

Tommy was also fond of good things to eat. Indeed, I fear he was somewhat greedy, and he soon grew cunning enough to run from one dinner-table to another, in the party. Every one gave him something, so he did not go hungry.

When dinner was ready at his master's hut, Tommy would climb the center-pole till high enough to see what was on the table. Then he would decide which dish he preferred, and

come down to the side of his friend to be fed. Du Chaillu, not knowing, of course, what he had selected, would offer him one thing after another, but till he reached what Master Tommy had chosen, he would throw the food to the floor, and howl and stamp his foot like a very bad child.

When he received what he wanted, he would thank by a soft little sound, and hold out his hand to shake, in a way so coaxing, that his naughtiness was forgiven on the spot.

But Tommy had a worse fault than naughtiness; he would steal. It seemed that he could not resist any bit of food that he fancied, or any fruit, though he knew it was stealing, and sneaked about it as a human thief will do. He was very cunning, too, though he sometimes was caught at it.

When the weather grew cold, Tommy began to think he should like a bedfellow. Unfortunately, none of the negroes would let him share their bed, nor did his master exactly fancy it. At last the knowing little rogue hit upon a plan to have his own way. He would wait till everybody was asleep, and then quietly steal into the bed of some negro friend, where he would stay till morning.

He was generally awake before the men, and so slipped away, and was not found out. But though he was sometimes caught, and whipped for it, he preferred a warm bed, and he continued to steal it just the same.

His master hoped to send his pet to America, but one day, when about five months old, he was taken ill, though no one knew the cause, and the next day he died.

Other travelers in Africa say that Chimpanzees are knowing enough to catch spears which are thrown at them, and throw them back; and if cornered, even to snatch them out of the

hands of their enemies, and use them as handily as men. They carry their babies in their arms or on their shoulders, as do the native women.

In Sierra Leone it is said they are trained to carry water, to make beds, and sweep. In other places they sit in chairs and wear clothes, being able to partly dress themselves, and having pride in dressing gayly.

On shipboard Chimpanzees have learned to reef and furl sails to light fires and cook food, even to dust furniture and clean floors.

One kept in the London Zoological Garden ate eggs with a spoon, used a knife and fork and cup, at table. He would lock and unlock a door or a drawer, thread a needle, uncork bottles, clean boots, and box with his keeper.

The Chimpanzee also washes his own face and hands, and sheds tears when he is hurt, even sometimes when he has done mischief, such as breaking a water jug.

These are but few of the marvelous things told of this Ape, and any one who has watched the intelligent way in which they copy everything they see people do, can easily believe them.

We have not yet made acquaintance with our four-handed fellow-creatures. Some thoughtful people believe that they will one day be trained to work for us as house-servants, and in other ways. Perhaps that is one of the things we're leaving for you youngsters to do when you grow up.

CHAPTER TWENTY-NINTH.

WHAT THEY SAW IN THE PARK.

THE most important day of the year to Marcy—her birthday—now drew near, and Uncle Karl had already warned her to make up her mind where she wanted to go on that occasion.

Marcy and Ralph had indeed talked it over, but it did not require much discussion, for they agreed unanimously that the best thing to have, was a whole day in the Park, with its usual accompaniments of a fine dinner at a restaurant, a row on the little lake, and ice-cream in the grotto. The great attraction in the Park was the collection of animals, at least for these young animal-lovers. Several new creatures had come there to live since the children's last visit, and Uncle Karl prepared his sketch-book and a stock of sharp pencils, for he knew he should find plenty of work for them.

The tenth of June came at last, and the first train after breakfast carried the birthday party to the city. They crossed the river in a ferryboat, and rode on the elevated railroad, high up in the air, where they could peep into people's second or third story windows, and look down on the unending stream of street cars, wagons, carts, and carriages in the street. This carried them quickly out to the Park, where they arrived in time for a long day's pleasure.

Never was a day so crowded with nice times as that day.

They spent many hours looking at the animals; they rode in an elegant carriage drawn by goats. They fed the Gazelle, a beautiful but homesick-looking creature, standing sadly in a pen, where its wonderful swift limbs were of no use, and who gazed at



DREAMING OF HOME.

them with large dark eyes, and seemed to be dreaming of its old home in sunny Africa.

They sailed on the lake, and threw crackers to the Swans, both black and white who floated slowly around the lake,

making little sharp remarks to each other, probably criticisms on the staring crowd, or opinions as to the freshness of the last bit of cake they had received.

They watched the antics of the Monkeys, listened to the barking of the Sea-Lion, and laughed at the loud purr of the sleepy Tiger. They went around the drive in a park phaeton, and about five o'clock they went out to a restaurant and ordered their own dinners, each to suit himself.

Two of these dinners, I must admit, were rather queer, and not according to the order laid down on the bill of fare; but they had what they chose, and it was of course nobody's business whether they began with pudding and ended with soup, on such an extra occasion as a birthday, which comes but once a year.

All I can say is, everything was nice, and everybody was pleased, including the waiter, who began rather stiff, but proved to be a very smiling person.

At seven o'clock they started for home, with their minds full of new questions to ask when their bodies were rested, and Uncle Karl's book well filled with rough sketches.

The greatest stranger in the Park, who had arrived only a few days before, and was not going to stay long, and perhaps also the oddest one there, was the Aard-vark, whose picture Uncle Karl drew in two positions.

Unfortunately this animal is a night-loving creature, and it is hard to find out how he lives and what he does. While people are awake and anxious to study him, he is curled up in the snug house he has dug for himself, asleep, and with no desire to be studied. Then when people are tired out and go to bed, Mr. Aard-vark and all the family come out to enjoy themselves, and hunt for something to eat.

What they look for, and what they prefer to find, is one of the strong high houses of the white ants. These are built of clay,



ONLY A VISITOR.

and become very hard, so that men, and even heavy animals, are able to stand on them.

The enormous claws of the Aard-vark—which you see in the

picture—are just the things to tear a hole in the White Ants'—or Termites'—house, and his long sticky tongue is well fitted to thrust into the hole and sweep up the Ants by hundreds. Everybody in that part of the world knows that Termites are good to eat, for even the people like them.

This curious animal is about a yard long, and a foot and a half high. When the children first saw him he was curled up in his cage, fast asleep, standing on his head, as you see him at the end of this chapter.

The Aard-vark lives only in Africa, where ants are plenty, and his name means Earth Pig. His claws, though they look so dreadful, are used only for digging, and so far as is known he is a harmless creature.

Another Ant-Eater, however, who lives in South America—the Ant Bear—is not so harmless, though he has no teeth, and never attacks any one, merely defending himself.

His way of doing it is curious. He simply grasps his enemy in his arms, and holds on; that is all. But as he can live a week or more without food, he just holds on patiently, while his victim, be it man or savage animal, starves to death. It is a dreadful way to fight, and he is sometimes found holding tight in his arms a wild animal, both dead.

This Great Ant-Eater has been known to live some time in Zoological Gardens, where he eats eggs, licking them out of the dish with his long tongue like a rat's tail, and varying this diet with cockroaches, crickets, and other small creatures.

The wonder of this creature is his tail, so long and bushy that it quite covers him up when he throws it over his back, as he does when he wants to sleep, working it exactly as though it had a hinge where it joins the body.

He has another use for his tail, which is as an umbrella, to protect him from rain. The Indians of South America take advantage of this fact, and rustle the leaves to make a sound like the pattering of rain-drops. The creature hastens to get up his umbrella, and while he is doing it, the Indians kill him.

Why do they kill him? Well, the same old reason; he has "good meat" on his bones.



STANDING ON HIS HEAD.

CHAPTER THIRTIETH.

WITH A LONG NOSE.

ONE of the funniest things at the Park was a row of four or five baby Elephants, swinging their big little bodies from side to side, looking sharply for cakes and peanuts from visitors, and politely holding out their long noses to receive gifts.

“Long noses!” you say?

Yes, truly; so say the wise men, and the unwise cannot deny it. The long member that we call a trunk, is really a nose, with a finger at the end of it. Who ever heard of a nose long enough to reach the ground when its owner stood up straight? Why, it's worse than the man in the story book, who had a long black pudding hanging from his nose!

The Elephant, however, doesn't seem to and this feature any trouble. In fact, it is the most useful member he has. It is an arm, a hand, a pump, and a nose in one. Nothing would be more helpless than one of these great creatures without the trunk.

Perhaps the most interesting animal in America just now, is a baby Elephant, born a few days ago (about the first of March, 1880) in a menagerie in Philadelphia, partly because it is the first of its family ever born in our country, and partly because it is an interesting baby itself.

Its mother is a performing Elephant by the name of Hebe,

and there was nearly as much rejoicing over that baby as there is over the heir to a throne. To be sure, there were no cannon fired nor fireworks let off, as on the birth of a prince, but let me tell you what there was.

Hebe began the performance with a wild shout of joy and welcome. It was night, and most of the animals in the large collection were asleep; but her cry was instantly answered by shouts and wild trumpeting from all the other Elephants, a dozen or so. The sleeping ones sprang to their feet at once and joined in the cries.

This wakened the dogs about the place, and of course—after the manner of dogs—they at once fell to barking with all their might. In the next house were the cat family—lions, tigers, panthers, leopards, and others—fast asleep. The unusual sounds quickly awoke them, and seeing that something was the matter, they all added their voices, roars, howls, and cries, each after the fashion of his kind.

It was a perfect Babel of talk; and as the voices were loud, and each spoke his own language, the confusion was dreadful.

Hebe forgot that she had begun it, and the noise frightened her. She broke loose from the great chains that held her, and started for the pen where the other Elephants were, determined to be with her friends, rolling her baby before her on the ground, while her Elephant friends tried frantically to break their chains and come to her help.

The night watchmen ran for help, and the animal keepers were soon on hand to quiet the uproar. In a few minutes they convinced the cat family—in a persuasive way they have—that there was no need of their making a noise, while the Elephant keepers did the same in their part of the house.

They then tried to get the baby away from Hebe, fearing that she would hurt it; but she was very much alarmed, trembled all over, and refused to let anybody come near, till her particular friend and trainer petted and soothed her, and made her understand there was nothing to fear.

She calmed down, and let them look at the little stranger, never allowing it out of her reach, however. That precocious baby stood up and wagged its absurd little tail, and flourished its trunk like any old Elephant. It was three feet high, and weighed a little more than two hundred pounds. Its trunk was one foot long, and its tail about the same length. It was covered with coarse, stiff, scattering hairs, and looked like nothing in the world except a big Elephant.

This little creature, you must know, is very valuable; a hundred thousand dollars, it is said, would not buy it, and it is treated like a very distinguished personage. A private room has been built for Madam Hebe and her baby, with bars across the front to insure quiet; and there they now spend their time, while crowds of people go to see them.

The first time the Elephants were let into the ring to practice some of their performances, they all rushed off to call on the new arrival. They thrust their trunks between the bars, caressing Hebe and the baby, which she pushed to the front of the room near them. They expressed their pleasure by grunts and snorts, and other queer sounds, which were well understood by both mother and baby; and as for that youngster, she strutted around and flourished her tiny trunk in reply.

The little creature has already shown that she is no common stupid baby. She is very curious about this world she has got into, and all the time tries to start on trips of discovery,

to find out things. But her mother does not allow her out of her reach. The moment the infant gets too far, she is quietly drawn back by Hebe's useful trunk.

Everything in her reach she examines with the greatest interest; turns over her mother's food, sniffing at it, but not trying to eat it; and if a visitor leans against the bars, she fingers his clothes, fumbles over his buttons, and thrusts her trunk into his pockets.

About half the time she sleeps, lying out full length on her side, and then her anxious mother has a little rest, though she will not let a stranger touch the baby even then.

This interesting little creature will probably be named Columbia, for a public and show name; but for her private friends in the bosom of her own family, her name is Lily.

She eats nothing but her mother's milk, of which it is thought she gets about two gallons a day at present, she being about ten days old at the time of this writing.

I want to tell you the story of another baby Elephant, that was caught in the island of Ceylon, and is told about by Sir Emerson Tennent, whose accounts of Elephants, and of hunting them, you will like to read when you get to grown-up books.

When first caught, with his mother and a dozen of his wild friends, he was a very naughty baby indeed. He threw himself down on the ground, and kicked and screamed, and struck with his trunk, and acted much like a naughty two-footed baby.

At last the men found that they must tie him up; so they fastened a rope around one leg, and started towards a tree. But he preferred not to go, and, like a bad child, he held back with all his strength, catching at every tree and bush he passed, and screaming and roaring all the time.

When he was tied and left to himself, he spent his time in beating his trunk on the ground, flinging himself around, and blowing clouds of dust over himself. He was not, however, so unhappy as he appeared to be, for he never stopped eating so long as there was a morsel to be had. The men would now and then throw him a bunch of leaves, or something of the sort, and he would snatch it and eat, all the time crying and bawling at the top of his voice.

Another young Elephant was caught at the same time, and it was pleasant to see, that both were as much pets of all the Elephant mothers in the party, as a baby is in a house among us. This second little fellow was very fond of his mother; and when the men took her away to tie up—which they have to do till she gets tame—the youngster followed her. He thought she was being hurt, and he tried to defend her. He would seize the rope and run between the men, pushing and striking with his little trunk.

When he became too troublesome the men had to drive him back to the herd. He went very slowly, as you've seen a child who doesn't wish to mind, yet dares not quite refuse. He looked back at every step, and shouted all the way. When he saw that he really must go, he went up to one of his old friends, and leaned himself against her forelegs, while she laid her trunk affectionately over him and caressed him.

Here he stayed, moaning and crying, sobbing and shedding tears, too, till his mother was tied and left by the men, and then back he went to protect her again, striking every one who came near, till at last he had to be tied up by the first baby, when he joined him in eating and bawling.

Sir Emerson Tennent was so pleased with these little creat-

ures—hardly more than three feet high—that he took one home to live at his house. He soon became a great favorite with all the servants; but his particular friend was the coachman, who built him a snug little house near the stable, where he lived himself.

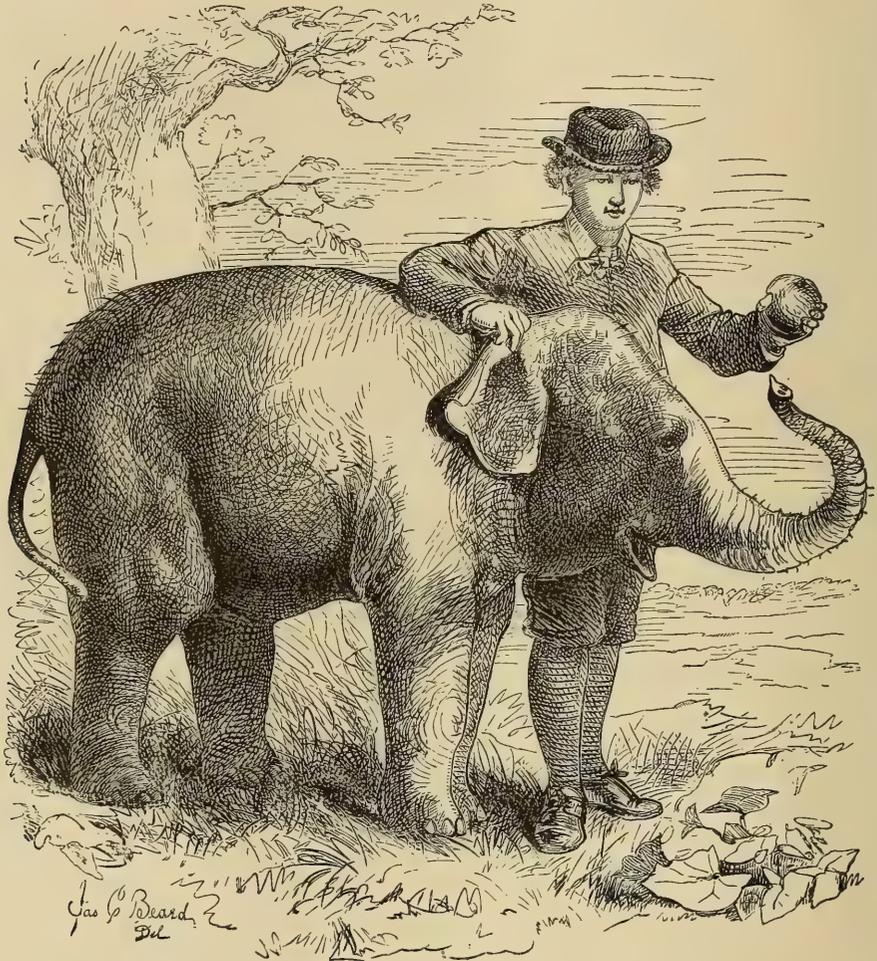
Fond as he was of his friend, he soon discovered a much nicer place than a stable.

This was the kitchen. All babies have to eat a good deal, you know, because they grow so fast, and it seemed as if this big four-footed fellow never could get enough. He would spend hours in the kitchen, and was so funny to see, that he was fed with fruits and other nice things, besides what he picked up for himself. More than this, he often came into the dining-room, when dessert was on the table, and was treated by the family to melons, cakes, and other sweets, of which he was extremely fond.

Then, when he was out in the grounds, if he saw his master he would run up to him, twine his little trunk in his arm, in the most coaxing way, till he could resist no longer, and would take his always hungry baby to the fruit-trees. On the next page is a picture of him taking a slight lunch. He was not all the time eating, however; he liked to work now and then. It was funny to see the wise and important air with which he would do little things, such as carry home a load of grass for the horses, from the field where it had been cut.

He was extremely fond of water, as are all his family, and nothing pleased him more than to go to a pond or stream, where he could wade in and drink, and throw water all over himself from that wonderful trunk of his. When he came out, he would draw up dust, and throw that over his wet sides, which wasn't

half so nice. It was curious to see him drink. He would draw the water into his trunk, having first closed the nostrils by little trap-doors, to keep them dry, and when it was full, he would curl it around, put the end into his mouth, and spout the water



THE BABY'S LUNCH.

in. He drank so much that he always had plenty of water in his water-bags inside; and whenever he wanted any he could draw it out again, by putting the end of his trunk in his mouth. Perhaps you don't see what he wanted to do with it; but he

did; he had plenty of uses for it. In the first place, to spout over his back when he was warm and uncomfortable; and in the second, to punish any one who offended him, by treating them to the same sort of a shower.

He liked to swim, and could do it easily; but sometimes, in crossing a stream, even although over his head, he would choose to walk; and he did, as calmly as if no water was there, holding just the tip of his trunk into the air to breathe. If his drinking seemed rather greedy, his manner of eating was as dainty as any lady's. He would pick up the smallest leaf, or the least berry, as carefully and as nicely as you could, and he never ate in a hurry. Big as this baby was, he was never known to "gobble," as some ill-mannered two-footed babies do.

He would stand by the hour, and fan himself in the most lady-like way with a bunch of leaves, which he picked for himself, and very droll he looked, too. When tired of that amusement he would swing about, in the way all Elephants, tame or wild, are fond of doing; sometimes it would be one leg swung back and forward, again it would be his trunk, or his whole body from side to side, and now and then it would be up and down, bending the knees and straightening them in turn. He would vary these strange performances by flapping his great ears, and throwing water or dust over himself.

Whatever happened, he was never known to keep still, except when he slept, which he sometimes did standing up, leaning against something, though usually he lay down on his side.

The thing that he hated above all others was to have one say "Dah! dah!" to him. What that sound means in Elephant language, of course we don't know, but it is extremely offensive to the whole race. It has the effect of a sharp "No! no!" to a

baby who is in mischief. This Ceylon baby was fond of flowers, and would pick one as nicely as you can. He specially delighted in those which were fragrant, and he would select one after another till he had a bouquet, which he would smell and appear to enjoy as much as anybody. When in trouble or distress, and I'm sorry to say he sometimes had the toothache, he would cry, really shed tears, and moan pitifully.

Nothing soothed him more than music. He would prick up his big ears and listen; his little bright eyes would sparkle, and he would keep quite still as long as the pleasant sounds lasted. His curiosity was funny to see. He would examine with the greatest interest any new thing. Give him a box or a package, and he would open or untie it, turn everything over carefully, and inspect it on every side, never leaving it till he understood all about it.

All this time he was growing, and though it seems funny to have a little Elephant three or four feet tall, coming into the dining-room to get his share of dessert, it isn't so nice when he grows bigger, and all on the table is not enough to satisfy him. Having learned the way to the sideboard, this little rogue would sometimes come in when no one was there, and not only help himself to fruit, which usually stood there, but—like other young people—would often knock off china and glass that were in his way. This naughty trick at last lost him his pleasant home. Trying one day to get some oranges, he brushed off all the china and glass on the sideboard, and it was decided that he must go to a new home.

He was now quite big, and fully able to learn to work; so he went to live with the grown-up Elephants, that work for the government of Ceylon. There he was at once adopted by a kind-hearted old Elephant "Auntie," named Siribeddi, who

brought him up carefully, and taught him the manners and ways of well-behaved Elephants.

Do you know that in the language of Hindustan, Elephants are called Hattie? The word is Hathi, and means "Creature with a hand," but it sounds almost like our Hattie.

Elephants are interesting and very knowing animals. They are much afraid of a fence, no matter how frail. A slight bamboo structure will keep them away from the most attractive food; but let a gate be left open and they go in quickly enough.

They do not like men either, and to keep them away from the rice-fields in India they make a scarecrow, or rather a Scare-Elephant. It is a gigantic figure of a man, dressed in fluttering rags, and armed with bow and arrows. If an Elephant is alarmed he moves off in perfect silence; large as he is, he can pick his way between bushes and trees without a sound.

If he gets into a wet place, where the ground is soft, and he is in danger of sinking, his first notion is to put something under his knees to keep himself up, and when Elephants are trained for use, they do not forget this trick of their savage days; therefore, their rider being the handiest object, he is usually the first to be put to this use. A rider that is wise will slip off suddenly and hasten out of reach.

When tame, Elephants are taught many tricks, which seem wonderful for their size. It is said that the only thing necessary to do, is to give the man idea of what is wanted. They will practice the trick when alone. They are taught to stand on their heads, to walk on two feet, to give a military salute, to answer when talked to, to play on instruments, as the horn, to act in a theatrical performance, to dance, and to dine with people at a man's table, behaving with perfect propriety through all.

They are very sensitive creatures, disliking extremely to be laughed at, and apt to be jealous if another is preferred. They understand when they are hurt for their own good, as in having a wound dressed, and will submit to painful operations, like having a tooth pulled.

An Elephant baby in a menagerie was once much hurt, and made so wild by the pain that no one could get near him to help him. The keeper made his mother understand what was wanted, and the knowing creature at once seized him and held him down with her trunk, while the surgeon dressed the wound. She did it also every day till the little fellow was cured.

When wild, the Elephant—like so many other animals—will “play possum;” that is, you know, pretend to be dead. He will lie down, and nothing will move him till men go away and leave him. Then he will spring quickly to his feet, and dash away through the woods screaming with joy.

In some countries Elephants are eaten; but people not native eat only the tongue or the foot. The foot, baked in a hole in the ground by a fire over it, is said to be delicious, and so tender that it may be eaten with a spoon.

In the London Zoological Garden an Elephant is said to eat, every day, one hundred pounds of hay, three bushels of turnips, twelve cabbages, and five pounds of bread, besides the bale of straw for a bed, which he eats during the night.

Like many other wild creatures, Elephants seem to know when their time to die has come; it is said that they steal away from the herd, and seek out a quiet place in which to draw the last breath. One particularly retired valley in Ceylon was called the Elephants' Burying-Ground, because, from the many bones found there, it seemed to be a favorite spot for this use.

CHAPTER THIRTY-FIRST.

PUSSY'S WILD COUSINS.

A PAIR of pussy's wild cousins lived in a house with front of iron bars, in the Park. They were the most powerful and grand relations she has; the very royal family, not only of the Cat tribe, but of all animals besides. They were Lions.

Before the children reached the Lion House, they heard a great roaring and excitement among the beasts, which live there in great cages, and they hurried over the little bridge, Ralph fairly running, to see what was the matter.

Nothing was the matter, as he soon found out, only that dinner-time had arrived, and the hungry creatures were grumbling because it was not ready to a second. When one began to speak his mind, of course every one else had to have his say, —therefore the excitement.

Before the cage of these two great cousins of pussy they stopped in amazement. There were two in the cage, a Lion and a Lioness, and they seemed to be playing a game of leap-frog. It was no game, however, it was deadly earnest, as they saw in a moment.

You see Mr. Lion was very hungry, and besides, he probably wanted the first chance at the meat; so when the time came for it to be thrown in, he put his nose to the front edge of the floor, to see if it had come. Not finding it in that corner he

hurried across to the other, keeping his nose to the ground, ready to seize it.

No sooner would he reach one side, than the fear would seem to seize him, that it might possibly be on the other, and back he would go like a flash. Back and forth he went, as fast as he could, getting more furious every moment.

Now, unfortunately, the cage was none too large for two so big animals, and when her ferocious lord rushed on one side, there was no room there for the Lioness. She therefore quietly jumped over him to the other side. But instantly he rushed back, leaving no room there. So back the amiable partner had to leap, being far too wise to find fault when he was in such a mood.

So the game went on; to keep out of his way the Lioness had to jump over him, first one side and then back again, and since he went as fast as he could, it kept her leaping all the time. It was a funny sight, and it never stopped till great pieces of meat were thrown in, and Mr. Lion had the first grab at them. Before we set him down as greedy, we must remember that he is fed but once a day, and of course gets desperately hungry, so there's some excuse for his conduct.

He was a great African Lion, with tawny-colored hair, and long dark mane, and he looked as though he would like to be free in his own wild country, and hunt for himself.

It is pitiful sight to see one of these wild creatures, not tamed and made happy to stay, but kept in one little cage by force of iron bars. No wonder they walk back and forth in endless tramp, and pine and die of homesickness, as no doubt they often do.

Marcy was so fond of all animals, that she did not much

enjoy seeing them shut up, and she did not stay long; but in Lions themselves, either in their native lands, or tamed and made happy, she felt the greatest interest.

I need not tell you how a lion looks, I am sure. If you haven't seen one for yourself you have seen dozens of pictures of them; but there are many curious and interesting things about the animal that may be you don't know. To begin with, do you know that Lions—like pussy—always walk on their tiptoes? and also—like their small domestic cousins—they like to sleep in the daytime, and go out at night? As with the cat, their claws draw in out of sight when not needed, and—like her again—their tongue is rough like a file, much rougher than hers, for a few licks from it will tear the skin from a man's flesh.

In the hunt, also, they act like our pets, as you have seen them when after a mouse. They will creep silently and slowly towards their prey, hiding behind every bush, and making not the slightest noise till they are near enough, when with one flying bound they pounce on the shoulder of the victim.

You have read many stories of how men hunt Lions, no doubt, and now I want to tell you the other side of the story; how Lions hunt other animals.

When they are far away from men, their way is very plain; they simply steal up to their prey and pounce on it, as I said above. But Lions that live near men get to be more wary. They learn to be shy of anything that looks like a trap. The most hungry Lion, it is said, will not touch a horse that has a halter hanging, nor a dead animal that is guarded by a white rag fluttering from a stick, or by two sticks loosely tied, and clattering in the breeze. He will look and long for it, but not quite dare to touch, for fear of some trap or snare to catch him.

The way Lions arrange their plans in Africa, and hunt in parties, is something very wonderful, almost too strange to believe. But hunters who have studied their ways insist that it is true.

Suppose a traveler through that savage country stops for the night near where a party of six or eight Lions have their home. There are no villages, no hotels, no railroads or stages. The traveler has his own wagons, with oxen or horses to draw them, his own riding horses, and his own train of native servants.

He camps out, ties the cattle to the heavy wagons, and feeds them, builds fires, eats his supper, and goes to sleep.

Dark night comes on, and the little party of Lions go out to hunt. They come near the camp, and see food in plenty within their grasp; but they know that men are there, and their desire is to get the cattle away from the protection of men.

Now see how knowing are the creatures which we call the lower animals! When the oxen have eaten their supper, they lie down to rest and chew the cud, always turning their backs to the wind, and their faces to leeward.

Why, do you suppose?

Because they can smell and hear an enemy coming between them and the wind, but must depend on seeing what comes against the wind. So the patient, intelligent creatures lie, looking sharply into the darkness while men sleep.

The wild animals are even more wise and cunning. Lions well know that their scent betrays them, and they carefully note which way the wind blows. In every party is an old Lion of strong scent; and as soon as plans are made, all of the party except this one steal quietly away to leeward of the camp, and hide in the bushes a little way off.

Before I go on let me tell you how it is that so large an ani-

mal as a Lion can creep through bushes and trees without making a noise. It is because of the stiff hairs beside the mouth that we call whiskers. They look like those on pussy's face, only they are much larger and longer. Each one of these hairs has at the root a large bundle of nerves, making them extremely sensitive to the touch of anything. They are as useful in warning the animal of things in the way as a pair of eyes. So the Lion can walk through the woods in the darkest night, guided entirely by them, and not touch tree or bush. Also he can keep his eyes on the game he is hunting, and not need to look where he steps.

To go back to our hunting-party. When the rest are in their places, the old Lion shakes out his mane to spread the scent about, deliberately walks up towards the wind, and comes near the cattle.

The instant his scent strikes them they spring to their feet, and turn their heads towards him, while he calmly walks nearer and nearer.

The scent grows stronger. The oxen—poor frightened creatures—make a dash to get away; but they are usually too well tied to break loose at once, and the four-footed hunter has to use his last device to frighten them enough.

He simply roars. That sound, which is nothing terrible as we hear it, is said to be made louder, and more fearful, by the animal laying his head to the ground when he does so.

No more is needed to throw every beast into a panic of fear. Halters snap like thread, and away they go, into the very jaws of the party awaiting them, their only one feeling, that they must run. This account of a Lion hunt from the Lion's side, is given by an African traveler, Mr. Gilmore.

He also tells a curious story of a native, who reproached the king of beasts for roaring and threatening to attack them. This man took from the fire a burning brand, and walked into the woods towards the fierce brutes.

When he came near them, he waved the brand around his head, and made them a speech something like this:

“O mighty lord, why do you come and disturb my cattle? Have you become too old or lazy to hunt, or have you turned weak-hearted? Go your way. The quagga and the hartebeest are yours, the koodoo and the buffalo. They await you while you lose your time here. Leave, I say, or we shall think you no better than the hyena, whose associate you will become.”

Probably the Lions didn't know what to make of this speech, or perhaps they were convinced. Any way, though he was almost in their clutches, they did not touch him.

Lions have been thought to be almost the most dangerous of pets; and we have had many stories of those which had become apparently perfectly tame and gentle, suddenly turning in an instant to savage wild beasts, and flying at their best friends.

A story is told, however, of King Theodore of Abyssinia having four tame Lions, which he kept all the time near him, and of which he was very fond. They traveled about with him, lived in the stables with his horses, and were never chained or shut up. They were tame and docile as cats, and like them fond of being petted and noticed, and so affectionate in their manners as to often frighten people. When King Theodore gave audience to people, he always had his four Lions near him.

One of the most wonderful cases of Lions kept as pets is in

our own country, and may be seen at any time. You may have seen short newspaper accounts of Mrs. Lincoln and her tame Lions, but the whole story has never been told, I believe, and you shall have it now.

Four years ago, at about the same time, were born in a traveling menagerie—which happened then to be in New York—two families of baby Lions, five in all.

The collection of animals being broken up while they were still very young, they fell into the hands of Mrs. Lincoln's husband; and he—as the most sensible thing he could do—handed the queer family of babies to his wife to care for.

They were pretty little creatures, about the size of three-months' old kittens, and looked very much like young tabby cats. Their parents were entirely wild.

Mrs. Lincoln had no children, and she devoted herself to her strange babies; but not knowing exactly how to feed them, three died before she found out what was best for them. The two that were left she fed on goat's milk, using a regular baby's nursing-bottle, and she soon had the satisfaction of seeing them grow strong and well.

She named them Willie and Martha, and they were playful as kittens, rolling and tumbling over each other on the floor, chasing each other around the room, and even coaxing the cat to join in their romps.

They slept on their mistress's bed, ran all over the house, and were fond of a ball as a cat. Even now, though he is four years old and grown up, the play is not all out of Willie. He enjoys a frolic with a cocoa-nut as much as puss enjoys a marble, and in the same way.

Whenever they wished, these two wild babies went into the

yard in the heart of Boston, where they live, and played by the hour, the cat being generally of the party. If tired they would lie on the lounge, or before the fire—when they had grown too big for their mistress's lap; and if hungry they would cry for something to eat, not exactly as a human baby—as some travelers have said—nor like a cat, but with a peculiar hoarse sound, like nothing in the world but a Lion. In every way they acted like domestic animals.

As they grew larger, Mrs. Lincoln began to teach them tricks. At first Martha was the more teachable. Willie would look on, but evidently preferred his ease, and to see her perform; so his playmate got ahead of him.

After a while, however, Willie in his rough play threw Martha against the corner of a box and hurt her back. A slight hump grew on the injured part, and she was not so well able to perform her tricks.

As soon as Willie noticed this—strange as it may seem—he suddenly became very docile. He took up every one of the tricks he had seen her do, and did them better than she did. It seemed as if he understood the harm he had done, and wished to make up for it as well as he could.

Till they were two years old, these interesting pets ran about the house and yard as they chose; and any visitor going into the house might be shown into the room with two pretty big Lions.

But now the neighbors began to be alarmed; complaints were made; a stronger house was built for the Lions, and they were shut up. This picture was taken about that time, and you can see how big they were, and will not be surprised that strangers were nervous about them. The family were not afraid of them,



THE LIONS AT HOME.

and but for the prejudices of others, the strong room would perhaps never have been built.

Their mistress could lead them anywhere, with a mere halter around their necks, and she went in and out of their cage as freely as though it were her own chamber.

So they went on growing bigger and more affectionate every day, till a few weeks ago Martha, who had never been strong after her hurt, became ill, and at last died.

This took place at night; and the moment she drew her last breath, Willie gave notice of the fact to all whom it might concern—and many whom it didn't—by howls and roars.

The mistress jumped out of bed, and ran down to see what was the matter. She found him lost in grief and sorrow over the dead body of his playmate.

This was a dreadful affliction. Mrs. Lincoln herself grieved almost as if she had lost a child, and poor Willie took it very hard. He would scarcely allow his beloved mistress out of his sight. He was so lonely and unhappy that she actually was obliged to sit up with him for several nights. The moment she left him he would carry on so fearfully that she could not rest, nor could any one in the neighborhood.

He has somewhat recovered from his grief now, and it has not affected his temper. In fact he is more loving and affectionate than before, and evidently regards his mistress as his best friend and only consolation.

Lions are night-loving animals, and most of their roaring is done at that time. In spite of the fact that from his babyhood Willie has lived with people, and been kept awake much of the daytime, he still—like puss again—delights to exercise his voice in the darkness, when all the world is still.

His mistress then has to leave her bed, and administer to the troublesome fellow a little punishment with a switch, when he lies down like a whipped dog, and keeps still till he forgets it.

This Lion is fed once a day, about five o'clock, on ten or twelve pounds of raw meat and bones. When dinner-time comes, and he knows he is going to be fed, he gets almost as impatient as the Lion in the Park. He will bound from one end of his room to the other, banging against the sides as though he would tear it down, and roar, and fairly howl.

The meat is thrown in from the top, and Master Willie seizes each piece as it falls, till he has it all dragged under his body, and then he gobbles it down in a short time. On Sundays he is not fed at all, and he does not expect it, nor ask for it; that is, get impatient. He knows Sunday as well as anybody, and never mistakes the day.

The reason he is not fed, is on account of an old menagerie belief, that animals who eat raw meat and do not exercise much, need one day's rest, out of seven, for their stomachs.

Willie's house opens out of his mistress's sitting-room, and he has the door open much of the time, especially at night, for the benefit of the fire in winter, and society always, for he's a sociable fellow. Going through that door the visitor finds himself in a narrow passage before the bars, all the rest of the room being the Lion's.

The cage is as large as a medium-sized bedroom, perhaps ten by sixteen, and from it a door opens into a narrow passage between two brick walls, where he goes to get the fresh air.

A visitor not long ago went to see Willie and Willie's mistress, and I shall tell you what she saw. Mrs. Lincoln had been away for a week, and just returned, and had not yet spoken to

her pet. He had been very lonely while she was gone, and had howled and cried after her every day.

It was in the early evening, and the Lion was sleeping after his heavy supper. The mistress took a little hand lamp in one hand and went to the Lion's door. He lay stretched out, fast asleep.

"Why, baby!" she began, as one would talk to a child, "aren't you ashamed to be sleeping there, and mamma just got home? Aren't you going to get up and see me?"

The moment he heard her voice he sprang up, and came to the door. He rubbed against the bars as a cat would, and made a queer sound, between a gentle roar and a whine, to show how pleased he was.

She put her hand through the bars and patted him, and he caressed the hand, and expressed his joy in every way. Then opening the door she went in, lamp still in hand, and fastened it behind her.

"Now come and kiss mamma," she said, fondly.

The great fellow leaned up against her, lifted his enormous head, and touched his lips to hers.

"No; you needn't smell of my dress," she said, as he snuffed about her. "Kiss me again."

Again he put up his lips, and was evidently as glad to see her as she was to see him.

"Did mamma go away and leave him, and was he awful lonesome without her!" she said, affectionately, talking baby talk exactly as a mother does to her child, and making a picture that no one can imagine the strangeness of who has not seen it.

"Now lie down," she said, after a while; and with a half groan, half growling protest, against showing off at such an untimely

hour, Willie flung himself on the floor, with his head flat on the boards.

"Now roll over," she said. Grumblingly he rolled over, like a big, clumsy dog.

"Sit up;" and up he sat, obedient as any dog.

"Now shake hands." He gave his paw.

"Stand up;" and up he got, all the time with the queer, good-natured, complaining noise.

"Now," she said at last, pointing to the wall, "put your feet up there, to show how tall you are."

Up went those great paws, higher and higher, till they must have reached nearly eight feet from the floor, and the visitor began to look for them over the top.

He completely overshadowed the woman at his side. How easily one blow of his paw would kill her! It was fearful to see.

"He has taken cold and is feverish," said Mrs. Lincoln calmly, passing her hand over his nose familiarly. "His nose is hot."

Her visitor's whole face was hot. She was in deadly terror lest the lamp held so close to his flying mane should set it on fire, and he should suddenly turn into a wild beast.

She drew a sigh of relief when she came out. But Mrs. Lincoln had not the slightest thought of fear, and she declared that there was not the least danger; that he grew more affectionate every day, and had never put out a claw to her in his life, though she was sometimes obliged to whip him; nor had shown a desire to attack anything, even a cat or dog.

His whipping—as I told you—he always took meekly, knowing that he deserved it, and never dreamed of resenting it.

This Lion, though four years old and so well-grown, being three feet four inches high at the shoulder, and eleven feet two inches long, including the tail, is still growing as fast as ever. It is thought by his friends that he will be the biggest Lion in the world, and perhaps, at some not very distant day, he may go back to the life with which he began his career, as the greatest attraction of some traveling animal show.

POSTSCRIPT.—Since this chapter was printed something more has happened to Willie—the lion whose story you have read. He has joined a traveling circus, and his business in future will be to carry a chariot around in the ring. When the circus people went to the house to take him away, they brought ropes and men used to wild animals. They then backed the cage up to the front door, and gave the order to let him out. But they did not know the gentle beast. His mistress led him out of his old quarters, through her own sitting-room into the hall, and to the new cage. Willie looked at it with interest, snuffed at it, and quietly walked in. I will not tell you of the grief of his mistress, who mourns almost as if she had lost a child, but will only say that his new owners mean to humor the great fellow, give him a good deal of liberty, and if possible keep him always as tame and good-tempered as he is now.

CHAPTER THIRTY-SECOND.

A MERMAID.

UNCLE KARL had greatly excited Marcy on the way to the Park, by telling her they had lately added to their collection of animals, a living Mermaid. You have heard of Mermaids, and possibly you have seen pictures of them as they have been described by sailors—beautiful women as far as the waist, with long hair falling over their shoulders, and scaly fishes from the waist down.

You can see what Marcy was thinking of, and of course she laughed at her uncle, and told him he couldn't deceive her.

But he positively declared it was true, and he refused to tell anything more about it, except that its scientific name is *Sirenia*, and the Portuguese call it the "Woman-fish."

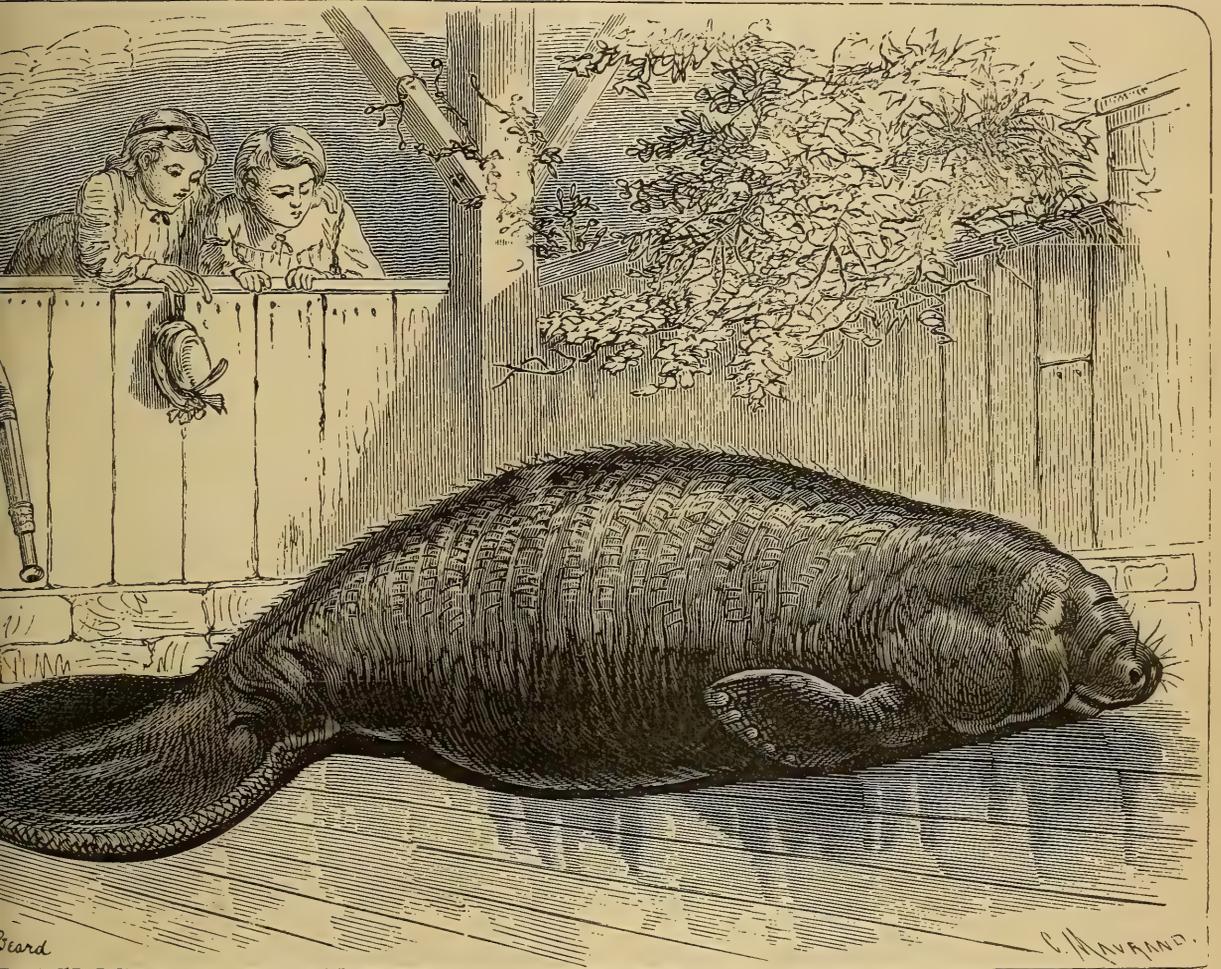
Marcy knew there was some joke about it, and when she reached the Park she was naturally anxious to find out what it was, and reminded Uncle Karl of his promise to show it to her.

Uncle Karl had already consulted with the keeper, and persuaded him to draw off the water that he might make a drawing of the wonderful creature. So with a great deal of mystery he led the way to a tank, and when the children looked eagerly over the side they saw—*this!*

Ralph shouted, but Marcy was disgusted, and almost vexed.

The color came quickly into her face, and she said it was a horrid creature, the ugliest she had ever seen.

It was not attractive. It looked something like a long barrel.



A MERMAID OUT OF WATER.

It has no neck to tell where the head began, no ears except two slits, so small they could hardly be seen, and almost no eyes, or, at any rate, eyes so small and far back in the wrinkles that there

might about as well be none. Besides this, its skin looked like a prickly pear, with here and there a hair sticking out, and its nostrils were shut up by valves when not needed for breathing. Above all, it looked about as bright as a lump of dough.

Marcy was turning away to look at something else, when Uncle Karl began to tell her about it, and she soon grew quite interested, though it was very hard for her to believe that this, and a near relative, are really the creatures which sailors have clothed in such poetical forms, and called Women of the Sea.

What led to this strange notion was the habit these creatures have, of standing up—you may call it—in the water, with the upper part in the air, and the flippers crossed on the breast, or the young one clasped in the arms. Seen in dim light, across the tossing waves, by sailors ready to believe any wonder they think they see, it is, after all, not so very strange.

But one doesn't look like a charming object in the cold light of day, shut up in a wooden tank, does it?

The name of this animal is the Manatee, from Manus, a hand, and though he lives in the water, he is really an animal and not a fish. He breathes with lungs, and not with gills like a fish, and he is warm-blooded, while fishes are cold-blooded.

He looks clumsy, and so he may be in a box without water, but in his native element he is as lively as any fish. His broad flat tail and his fins, which are really hands and arms covered with skin, help him along finely.

You may not think those awkward-looking fins are much like hands, but the fingers are easily felt through the skin, and you can see for yourself that he has five nails, like finger-nails, on each one.

Perhaps you think with Marcy that he's a stupid-looking

object, but I can assure you he's not half so stupid as he looks, and he has lovely traits of character. He's an extremely social, good-tempered fellow, and tender-hearted also, for when caught he never attempts to bite, but sheds tears at being taken from his friends—so says Mr. Gosse.

Manatees collect in parties and go about together, never quarreling like many animals, but always gentle and playful with each other. Best of all, he is affectionate, and if one of a party is hurt all the rest come to his aid.

Nearly every mother, from the elephant down to the smallest insect, is tender of her little ones, and will fight for them till she is herself killed, but these animals are just as fond of each other. The fathers protect the mothers, and the mothers protect the babies. In fact they never desert each other in the greatest danger.

In their parties the fathers go ahead, the mothers behind, and the young ones in the middle. They are hunted for their flesh, which is considered delicious, and for their skin, which makes strong leather; and when a harpoon is thrown into one, all the rest crowd around and try to pull it out or bite it off. Not one thinks of taking care of himself, nor of fighting the hunter; so the fisherman—if he may be called so—can secure as many as he chooses, often the whole troop.

This creature, who you see is interesting after all, in spite of his stupid looks and his clumsy ways, lives on the sea-shore, in a bay, or at the mouth of a river in a tropical country, generally in South American waters, and he sometimes takes journeys up the rivers a long way from the sea. He is from ten to fifteen feet long, and perhaps longer.

The Manatee has another name—Sea-Cow—and he feeds on

grass and plants. Not only on those growing under water, but it is said he comes partly out of the water to get certain land plants.

The gentle creature is easily tamed. In an old magazine, published more than a hundred years ago, there is an account of a tame Manatee kept by the governor of Nicaragua, in a lake on his estate. This good-natured creature would not only come to dinner when he was called, crawling out of the water and up to the house, but he would allow people to ride on his back. As many as ten people, the old story says, would often mount him, and ride safely across the lake.

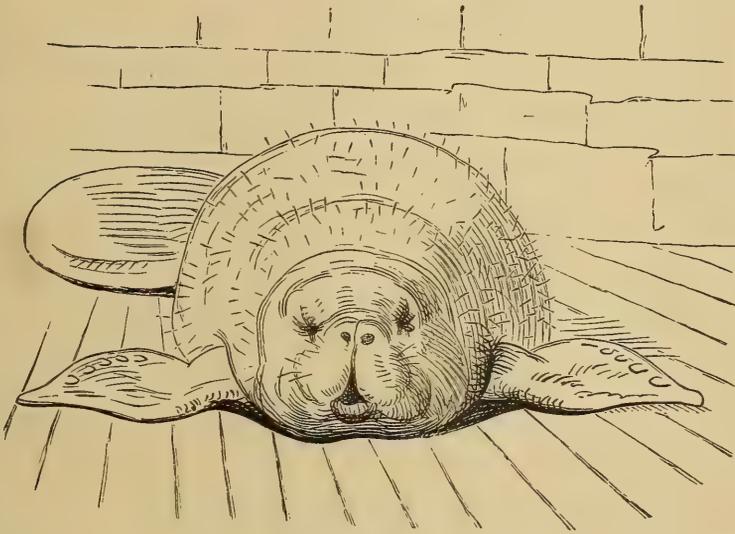
More lately, Manatees have often been kept as pets. One living in a lake belonging to one of the Caciques of Hispaniola, answered to its name of Matto, and was full of play as a monkey, not only frolicking with its own kind, but with the young Indians.

A Manatee kept in the Public Gardens of Rio, became attached to a white swan, and would follow it all around the pond. The swan, I fear, did not appreciate this warm affection, for it took no notice, and was said "not to care." This friendly Manatee would come to the shore and take grass from the hands of visitors. One of these creatures was sent from Demarara to the London Zoological Gardens. She was young, and only about seven feet long. She traveled in a tank hung so as to swing with the motion of the vessel, and not get hurt against the sides. She was fond of lettuce, and some vegetables cut in slices.

A few years ago a Manatee was captured in the Orinoko River, and sent to the Philadelphia Gardens. This one was put into a fine glass tank, which was kept perfectly clean and nice. They hoped to make her so contented that she would live a long time;

but she did not enjoy a glass house, though she soon learned not to be frightened when the water was drawn off for house-cleaning and changing the water. Her taste was for mud, and she was never so lively as when heavy rains discolored the water.

The question of what to eat was a troublesome one, for she had her notions. In vain they offered her biscuits, cabbages, and at last every vegetable in the markets. She would not



A PRETTY FACE.

touch one. Finally, they had a load of seaweeds and water-plants brought, and she tumbled them over till she found one she could eat.

That matter was settled, they thought, and orders were given for a supply of this particular plant. All went well for a month, when the supply failed; not one more was to be found in the Schuylkill or the Delaware. She had exterminated the plant.

Then Madam Manatee had to eat something else, and they would bring loads of weeds and plants to her. She would turn

them over, and select one and another that she would condescend to eat.

To give her a chance to come out of water, if she wished, a shelf was arranged, but she didn't seem to care for it, and never showed the least desire to try it. Everything was done that was possible to make her contented, but she was never happy, and before long she died.

While Uncle Karl drew the side view of the Manatee, Ralph stole around the other side of the tank and looked him square in the face. A funny-looking fellow he was, too, so funny that he had his picture taken from that point also, and here it is on the other page.

Pretty face, hasn't he?

CHAPTER THIRTY-THIRD.

A STRANGE STORY OF A HORSE.

A BOOK about animals would hardly be complete without something regarding one of the most noble, as well as the most common, animals we have—a Horse.

The Horse has been so long used to living with men, like the cat and the dog, that we can hardly think of them as ever having been wild, and stories of their intelligence and their almost human actions are to be read in every newspaper.

There is one story of a Horse, however, somewhat different from these, and so odd that I'm afraid you'll think I made it up. But I did not. Every word is true; and since he had been a great pet, though not, to tell the truth, at Marcy's, I think his story may go in here, and I'm sure you'll be as much interested in it as were the children when it was told to them.

The unfortunate hero of the story belonged to a circus, had been a great pet, and had tramped the country over from one end to the other, galloped around in a stupid ring, and learned various tricks to amuse you boys. No one could say he did not honestly earn his living.

But at last he met with an accident. And when he arrived in Chicago, in 1850, his master found that he could no longer take his part in the performances; and, of course, he was a burden to a traveling circus. His owner, though a showman, was

kind-hearted, and attached to the unfortunate fellow, and he couldn't bear to turn him out to starve, nor did he like to kill him. In this emergency a gentleman living in Chicago, a physician and a wealthy man, knowing that he was a valuable animal, and thinking that he could cure him of his hurt and make him useful, offered to take him, and promised to see that he never came to want. Upon these terms the owner gladly left him, and took his circus to parts unknown.

Well, the Doctor found himself disappointed about curing the hurt, and before long it became evident that he would never more be able to work. So he gave him a warm corner of his barn, and made him comfortable the rest of his days—do you suppose? By no means. He turned him out to starve.

Perhaps that is a harsh way to put it. I don't suppose he really said any such cruel thing to himself. He probably thought, "The old Horse will never be of any use to me, and I don't want to buy oats and hay for him, so I'll let him run and pick up his own living."

But the fact was, it was late in the fall, the grass was dead on the prairies, and there was no living to pick up. To be sure, he had now and then a bite out of a load of hay in the street, or a nibble out of the back of a farmer's wagon, and sometimes perhaps a potato or a turnip from a barrel in front of a grocer's shop; but with all his efforts he found barely enough to keep the breath of life in him, and not enough to keep him from looking half dead, and wholly miserable. He grew thin, his ribs stuck out, and he looked more like the frame of a horse wandering about the streets, than he did like the plump fellow he was when his master left him.

At that time Chicago was not so big as it is now, and after a

while people began to notice the wretched wanderer and to inquire about him ; and before long everybody knew the story, and felt indignant at his fate. At last two young men, who wanted to shame the hard-hearted Doctor, and put the old Horse out of his misery at the same time, concocted a plan for a donation party.

The first thing they did was to put an anonymous notice in the two daily city papers (for which the publishers took no pay, by the way), setting forth the sorrows of the poor old Horse, his life of hard work, and his unhappy fate, and calling on every one who had a heart to pity a suffering fellow-creature to bring to the City Hall Square, on a certain day named, anything in the way of horse provisions that he felt able to contribute, that the unfortunate pauper might end his days in peace and comfort, and their eyes no more be vexed by his wandering ghost.

Then somebody wrote a poem on the text, "Why should the poor despise the rich?" And some one else printed it neatly on small sheets of paper, ready to sell on the great day.

When that day arrived the wretched straggler was captured, and an unpromising-looking creature he was. He was one of those bay and white-spotted Horses so often seen in a circus, and had been the owner of a beautiful flowing mane and long sweeping tail. But now the dust of the street—where he slept—clung to his rough skin, bits of straw and dead leaves ornamented his tangled mane, and his half-switched-out tail hung limp and ugly.

His captors, nothing daunted, procured castile soap and soft water, and washed and combed and thoroughly cleaned him,

decorating his mane with ribbons, and covering his lean sides with a comfortable blanket.

In the meantime all the available music of the city had come together. There were no regular bands, but every one who had an instrument (wind or stringed) and could play it, came out and joined the merry party.

When all was ready the procession started. First came the motley musicians, playing with a good heart, if not with much skill; next the gaunt hero, bearing on his back the orator of the day (one of the two young men); lastly a miscellaneous party of citizens. They paraded through the principal streets to the City Hall Square, being careful to pass the cruel Doctor's house. A touching speech was made, appealing to the charitable in the crowd. Copies of the poem were sold to whoever would buy, and many dimes and some dollars were drawn out of pockets and purses, while loads of hay, bags of oats and corn, and barrels of bran piled up in the yard.

When the whole thing was over, and the two originators of the performance counted up gains, it was found that there was money enough to hire a barn, and a man to take care of him all winter, and food enough to keep a hundred horses till summer should cover the prairies with grass again. A barn was procured, the provisions removed, a man hired for the work, and the old circus Horse was duly installed in his comfortable home that very night.

And how do you suppose the Doctor felt all this time? I can imagine his shame when he saw the odd procession from behind his blinds. But the truth is, he never expressed his feelings (so far as I can discover); and therefore history is silent on that point.

But a strange thing happened before the people finished talking about it. One dark night the old Horse disappeared, and it is supposed (though it is only a guess), that the Doctor enticed him away, and put an end to all his troubles by a bullet through his brain.

At any rate, he was never seen again.

CHAPTER THIRTY-FOURTH.

THE AIR CASTLE, AND THE FAMILY THAT LIVED IN IT.

BEFORE the time of the visit to the Park, something happened next door to Marcy's that resulted in giving her a new pet. To tell the whole story I must go back a little.

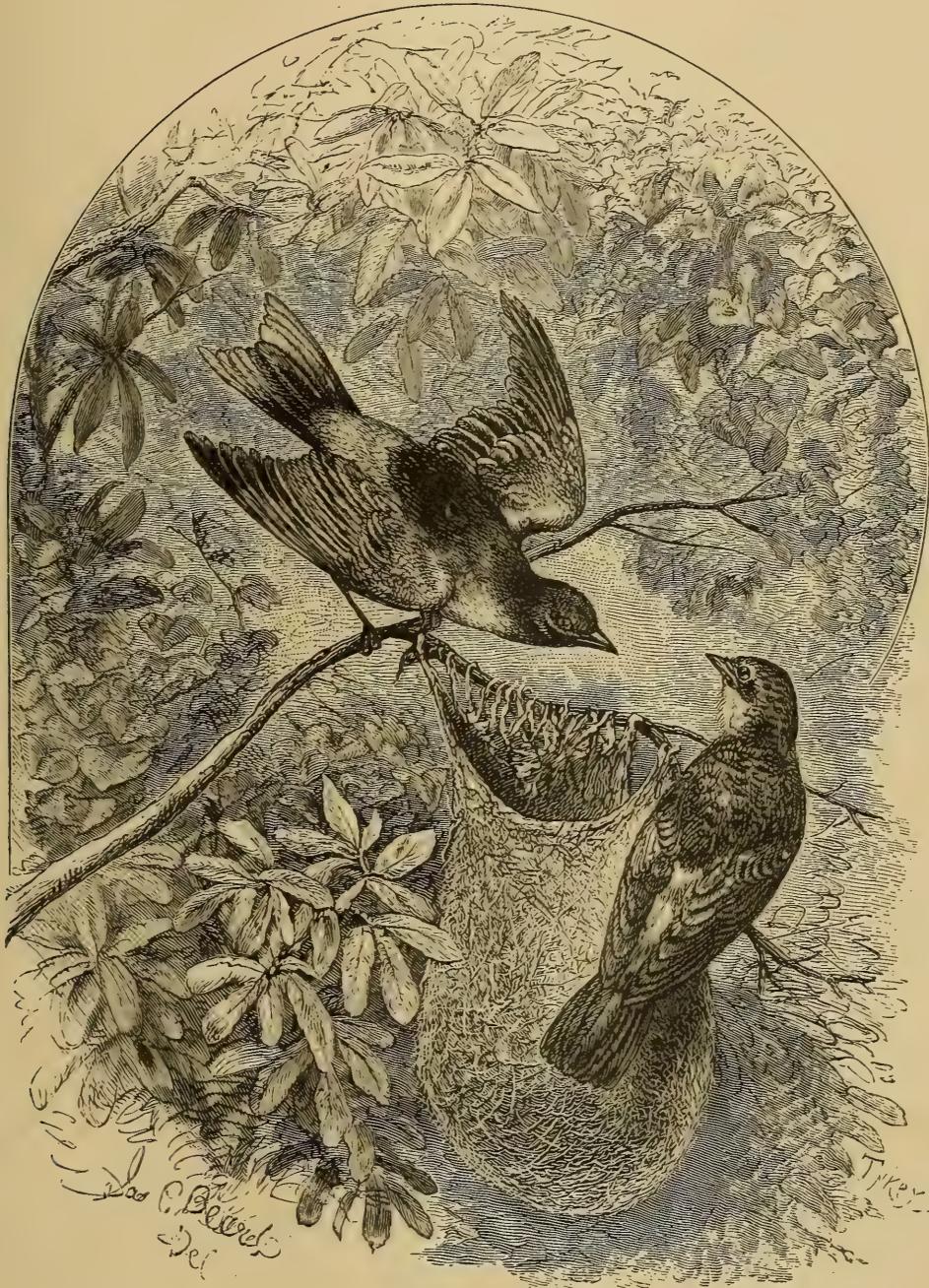
About the first of May of that spring, a new family came to live in the neighborhood. They were very gay and lively, fine singers and great travelers, spending their winters in the South, and returning to the North when it became too warm for comfort.

The family was small, in fact it was a bridal couple, and they had as much trouble as young housekeepers generally have, to settle upon a suitable home. Not that questions of rent, street cars, markets, and such things entered into account. The Oriole family never rented, they *always* built, and they kept their own private conveyance, while going to market was only fun to them.

An attractive place to build was the great thing to find, and after much earnest talk and many trips about the town, the place was selected—a beautiful crotch in a branch of a tree near a garden.

As soon as the spot was decided upon, building began. No masons and carpenters and stone-cutters made clumsy botchwork

of this house. Far from it. Mr. Oriole himself collected the materials, while Madam arranged them and built the house.



DISCUSSING THE NEW HOUSE.

Beautiful things the busy young fellow brought to decorate their swinging castle in the air; stems of flax and other vegetable fibers; long strings which he found dangling from the telegraph wires, left by runaway kites shipwrecked there; pieces of fish-line with rusty hook still on; long horse-hairs, and many other nice things.

All about the neighborhood he sought carefully for suitable and pretty objects, and one day he brought a strange and curious thing, such as perhaps no Oriole had ever been able to find before. It was long, and delicate, and white, and the busy little wife carefully wove it into the walls of her pretty house.

That very day the home was finished. It was a long, hanging, purse-shaped affair, beautifully woven of the various materials she had received, strongly stitched together by long horse-hairs, and firmly sewed to the branch above. You can see here a picture of it, with the family itself, Mr. Oriole apparently having some final suggestions to make, while Mrs. Oriole roundly declares that nothing can improve it, and she'd like to see any bird in the neighborhood with a more comfortable home than that.

I must tell you how the birds were dressed. The little builder wore a sober dress, of dull yellow or orange, trimmed with black and brown, quite in good taste; but Mr. Oriole was the least bit of a dandy in looks. His coat and cap, to be sure, were black, but his vest was of the most gorgeous orange and scarlet, his black coat was trimmed with white and orange, and above all, his boots and stockings were light blue.

Busy times soon came for this gayly-dressed little fellow, for now five pretty, pink-tinted, and delicately-spotted eggs were placed on the soft bed of cow's hair and sheep's wool, which had been carefully gathered from the bushes and fences, and nicely

spread in the nest, and Madam took her place on them for her summer's work of raising a young family. He had now to keep her supplied with good things to eat, and those who have nothing else to think about do get dreadfully notional about their food. Besides this work, he had to entertain her dull hours with his singing, for there is a good deal of monotony in sitting at home in one spot, for three long weeks, as anybody can see by trying it.

The Oriole never seemed to get tired, however. Every day he made long excursions into the garden, looking under every leaf and behind every twig for a nice little beetle, or a soft fat grub, of which Madam was specially fond. When she had dined he would settle himself on a branch near her, and sing his finest to amuse her.

This pleasant life went on till the three weeks had passed, and one fine day the egg-shells were broken, and five baby Orioles opened their eyes on the bright world. They opened their mouths too, and kept father and mother both, very lively finding enough to fill them.

Now the tree in which the Orioles lived hung over the roof of a house near Marcy's, as I told you. In this house lived a sort of a monster in the bird world—a boy. His name was Will, and he had, from the first day the new family arrived, looked with longing eyes upon their pretty house.

Will was—I'm sorry to say—that cruel kind of a boy called a "bird's-nester," and he fairly ached to get the beautiful swinging castle, with its treasures, into his hands. But the roof was so steep that for some time he feared to attempt it. At last, however, when the peeps of the young birds had driven him nearly wild, he determined to try.

Without letting anybody know the cruel thing he intended, he stole out of a window and crawled along the peak of the roof. When under the branch, he carefully stretched up to the nest, which he pulled away from its fastenings, while the pretty owners flew about in distress and terror.

He cared nothing for their trouble, but he soon had enough of his own to think of, for having possession of the nest, he found that he couldn't get back again. He was afraid to let go of the branch, lest he should slip and roll off the steep roof.

While he is in this uncomfortable position, which he well deserved, I will tell you about something else in the house. Will's mother had, some time before this, taken a young girl to adopt from an orphan asylum, whose name was Mary.

Mary was a very nice girl, and her life had been so sad that the prospect of a pleasant home with Will's mother was a happy one. The family liked her, and it was as good as settled that she was to stay always, when, a few weeks before this day, something strange had happened.

Will's mother lost a piece of valuable lace. She left it on the table in her room, no one had been there but Mary, yet when she looked for it, it was gone. The house was searched, for she could not bear to suspect Mary; but when weeks passed, and it could not be found, she sorrowfully concluded that the girl was the thief, and a thief she could not have in the house.

She forgot the family that lived in the castle in the tree, and never remembered that the Oriole family are very sharp-eyed when looking for building materials.

The very morning that Will decided to try for the nest, was the one in which Mary had been told that she must go back to

the asylum with a bad name, and she went sadly to her room to pack her things to go.

Everything was in the trunk, and plenty of tears dropped in with them, and the lonely girl sat down by the window to rest, when she heard a faint cry of "Mary! Mary!"

It seemed to come from outside, and she put her head out of the window to see. There, half way down the steep roof, was Will, holding on for dear life, and getting more and more frightened as he grew tired.

In a moment the girl forgot her own trouble in his danger. She slipped off her shoes, and stepped cautiously out her window into the eaves-gutter which ran along the edge. Quickly creeping up to him, in imminent danger of slipping off, she reached up and seized his hand, and, by strange good luck, succeeded in steadying him and guiding him into the open window, just as his mother came in to say the time had come for Mary to go.

In a few words the story was told. The generous girl had risked her own life to save the boy's. What was a bit of lost lace to the life of her only son? In a moment she resolved that Mary should not go, that she would try and cure her of her fault.

She told her so, and Mary burst into tears of gratitude and joy. Will's mother then turned to her son to reprove him. He was looking eagerly at the treasure which had so nearly cost him his life, and which he had held on to through all his terror.

"See, mamma," he said, to avert the threatened reproof, "what a curious hang-bird nest!"

"I can't bear to see it, my son," she began sternly, when her eyes fell upon it, and she started.

"Why!—let me see it—why! there's my lace this minute," she exclaimed breathlessly, "built into the very nest. The bird must have flown in the window and carried it off."

"Course it did," said Will coolly. "Hang-birds always hunt strings and such, to make their nests. See what lively young ones! Won't I have fun bringing 'em up?"

The discovery of the lace, of course, cleared Mary of suspicion, and the result was so good that his mother had not the heart to find much fault with him. But what of the Oriole family left desolate?

They deserted the place, and were never seen in the neighborhood any more, and the little ones, after some attempts to feed them, were given away by Will to any one who would take the trouble. One of them came to Marcy, and became almost her dearest pet.

He was perfectly tame, and never lived in a cage. He perched on her finger, her head, or her shoulder, and was carried all over the house. As soon as he began to show a taste for weaving, which he did by trying to pull bits of her mother's dress through the meshes of her lace collar, Marcy kept him furnished with lace and threads, and he amused himself for hours, as a child does with playthings, weaving the threads through the holes in the lace.

A very interesting story has been told of an Oriole brought up in this way by a lady in Connecticut. This pet would pry open her lips and take food from them, and delighted to creep under her cape on to her neck when the weather was cold.

When she was sewing, the bird would play with her thread, try to snatch it away, or perhaps to help her. He would drive away anybody who tried to attract his mistress's attention, and he knew enough to put his cake, when hard, into water to soften.

In winter his mistress had a small cage lined with cotton batting, where the bird could sleep. As evening came on he would leave the big cage and go to bed himself, drawing the cotton together over the door, if she did not do it.

When put into a cage with bars for a door, this wise Oriole knew enough to push them back, one by one, till he could squeeze through and get out, but he never thought of getting away.

He often went on journeys with his mistress, and was perfectly contented, though his traveling cage was but a few inches square, and covered up in a bag, which left only a small hole for him to look out, and be fed.

When his beloved mistress was ill, the affectionate bird hovered around her in evident distress. He would come to her pillow and look at her, or creep under the bedclothes to be near her, all the time looking sad and low-spirited.

He was well able to express his feelings, even though he could not speak. In fact we have no business to call any animal dumb; they can all communicate things, though not as we do, even down to tiny atoms of ants, which tell each other bits of news, where food is to be found, and other things of interest to ants.

This bird, now, plainly told any one whom he did not like, to go away. He also plainly showed his sympathy and sorrow for his mistress's illness, and when he wanted to bathe, he would look at his friend and shake his wings, in a way that she understood in a moment. When she came into the house, after a short absence, he had no need of words to show his pleasure. He lived with her for seven or eight years, and was a delightful pet.

CHAPTER THIRTY-FIFTH.

PLAY-HOUSE BUILDERS.

AMONG the strange things in the Den, which was a real curiosity shop, was a pair of stuffed birds. They were carefully preserved in a glass-case with other birds, which Uncle Karl had brought home, from some of the long journeys taken when he was young.

By themselves they were simply very pretty birds, of spotted brown and gold color, with a sort of collar at the back of the neck of bright pink feathers, but looked at with a drawing of the play-house they make, which came out of the Blue Sketch-Book, they became exceedingly interesting.

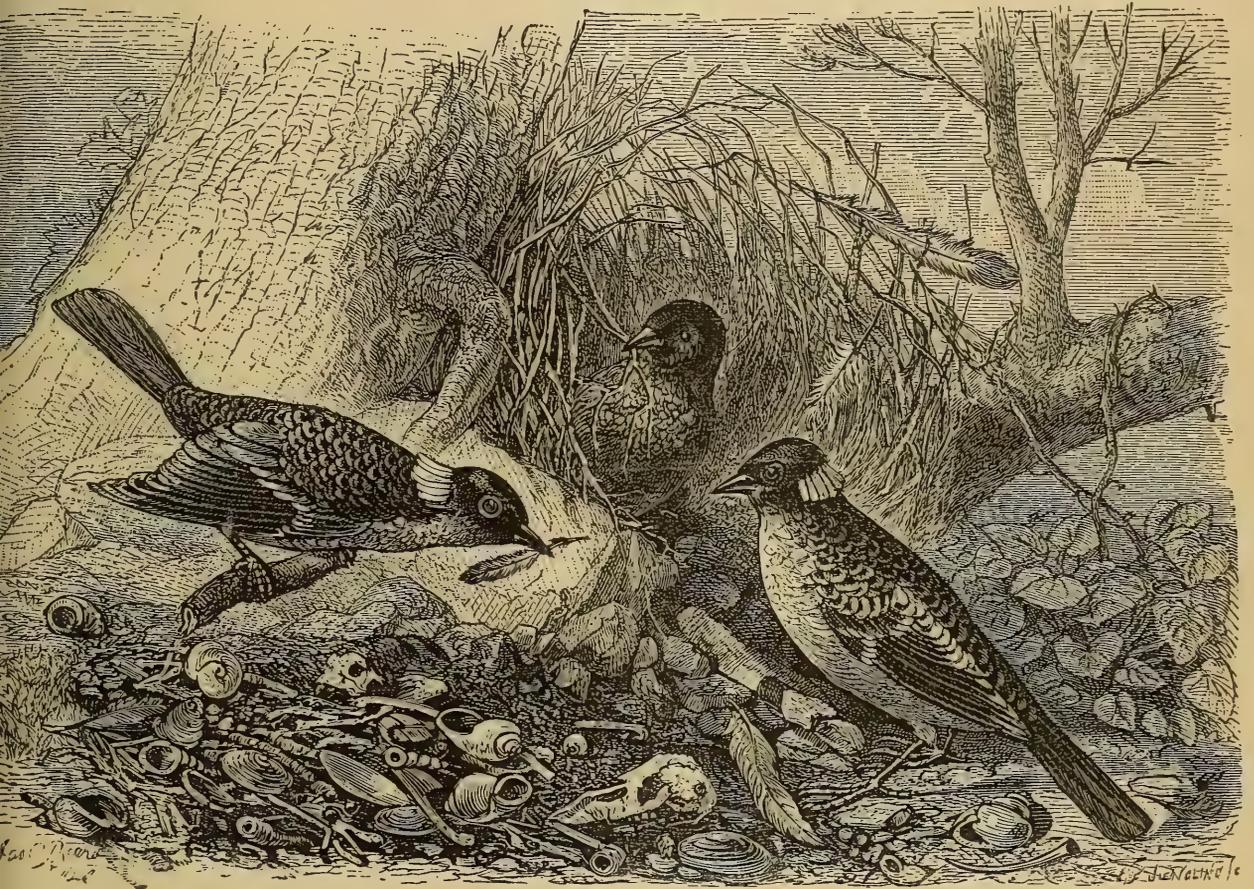
They were Bower Birds, the only family of birds yet known who make any sort of a house besides their nest in the trees, and they live in Australia, from whence come some of the queerest creatures we have.

The play-house is a wonderful structure for a bird. There is first made a platform of twigs, closely woven together to make a firm floor, and in the middle of the floor is the bower.

This is made of twigs also, with their short branches or forks turned to the outside, so that the inside shall have smooth walls. The twigs are firmly planted in two rows in the platform, and bend over towards each other, thus making a covered passage-

way, often three feet long, and lined with tall grasses, which are held in place by small stones.

The bower being built, then comes the most curious part of it—it is decorated. For this purpose the birds scour the coun-



BUILDING THE PLAY-HOUSE.

try for bright or gay-colored objects, feathers—especially a certain blue sort—snail shells, broken glass, bleached bones, bright-colored rags, and pebbles of various colors.

Some of these things, as the feathers and rags, are fastened in the walls of the bower, and the rest are piled in a heap

before each end of the passage-way, small stones being spread out like a fan, from the edge of the entrance, to make little paths.

On page 311 is a picture of the Spotted Bower Bird at work, while the end of the bower is seen from behind the tree.

For what these pretty play-houses are built is not positively known, though it is certainly not for nests. They are supposed to be merely pleasure halls, which the birds run through, with loud calls and playful manners.

The Bower Birds in the London Zoological Gardens have built play-houses there, and are said to be never tired of decorating and playing about them.

The most beautiful of the family is the Satin Bower Bird, about the size of a pigeon, and dressed in the most glossy blue-black suit, with beautiful eyes of light blue, and feet and legs of white. The mother birds—as well as the young ones—dress in olive green, with eyes of still darker blue. They go in small flocks in the fall, and build bowers, not quite so large as their spotted cousins build.

The gardeners of Australia do not admire the Bower Bird so much as strangers and naturalists do, for they are troublesome in the gardens, wanting everything they see, and pulling up even the little sticks used to mark where seeds are planted. They eat fruit and berries.

A new Bower Bird has been discovered quite lately in New Guinea, which is the most wonderful builder yet known in the family. The bird is the size of a turtle-dove, and dresses in plain brown, but is a clever mimic, mocking the cries and calls of other birds so well as to deceive people, and drive bird hunters to despair.

He is called by the natives the "Master Bird," for the reason just given, but he has another name—the Gardener Bird—from the beautiful garden he lays out in front of his door.

The house, like the others, is no doubt a play-house, and not a nest, and is a beautiful structure, shaped like a tent. First the birds select a small tree, with a trunk the size of a walking-stick, and no branches near the ground—this is the center-post.

Around the tree-trunk, on the ground, they make a soft cushion of moss, and then proceed to put on the roof or walls. This is done with the twigs of a particular orchid, which grows in large masses on the branches of trees. The twigs of this plant are easily bent in any way, and so are nice for weaving.

About two feet from the ground, on the little tree they have selected, the birds fasten a quantity of these twigs, and then weave them together in a close texture, and fasten the ends to the ground, a foot and a half from the center-post on all sides, leaving an open space for a door.

Thus you see they have a most beautiful tent, two feet high and three feet wide on the ground, with walls of a lovely plant, which remains fresh and green for a long time. Orchids, you know, are air plants, and require no earth to keep fresh.

Inside, there is a wide ring around the moss cushion, where they can run about, and have social meetings, the building being—as I said—probably a sort of public play-house.

But the pretty green tent is not all of the work. The little builders desire a garden or lawn, and more than that, they make one. In front of the tent is made, first, a smooth lawn of green moss, carefully brought to the spot, and kept perfectly clean and free from leaves or stones.

On this green turf are then placed the decorations, which are

flowers or fruits of pretty color, so arranged as to form an elegant little garden. The objects are of many kinds, a red fruit like a small apple, another of yellow color, beautiful red flowers, even striking-looking insects.

So soon as one fades, it is taken away to the back of the house, and something new is brought to fill its place.

This bird and his play-house were discovered and described by a traveler, Signor Beccari, and it is certainly, as a builder, the most remarkable bird yet known.

CHAPTER THIRTY-SIXTH.

THE CURIOUS FELLOW THAT CAME IN A BOX.

TOWARDS the last end of summer, Mr. Raynor, Marcy's father, took a journey to Washington, and when he had been gone about a week, there came one day, through the post-office, a small package for Marcy.

It seemed to be a square tin box, with holes punched in the ends, and suspecting that it held something alive, it was opened very carefully, with many precautions to prevent its tenant from hopping, or flying, or wriggling out.

There was not much danger; he seemed to be a remarkably quiet creature when his prison was fairly opened to the light. Perhaps he was tired from his journey in the mail-bag; any way he had to be tumbled out of the box into another residence.

This was a small house of glass on the table, in which had lived—and also died, I regret to say—several interesting tenants this summer. Much of the time the house had been empty, and none who lived in it seemed to like it, for it was really a sort of prison, and no one who went inside its glass walls could get out without the consent of its owner.

But this new resident was more odd than any who had lived there before him, and his ways were so curious that I'm sure you will like to hear about him.

His dress was a dark greenish-gray, though under a magnify-

ing-glass it appeared speckled all over with red and yellow and brown. His body was rather more than an inch long, very round and plump, and covered with a pair of curiously folded wings. It was furnished with four long legs, and ornamented at the end with two little horns.

It was at the waist, if one may call it so, that wonders began on this queer little fellow. The waist itself—or thorax, as the books call it—was as long as the body, and was straight, thin, and horny, more like a brown twig than anything else. On this part were two more legs, the strangest you ever saw. They were much stronger than the other four legs, and had two joints, that you might call elbows and wrists. They could be used in walking, like the others, but they had more important uses, and were quite differently furnished.

Inside, the arm, as we may call it, was flat, and had a most formidable array of thorns or spikes, and the edge was toothed like a saw. Those two arms were the prisoner's only weapons, but they were terrible enough to the game he hunted, I can assure you.

The oddest thing about him was his head. It was three-cornered, like the face of a cat as usually drawn by a child. At each upper corner, where the cat's ears are placed, were two large eyes, and at the lower corner a strange and wonderful mouth.

This head could be turned any way, and the knowing look, as it turned to glance at a wandering fly, or at a person who came too near the house, was something almost uncanny.

It was so wise and knowing in looks, that one cannot be surprised at the strange names that have been given to this little creature in different parts of the world, nor at the superstitions

about him, as that he points the way home to lost children, or that he brings a blessing to the one he alights upon, or that ill-fortune will follow any one who disturbs him.

The books call him the Praying Mantis, from his favorite atti-



ALL READY FOR THE FLY.

tude, and here is the picture of him, which I shall tell you about soon.

The first day the Mantis lived in the glass house he amused himself with trying to climb its smooth walls. He would put

out his two long arms and paw the air till he touched the glass with the tips of his fingers, which were a pair of hooks, by the way. Then he would seem to take hold with the little soft-looking pads just above the hooks, and would pull up his body till the four legs all held to the glass. Up he would go, three or four inches, till he came to the curve of the side, for the house was really a shade, such as you've seen over delicate objects to protect them.

At the curve his feet would slip, and he would slowly slide down, down, till near the bottom, when he would fall over on his back. Then his legs and arms would paw wildly for a moment, and up he would hop and try again.

The next morning Marcy found him very still on the floor, evidently tired out with his gymnastic exercises, and perhaps rather stiff, too, as the night had been cold. She therefore hastened to place his mansion on a chair before the register, and soon he was lively as ever, and just as anxious to climb the walls as before.

But now she thought he might like his breakfast, and to know what he would eat she went to the big books. One mentioned his family name—which is *Mantidæ*, if you want to know—and dismissed him with the remark that he did not live in England; another merely said that he was first cousin to the Walking-Stick Insect, and lived in the tropics and warmer parts of the earth, including our own Southern States. At last one was found that said the Mantis was the only one of his family who would eat meat, the rest being strict vegetarians. But he was dainty about his food; it must be fresh, and he must catch it himself.

Armed with these facts, the books were closed, and the whole family turned its attention to flies. The children caught them,

and before long the tenants of the glass house were increased by eight or ten of those interesting creatures.

Now Mr. Mantis roused himself, and became interested in something besides the walls of his prison. The first fly he saw, he planted his four legs squarely on the ground, lifted his long waist almost at right angles to his body, and drew his two thorny arms up together, almost in the attitude of prayer.

There he stood perfectly motionless, except the turning of his curious little head to watch the fly as it moved about. Soon the stupid creature alighted on the floor beside him. Instantly the three-cornered face turned toward him, and the whole body fairly trembled with excitement. Slowly the long waist and horny arms bent down till about level with the body, when there was a sudden snatch, and the fly was caught on the sharp spines and held up to the hungry mouth.

Marcy wanted to see him eat, so she carefully moved the shade up near his head, as Uncle Karl had shown her, and with a magnifying-glass she took a look at the busy eater. What a sight! The whole lower part of his face seemed to be mouth. As he worked it, a plate on top—upper lip you might call it—worked up, a pair of jaws on the sides worked out and in, helping to cram in the wings and legs, and two yellow tongues—or something—were busy as the rest.

All these organs were hard at work disposing of the different members of the fly, and every particle was eaten, though the head was rolled about for some time, as though almost too big to be taken in.

When the last bit was swallowed, Mr. Mantis went carefully to work to clear up. Every part of his arms and legs were drawn through his mouth. He reached around with his arms

and drew forward his legs one by one, and he rubbed his bent elbow over his head to pull down his long antennæ or feelers.

His toilet completed, he fixed his eyes upon another fly, which he caught in one arm, and held so till it was eaten. So he went on, till he had caught six, when he seemed to be satisfied, and would touch no more that day.

But he was very entertaining for all that. He cleaned himself up nicely, rubbing his arm over his head as a cat does, and nearly bending himself double—to the children's horror, for they thought he would surely break off at the waist—to clean off the two little horns on his body.

When he was not hungry, he paid no attention to flies which walked under his very nose; but if one came near his body, he would raise it from the ground, where it usually rested, without moving his legs, looking exactly as though he was amazed at its impertinence. If one came too near his leg, he would lift the limb instantly, and hold it high in air till the impudent intruder had passed on. He actually seemed to have a horror of being touched by a fly, which was certainly curious—considering.

Marcy was much interested in the ways of her little prisoner, and hoped to keep him alive for some time, though the books say the Mantis dies in the fall. But the next morning she was sorry to see that he was stiff and dull. The warmth of the register did not revive him; flies ran over him without notice, and she put him outside the window to die, or get well if he could. He crawled up the side of the window-frame, and that was the last she saw of him.

Then she got out the books, to see what other people knew about him. She found out that the Mantis mother makes her nursery on a twig of a tree or a bush. First she places the eggs

in regular rows, fifty or a hundred, or even more of them, and then she covers them for the winter with a nice, warm, silken quilt, that is very tough, though light, and keeps them safe and comfortable through the winter. The whole nest, when done, is about the size of a hen's egg.

When the weather is warm in the spring, the shells burst open, and the babies come out. They are droll little creatures, about as large as a common ant, and almost transparent in our country (though in some places they are said to be black). They are not dull and stupid as many babies—far from it! they're as lively as their mamma herself. No sooner are they out of the shell than they run about, and, I'm sorry to say, even fight among themselves, and each one quickly sets up life on its own account, for they are not in the least a sociable family.

The deserted nest itself is used, in some parts of the world, by savage mothers, to rub the soles of their children's feet, to make them good walkers when they are grown up.

I said they come out in the spring, and they do if left where the mother put them; but I have read of one nest which—queerly enough—was made on a bit of stone, that was carried from France, where the Mantis is common, to England, as a curiosity. It was kept in a cool place until long after the little ones should have come out. At last it was put up on a warm mantel-piece, and in a few hours they began to stir; one after another made its appearance, till there were fifty young Mantis babies running about, holding up their arms as though begging for food. Food was brought, but not of the right sort perhaps; sugar, flowers, meat, and even insects failed to attract them, and in a little while they all died.

The first thing for the baby Mantis, as for other babies, is to

grow, which they do like many little creatures, by throwing off each suit as they outgrow it, till they are as long as their mother, about three inches, and have bright green coats and a nice pair of wings. They live in trees and shrubs, and are so near the color of the leaves that they are hard to find.

It is said that as the leaves turn brown in the fall, the tree-loving Mantis turns brown too, and it is true that the one Marcy had was nearly the color of a dead leaf, and it was in that season.

There is one of the family, however, who does not look in color like a leaf, but like a flower. It lives in Java, and is of a bright pink tint, almost exactly like an orchid blossom. Resting quietly on a tree—as the Mantis waits for its food—this pink fellow must look like a flower, and no doubt many insects are deceived by it.

In our country, the Mantis is found about Washington and Baltimore, and farther south. In Baltimore the youngsters make small carts or wagons of cardboard, and, with cotton thread, harness to them a pair of these little fellows. This queer pair of horses may be driven about—at least so the boys say, I never saw it.

In Washington—as Grace Greenwood has told you in a nice story-book—they are sometimes kept as pets, and are made tame, so that they will come when called, and take flies and bits of meat from the hand, and a naturalist told her that he had known a Mantis three days old to catch and eat a honey-bee. So you see they soon learn to look out for themselves.

There is one thing a Mantis is afraid of, and that, strange as it seems, is an ant. Put one in the cage, and the Mantis, though fifty times as big as the ant, will try to run away. Don't laugh

at him! you must remember that in hot countries where the Mantis lives, ants are more ferocious than tigers, and though small, they make up for size by vast numbers. No insect can fight with them, and large animals, and even men themselves, if unable to get away, are killed by them.

The Mantis is not a coward—in fact he's a born fighter. He begins as soon as he's out of the shell, and never stops till stiff with old age. He fights his baby brothers, and he never meets one of his own family without a battle. Even worse than that, after he has killed his enemy he eats him!

The Chinese keep them in cages to see them fight, which they do by swinging their arms about like men with swords, and often cut off the head of their opponent by a blow. One that I read of in Buenos Ayres even attacked larger game. A gentleman heard a bird shrieking and fluttering in a tree, and went up on a ladder to see what was the matter. He saw a strange fight. The Mantis clasped the tree with four legs, and held the bird (which was small) around the neck with his two arms.

But there is something about the story that has never been told—that is, who began it? The Mantis had evidently been pecked by the bird, and perhaps this unpleasant hug was only what he deserved, for trying to make a breakfast of his smaller neighbor.

The Mantis in our country is a silent little fellow, but a traveler in Africa tells of one of the family which he found there who made a very loud and harsh sound like some large bird.

This strange little creature has been called hard names. People who are not ignorant enough to worship or to fear him accuse him of cruelty. It must be admitted that his conduct in his family is very bad, as we look at it, but as for his fly-catching,

it is what he was made for, and housekeepers certainly should be grateful to him.

He has more names than any three-inch-long fellow that I know. Besides Praying Mantis, and all the long book-names, he is called Soothsayer, Praying Nun, Rear Horse, and Camel Cricket. The French name him *Prie Dieu*, and *Le Prêcheur*, the German, *Gottes Anbeterin*.

I want to tell you what an old writer of more than a hundred years ago says of the Mantis, it is so quaint and funny.

“So divine a creature is this esteemed that if a child ask the way to such a place she will stretch out one of her feet and show him the right way, and seldom or never misse. As she resembleth those Diviners in the elevation of her hands, so also in likeness of motion; for if they do not sport themselves as others do, nor leap nor play, but walking softly, she retains her modesty, and shewes forth a kind of mature gravity.”

You may think the Mantis is a queer-looking fellow, but you should see some insects that used to belong to his family, but have lately been put into another by the book-makers. One family, called the Walking-Sticks, look so much like different sorts of green and brown leaves that they are often mistaken for them, and others so nearly resemble dry twigs that they equally deceive people.

One Walking-Stick that lives in Fiji is a monster, a giant insect, being fifteen inches long when his legs stretch out, as he usually stands, and as big as a man's thumb.

Some of this family live in our country, though not so enormous as this one. They have never been known to do any harm till lately. Perhaps they have just found out how nice are certain trees to eat. Whatever the reason, they have within

a few years taken to eating the leaves off many beautiful trees.

Naturally this did not please the farmers. They wrote letters about it to the papers, and at last the naturalists went after the queer creatures and found out many things about them.

They are sociable fellows, and when they have stripped one tree, they start off in armies to another, so close together that they cover fences and ground on the way.

The mother Walking-Stick is not a very careful nurse. Her babies are safely packed in a tough little egg-shell, black and shining, to stay over winter, and hatch out in the spring. Now, instead of covering them up nicely from the cold, as the Mantis does her little ones, this heartless creature simply drops them to the ground.

In the autumn, when the mothers are eating their last, and the leaves are falling—for they all die at the end of summer—one walking under the trees which are covered by them will hear a constant patter like rain, caused by the fall of eggs, which often lie thick enough to scrape into piles.

Who ever heard of a shower of eggs?

All winter the black eggs lie on the ground—unless the farmer has been wise enough to destroy them—and in the spring the babies come out. They are dressed in pale green, and at first do not go very high on the trees. But they soon grow, and shed their skins, changing color to match the leaves, light green in spring, gray and brown in summer, and dead leaf color in autumn.

This fellow is not a pet in the country where he lives. The names he gets are not pet names, Stick Bug, Prairie Alligator, Devil's Horse, and others.

Professor Riley says they may be destroyed by burying in the ground, or burning the dead leaves where the eggs lie.

I can't end this story any more than I could begin it, because it hasn't come to an end yet. Marcy's is just as full of pets as ever, and new ones coming every year. I shall have to stop in the middle after all.

THE END.

Steph



LIBRARY OF CONGRESS



0 009 561 549 1

