

Country Friends



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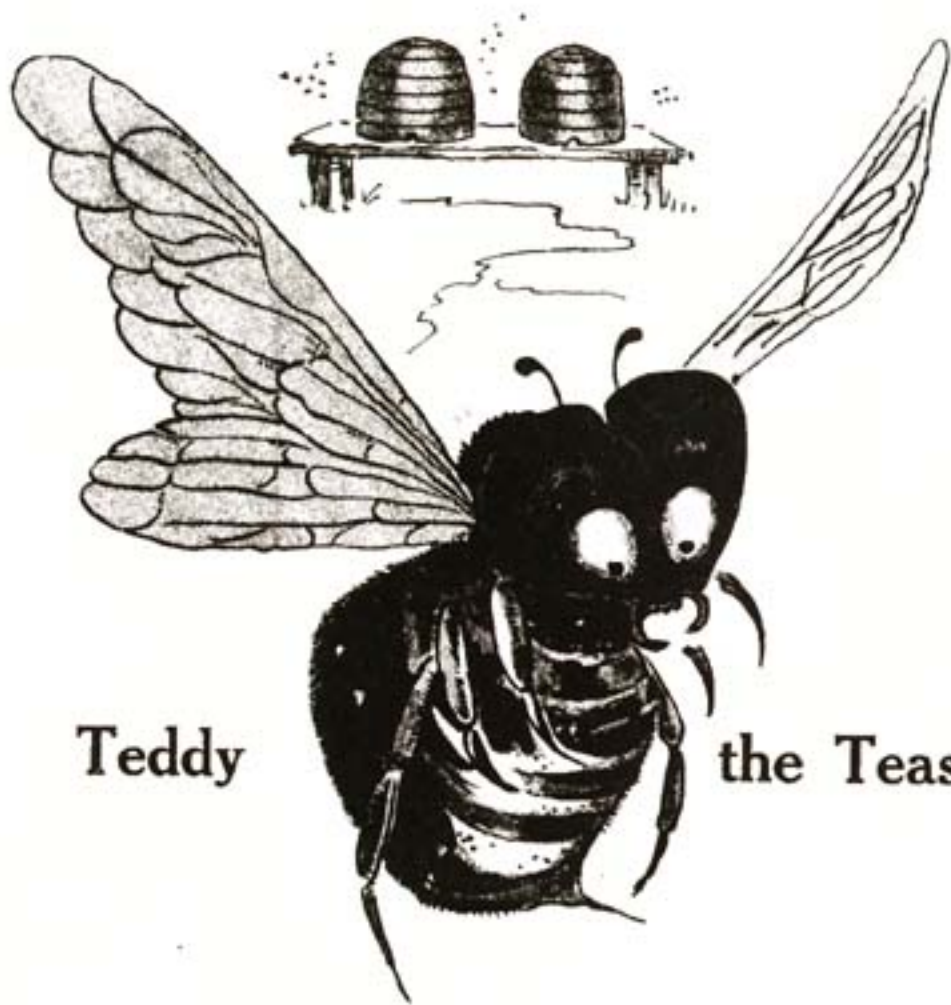


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COUNTRY FRIENDS

**Pictures and Stories
for Little Folk**

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Teddy

the Tease

On a day serene and sunny,
Teddy went to take some honey.
Round his hat he wore a "veil",

TEDDY THE TEASE

And the "smoker" could not fail,
Teddy thought, to quell the bees.
So he fancied that with ease
He could rob the hive, and home
Carry lots of honeycomb.
But, alas! out flew a bee,
And it grew and grew till he
Saw that it was bigger than
Bob, the cart-horse. Teddy ran
From the spot with all his might;
But the bee, in rapid flight,
Chased him, buzzing: "It is plain
You're the boy who on the pane
Teased me t'other day, when I
Chanced into the house to fly.



Now I mean to sting you well!"
Teddy jumped and gave a yell—
Gave, indeed, so shrill a scream
That it waked him from his DREAM!
Since that moment, it is known,
He has left poor bees alone,
When they strive, and strive in vain,
To get through the window-pane.

—Felix Leigh.

The Leaping Match

ONCE upon a time there were four young frogs who lived in a pond. Their names were Bright-Eyes, Fly-Catcher, Spring-Heel, and Spotted-Vest, and they were the handsomest and cleverest young fellows who ever dozed in the sunshine, or croaked to the moon. Each of them had a wide mouth, a long tongue, and big round eyes, exactly like every one of the others; and each could croak, and jump, and swim, and dive just as well as all the rest.

Now, there lived in the pond a little frog princess, who was the most beautiful and charming creature that Bright-Eyes, and Fly-Catcher, and Spring-Heel, and Spotted-Vest had ever seen; and each one of them wished to make her his bride. But the princess had already given her heart to a drake with a yellow bill whom she had sometimes seen as he swam round the pond just at sunset; so she had no desire to wed any of her frog suitors, though she was afraid to say so, because the frog king and queen, her father and mother, had ordered her to choose one of them for her husband.

But she was a clever princess, and she made up her mind to have her own way and marry the

THE LEAPING MATCH

drake, in spite of all the frogs in the pond. So when Bright-Eyes, and Fly-Catcher, and Spring-Heel, and Spotted-Vest came and laid their hearts at her feet, she pretended to be so much charmed with the good looks and cleverness of all, that she found it impossible to know which to accept. "But," said she, "I will give you a test to prove which is most worthy to be my prince. I will marry the frog who is able to outlast all the rest at a jumping match which shall be held on the bank at sunset this evening."

Bright-Eyes, and Fly-Catcher, and Spring-Heel, and Spotted-Vest gladly agreed to this plan, and each one swelled with the hope that he would win the beautiful prize, and jumped with joy at the thought. By the order of the king, all the frogs in the pond gathered at the appointed place just before sunset, to watch the contest. The princess chose a seat upon a tuft of grass close to the water, from which she said she had an excellent view; and the rest of the company settled themselves upon the bank, rather nearer to the jumping-ground. Then the match began. Each frog leapt over the bent backs of his three rivals, then bent his own



The Leaping-Match

THE LEAPING MATCH

back for the others to leap over in turn. Up and over they went, one after another, while the watching frogs croaked their approval at each leap.

But the little princess, though she seemed to be watching the match, and croaked with the rest, was keeping one round eye upon the pond, and by and by she saw the drake come as usual for his evening swim.

As he drew nearer to the bank upon which she was sitting, she edged a little nearer to the pond, and when he was close to the bank she jumped right into the water, just under his yellow bill.

The other frogs were making so much noise with their croaking that they did not hear the *splish-splash* she made, and when they noticed that her place was empty she was no longer to be seen, and the drake was waddling up the bank on the other side of the pond.

Bright-Eyes, and Fly-Catcher, and Spring-Heel, and Spotted-Vest did not finish their match—for what was the good of winning a prize which could not be found?



The Caterpillars

TWO caterpillars lived upon an oak tree. The oak leaves served them for food and shelter, and they never went from home; for the butterflies had told them that the world is a dangerous place. Many hungry birds, looking for food, perched on the oak tree, but the two caterpillars hid themselves under the leaves and lay quite still, and because they were like the leaves in colour the birds did not see them, or mistook them for leaves.

For some time, the caterpillars were quite happy, but after a while, one of them became cross and discontented.

THE CATERPILLARS

"I am tired of these leaves," grumbled he one day; "I am going out into the world."

"Wait till you are a butterfly, and have wings with which to fly from danger," replied his brother. "If you go now, you may never grow up."

But the discontented caterpillar would not listen to advice; and he began to lower himself to the ground by a fine thread which he spun from himself. Alas! he had gone but a little way when a brood of chicks saw him swinging in the air.

"What a strange thing! Is it good to eat?" chirped one inquisitive chick.

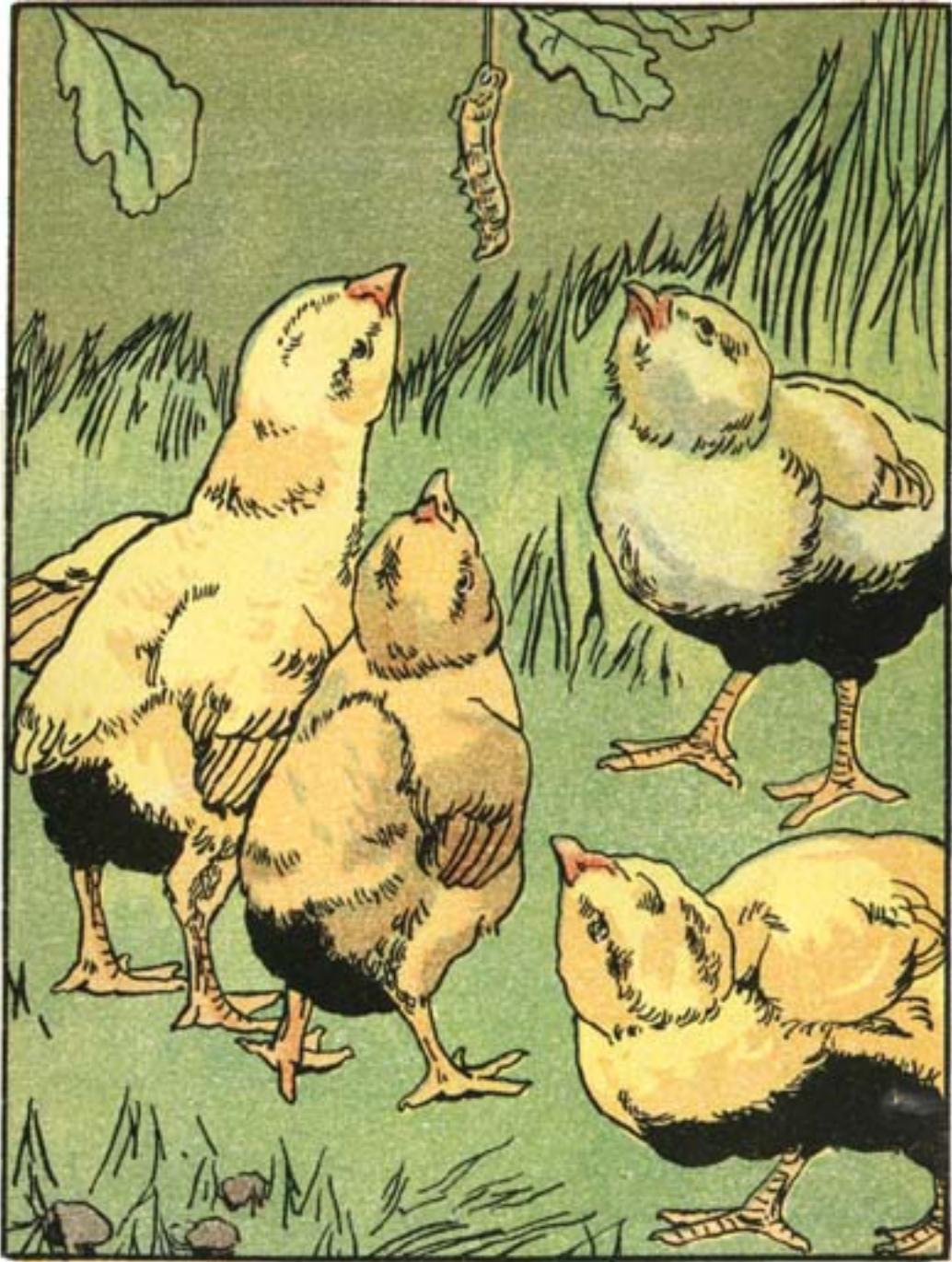
"It may be poisonous," chirped another, who was timid.

"I will go and ask Mother," chirped a third, who was prudent.

"I will peck it and try," chirped a fourth, who was bold.

"I will swallow it and find out," chirped the fifth chick, who was greedy; and before the rest of the brood could chirp again, he had pulled the caterpillar from his thread and gulped him down.

"I told him so!" said the other caterpillar, who saw it happen from his hiding-place under a leaf.



What is It?

Tommy and the Hens

TOMMY did not like porridge, however hungry he was; so he looked solemn when Aunt Jane brought some into the garden and told him to eat it. "I—I'm not very hungry," faltered he timidly, for he had never before visited Aunt Jane, and was rather afraid of her.

"Stuff and nonsense!" cried his aunt. "Boys are always hungry. Eat it up quickly, and you shall have some hot cakes." And she hurried back to the kitchen.

Tommy sat upon the fence and looked disconsolately at the bowl of porridge on his knees. He tasted a very little, but it seemed so nasty that he swallowed it with a grimace, and spilled the rest of the spoonful upon the ground. "I really can't eat it," said he.

"Cluck and nonsense!" replied a sharp voice.

Tommy started, for he thought Aunt Jane had returned. But it was only a hen that had spoken. She and two of her friends were pecking up the spilt porridge, and asking for more. Tommy got off the fence, and set the bowl upon the ground; the hens made short work of the contents, and



The Hungry Hens

TOMMY AND THE HENS

when Aunt Jane came back with a plateful of steaming cakes, she smiled approvingly at the empty bowl in Tommy's hand.

"I know boys," said she. "They can eat porridge fast enough, if there is something good to follow."

Tommy grew rather red, and swallowed a lump in his throat which the smell of the cakes had brought there.

"I'm sorry I'm not the sort of boy you know, Aunt Jane," said he. "I can't eat porridge anyhow. The hens emptied the bowl, so they must have the cakes."

Aunt Jane laughed. "Bless the boy!" cried she. "He's the right sort, even if he doesn't like porridge. Here, child, take the cakes, and don't give those hens a single crumb."

Tommy went back to the fence, smiling, with his plate. But he did not take Aunt Jane's advice about the hens. "One good turn deserves another," thought he, as he crumbled a whole cake on the ground for them.

The Wicked Rat

“Now, who are you?” said Rooster, as he met
a prowling rat;

“I do not like your looks, my friend, at all.”

“Oh, sir!” the stranger said politely, taking off
his hat,

“I’ve only come to pay a friendly call.”

“A friendly call! All very fine!” replied Sir
Chanticleer,

“But on the whole I think ’t would be as well,
In future, when you come to pay your friendly
visits here,

Like other friends to ring the front door bell!”



The Wicked

Rat is Caught

THE WICKED RAT

Now who would have thought
The rat would be caught
With a barrow the very next day,
Attempting to wheel—
Yes, trying to steal!—
A lovely white egg right away?
Yet that's what he tried;
And though he denied
His intentions were those of a thief,
The rat did his best
To rob the hen's nest—
And that is my honest belief.
Now the rat is in jail:—
'T is a pitiful tale,
I hope it will make you reflect;
It may come soon or late,
But that is the fate
All wicked young rats must expect.



The Foolish Little Sparrow

CHEEP!" said a little sparrow. "Cheep, cheep, chirrup! I am tired of sitting still and waiting for my breakfast; I will go out into the world, and find some fine fat grubs for myself." And he scrambled out of the nest, and perched upon the top of the water-pipe in which it was built.

"Come back! Come back! Take care! you will fall," squeaked the other little sparrows all together, opening their big mouths, and fluttering their small wings. But the bold young bird paid no heed. He hopped up and down, and jerked

THE FOOLISH LITTLE SPARROW

his stumpy little tail, chirping loudly to show he was not afraid. Then he spread his short wings, and stood on tiptoe on the edge of the pipe.

“See me fly,” chirped he, and jumped.

But his feathers had not had time to grow, and so his wings were not long enough, nor strong enough, to hold him up. For a moment he flapped about wildly; then he fell headforemost to the ground, and broke his neck.

When the father and mother sparrows, bringing breakfast for their young ones, came home, and heard the bad news, they shook their heads and flapped their wings, and chirped most sadly.

“My children,” said the mother bird, “learn this lesson from your poor brother’s fate: Wait until your wings have grown before you try to fly.”

—Aston Moore.



The Spotty Kitten and the Speckly Hen

THE Persian kittens in the window of the little bird-and-beast shop were the prettiest ever seen. At least, Betty thought so, and she ought to have known, for she looked at them very often; indeed, she looked so often that at last she felt she could not bear to live any longer without the prettiest spotty one to stroke and play with.

And then she caught her own speckly hen, and carried it down to the shop in a large basket.

Old Christopher, the shopman, was sitting behind the counter when she came in, and he peered over the top of his spectacles and asked her what she wanted.

"Please, I want your spotty kitten, and I have brought you my speckly hen," said Betty.

"A hen!" shouted Christopher, running round the counter in a hurry to stop her from opening the basket; "why, each of my kittens is worth at least six hens!"

He looked so crooked, and sounded so cross, and Betty felt so forlorn and kittenless, that she burst out crying.



Betty Visits her Speckly Hen

THE SPOTTY KITTEN AND THE SPECKLY HEN

That seemed to surprise Christopher. "Bless me! Crying!" said he. "And all about a speckly hen, and a spotty kitten! It isn't worth it, my dear—nothing is." And he patted her head and smiled so kindly that Betty, forgetting she was rather afraid of him, threw her arms round his neck, and sobbed out: "My s-speckly hen is very big, and your s-spotty kitten is very little."

"Tut-tut, my dear!" said the old man, laughing, "if your hen were as big as an ostrich, I should not want it. But I am very fond of a fresh egg for my tea; how would you like to bring me all that your hen lays? I will keep the kitten until you have brought enough eggs to pay for it."

Betty smiled through her tears. "I should like it very much," she said. "And I will bring the first one to-morrow."

She did. And, what is more, she boiled it for Christopher, and made tea and toast in his little parlour. Then, while he took his meal, she nursed the kitten. And these things she did every day for many days. It was very pleasant, like being out to tea and at home at the same time. The kitten ran to meet her when she came, and

THE SPOTTY KITTEN AND THE SPECKLY HEN

Christopher called her his little housekeeper, and laughed when she told him all about the speckly hen, which laid an egg every day in the top nest, near the door, in the henhouse. But even pleasant things do not last for ever, and one day, at the end of a month, Christopher said that the kitten was paid for.

“Paid for already!” cried Betty. “Mother said it would take months and months to pay for it in eggs!”

“It was paid for long ago, little woman, in love and kindness,” said Christopher, “and they are worth more than all the eggs in the world, and all the gold and silver too.”

Then Betty hugged him. “I don’t want to take my kitty away unless I may come to see you afterwards,” cried she, “for I do love you, and I like making your tea!” Christopher stroked her hair tenderly. “Surely, lassie,” said he, “an old, lonely man will be happy whenever he sees your bright face.”

So Betty still makes Christopher’s toast and tea every afternoon in the back parlour.

The Frog who would not Croak

THERE was once a little frog who would not croak. His name was Hopper. No matter what happened, he never troubled to say anything about it.

"I will make him croak," said his mother. And she swelled herself out to such a size that all her other children cried "A-a-a-h!" and "O-o-o-h!" in terror, lest she should burst. But Hopper only stared at her with his big round eyes, and said never a word.

"We will make him croak," said his playmates. And they jumped on him hard, when they romped with him at leap-frog. But not the heaviest of them could squeeze a sound out of Hopper.

"I will make him croak," said his schoolmaster. And he flogged him soundly with the tip of a rush. But it was of no use. Hopper bore his punishment in silence, and, when it was over, wrinkled his skin and jumped into the pond to cool himself.

It was just the same when Hopper grew up. He never croaked.

"We will make him croak," said the old wise frogs. And they told him all the wonderful things



Skipper's Song

THE FROG WHO WOULD NOT CROAK

they knew. Hopper listened until his big round eyes grew bigger and rounder than ever with surprise. But he did not croak.

"We will make him croak," said the frog-ladies. And they smiled at him; and sat upon lily leaves in the sunshine, to show him their pretty spots; and swam and dived gracefully before him. But Hopper only looked at them and sighed. He did not croak.

"We will make him croak," said the gay young frogs. And they invited him to a smoking and croaking concert, to be held after sunset in the field above the pond. Hopper accepted the invitation and went in good time, taking his long pipe with him. Refreshments were served upon little mushroom-tables under the trees. Hopper sat at a table with his friends Skipper and Jumper, who were very musical frogs, and, having lighted his pipe, leaned back against a tree trunk to listen in comfort.

A song from Skipper was the first thing on the programme. It was called "Crik-crak-croak", and was very funny, with a chorus at the end of each verse so rollicking and frolicking that no frog who had ever heard it, however solemn he might be, could help joining in the general croak,

THE FROG WHO WOULD NOT CROAK

sooner or later. The young frogs thought this song would be sure to make Hopper croak. Jumper tuned his banjo, for he was to play the accompaniment, and Skipper cleared his throat and began in a hoarse bass voice. By the end of the first verse everybody present—except Hopper—was laughing. When the chorus came round for the second time, all the young frogs—except Hopper—sang it with all their might. Soon afterwards, the old frogs in the pond began to sing too. Then the frog-ladies raised their voices; and before the end of the song all the baby-frogs were awake and croaking. “Crik-crak-croak!” shouted they all. It roused the birds who were roosting in the trees, and set the dogs barking half a mile away. But it did not disturb Hopper. He puffed peacefully at his pipe for a time. Then he began to nod. After a while his eyes closed, and his pipe fell to the ground and was broken in pieces. In the stillness that followed the last shout of the last chorus, he made a gentle sound, like a small “C-r-r-r-k”.

“He is croaking!” cried Skipper and Jumper, springing high in their joy. “He is croaking!” shouted all the other frogs, leaping too.

THE FROG WHO WOULD NOT CROAK

But he wasn't croaking—he was only snoring. And it is my belief that he never did croak, unless he found something worth croaking about, which isn't likely.

—*Aston Moore.*





A Disappointed Parent

Quoth Father Froggie, as he smiled:
“He is my own, my Tadpole child!
But everybody will agree
He’s not the smallest bit like me;
For beauty, so folk say, is mine—
In *spots*, at least, I’m very fine!
Then, *I’ve* no silly tail to wag;
Of legs and arms, too, *I* can brag!
In short, I can’t perceive a trace
Of *me* in Taddy’s form or face.
Well, well, I’ll have to let him grow
In water for a month or so;
And *p’r’aps* he’ll get to be, poor Tad,
As nice to look at as his Dad!”



On Trust.

"Trust! Doggy, Trust!"

That's what the Children say,
But I wish they'd recollect

That I can't sit up all day!

Yes, sugar's very nice,

But its silly to suppose

That a dog enjoys a lump,

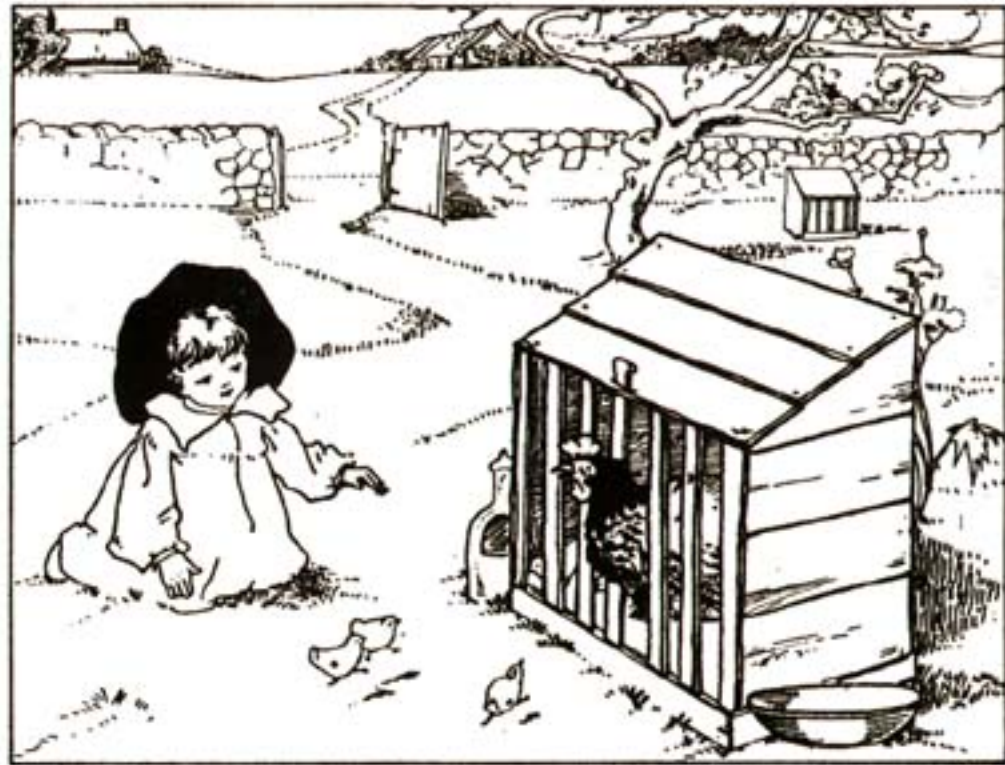
When it's only on his nose!

A Narrow Escape

There was a naughty little bird who would not go
to bed;
He gave his little tail a flirt, he shook his little head,
And when his mother called out: "Cheep!"—that
is, "I want you, dear"—
He hopped away among the shrubs, as if he did
not hear.

There was a puss, a tabby puss, whose eyes were
green and bright;
She prowled about the garden paths with footstep
soft and light,
And catching sight of Master Dick, she gave a
sudden spring,
And though he got away—oh, dear! it was the
nearest thing!

He hurried home as quick as quick, that frightened
little bird,
And always after that obeyed his mother's every
word.



What their Mothers Say

- “Peepsey-peep!” the chickens cry,
When frightened is each poor thing.
- “Cluck, cluck, cluck!” the hens reply,
And cuddle them under the wing.
- “Cheepsey-cheep!” the birdies cry,
Whenever they’re left alone.
- “Sweet, sweet, sweet!” the birds reply;
Oh, mothers will answer their own!



LITTLE ONES FIRST.

How you are flapping and
fussing to-day!

Keep farther off, or I'll
drive you away.

Old Cock-a-doodle, its you
who are worst;

Don't be so greedy, sir -
Little ones first!



The End.

