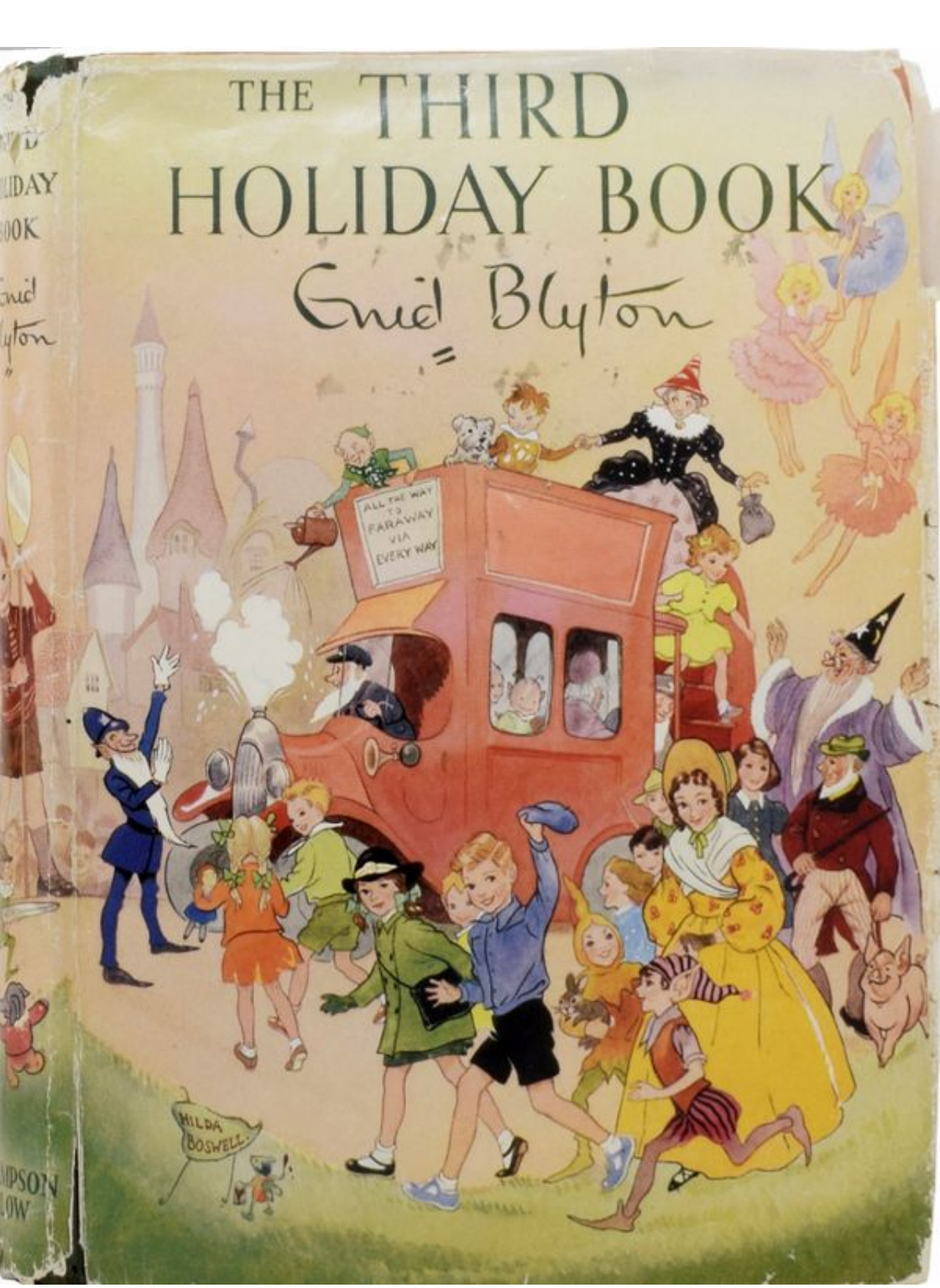
THE THIRD HOLIDAY BOOK

Enid Blyton



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THE THIRD HOLIDAY BOOK

By
Enid Blyton

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Porridge Town

There was once a little boy called James, who was very messy with his porridge at breakfast-time. He liked to stir it round and round in his plate, and then it always went over the edge on to the cloth.

"James! You've dirtied the clean tablecloth again!" cried his mother almost every day. "Oh dear, if only you would try and eat your porridge up properly instead of getting it on the floor and on the table!"

After James had finished his breakfast each morning, Mummy had to take a cloth and wipe up porridge spots on the carpet, dropped off James's spoon, and she had to wipe up plenty of messes on the cloth as well.

One morning Mummy was very cross with James because he had made a bigger mess than usual.

"Now, James! I am going to get a cloth to wipe up that mess," she said, "and if your porridge is not finished by the time I come back, you shall not have your nice boiled egg this morning, and you will have to sit in the corner and think about porridge for half an hour!"

Mummy went to get a cloth. Did James eat his porridge up quickly as soon as she had gone? No, he did not! He sat there, dreaming, looking out of the window, stirring his porridge and making some more slop over the edge of his plate. He really was a most annoying child.

Then he heard Mummy coming back, and he remembered what she had said. No egg—and half an hour in the corner if he hadn't emptied his plate of porridge! Well, there certainly wasn't time to eat it. Whatever was he to do?

You will never guess what that naughty boy did! He took up his plate, turned it upside down out of the window, and emptied all his porridge into the garden.

He heard an angry yell from below the window, but he hadn't time to look out and see what had happened, because Mummy came back. She took a look at his plate and said, "Oh, so you have managed to eat up your porridge quickly for once. And a good thing too!"

Naughty James didn't say a word. He watched Mummy wipe up the mess he had made, and then he began to eat his egg, wondering who had yelled like that in the garden.

He soon found out when he went to play on the lawn. A fierce little brownie-man ran out from under the lilac-bush and caught hold of him.

"Was it you who poured porridge all over me?" he cried angrily. "Look at me! It's all over my hair and down my neck! You nasty, horrid boy!"

James looked at the angry little man, and he began to laugh. The brownie had porridge all over his hat and down his neck. He really did look funny.

"Oh! So instead of begging my pardon you think you'll laugh at me, do you!" shouted the brownie, getting crosser and crosser. "Well, my boy, you just come along with me to Porridge Town! It isn't very far, and maybe you will see then what it is like to have porridge when you don't want it!"

Then, to James's surprise and dismay, he dragged him to the gate, whisked him down a path, and through a strange gate that James knew he had never seen before—and before he

could say anything, there he was in a crooked little town, with tumble-down houses, twisty chimneys, and a crowd of little folk going about their shopping.

"This is Porridge Town," said the brownie with a grin. "Have a good time, nasty little boy!"

James didn't like the look of Porridge Town at all. He wandered along by himself, and came to a seat by the road. He sat down on it. Presently a bus came along, and splashed through a big puddle—and the puddle splashed all over poor James.

And when he looked down to see if his suit had been messed, he found that he was all over porridge! Yes,—all the puddles in the road were full of porridge instead of water. It was most disgusting! Poor James tried to wipe the porridge off himself, but his hanky soon got wet and sticky.

He got up and went on again. He saw some lovely buns in a baker's shop, and he wondered if he had a penny. Yes—he had. So into the shop he went and bought a penny bun.

But, dear me, when he bit into it, what a surprise! The inside was full of porridge that squirted out all over James! Some went down his neck and some went on to his chest.

The little folk who were passing thought it was a great joke, and they laughed and laughed at him. James was angry and ran away. He fell down—and of course he fell into a porridge puddle! He did hate that.

A little old woman came out of a nearby cottage and helped him up. "Come and rest in my cottage for a minute and I'll tie up your knee," she said.

So into her house went James and sat down on a nice, fat, soft cushion. And, do you know, it burst under him, and goodness gracious, will you believe it, it was full of porridge!

Well, it is horrid enough to fall down in a porridge puddle, but it is even worse to *sit* in porridge! James got up in a hurry and went out of the cottage at a run. He simply couldn't bear the idea of sitting down in another chair there.

Not far off was a big apple tree and on it were some rosy, ripe apples. It was not the time of year for apples and James was most surprised. He thought he would go and sit under the tree and maybe an apple would fall down by him, and he could eat it.

Well, the apples were very ripe and they did fall down. But they were not like ordinary apples. Oh no!

One fell on to James's head and burst at once—and as you can guess, it was full of porridge. In fact, it was a porridge-apple! Another one fell down and burst on his shoulder, sending wet porridge down his neck. A third apple fell on his hand, and covered it with porridge too—hot porridge this time, so that James was burnt and sprang up with a shout of pain!

He ran away from that queer tree. He ran and he ran. He didn't know where he was going to, but he meant to get away from Porridge Town. He ran fast. It seemed to him as if he ran for miles. And after a while he found himself on a path in a garden, rushing along at top speed.

He bumped into someone. "What's the hurry?" cried a voice.

"I want to get home!" cried James. "Tell me the way!"

Then he looked up and saw—his mother! She *was* astonished.

"You *are* at home!" she said. "Fancy galloping along like this at sixty miles an hour to get home when you are in your own garden. Really, James!"

"Am I in my own garden? How funny!" cried James. "I've been all the way to Porridge Town and back, Mother."

“Well, I hope you didn’t make as much mess there as you did at breakfast this morning!” said his mother. James looked down at himself—and to his surprise he was quite clean. He hadn’t a scrap of porridge on him. Could he possibly have imagined it all?

But, dear me, when he put his hands into his pockets, what a shock he got! They were full of porridge—hot porridge, too! That was the last trick one of the little folk in Porridge Town had managed to play on him. Poor James! He didn’t say a word to his mother but hurried off to the bathroom. He turned his pockets inside out and tried his best to sponge out the porridge. And he made up his mind about something.

“I shall eat up my porridge in the morning and not make a single mess!” he said to himself. “Oh dear—I really don’t think I could BEAR to see a porridge spot on the cloth again!”

Do you make messes? What! You do? Come along to Porridge Town then, and we’ll see what happens!

THE BISCUIT TREE

Once there was a brownie called Mickle who was very poor. He lived in a tumble-down cottage, and grew potatoes and cabbages in his garden, and nothing else, because it was so small.

But though he was poor he was as kind as could be! If anyone came knocking at his yellow front door begging for a penny, he would shake his head and say:

"I haven't even a ha'penny. But you may have a slice of bread, or two or three potatoes."

If anyone wanted help, Mickle would always run to give it. When old Dame Fanny broke her leg, he went in to sweep and dust her cottage every day, and he fed her hens so well that they laid even more eggs than usual.

And when Mister Winkle had his roof blown off in a storm, Mickle took a ladder, and spent the whole day mending Winkle's roof most beautifully.

Most people knew how to reward Mickle for his kindness. They would give him a few biscuits.

Mickle was so poor that he never bought a biscuit for himself. His meals were mostly bread, potato, and cabbage, with sometimes soup for a treat. And he did love biscuits so much!

"I really don't know which biscuits I love most," he would say. "The ginger-snaps are marvellous—such a lovely taste. And the chocolate biscuits that Dame Fanny makes simply melt in my mouth. And as for those little biscuits with the jam in the middle, well, I could eat them all day long!"

Now one day Mickle had a bit of bad luck. A goat got into his garden and ate all his winter cabbages! And when he went to his sack of potatoes to help himself to one or two, he found that a rat must have told his family about them, for nearly all had disappeared through a hole at one end of the sack!

Mickle took a ladder, and spent the whole day mending Winkle's roof.

A goat got into his garden and ate all his winter cabbage!

Mickle could have cried! All his winter greens gone—and most of his potatoes! What was he to live on now?

He went indoors. He had been to help Pixie Lightfoot to dig her garden that day, and she had given him six pat-a-cake biscuits as a reward. He had meant to keep them for Sundays, and eat one each Sunday for six weeks at tea-time. But to-day he was so hungry that he felt he could eat them all!

Now just outside at that very moment was a little beggar-child. She belonged to a tramp who was walking through the village. She was ragged and cold, and when she saw the smoke rising from Mickle's chimney, she thought it would be very nice just to peep inside the door and look at the fire.

So, as Mickle was about to take a bite from the first biscuit, he saw the door slowly open, and the untidy curly head of the little beggar-child come peeping round the corner!

Mickle stared in surprise. The child smiled and came right in.

"I'm cold," she said. "I saw the smoke coming from your chimney and I wanted to look at a nice warm fire."

"Come and sit down by it," said Mickle at once. "It's only made of sticks from the woods, but it is cheerful and warm."

So the little ragged girl sat down and warmed her hands. She looked at the bag that Mickle was holding and asked him what was inside it.

"Biscuits," said Mickle.

"Ooh!" said the beggar-child, but she didn't ask for one. Her eyes grew rounder, and she looked small and hungry. Mickle felt that he simply *must* give her a biscuit. So he handed her one.

"Thank you!" said the girl, and crunched it up as quickly as a dog eats a bone! Then she looked hungrily at the bag again.

Mickle knew he shouldn't give her any more because he wouldn't have any for the next five Sundays. But he found his hand going inside the bag, and there it was, holding out another biscuit again!

There he was, holding out another biscuit again!

Well, the girl ate five of those six biscuits, and Mickle was just handing her the very last one when there came a shout from the gate:

“Hie, Binny, hie! Where are you? Come along at once!”

The beggar-child jumped up. Her name was Binny, and it was her father who was calling her. She gave Mickle a quick hug and flew out into the garden. Her father was standing by the gate, waiting.

“This brownie-man has been so kind to me, Father!” cried the little girl. “Give him a reward. Please do!”

She bit her last biscuit and some crumbs fell to the ground beside the gate. The tramp trod them into the earth with his foot and muttered a few strange words. He looked at Mickle out of bright green eyes.

“Sometimes a bit of kindness grows and grows and brings us a reward we don’t expect!” he said. “And sometimes it doesn’t! But to-day there is magic in the wind, so maybe you’ll be lucky!”

He nodded to Mickle and he and the beggar-child went dancing up the lane together, their rags blowing like dead leaves in the wind. Mickle shut the gate and went back to his warm kitchen. He was hungry—and all his biscuits were gone. Life was very sad.

He forgot all about the tramp and the beggar-child that spring. He never saw them again, and he worked so hard that he really hadn’t time to think of anything except food and rest and work.

But one day he noticed a strong little shoot growing by his gate-post. He bent down to look at it. It was not like any seedling he had seen before. Perhaps it was a weed. Mickle thought he would pull it up. Then he thought he wouldn’t. So he left it.

And to his enormous surprise it grew and grew very fast indeed, till in three weeks' time it was as high as the top of his gate! It sprouted into leaves. It grew higher still. It grew into a small tree, and Mickle had to walk under it when he went out of the gate. It was really most extraordinary!

He talked to his friends about it. They were used to magic, of course, but no one had ever seen a tree grow quite so quickly.

"It will flower soon and then we shall know what it is," said his friends. And the next week, sure enough, it did flower. It had funny flowers—bright red, with flat yellow middles.

The blossoms didn't last long. The red petals fell off, and the flat yellow middles grew larger. Every one was most puzzled—till at last Dame Fanny gave a shout and slapped Mickle suddenly on the shoulder.

"It's a biscuit tree! That's what it is! A biscuit tree! Goodness me, one hasn't grown in the kingdom for about five hundred years! A biscuit tree, a biscuit tree!"

Well, Dame Fanny was right. It *was* a biscuit tree, and no mistake! The biscuits grew till they were ripe, and a sort of sugary powder came over them. Then they were ready for picking.

And how Mickle enjoyed picking biscuits off his biscuit tree! You would have loved it too. He got some big and little tins from his grocer, lined them with paper, and then picked the biscuits. He laid each one neatly in a tin, till the tin was full and he could put the lid on. Then he took up another tin and filled that. He did enjoy himself.

He gave a tin of biscuits to every one in the village. This was just like kind old Mickle, of course. They were pat-a-cake biscuits, and for a long time nobody knew why the tree was a pat-a-cake biscuit tree, nor why it had grown at all. And then Pixie Lightfoot suddenly remembered that she had given Mickle some pat-a-cake biscuits some months back.

"What did you do with them?" she asked Mickle. "Did you eat them?"

"No," said Mickle. "I gave them all to a beggar-child."

"Did she drop any crumbs near your gate, where the biscuit tree is growing?" asked Lightfoot.

He looked at Mickle out of bright green eyes.

"Yes—she did—and I remember now, her father stamped them into the ground, and said that sometimes kindness grew its own reward—and he said that there was magic in the wind that day!" cried Mickle.

"Ah—now we know everything!" said Lightfoot. "It was your own bit of kindness that grew! From the biscuit-crumbs came your wonderful tree, Mickle. Oh, how marvellous! I do

hope it goes on flowering year after year."

Well, it does, of course, so Mickle always has plenty of biscuits to eat, sell, or give away. Go by his gate in Misty Village during the summer and see his biscuits growing on the tree—he'll be sure to give you a pocketful if you wish him good morning!

"It's a biscuit tree! That's what it is!"

Paying It Back

There was once a dog called Mack. He was a little dog with a big bark, and every one was very fond of him. He lived with Terence and Hilda, and they took him for a walk each day.

They were good to Mack. They always saw that he had plenty of good food to eat, and filled his bowl full of fresh water each day. They brushed him well every morning, and made quite sure that he had plenty of straw in his kennel at night.

Terence and Hilda had two pets. One was Mack and the other was a big goldfish called Rudolf. Rudolf had lived in the nursery ever since the children could remember. He had a very big round glass bowl, with some pond-weed in it, and he swam round and round the bowl and looked at the children through the glass.

He knew Mack the dog very well indeed, for he had seen Mack brought into the nursery when he was a tiny puppy, so that he could hardly walk. The goldfish had looked and looked at the puppy. He had never seen one before, and he wondered what it was.

When Mack grew older he wanted to see the goldfish properly. The glass bowl was always put in the middle of the nursery table so that the children could see the big red fish swimming whilst they were having their meals. He looked lovely peeping at them between the pond-weed in the bowl. When the children fed him he popped his red nose out of the water and ate the food greedily. He would take some from the children's hands, so you see he was really very tame.

One day Mack jumped up on the nursery table to have a good look at Rudolf the fish. He lay down on the table with his nose close to the bowl and watched the goldfish. Then he wuffed to it.

"Why don't you come out and play with me?"

"Because I should die if I left the water for long," said the goldfish, poking his nose out of the top of the bowl to speak to Mack.

"It must be dull swimming round and round in your bowl," said Mack.

"I have plenty to look at," said Rudolf. "I love to see the two children, and it's fun to see you come trotting into the nursery too. You are a very nice dog."

Mack was pleased. He wagged his tail so hard that it thumped the table like a drum.

"Oh, I say! What's that funny noise?" said the goldfish in alarm.

"Only my tail wagging," said Mack. "It's to say I'm friendly to you. Wag your tail at me, goldfish, and then I shall see that you are friends with me too."

"I can't wag my tail like you," said Rudolf. "If I wag my tail it makes me swim fast and I shall bump my nose on the bowl. But I'll waggle my fins—look!"

Rudolf waggled his fins and Mack thumped his tail again. Then he heard someone coming and he jumped off the table. He was not really supposed to climb up there.

After that Rudolf and Mack were very friendly indeed. Rudolf always got excited when Mack came into the room and Mack always gave a little bark to tell Rudolf that he was pleased to see him. Once Mack even jumped up on the table and dropped a few biscuit crumbs into the water for the goldfish. Rudolf was delighted.

Now one very, very hot day somebody upset Mack's bowl of water. It always stood outside in a shady spot. Perhaps the gardener trod on it and upset it. Maybe the window-cleaner upset it. Mack didn't know. Anyway, the water was spilt and Mack had none at all.

There was no pond in the garden. There was not even a puddle to drink from, for the weather had been hot and all the puddles had gone.

So Mack had nothing to drink at all. He went about with his tongue hanging out, feeling so hot that he wished he could take his coat off as Terence did.

The children were out for the day, so they did not see that Mack was thirsty. Their mother was busy, and the maid never bothered about Mack anyhow. So nobody knew that the little dog was dreadfully thirsty. He went to his overturned bowl and tried to lick a few drops out of it—but there were none. So off he went again, his pink tongue hanging out, dry and thirsty. The sun shone down hotly, and made him more thirsty than ever.

The evening came. The children arrived home, laughing and talking. They noticed Mack's tongue hanging out and called to him, "Go and have a drink, silly dog!"

"Wuff!" said Mack. But they didn't understand that he was saying that his bowl was empty. They went off to bed and left Mack downstairs. Night came and the poor little dog really thought he would die of thirst. He went up to the nursery and lay down panting on the floor.

Rudolf the goldfish spoke to him. "What's the matter, Mack? You look hot?"

"I am so thirsty I think I shall die!" said Mack. "My bowl of water has been spilt and nobody has given me any more."

"You poor thing!" said Rudolf. "Well, come up here on my table, Mack—and have a drink out of the water in my bowl!"

"Oh, tails and whiskers, what a good idea!" wuffed Mack. "Do you really mean it?"

"Of course," said Rudolf. "You are my friend, aren't you? And friends should always help one another. But leave me enough water to swim in, won't you? If you drink it all, I should die."

"I'll leave plenty," said Mack, and he jumped up on to the table. He put his tongue into the bowl of water and lapped it up greedily. Oh, how delicious it was! Mack had never never tasted such delicious water.

"Leave me enough to swim in!" cried Rudolf, as the level of the water went down and down. "Stop! Stop!"

Mack stopped drinking. He could have drunk the whole of the water, he was so thirsty. He had left just enough in the bottom for Rudolf to lie in—it was very little indeed.

"Bones and biscuits, I hope I've left enough!" said Mack in dismay. "Will the children fill your bowl to-morrow, Rudolf?"

"Sure to," said Rudolf, waggling his fins to and fro. "Don't worry about me. I'm all right so long as I keep still. There's just enough to cover me."

"It's very very kind of you," said Mack gratefully. "I can't tell you how much better I feel already. I will do *you* a good turn one day, Rudolf. I really will. I will pay back the good turn you have done me, I promise you."

Rudolf laughed and made a few bubbles in the water. "You won't be able to pay it back," he gurgled. "Dogs can't help goldfish!"

But Rudolf was wrong, as you will see. Not very long after that, there came an enormous thunderstorm. It was right overhead, in the very middle of the night. The thunder sounded like wardrobes falling down the stairs—crash-crash, rumble, smash-crash! The lightning flashed

and the whole world was drenched with rain. The children woke up with a jump, but they liked thunderstorms, so they didn't mind a bit. They lay and waited for the lightning to light up their bedrooms.

Mack growled at the storm. He was angry with it for waking him. He was lying in his basket in the kitchen, and he heard the raindrops come pelting down the chimney nearby.

Rudolf the goldfish was dreadfully frightened. "This must be the end of the world!" he thought, and he swam round the bowl like mad. The lightning came into the nursery and Rudolf jumped in fright. Then such a crash of thunder came that the fish leapt right out of the water! He fell on the table and wriggled there, gasping.

He couldn't get back into the bowl. He flopped about in alarm, wondering what was going to happen to him. He could only breathe when he was under the water. He would die!

He wriggled right off the table—plop! He fell on to the floor and flapped about there, jumping and gasping for all he was worth.

"Help! Help!" panted poor Rudolf. "Water! Water!"

The children did not hear him—but Mack did! Mack pricked up his ears when he heard the plop. Then he was puzzled to hear some wriggling noises on the floor overhead, and he at once ran up the stairs to see what they were.

And on the carpet lay poor Rudolf, gasping for breath! "Oh, Mack, I shall die if I don't get back into my bowl!" he panted. "The thunder frightened me and I jumped out."

Mack looked at the poor goldfish. He did not dare to take him into his mouth and try to put him back, for he knew his teeth would hurt him. But whatever was he to do? He couldn't leave his friend like that.

So Mack lifted up his head and began to bark. How he barked! Wuff, wuff, wuff! WUFF, WUFF, WUFF! He went on and on, and at last every one in the house heard him and came running to see what the matter was.

And there they found Mack sitting close beside the poor goldfish, barking for all he was worth! Terence at once lifted Rudolf up and slipped him gently into his bowl of water. How thankful the big fish was! He breathed again and swam round his bowl in delight.

"Fancy! Rudolf must have jumped out with fright!" said Hilda. "What a good thing Mack knew! Aren't they kind to one another! First Rudolf lets Mack drink his water—and then Mack rescues Rudolf!"

They all went back to bed—but Mack stayed in the nursery.

"I've paid back your kindness," he said to Rudolf, with his paws on the table. "I've paid it back, just as I said I would. It's a nice feeling!"

"Thank you," said the goldfish, waggling his fins. "You're a real friend, Mack. You saved my life."

It *is* nice to pay back a bit of kindness, isn't it? I always try to if I can, don't you?

The Cuckoo in the Clock

There was a cuckoo-clock in the nursery. It was rather a fine one, made of wood, with carved leaves and flowers and birds all round it. At the top, in its tiny room, lived the wooden cuckoo. This room had a little door which flew open every half-hour—and out popped the cuckoo, bobbed and bowed, and cried "Cuckoo!" in a pretty voice.

All the toys liked the cuckoo. It was a nice, friendly little bird, and often asked the Noah's Ark animals to come and visit it. They were small enough to get inside the tiny room and have a talk. Sometimes the lion went up the chain to the cuckoo's little room, sometimes the kangaroo leapt up, and sometimes the bear went.

The cuckoo loved them all. One day the Noah's Ark ostrich brought some canary seed for the cuckoo to eat.

"I picked it up from the floor," said the ostrich. "The canary dropped it from her cage. You have it, Cuckoo, it will be a nice meal for you."

The cuckoo was grateful, though she didn't really like seed very much. She pecked at it and nibbled it—and almost forgot to pop out and say "Cuckoo!" at the right time.

Once, on a cold winter's day, the wooden cuckoo shivered in her tiny room. The cuckoo-clock was far away from the fire, and the nursery door was wide open.

"I shall be too cold to pop out and cry 'Cuckoo' at twelve o'clock!" thought the poor cuckoo. "I'm sure I'm getting a cold."

So she was, and her voice was so hoarse when she came out at twelve o'clock that all the toys were sorry for her.

"I'll climb up and give her a tiny blanket off one of the cots in the dolls' house," said the golliwog. So up he went, carrying the little blanket in his pocket. He rapped on the cuckoo's door and she opened it.

"Here you are," said the golliwog, handing her the tiny blanket. "This will keep you warm, Cuckoo."

"Oh, thank you; you *are* kind to me!" cried the cuckoo gratefully.

"This will wrap me up beautifully."

She wrapped the little cot blanket round her shoulders—and it *did* keep her so nice and warm. When it was time for her to come out and cuckoo again, she quite forgot to take the blanket off her shoulders—and out she came with it round her!

The two children in the nursery did not notice, but all the toys did. They giggled among themselves and waited to see if the cuckoo would pop out with the blanket next time she cuckooed.

But this time she remembered to take it off. The toys were quite disappointed!

Once a dreadful thing happened. Somebody came to spring-clean the nursery, and they rubbed the cuckoo-clock so hard that the door of the cuckoo's room stuck fast and wouldn't open! The next time that the cuckoo wanted to come out and tell the time, she couldn't open her door!

So she stayed inside, frightened and silent, and the toys looked up in wonder. What had happened to the cuckoo?

All that day the cuckoo stayed in her little room inside the top of the clock, and didn't say a single cuckoo. The door stayed shut. The toys began to worry.

"Is the cuckoo ill, do you think?" said the golliwog. "We do miss her merry voice so much."

"We shan't know what the time is," said the baby-doll.

"Let's call up to her and see what has happened," said the pink rabbit.

So the golliwog stood below the clock and shouted loudly, "Cuckoo in the clock! Why don't you come out?"

All the answer they got was a tiny noise that sounded like someone doing their best to say "Cuckoo."

"I believe the door must be stuck," said the golliwog. "I'll go up and see."

So he climbed up the clock chains, and came to the cuckoo's door. Sure enough, it *was* stuck! The golliwog couldn't open it at all.

"I want a pin or something," he said. "Hie, Baby-doll, give me that brooch you wear—the one with 'BABY' on. That will open the door nicely."

"Oh, I can't lend you my brooch," said the baby-doll at once. She was very proud indeed of her lovely brooch. "You might break it, Golly."

"Baby-doll, how selfish you are!" cried the golliwog. "The poor cuckoo is locked in her room and can't ever get out unless you lend me your brooch to open the door."

"Oh, very well," said the baby-doll, who was really very fond of the cuckoo. She unfastened her beautiful brooch and threw it up to the golliwog. He caught it and began to dig into the door-catch with the pin of the brooch.

And at last he got the catch free so that the door would open once more. It was just time for the cuckoo to cry eight o'clock, so she rushed out and called "Cuckoo" very loudly eight times. Every one was delighted.

But alas for the baby-doll—the pin of the brooch was broken. The golliwog was very sorry.

"I couldn't help it," he said. "Don't make a fuss, Baby-doll. It was so kind of you to lend it."

The baby-doll didn't make a fuss, but she went into a corner and cried by herself, because she had been very proud of the brooch. The cuckoo saw her crying there alone when she next popped out to cuckoo the half-hour, and she was very sorry.

"If only I could do something to show the baby-doll that I am grateful to her for lending her brooch to open my door!" she thought. "If only I could!"

Well, if anyone wants to repay a good turn they usually find a chance if they watch hard enough—and one day the cuckoo saw her chance.

She came out to cuckoo twelve o'clock one morning—and she saw a wasp flying round the frightened baby-doll! "Help! Help!" squealed the doll. "It's going to sting me!"

All the toys were scared of wasps, and not even the golliwog dared to flap it away. It settled on the doll's pink cheek and she screamed.

"Now's my chance!" thought the cuckoo. And without thinking at all what she was doing, she flew straight out of the clock, down to the baby-doll!

With her sharp wooden beak she pecked hard at the wasp. It gave an angry buzz and flew at the cuckoo. The cuckoo pecked at it again, and the wasp flew straight out of the window,

buzzing, “I didn’t know there was a bird in the nursery! I didn’t know there was a bird in the nursery!”

“Oh, Cuckoo, you are wonderful!” cried the baby-doll. “Thank you so much. I really think I would have died of fright if you hadn’t saved me from that wasp! How clever of you to fly right out of the clock! I didn’t know you could.”

“I didn’t know I could, either,” said the cuckoo, most surprised. “I say, Toys, isn’t this wonderful! I’m out of the clock! I can come and play with you at night!”

So she can—and so she does. And sometimes the cuckoo-clock doesn’t cuckoo at all in the night—not because it has stopped—oh no! But because the little wooden cuckoo is having a fine time playing with the toys. You should see her playing hide-and-seek—she cuckoos beautifully when she is hiding! Wouldn’t I love to see her then!

Secret Writing

Perhaps one day you will want to send a secret message to somebody, a message that cannot be read by anyone else because it is invisible.

But how can you write invisibly? And what is the use of it if your message cannot be seen? Well, we must use some kind of ink that is invisible until it is heated—and then, as soon as it is warmed up, our message will shine out clearly.

The best pen to write with if you want to send an invisible message, is a quill pen. You can still buy these at various stores.

There are many things you can use for invisible ink, but perhaps the easiest for you to get will be either onion juice or lemon juice. Either of these is good for invisible writing.

Now, you have your quill, your secret “ink” and a piece of paper. Begin to write your message. When it is finished, there is nothing to be seen!

But now warm it up—run a warm iron over it, or hold it in front of a hot fire.

At once your message springs up clearly to be seen! It really seems like magic when you first see it appearing.

The Loose Shoe Button

"Alice! Is your shoe-button coming off?" Mother said, looking down at Alice's right shoe.

Alice looked too, though she knew quite well that the button *was* loose. "Oh yes, it's just about to come off," said Alice, who guessed what Mother was going to say next.

"Now, Alice, do remember to sew it on before you go to school to-morrow morning," said Mother. "You are so bad at remembering little things like that."

"Oh, Mother, won't you sew it on for me?" begged Alice.

"Really, Alice! Don't you remember what you promised me when I gave you your beautiful new work-basket?" said Mother. "You promised me faithfully that you would keep your clothes mended—darn your stockings, sew on your buttons, and keep yourself really tidy! You can easily sew on that button."

"All right," said Alice sulkily. "But, Mother, I've a dreadful lot of work to do to-night, because I am going in for the Scholarship Exam. to-morrow, you know—and I've got to look up all those history dates and French words."

"It will take you at the very most two minutes to sew on that button," said Mother, getting cross. "Why do you put things off so, Alice? You are supposed to be a clever girl at school—and yet I have to grumble at you nearly every day for leaving some silly little thing undone. Now do be a good girl and put that button on AT ONCE."

"Very well, Mother," said Alice, and she went to fetch her work-basket. But on the way she met the black kitten, who was really the most playful thing in the world. So of course Alice stopped to play with it, and when she had finished, she had forgotten all about her work-basket!

She sat down to do her work. She was a clever girl, and had such a good memory that she only had to look at a thing once to know it. She was very, very lucky. No lesson was any trouble to her, and Alice felt quite certain that she would be top in the Scholarship Exam. and beat all the other girls by about a hundred marks!

She swung her foot under the table as she learnt her history dates: "1066, 1087," she said to herself. "How easy all this is! I can't imagine why that silly little Mary Yates always gets her dates wrong."

As she swung her foot she felt that her shoe was loose. She remembered the button.

"Bother!" she said. "I forgot to sew on that button! Well, I'd better go and do it now. Oh no, I won't—it's too much bother. I'll do it in the morning."

So Alice didn't sew on the button, and she went to bed with the button hanging by a thread on her shoe under the chair. She fell asleep at once and dreamt that she worked out all her exam. papers most perfectly, and that she had top marks and a most wonderful prize. The prize was an enormous doll, and Alice was just holding out her arms to take it when she heard a voice speaking to her.

"Alice! It's time to get up! Hurry, because it is your exam. morning and you mustn't miss the bus to school."

Alice stretched herself and yawned. It was warm and cosy in bed. She didn't want to get up a bit. So she lay there and snoozed until Mother came along and pulled all the clothes off her. Then she *had* to get up.

When she put on her shoes, she remembered the loose button again. It really was almost off now! Bother!

"I meant to get up a bit early and sew it on," thought Alice crossly. "Now I shan't have time unless I gobble my breakfast—and that will make Mother cross."

She did eat her breakfast quite quickly, though, and when she looked at the clock she thought she would just have time to sew on the button. But then Mother said that she really must go upstairs and put clean hair-ribbons on because hers were so crumpled and dirty.

"Oh dear! Now I shan't have time to sew on that silly button!" thought Alice as she ran upstairs. "No—it's no good. I shall miss the bus if I wait to do it."

She set off to catch the bus at the corner of the road, swinging her school-bag as she went. Then she suddenly saw the bus coming and she began to run. It would never, never do to miss it on exam. morning!

As she ran, the button on her shoe came right off! It rolled into the gutter and was lost. Of course the shoe wouldn't stay on Alice's foot without the button to hold the strap—so the shoe came off too! Alice was running fast and she didn't feel that her shoe had come off until she had left it a little way behind.

"Oh dear!" cried Alice, stopping. "The bus will go without me—but I *must* get my shoe! I can't go to school with only one shoe. Oh, bus, stop, stop! Wait for me!"

She rushed back to get her shoe and she put it on again. Then she began to run once more —but it is quite impossible to run fast with a buttonless shoe, and Alice had to half run, half shuffle, in case she lost her shoe again.

And the bus didn't wait for her! It was already one minute late and it couldn't stop for Alice. So off it went up the road, round the corner, and out of sight.

Alice sat down on the bus-seat and cried. She cried bitterly, because she knew there was no bus now for two hours and she couldn't get to school in time to sit for her exam.

"If only I could sit for the exam., I'd be top, I know," she sobbed. "And I could go to the big school in the next town, and because I had won the Scholarship Mother and Daddy wouldn't have to pay any school fees for me, and I could have nicer dresses and perhaps a bicycle. Now I shan't be able to sit for the exam. at all!"

Alice was so upset that at first she couldn't even get up to walk home. But at last she did, and Mother *was* astonished to see a tear-stained face looking round the door.

"Alice! Whatever has happened?" she cried.

Alice sobbed everything out. "I didn't sew on that button—and my shoe came off and I lost the bus—and there isn't another one, and I shall be too late for the exam., and I shan't win the Scholarship."

Mother was wise. She didn't scold Alice. She saw that the little girl had been too well punished by her buttonless shoe to need any more scolding. She just looked sad and solemn and took Alice on to her knee.

"Sometimes, Alice, to be forgetful in a little thing will spoil a much, much bigger thing," she said. "I am very sorry for you. I will ring up the taxi-man and see if he can bring his taxi-cab here to take you to school. Then maybe you will be in time for the exam."

"Oh, Mother! I don't deserve it, but I do, do wish you would," said Alice, cheering up. So Mother rang up to see if the taxi-cab could come. But it was already out, taking someone to

the station. The garage man said that as soon as the cab came back again it should fetch Alice.

The little girl had to wait half an hour before the taxi came. She had time to think of all the things she had put off doing, all the things she had forgotten—just little tiny things that didn't seem really to matter very much. And they did matter after all.

Alice was an hour and a half late for school. The children were in the middle of their second exam. Alice took her papers and sat down. She worked very, very hard indeed.

But alas for poor Alice! She had missed the history exam, altogether, so she had no marks for that at all—and little Mary Yates came out top of everyone, and won the Scholarship for herself. Alice was dreadfully disappointed, and she cried in bed that night till she soaked her pillow and Mother had to get a clean pillow-case.

"Now listen, Alice," said Mother, putting the clean pillow-case on the pillow. "You have still another year at this school, and one more chance of winning a Scholarship. You have good brains and can easily win it. See that the little things don't spoil the big things again. It is no use having brains if you don't use them to sew on a loose button as well as to learn all the history dates there are!"

"Mother, I promise I'll never forget things again," said Alice. And she meant it. Next year she will probably win that Scholarship—but who would have thought that a loose shoe-button would have caused such a terrible disappointment!

The Train that Broke in Half

Benny was a funny little boy. He thought he couldn't do anything well! He was always afraid of things, so he was shy and timid, and hadn't any friends.

"Benny, why don't *you* go in for the races?" his mother said each summer when the school sports came. But Benny shook his head.

"No, I'm no good at running," he said. "I'd only be last, and look silly, Mother."

"Benny, why don't you ask to belong to the Scout Cubs?" said his father when the spring came and the Scouts and Cubs put on their uniforms and went to have some fun in the fields.

"I'd be no good," said Benny. "I'd never learn enough. You have to know a lot."

"Well, you could learn, as the others do," said his father. But no—Benny wouldn't try. He was afraid of looking silly and of being laughed at.

It was the same with everything. At parties Benny wouldn't play Musical Chairs because he felt sure he would be the first one out. At Christmas-time he wouldn't pull a cracker because he said he didn't like the bang.

"But, Benny, you've never pulled a cracker in your life, so how do you know you won't like the bang?" asked his mother. "You may love it, as the other children do. Don't be such a little coward."

Well, that was quite the wrong thing to say to shy Benny. He at once thought he *was* a little coward, so he became more ashamed and shy than ever. He thought that everyone must think him a coward, so he wouldn't play games in case he fell down and cried, and he wouldn't go to any parties at all.

It was dreadful. His mother didn't know what to do with such a funny boy. The other children got tired of asking him to play with them and left him quite alone. So Benny played by himself all day long, and hardly opened his mouth at school. And yet, secretly, Benny longed to have friends and to shout and run and play. Poor Benny!

Now, not far from Benny's house ran a railway line, deep down in a cutting. Benny loved to watch the trains that ran by. He liked to hear their shrill whistling, and to see the smoke come curling up. He knew every one of the trains, and would have liked to wave to the engine-driver, but he was much too shy.

One day he was sitting on the fence, watching the trains, when the long train from the nearest big city came by. It was a corridor train, so that the carriages were closely joined together for people to walk all up and down the train if they wanted to. Benny liked that sort of train, because he could see the people sitting at the dining-tables and having their dinner, and he could see people standing in the corridors and looking out of the window.

With a loud whistle the train came along, deep down in the cutting. Benny looked at his watch. The train was late, and it was hurrying. Not more than ten minutes behind it would come the next train.

"You'd better hurry!" said Benny to the train. He wouldn't talk to other children, but he often talked to animals and trains and cars. The train whistled and went on.

And then a strange thing happened. The three last carriages of the train suddenly broke away and got left behind!

Benny stared as if he couldn't believe his eyes! The rest of the train went rushing on, and was soon out of sight. Just those three carriages were left behind. They ran a little way, and then stopped on the line.

"It's broken in half," said Benny to himself. "The train's broken in half! Where's the guard? Will he pop his head out of the guard's van and see what's happened?"

But no guard popped his head out. He couldn't because he was in the other part of the train. He had gone to speak to the ticket-collector who happened to be on the train—so he didn't know anything about his van being left behind.

Nobody was in the last three carriages at all. They were quite empty. There they stood on the line, looking rather silly.

Benny soon saw that there was nobody in them. He stared and stared—and into his head came a dreadful thought.

What about the next train that would come rushing along in a few minutes' time? It wouldn't know those carriages were left on the line. Nobody knew but Benny. The signal-man didn't know. The engine-driver wouldn't know—and he would go crashing into them!

"Then there would be an accident," said Benny. "Oh dear! Whatever shall I do?"

For once Benny forgot that he thought himself a poor little coward, no good at anything. He only thought of the people in the train that was soon coming into that deep railway cutting, and would crash into the carriages there. Benny sprang down from the fence. "If I run for all I'm worth I could perhaps get to the signal-box in time, and tell the man to put the signal up against the next train!" thought the little boy. "That would stop it!"

He began to run. Benny hadn't thought he was any good at running at all—but how he ran now! His legs twinkled in and out, and his breath came in big pants. His chest felt as if it would burst, but Benny didn't care. No—he must, he must, he *must* get to that signal-box in time!

It was quite a long way—but at last Benny saw it in the distance. His legs were so tired that they could hardly run, but he made them go on and on until he reached the signal-box. The signal-man was leaning out of his box, and he saw Benny.

Now in the ordinary way Benny wouldn't have dared to speak to a signal-man—but now he didn't care what he did. He could hear the train coming!

He turned his head, and there it was, rushing along the line—the train that would crash into the three carriages! Benny tried to shout, but his voice was so full of puffs and pants that he could hardly get his words out.

"Signal-man, put the signal up!" he panted. "Put it up! There's some carriages left on the line—broken off the last train!"

The signal-man could hardly understand the breathless boy, but he at once pulled a heavy lever—and to Benny's great delight the signal that had been down for the train to pass by, went up with a click—just as the train came rumbling up at a great speed.

The driver saw the signal going up and he put on his brakes very suddenly. With a long screech the train slowed down and then stopped. Passengers popped their heads out of the windows to see what was the matter.

Benny got back his breath. He yelled to the signal-man: "The last train broke in half! It left three carriages behind up the line. I only just got here in time to warn you."

"Good for you, young man!" said the signal-man. He ran down from his box and went to the engine-driver. Then the train steamed slowly on, taking the signal-man too, and soon everyone saw the three left-behind carriages.

"That was a narrow escape," said the engine-driver, looking rather pale. "I'd have been right into those carriages if you hadn't put the signal against me."

"It's that boy who saved the train," said the signal-man, looking round for Benny. But Benny was gone! You won't believe it, but all his shyness and fear came back again when he saw so many passengers looking at him. He ran home quickly and went into his bedroom. He was trembling now. He couldn't think how he could have done such a thing!

That tea-time his mother was full of the whole affair. "Fancy, Benny," she said, "a boy saved the London train! He saw some carriages left behind on the line, and he tore to the signal-man to tell him—and the next train was saved. Oh, Benny—if only you could do a thing like that! How proud Daddy and I would be of you!"

Benny looked at his mother. He knew how often he had disappointed her because he had been so silly and shy and afraid. Now he had a big surprise for her!

"Would you really be proud of me?" he said. "I'd like that, Mother!"

"Oh, Benny, I'd be so proud I'd run out and tell everyone about you!" said his mother. "But you're such a funny little quiet boy—you'd never do anything wonderful, you'd be too scared!"

Just then a knock came at the door—and who should be there but the signal-man! He knew Benny and knew where he lived—and he had come to say a few words to him. And behind him was a crowd of children—the boys and girls of Benny's school, who had already heard about Benny from the signal-man!

"Where's Benny?" said the signal-man. "Ah, there you are! You're a hero, Benny! You saved the train! My goodness, I saw you running to my box, and I've never seen anyone run so fast in my life! Never! You'd win any race if you ran like that. I want to shake hands with you."

And he solemnly shook hands with Benny, whilst Benny's mother and father looked on in the greatest surprise.

"But was it our *Benny* who saved the train?" cried the boy's father. "Good gracious! To think Benny could do that! Benny, Benny, I'm proud of you! I always thought you were a timid little fellow—but my word, you're a hero!"

His mother hugged him. His father clapped him on the back. The signal-man shook his hand up and down—and in crowded all the boys and girls, yelling, "Benny, Benny! Tell us all about it. Come out, Benny, we want to see you."

And then, in the twinkling of an eye, Benny became a hero. He didn't feel a cowardly little fellow any more. He wasn't afraid of anything. He wanted to shout and run and climb. He was changed from top to toe!

"I didn't know I could do it—but I did!" he kept telling himself. "I was wrong about myself. I was silly and shy just because I thought myself to be silly and shy—but I'm not really. I'm brave and bold—I can run very fast. I can do fine things! Oh, I'm glad, I'm glad! Everything will be different now!"

And so it is—for Benny himself is different, you see. The passengers of the train collected money to give to the boy who saved them, and they bought Benny a fine toy motor-car that he drives down the streets every day. And to hear him come hooting along at a fine pace, you'd never think he was once a poor, shy little fellow who couldn't say boo to a goose!

You never know what you can do till you try!

A Page of Puzzles

1

Upon one leg I always stand
By night and day,
My head I hold up stout and strong,
And strange to say
You'll find my heart inside my head,
You think that's queer?
Well, rack your brains to find my name
And write it here!

2

I've something that belongs to me,
Possessed by me alone,
Although I rarely use it, still
It is my very own.
And yet my friends the whole day long
Are using it . . . and I
Don't mind this in the very least!
Now can you tell me why?

3

If you cut off my head you will feel as warm
As a Cockney in summery weather.
If you cut off my tail you will see the start
Of a company, gathered together.
Now cut off my head and my tail as well,
And though I still have a middle
You'll find there is nothing there after all—
Now please will you guess this riddle!

Answers on page 95.

The Boy Whose Toys Came Alive!

There was once a boy called Sammy, who longed and longed for his toys to come alive.

"I'm sure you come alive at night and have a lovely time!" Sammy said to them. "Well, why can't you come alive and really play with me in the daytime? Oh, I do wish you would!"

But they didn't—until something peculiar happened. It was like this. Sammy was walking along the lane to his home when a tiny rabbit flung itself out of the hedge and crouched down at Sammy's feet. After the rabbit came a fierce little weasel.

Sammy was frightened—but he picked up the little rabbit and held it safely in his arms. "You go away!" he said to the weasel. Just as he spoke a small brownie came running from the hedge, smacked the weasel sharply on the back, and ran up to Sammy.

"Oh, you've saved my pet rabbit for me!" he cried. "Thank you a thousand times, Sammy! Snowball escaped this morning from her hutch, and I knew the weasel would be after her. Come here, you silly little Snowball!"

Snowball leapt from Sammy's arms into the brownie's. The little man petted and scolded her. Then he spoke to Sammy.

"I do feel so grateful to you for saving my pet rabbit. Is there anything I can do for you in return?"

Well, you can just guess what Sammy thought of at once! His toys!

"Yes, there is something you can do for me," he said. "Make all my toys come alive! Can you do that?"

"Yes, I can," said the brownie. "But just tell me this first—are you a good boy or a naughty one?"

"Does that matter?" asked Sammy, going red. He was a naughty boy, not very kind to others, often disobedient, and so noisy that his mother was always having headaches.

"Well, it does matter a bit," said the brownie. "You see, your toys will behave like *you* when they come alive. It wouldn't do to have a nursery full of bad toys, you know. You'd get very tired of them. Also, you must promise not to tell anyone they are alive."

"Of course I promise!" said Sammy. Then he told a story. "I'm a good boy!" he said. "So do make my toys come alive!"

"Very well," said the brownie. He felt in his pocket and brought out a little tin. "Rub this yellow ointment on to your toys," he said. "It will make them all come alive."

Sammy was so excited that he forgot to say thank you. He tore off home with the tin and rushed up to the nursery. Which toy should he make come alive first?

"I'll make my golliwog come alive!" he said. So he rubbed a little of the ointment on to the golly's face. It acted like magic! The golliwog yawned, got up and ran round the nursery at once! Sammy could hardly believe his eyes. This was simply fine!

"Come here, Golly," he said. "I want to have a look at you. Come and speak to me."

"Don't want to," said the golliwog. "I want to play with the bricks."

"Come here at once when I tell you!" said Sammy angrily. Do you know, that golliwog turned and made a very rude face at Sammy!

Sammy was so angry that he ran after his golly and slapped him hard. And that naughty little golly turned round and pinched Sammy in the leg! Then he ran off and got behind the toy-cupboard so that Sammy couldn't reach him.

"All right, you just wait!" said Sammy. He went to where he had left his tin of ointment and picked it up. He rubbed some on to his soldiers, his teddy-bear, his sailor-doll, his train, his horse-and-cart, his red ball, and his bricks!

Well, you should just have seen the nursery after that! The soldiers at once began to march in splendid rows, and the soldier band began to beat the drum and blow the trumpets! It sounded beautiful.

The teddy-bear chased the sailor-doll, and the train shot round the nursery so fast that it bumped into the box of bricks. But the bricks were alive and sprang out of their box at once. They hopped about, and threw themselves here and there joyfully. One brick threw itself at the teddy-bear and hit him on the nose. The bear was angry and ran after all the bricks, which hopped about the floor like mad things, making a tremendous noise!

"Stop that noise!" said Sammy, who was afraid his mother would come in. But do you suppose those bricks stopped? Not a bit of it! They danced about all the more, and two of them threw themselves at Sammy and hit him on the head!

Then the train got excited and ran over Sammy's foot. Its key caught his ankle and hurt him. Sammy held his foot and hopped about in pain.

"He thinks he's one of the bricks hopping about!" cried the sailor-doll rudely. "Just look at him!"

Sammy bent down and slapped the sailor-doll—and the doll gave a howl of rage, ran to the work-basket on the window-seat, took out a needle and pricked Sammy in the leg with it.

"Ow! Ow-ow!" yelled Sammy, hopping round again, first on one foot and then on the other. How his toys laughed!

Then the horse-and-cart began to gallop round the nursery—and you should have seen the horse kick up its little wooden legs! And how it neighed too! Sammy would have loved to listen if only it hadn't made *quite* such a noise!

"You do make a noise," he grumbled. "Oh, goodness me—now the ball's begun bouncing itself! I say, don't bounce so high, Ball! Do you hear me? Don't bounce so high!"

The ball squeaked for joy and went on bouncing just as high as it wanted to. It bounced so high that it struck a vase of flowers—and over went the flowers, and down went the vase on to the floor, crash!

Well, all this noise was really too much for Sammy's mother. She was resting downstairs and she called up to Sammy. "Sammy! Come here! What was that you broke just now?"

Sammy went down to his mother, looking cross and worried. "I didn't break anything," he said. "The ball bounced up and knocked down the vase of flowers."

"Oh, Sammy, that was very naughty of you," said Mother.

"Mother! *I* didn't do it!" cried Sammy. "It was the ball, I tell you."

"Don't talk like that," said his mother. "And don't be silly. Balls don't bounce themselves."

But that was just what Sammy's ball *was* doing, wasn't it! Sammy went back upstairs, very cross and upset.

"Here he comes! Here he comes!" he heard his toys say as he came in at the door. They were all waiting for him.

The ball bounced up into his face and hit his nose. The bricks, which had built themselves up into a high tower, made themselves fall all over him. The golliwog pinched his left leg and the teddy-bear pinched his right one. The sailor-doll pulled his laces undone. The train tried to run up his leg. The horse galloped his cart over Sammy's left foot and back again in a most annoying way, and all the soldiers ran at him and tried to poke through his socks with their guns and swords.

"What are you all doing, you bad toys!" cried Sammy.

The toys danced round in glee, shouting and squealing.

"You were never kind to us!" yelled the bear. "We're enjoying ourselves now you've made us come alive!"

And then the golliwog did a silly thing. He saw the tin of yellow ointment where Sammy had left it on the chair—and he ran to get it.

"I'm going to make the chairs and tables come alive!" he yelled. "Watch me, Toys!"

And then, to Sammy's horror, that naughty golliwog ran to the nursery table and rubbed some yellow ointment on to its legs. Then he rubbed some on to the chairs, and then smeared some on the cushions, the fender, the coal-scuttle, the stool, and everything else he could think of!

"Stop, stop!" shouted Sammy. But it was too late—the whole of the nursery was alive!

Goodness, you never heard such a noise as that furniture made! The table at once began to dance round and round, first on one leg and then on the other. The chairs played "Catch" with one another, and banged all round the room trying to grab each other with their legs.

The coal-scuttle tried to get out of their way and bumped into the stool, which was very angry and kicked the coal-scuttle so hard that it made a dent in it.

The fender began to laugh and stood itself up on end to see how tall it was. All the cushions rolled off the chairs and the sofa, and tried to flop on top of the toys.

Sammy stood by the wall, looking quite frightened. It was like a bad dream. The arm-chair raced by and bumped into him. Sammy fell down at once, and all the other chairs raced over him. The fender laughed so much that it fell down with a crash.

"This is awful," said Sammy, trying to get up out of the way of the stool, which seemed to think it would like to stand on Sammy's middle. The fender stood itself up again to see better. A large blue cushion flung itself on top of the surprised teddy-bear, and he sat down hard, with a growl. The fender laughed so much that it fell down again.

"*Silly* fender! Stupid fender!" said Sammy, feeling very angry with it. "Stop laughing!"

But the fender couldn't. Then the fire-irons began to laugh too—the poker, the shovel, and the tongs—and they made such a noise skipping about and squealing that Sammy felt quite certain his mother would be angry enough with him to send him to bed for the rest of the day.

"Listen, Toys! Listen, Everything," said Sammy, trying to make them stop. "I shall get into such trouble if you behave like this! I never knew such a noisy, disobedient nursery! Wherever in the world do you get these bad manners from?"

"You!" screamed Everything. "We've learnt it all from watching *you*! That's why we're noisy! That's why we're rude and disobedient! That's why we're unkind! You taught us!"

The clock on the mantelpiece suddenly struck twenty-one without stopping and walked up and down like a policeman. The fender began to laugh again, and down it fell with a crash.

This time it fell on the golliwog, who was so much hurt that he yelled the place down.

"Stop screaming like an express train!" cried Sammy angrily. "I know you'll bring my mother up here! Oh, how I wish I'd never made you come alive, you tiresome things!"

"Well, we *are* alive, so you'll have to put up with it!" said the teddy-bear rudely.

"If you talk to me like that I'll smack you!" shouted Sammy. He ran to smack the bear, and the fender stood itself up again to see the fun. But before Sammy could smack the teddy, the golliwog neatly tripped him up and down he went with a bang. The fender almost choked with laughing and fell down with a worse crash than usual.

Sammy kicked the fender. He kicked the stool. He kicked the engine and the red ball. He kicked everything he could reach, for he was in a great temper.

And then the toys and everything else decided that they would do a little kicking too. After all, if you are a table with four legs, you can do a lot of kicking! So they all rushed after Sammy, and the table got four fine kicks in all at once. Sammy gave a yell and rushed out of the room.

"After him, after him!" shouted the table, and tried to get through the door. But it got mixed up with the fender, who was hopping along to see the fun, and it was a good half-minute before they got outside the door. Then the fender laughed so much that it fell down again, and the table jumped over it and left it there on the landing.

Now Sammy had rushed to his room and locked the door, but the nursery-things didn't know this. They quite thought he had run downstairs. So down they all went, helter-skelter, after him. Well, really, you never heard such a noise!

The table clattered down on all four legs, and the chairs jumped two stairs at a time. The coal-scuttle rolled itself down and made a great noise. The stool hopped down, and the cushions rolled over and over. The fender stopped laughing, and slid itself down, bump-bump-bump, from stair to stair. It was enjoying itself thoroughly.

The golliwog and the rest of the toys rushed down after the furniture. They all had to pass the open door of the room where Sammy's mother was trying to rest.

She saw the table gallop past, and she was most astonished. She thought she must be dreaming.

Then the chairs hopped by, and Sammy's mother sat up and stared. Then the coal-scuttle rolled by, its handle clattering gaily, and the stool trotted along behind.

"I must be mad!" thought Sammy's mother. "Am I really seeing tables and chairs running along? Why are they running along? Where are they going? Oh dear, it really makes me feel ill!"

The fender came along and stared in at the room. When it saw Sammy's mother looking so frightened it began to laugh, and down it fell with such a crash that Sammy's mother nearly leapt off the sofa. The fender picked itself up and hopped on after the others. Then the toys raced along too, and the engine clattered by with its carriages. The ball bounced along and the bricks hopped gaily. It was really a most alarming sight.

Sammy was trembling in his bedroom. He heard everything racing by, and he wondered what his mother would say if they all went into her room—and then he heard them out in the garden! He went to his window and looked out.

"Where's he gone?" cried the golliwog.

"He must be down the lane!" growled the teddy-bear.

"After him!" clattered the coal-scuttle—and out of the garden-gate they all went.

Well, they made such a noise that the brownie who lived in the lane peeped out to see what it was all about. And when he saw the live toys and furniture, he guessed in a twinkling what had happened.

"They must belong to Sammy—and he used his yellow ointment on them!" he cried. "Oh my, he must have been a bad boy to have such noisy, naughty toys! I shall have to do something about this!"

He ran into the lane and spoke to the toys and the furniture.

"What's all this? What's all this? Please go by me, one by one, slowly and without noise."

Everything was afraid when they heard the brownie's stern, rather magical voice. So one by one they went quietly by him—and quick as thought he dabbed each toy and each piece of furniture with a blue ointment.

When every one of them had gone by, the brownie called to them sternly. "In two minutes you will no longer be alive. You had better go quietly back to the nursery unless you want to be left out in the lane, unable to move a step!"

What a shock all the toys and the furniture got! They were so afraid of being left out of doors that they all turned round and rushed up the lane, into the gate, and into the house. And Sammy's mother saw them all again, rushing the *other* way this time!

"I've got that dream again!" she said. "Oh dear, I must be ill or something. And here's that dreadful fender staring at me again, and laughing!"

Sure enough the fender began to laugh again, and it laughed so much that when it fell down with a crash at the bottom of the stairs, it couldn't get up again. And the two minutes were up before it could climb the stairs, so there it stayed, quite still.

But all the other things got safely into the nursery and just had time to arrange themselves in their places before the magic worked. They gave a sigh, and stayed as still as could be. There wasn't a growl from the teddy nor was there a creak from a chair!

When everything was quite quiet, Sammy unlocked his door and peeped out. He tiptoed to the nursery. He saw that everything was quite still. He wondered if he could possibly have dreamt it all—but no, there was the little tin of yellow ointment still on the chair.

"Horrid stuff!" cried Sammy. He picked up the tin, put on the lid, and then threw the tin as far as ever he could out of the window!

"If my toys behave like me, then I must be a very bad boy!" thought Sammy to himself. "I'll try and be a bit better in future. Oh, goodness—here's Mother! I'm sure she will be cross with me."

Sammy was right—she was! She had made up her mind that Sammy must have thrown all the furniture and toys downstairs and then thrown them up again!

"What a bad, naughty boy you are, Sammy!" she said. "What do you mean by throwing everything downstairs? And do you know you've left the fender at the bottom of the stairs and I nearly fell over it? You will just go straight to bed and stay there."

"Yes, Mother," said poor Sammy, trying to be good and obedient for once. He went to his room, but on the way he peeped down the stairs and saw the fender at the bottom.

"You can stay there!" said Sammy. "Laughing like that! I suppose you thought it was all very funny!"

The fender tried to laugh but it couldn't. Sammy went to bed, very sad and sorry.

And so far nobody has found that tin of ointment yet. But if you do (it's a very bright yellow), just be careful how you use it. You don't want to end up in bed like Sammy!

The Undressed Golliwog

Once Janey had a very surprising adventure. It all happened one summery night when Janey couldn't go to sleep.

"It's really too hot to have even my sheet on!" said Janey, and she threw her sheet on to the floor. Then she lay on her bed with just her nightie on, and nothing else. But still she was hot and couldn't sleep.

So she lay and listened to the sounds of the night.

"Ooooo-ooo-ooo-ooo!" called a beautiful voice from the trees. "Ooooo-ooo-ooo-ooo!"

"That's the old brown owl," thought Janey. "I like his solemn voice."

"Tvit, tvit!" said another voice sharply.

"And that's the little owl who lives in the hollow willow tree," said Janey.

"Eeee-eee!" cried another voice. "And that's a little frightened mouse," said the little girl, sitting up and listening. "Perhaps the big brown owl has caught him."

"Wisha-wisha-wisha!" whispered another voice.

"That's the wind in the trees," thought Janey, lying down again. "It sounds like the seaside waves."

And then she heard another sound that she didn't know at all! It sounded like a rippling laugh, but very high and small. There! It came again. Whatever could it be?

"That's one thing animals and birds *don't* do!" said Janey. "They don't laugh. So *who* can be laughing at this time of night? And it doesn't sound as if it is coming from outside, either. It sounds as if it's in the nursery. There it is again! I'm going to see what it is!"

She slipped quietly out of bed and went to the day-nursery door. It creaked a little as she opened it, and Janey heard a small scampering sound—and then there was silence. She peeped in at the door.

The moonlight shone in and made everything as bright as day. Her toys sat round on the window-seats just as she had left them. Her rocking-horse was quite still.

But what was that in the middle of the floor? Janey went to see.

"Oh, it's my golliwog!" she said, surprised. "But I left you on the seat, Golly! How did you get off? And, dear me, you are undressed! You naughty boy!"

The golly stared up at her out of his round eyes. He looked frightened. He had no clothes on at all, for his red coat, white waistcoat, blue trousers, and blue tie had all gone. Janey looked round for them but she couldn't see them anywhere.

"Golly, you are very naughty indeed!" she said. "You have taken off your clothes, and I believe you must have thrown them out of the window, for they are nowhere to be seen! I shall smack you! *I* heard you giggling as you took off your clothes! You look very queer in your black body, and you do deserve a good slapping!"

But before she could smack her golly, a tiny voice called out from inside the big brick-box:

"Don't! It's not his fault! It's mine!"

"Well, who are you?" asked Janey in astonishment, trying to see who was inside the brick-box. She soon saw—for a small figure climbed out and jumped to the floor. It was somebody no bigger than the golliwog, dressed up in the golly's clothes!

"I'm Tickles the pixie," said the little creature. "I'm going to a fancy-dress dance to-night, and I asked the golly if he would lend me his clothes. It's such a hot night that I didn't think he'd catch cold. So he took them off and I put them on. And somehow we couldn't help giggling because he looked so funny undressed."

"Oh," said Janey, most surprised. "Well, I don't mind a bit. Of course I won't smack Golly. It was nice of him to lend his clothes. But oughtn't you to have a black face and black hair if you're going to the dance as a golliwog?"

"Yes," said the elf, smiling all over her little pink face and nodding her golden head. "I was going to stick my head into a red poppy, and get it black from the stamens there. Then I would look exactly like a golliwog!"

"That would be a silly thing to do!" said Janey. "The black powder would make you sneeze all the evening, and people would think you had a cold and you'd be sent home. I know a better thing than that—I'll paint your face with the black paint in my paint-box, and I'll cut up some of my black wool to pin on your own hair, then you will look like a real golliwog!"

The elf was pleased. She sat as still as could be whilst Janey painted her face black with her paint-brush. It was fun doing that! The elf giggled again, and Janey liked her high rippling laugh.

"There!" said Janey. "You look fine. Now I'd better paint your hands too, for golliwogs' hands are always black. Then I'll cut up my black wool for hair."

Janey cut up the wool and pinned it with small hair-pins to the elf's golden hair. She looked fine!

"Oh, thank you!" she said. "I'm sure I shall win the prize for the best fancy dress!" She ran to the window, climbed out on to the sill, slid down the tree outside, and was gone!

"Well, Golly dear, I hope you won't be cold without your clothes, but I don't think you will," said Janey. "Good-night! Sleep well!"

"Good-night," answered her golliwog in a dear little husky black-sounding voice. It was the first time that Janey had heard him speak. She was very pleased. She ran to her bed and jumped in.

"That was a real adventure," she said happily, "and I'm going to lie here and remember it." But Janey fell asleep almost at once and didn't remember it again until the morning.

She ran into the nursery as soon as she was dressed—and there was her golliwog in his clothes again, dressed just as usual!

"Oh!" said Janey, disappointed. "I do hope it wasn't all a dream. Why, Golly, I believe I saw you wink at me! What's that pinned to your coat?"

It was a tiny note that said: "I got the first prize, and I want you to have it, Janey! Love from Tickles the Pixie!"

Pinned to the note was a tiny little brooch, shaped like a forget-me-not, and coloured blue. Janey took it up and looked at it in delight.

She wears it every day, and it is so small that perhaps you might not see it. But if you do, ask Janey to tell you where she got it—and she'll tell you the same story as this!

Mr. Tan’s Old Puzzle

There was once a Chinaman called Tan. One day he invented a puzzle, which we still play with, four thousand years later. I would like you to make it and play with it yourself.

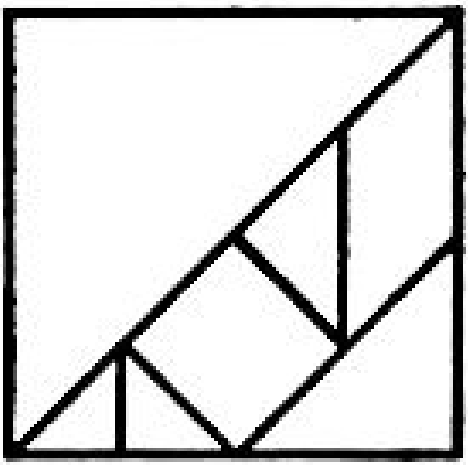
Take a square of stiff cardboard about six inches in size. Now look at the diagram.

With a ruler mark the lines shown here, very carefully.

Have you done that? Now take a really sharp knife and cut out the cardboard along the lines you have ruled. When you have finished, you will have seven pieces. Now get some black Indian ink and make both sides of the cardboard pieces as black as night.

Now you have your seven cardboard pieces, black on both sides. Look at the picture of the man presenting a gift. He is made up of the seven card-fitted board pieces fitted together—and not one of them is over-lapping.

Can you make the puzzle-man? Fit your pieces together and see if you can. You will be very clever if you can manage to do it without looking at the solution on page 95.



Pixie Mirrors

In Clara's garden, though Clara didn't know it, lived a whole family of curly-headed pixies. They were the prettiest things, as light as thistledown, and as merry as a blackbird in spring.

Everybody liked them. The field-mice who lived in the meadow at the bottom of the garden often asked them to tea, and the larks in the field took them to see their young ones as soon as they were out of the egg.

The meadow pixies asked them to dances, and even the cross old goblin who lived inside the hollow oak tree used to poke his head out and smile at them if he heard the flutter of their small wings going by.

Now whenever they were asked out to a party the curly-headed pixies used to dress themselves up in their best blue-and-silver frocks, and brush out their hair till it shone like a golden mist around their small heads.

And then they used to fly to Clara's bedroom window, creep in very quietly, and go to Clara's mirror. It stood on Clara's dressing-table, and was very pretty, for it had flowers all round it.

Each pixie took her turn at looking in to see if her dress was right and her hair was neat. They patted their skirts down, and dabbed at their curly hair, chattering excitedly all the time.

And Clara never knew! She didn't guess that the pixies used her mirror for their own, though once, on a rainy night, she was very puzzled to find a whole crowd of tiny muddy footsteps on her clean white dressing-table cover!

"Can it be the cat?" she thought. "No—cats don't have such small feet, nor such pointed toes either. It's very queer."

And then one day a dreadful thing happened. Clara went to put some flowers on her dressing-table, and her hand knocked against her mirror. It fell over, slid off the dressing-table and then fell to the ground with a crash! Bits of broken glass flew round Clara's feet.

"Oh, my goodness! Look at that!" cried Clara in dismay. "My lovely, lovely mirror is broken! Mother, Mother, look what I've done!"

Mother was sad. It had been such a beautiful mirror. "Never mind," she said. "Maybe we can get a new glass fitted into it and then it will be all right again. But you have broken one or two of the flowers off too, Clara. I wonder if those can be mended."

"That's seven years' bad luck for Miss Clara," said Jane, the maid, looking in at the bedroom door.

"Don't be silly, Jane," said Mother. "Bad luck has nothing whatever to do with breaking a mirror. It's bad luck to *break* a mirror, certainly—but really, I am ashamed of you to think you are such a baby as to believe that silly old tale of seven years' bad luck!"

Jane went away, blushing. Clara swept up the broken bits of mirror and put them into the dustbin. Mother took the broken mirror to see if it could be mended.

So Clara had no mirror on her dressing-table to tell her if she was neat and tidy.

"Well, it's a good thing no one else uses the mirror but me," thought Clara.

That was just where she was wrong! The curly-headed pixies had a great disappointment when they came along that evening to see if they were looking pretty for a dance that the cross old goblin was giving especially for them. There was no mirror there!

"It's gone!" said one.

"Let's look for it!" said another.

But that wasn't any good, because it just wasn't anywhere in the room at all. The pixies were so busy looking for it that they didn't hear Clara come into the room—and the little girl stood staring in surprise and joy at the twelve tiny pixies flying all round her bedroom!

"Am I dreaming?" she cried. "Or are you real?"

The pixies flew together in a bunch, looking round in fright. Then one of them spoke.

"We are real, of course," she said. "We were looking for your mirror, Clara. We always came to peep in it before we went to a party. But now it's gone."

"It's broken," said Clara sadly. "Did you badly want to see yourselves, Pixies? There is a long mirror in my mother's room. You can peep into that if you like."

"No, thank you," said the pixies at once. "We shouldn't really have let *you* see us, Clara—we would get into trouble if we let a grown-up see us. Oh dear—what are we to do? There is no pond in your garden to look into."

"Shall I tell you something?" said Clara suddenly. "Well, listen. This afternoon when I went down the garden, it had been raining. And as I passed by the lupin plants, I saw such a pretty sight. One of the lupin leaves had curved its pretty green leaflets upwards, and had caught a bright raindrop just in the middle! I am sure you could find it and use it for a mirror!"

"That *is* an idea!" cried the pixies in delight. "We'll go and find it straight away, Clara."

They flew out of the window. They went to where the big blue and pink lupins grew. They had pretty leaves, cut up into green fingers—and sure enough, in the centre of one was a bright raindrop, just big enough to make a little mirror for the curly-headed pixies! One by one they looked into it, and patted their hair and arranged their dresses. It was just right for them!

Then a pixie knocked against the lupin leaf and the raindrop rolled out and splashed on to the ground. The little lupin mirror was broken!

But it didn't matter. The pixies had finished with it, and went off gaily to their dance. They had a lovely time, and told every one about the funny little mirror they had found in the lupins.

Clara's mirror was mended and was put back on her dressing-table; but the pixies never used it again, though they often remembered Clara and dropped fresh flowers on to her pillow for her to find.

They asked the lupin leaves to hold the raindrops for them, whenever it rained—and that is just what they do. They make beautiful mirrors for the little folk, and are simply lovely to see. You won't forget to look for them, will you, after a rain-shower? You will find those pixie-mirrors gleaming brightly here and there, in the centre of the lupin leaves. Roll one out and see it break on the bed below!

Silly Little Goofy

There was once a small pixie called Goofy who really did do silly things! He was always making tea without putting tea into the teapot and putting salt on his stewed apples instead of sugar. You really couldn't help laughing at him!

Have you heard how he tried to mend Mr. Hoho's motor hooter? You haven't? Well, I really must tell you and give you a good laugh.

Mr. Hoho had a large green-and-yellow car, and it had a fine hooter that went "pip-pip-pip" very loudly whenever he pressed it. He pressed it quite a lot, because the High Street in Goofy's village was always crowded with pixies, fairies, and brownies doing their shopping.

But one day when Mr. Hoho pressed his fine hooter, it didn't make a sound. Not a pip came out of it, not a squeak. It was very sad. Mr. Hoho had to drive very slowly and carefully indeed, because he couldn't hoot people out of his way.

Goofy was almost run over, and he stopped and glared at Mr. Hoho. "I'm sorry, Goofy," said Hoho. "But my hooter has lost its pip. It just won't pip-pip any more. Listen!"

He pressed the hooter hard but no sound came. Goofy pressed it too. "I think I can mend it for you, Mr. Hoho," he said.

"I'd rather you didn't, thank you," said Mr. Hoho, very quickly, for he knew that Goofy often did very silly things. "Now hurry on your way, Goofy. I'm going into this shop to buy myself a new pair of socks."

Mr. Hoho hopped out of his car and went into the shop. Goofy stood and stared after him. He felt sure he could put Hoho's hooter right, and he did so want to try.

"If the pip-pip has gone I could easily put it back again," thought Goofy. "I could buy an orange and put the pips inside the hooter—then it would be full of pips again and Hoho would be so pleased!"

Goofy waited till Hoho was safely inside the sock-shop and then he ran across the road to the fruit-shop. He bought the largest orange he could see, and went back to the car. He got into it and peeled the orange. Goofy was not at all a tidy person and he scattered the peel all over the floor of Hoho's neat car.

He ate the orange, and then he gathered all the pips together into his left hand. He looked at the hooter. How was he to put the pips into it? He would have to make a little hole and pop them inside, one by one.

So Goofy got out his pocket-knife and made a small hole in the rubber hooter. Then, one by one, he dropped the sticky orange-pips inside. It was rather fun to put them in.

"I feel as if I am posting pips in a letter-box!" said Goofy. "There! That's the last pip. Goodness—I must have put about twelve into the hooter. It ought to say pip-pip very loudly indeed now!"

He pressed the hooter, expecting it to pip-pip as loudly as could be. But it didn't make a sound. Not the tiniest squeak came out of it at all!

Goofy was dreadfully disappointed. He stared at the hooter in dismay. Why wouldn't it pip-pip when he had put so many nice new pips inside?

“Perhaps it doesn’t like orange-pips,” said Goofy at last. “Perhaps it would rather have apple-pips. Yes—I feel sure it would rather have apple-pips. I’ll go and buy an apple.”

So he went and bought an enormous ripe red apple. He sat in Mr. Hoho’s car and ate it. It was most delicious. There were plenty of brown pips in the core. Goofy carefully saved them all.

“I’d better take out the orange-pips before I put in the apple-pips,” thought Goofy. But it was very difficult to squeeze out the orange-pips. They just wouldn’t come.

“Well, I’ll put in the apple-pips on top of the other pips,” thought Goofy. “I don’t expect the hooter will mind.”

Into the hooter went all the brown apple-pips too! And then Goofy pressed the hooter again, expecting it to shout “Pip-pip-pip” very loudly indeed.

But no—not a single pip-pip came out of it! Goofy was upset. He began to wonder what Hoho would say when he came out of the sock-shop. Perhaps he wouldn’t be very pleased. Goofy decided he would go home.

Just as he had got out of the car, Hoho came along with the shopman.

“If you’ll let me unscrew your hooter and give it to my son to mend, I’m sure he can soon put it right for you,” said the shopman. So Hoho got the screw-driver and began to unscrew the hooter from the side of the windscreen. But as soon as he had got it off, he looked very puzzled.

“Listen!” he said to the shopman. “This hooter rattles!” He shook it—and sure enough it rattled, which was not at all surprising considering what a lot of pips there were inside!

Hoho was most puzzled, and so was the shopman. They both looked at the hooter in astonishment. Then Hoho saw the little hole in the rubber of the hooter and was even more surprised.

“Look at that hole,” he said. “What made that, I wonder?”

“Moths, do you think?” said the shopman.

“Of course not. Moths don’t eat rubber, silly,” said Hoho. He shook the hooter again, and then he made the hole a little bit bigger—and out came about twelve big orange-pips and eight large apple-pips! Gracious goodness, how Hoho stared!

“Who’s been putting pips into my hooter?” he roared. “Who’s been silly enough to think that pips in a hooter would mend it? Who . . .”

And then he caught sight of Goofy creeping away down the road, looking very red indeed. Hoho guessed at once that Goofy had been fiddling about with his hooter, and he gave an angry shout. He rushed after Goofy, took hold of his collar—and put all the orange and apple pips down poor Goofy’s neck! You should have heard Goofy howl!

“That’s right,” said Hoho fiercely. “Run down the road squealing and squeaking like a hooter! Didn’t I tell you not to touch my hooter? You wait till I see you next time, and I’ll bump you right over in the road with my car!”

And Goofy is so afraid that he will, that he hasn’t dared to go shopping for three days. Poor Goofy!

The Magic Rubber

Once a very curious thing happened to Kenneth. He was walking home from school with his satchel full of school books. He remembered that he had half-finished a sum that rather puzzled him, and he sat down under the hedge and got out his number book.

He looked at the sum—and he saw that he had made a mistake in it. "Oh dear!" said Kenneth. "I'd better rub that out before I forget."

But he had left his rubber at school. What a nuisance! "Bother, bother, bother!" said Kenneth.

A queer little man peeped out of the hedge at Kenneth. He was a brownie with a very long beard and the brightest green eyes imaginable.

"Anything wrong?" he said politely.

"Well, nothing much," said Kenneth. "I just was wishing I had my rubber with me to rub out something, that's all."

"I'll lend you mine," said the brownie and put his hand in his pocket. He took out a rather marvellous rubber. It was gold one end, blue in the middle, and silver the other end. On it was stamped the brownie's name, TWINKLE.

"Just say, 'Rubber, rub out!' and it will rub out whatever mistake you have made and not leave a single mark," said the brownie. So Kenneth said, "Rubber, rub out!" and the rubber slipped out of his hand to his number book and rubbed out the mistake so smoothly that nobody could see where it had been.

"Excuse me a moment," said the brownie. "I think my telephone is ringing. I must just answer it."

Kenneth was rather astonished to think that a telephone should be in the hedge, but he could clearly hear a tiny tinkling noise. And, whilst he waited for the brownie to come back, a naughty little thought came into his head.

"If I ran off home now, I could take this marvellous rubber with me, and show it to all the others! Wouldn't I feel grand with such a wonderful rubber?"

Well, it is always a pity when anyone does a mean thing. Kenneth didn't stop to think twice. He got up, flung his satchel over his shoulder, and ran off with the magic rubber safely in his pocket.

He got home, panting, and out of breath. Nobody followed him. He had the rubber for himself.

"I'll show it to every one at school to-morrow," thought Kenneth. "I'd better not show it to Mother, because she will say I must take it back, if I tell her where I got it from."

That evening, when Kenneth did his homework, he had a fine time. Every time he made a mistake he said, "Rubber, rub out!" And it obeyed him at once, and rubbed out every single mistake without leaving a mark. It rubbed out ink just as well as pencil, and Kenneth was able to write out his geography lesson most beautifully. In fact, he sometimes made a mistake on purpose so that he could get the rubber to rub it out.

“You seem to be a long time over your homework this evening, Kenneth,” his mother called up to him. “Do hurry up. What are you doing?”

“Mother, I’ve written out my geography, and done six sums, and made out a list of French words, and I’ve drawn a map,” said Kenneth, quite truthfully.

“Well, that’s a lot,” said Mother. “Come along down to supper now.”

Kenneth put his rubber into his pocket and went downstairs, very pleased with his evening’s work. He didn’t say a word to Mother about the magic rubber, but he kept feeling it in his pocket. It really was marvellous, all silver and blue and gold.

The next morning Kenneth ran to school in a hurry. He didn’t go the way he usually did because he didn’t want to go by the hedge where the brownie lived. He went a different way. When he got to school he called his friends round him.

“Do you want to see something simply too marvellous for words?” he asked. “Well, look!”

Kenneth set out his number book with his sums so beautifully done, his geography lesson written out without a mistake, his nicely drawn map, and his list of French words.

“What do you think of my homework?” he asked. “Isn’t it marvellous? Not a single mistake! I shall get top marks to-day.”

“How do you do it so nicely?” asked Bill. “Usually you rub out about a hundred times, and leave messes all over your page. Mr. Brown is always telling you about it.”

“I’ll show you how I managed it!” said Kenneth. “Look—I’ve got a magic rubber! Here it is.”

“A magic rubber!” cried the boys. “How does it work? Where did you get it?”

“Well, when I say to it, ‘Rubber, rub out!’ it rubs out any mistake for me and doesn’t leave a single mark,” said Kenneth. As he showed the boys the rubber, and said, “Rubber, rub out,” the rubber hopped from his hand and skipped to where Kenneth had spread out his homework books.

And, my goodness me, in a trice it had rubbed out all Kenneth’s beautifully done homework! Yes—it rubbed out his geography lesson, his nice map, his list of French words, and all his sums! The pages shone quite bare and clean. Not a pencil or ink mark was on them.

Kenneth stared down in horror. “Oh, you silly, stupid rubber!” he cried. “What did you do that for? Now I’ve no homework to show to Mr. Brown, and I shall get into dreadful trouble.”

He did get into dreadful trouble. You can guess that Mr. Brown wouldn’t believe Kenneth’s tale about a magic rubber that had rubbed away all his beautiful homework. And when Kenneth put his hand into his pocket to get out the rubber, it wasn’t there. No—it had slipped out and gone back to the brownie in the hedge. Nobody had noticed it hop-hop-hopping along the lane except a most surprised dog.

Kenneth had to lose his playtime and stay in after school to do all the homework again that the rubber had rubbed out. And this time his mistakes couldn’t be rubbed out so beautifully, and he certainly didn’t get top marks.

He is now trying to make up his mind to go and find that brownie again, and tell him he is sorry he ran off with his rubber, and he hopes it came back all right. I wonder if he will be brave enough to go and do that. Do you think he will?

THE CHOCOLATE CIGARETTE

The Chocolate Cigarette

Once upon a time Bobby had a cigarette-case full of chocolate cigarettes given to him for his birthday. He was very pleased with them indeed, and he thought they looked exactly like real ones!

"I shall pretend I am a grown-up person like Daddy, and I shall walk proudly through the wood by myself, smoking one of my cigarettes and puffing out pretend-smoke!" said Bobby. "I *shall* enjoy myself."

Well, it is always fun to pretend, and Bobby loved it. He went into the wood, and stuck a chocolate cigarette into the corner of his mouth. He pretended to puff at it, and then he took it out of his mouth and blew out pretend-smoke. Really, he did feel grand.

And then suddenly things happened. A small man with a long beard ran out from behind a tree and pointed his finger at Bobby.

"You bad boy! You very bad, wicked boy! You are smoking a cigarette!"

Bobby looked at the little man. He was a brownie, but Bobby didn't know that. The little boy smiled and waved his cigarette grandly in the air.

"Yes—I'm smoking a cigarette!" he said. "Will you have one?" He held out his case to the brownie. The little man went purple in the face.

"Of course not!" he shouted. "Oh, you bad boy! Smoking like that and carrying a whole cigarette-case full of cigarettes too! Stop smoking at once."

Well, of course, you can guess that Bobby really was delighted that somebody thought he truly was smoking! He didn't say a word but went on putting his cigarette in and out of his mouth, and puffed away as hard as he could.

The brownie stamped his foot. "I'll make you sorry you're smoking!" he cried. "Don't you know that you won't grow at all if you smoke when you're too young? Don't you know that your skin will turn yellow? Don't you know that you will look old before you are?"

"Yes, I know all that," said Bobby, and he puffed away at his chocolate cigarette again. "It's dreadful to think that all these things may happen to me—but I'm going to smoke all my cigarettes just the same!"

The brownie suddenly put his hands to his mouth and gave a loud shout. At once four other little men just like himself ran up. The first brownie pointed to Bobby.

"See that bad boy?" he said. "He's smoking. And he won't stop! Take him prisoner and bring him to our police station! We'll soon teach him not to smoke!"

So, to Bobby's surprise, the four brownies caught hold of his arms and marched him off through the trees. The little boy struggled, but the men were strong. Off he had to march until he came to a very peculiar little building. It was built of red and yellow bricks and had a blue chimney. And across the door was a big notice that said—

A small man with a long beard ran out from behind a tree.

BROWNIE POLICE STATION

Bobby was taken inside. There was a small room there, and a brownie policeman sat in a big chair. He was dressed just like an ordinary policeman, except that his clothes were green and his helmet was red. He glared at Bobby.

"What's this naughty boy done?" he asked.

"Can't you see?" cried the first brownie. "He's smoking! Look at him! He's got a cigarette in his mouth."

"So he has," said the policeman with a frown. "What's your name, boy?"

"Bobby Brown," answered Bobby, and he puffed at his cigarette.

"Bad, naughty boy!" said the policeman, writing down his name. "Bobby Brown, I must put you in prison unless you promise to be better and never to smoke again!"

Bobby laughed. He took the paper off his cigarette, bit the cigarette into three pieces, put them into his mouth and began to chew them up.

"He bites cigarettes! He *eats* cigarettes!" shouted the brownies and the policeman. "Worse and worse! Whatever shall we do with a boy like this?"

"Off to prison with him!" said the policeman, getting up. He took Bobby by his collar. "Come along."

"Now just wait a minute," said Bobby. "Are you quite sure I was smoking a cigarette?"

"Quite sure," said the policeman.

"Did you see any smoke?" asked Bobby. The brownies and the policeman looked at one another.

"Did we see any smoke?" they asked one another. They frowned and screwed up their noses, trying to remember.

The four brownies caught hold of his arms and marched him off.

"No, we didn't see any smoke," said the first brownie, looking surprised. "But he puffed and puffed, didn't he?"

"Yes, he did," said the others.

"But how can you say anyone was smoking a cigarette if there wasn't any smoke?" asked Bobby.

"Can we say that?" said the policeman to the brownies. They shook their heads.

"If a cigarette isn't smoking, I don't see how we can say it was being smoked," said one brownie.

Bobby took a cigarette out of his case and popped it into his mouth. The brownies waited for him to light it. But he didn't. He just puffed away at it and blew out pretend-smoke, and every one watched him, puzzled.

"Now just don't be so silly," said Bobby, smiling down at the little men. "Take one of my cigarettes each and say you're sorry to me, and let me go. You mustn't carry people off like this. It's very naughty of you!"

The policeman took a chocolate cigarette. The brownies took one each. They put them into their mouths. They tasted the chocolate! And one by one all the solemn faces broke into delighted smiles.

"It's only *choc*olate!" said the policeman. "What fun!"

"Chocolate cigarettes! Well I never!" said the brownies. "Sorry, Bobby!"

He glared at Bobby. “What’s this naughty boy done?” he asked.

“Sorry, Bobby Brown,” said the policeman, and he puffed out a whole lot of pretend-smoke. “Come along—we’ll take you back through the wood again. And we’ll all smoke our cigarettes as we go along!”

So back they went to the path that Bobby knew, all of them with cigarettes in their mouths, puffing away marvellously, and feeling as grand as could be.

“*So* sorry we caused you such a lot of trouble!” said the policeman, shaking hands with Bobby.

“Don’t mention it,” said Bobby. “I loved it all! You can’t think how nice it is when a pretend comes real for a little while! I *did* enjoy myself when you all thought I was really and truly smoking!”

Be careful not to walk through the wood when you are smoking a chocolate cigarette. The same thing might happen to *you*!

With cigarettes in their mouths, puffing away marvellously.

The Black Sheep

You wouldn't believe how many toys there were in Fanny's nursery! Teddy-bears, dolls, dogs, elephants, a rocking-horse, two cats, three rabbits, and a mouse, to say nothing of trains, cars, books and aeroplanes!

Fanny had a great many uncles and aunts, and they all spoilt her and brought her toys every week, so that really it was quite difficult for her to find room for all of them.

And then one day Uncle Jack brought her a black sheep. It was a large sheep, not big enough for Fanny to ride on, but big enough for her to sit her dolls on. She played with it a lot, and squeezed it to make it say "Baa, baa!" all day long.

The other toys were not sure that they liked the black sheep.

"It's no cousin of *mine*," said the snow-white woolly lamb. "All my family are as white as I am."

"I'm tired of its voice," said the golliwog.

"*I* thought sheep were white," said the pink cat.

"And *I* thought cats were black, brown, tabby, or ginger!" snapped the black sheep suddenly. "I've never seen a *pink* cat before. Pink indeed!"

Now the pink cat was one of the oldest toys in the nursery, and very easily offended. She swished her short tail angrily, and tried hard to think of something rude to say. But all she could think of was "Baa, baa, black sheep." So she said it, and laughed as she said it.

The toys thought this was funny. They laughed. They made a ring round the surprised sheep and sang to him. "Baa, baa, black sheep, have you any wool?"

"Don't be silly," said the black sheep.

"Go on, answer us," said the pink cat. "You've got to say you have three bags full."

"I haven't," said the sheep. "I'm not the sheep in the nursery rhyme, silly. Be quiet!"

But the toys wouldn't be quiet. Every time they saw the sheep they asked him the same silly question, "Baa, baa, black sheep, have you any wool?"

The black sheep never answered, but he grew sad. He was quite a nice creature really, and it wasn't his fault that he was black. He was a kindly animal, but the toys didn't give him any chance to show his kindness. They just teased him.

One day Fanny took him down the garden with her. A workman was whitewashing the hen-house, and Fanny went to watch him. She put the sheep on a box nearby and stood watching the slish-slosh of the workman's brush. It was a lovely sight. Fanny wished she could whitewash the wall too. She thought she would go and ask Mother if she might have a brush and help the workman. So off she went.

Now after a few minutes the workman stepped back to see how his work looked—and he knocked against the black sheep. The sheep fell off the box straight into the bucket of whitewash!

He *was* surprised. He went under the whitewash and then bobbed up again. The workman didn't see him until he bent to dip his brush into the pail again.

“Goodness me! What’s this?” he said, and he picked the sheep out of the whitewash. The black sheep was now as white as snow!

“It’s one of the little girl’s toys,” he said in surprise. “Well, well! It had better dry in the sun. I’ll give it to Miss Fanny when she comes back.”

So he stood it in the sun to dry. Fanny didn’t come back, because Mother had told her she must get ready for her walk. So the workman handed the sheep to Alice the maid and asked her to put it in the nursery.

The sheep had dried snowy white. He looked most beautiful. He was still very surprised, and could hardly believe it was himself.

The toys were astonished to see a snowy-white sheep. They didn’t know him at all. They looked at him and greeted him politely.

“Good afternoon. What a fine fellow you are! We are pleased to see you in our nursery.”

“Good afternoon,” said the sheep, most astonished. It was funny to think that the toys didn’t know him.

“Have you come to live with us?” asked the lamb.

“Yes,” said the sheep.

“Perhaps you have come instead of the horrid black sheep that used to live here,” said one of the dolls. “He was so ugly.”

“And so rude,” said the pink cat.

“If he comes back you must fight him,” said the golliwog.

“Why was he so horrid?” asked the sheep, most surprised to hear all these things about himself. “Perhaps he was quite nice really, and you didn’t give him a chance.”

“Oh no, he was just as horrid as you are nice,” said the black dog.

“Will you join our games when we play to-night?”

“Yes, thank you,” said the sheep. The toys had never asked him to join in their games before.

Well, the sheep had a fine time. Everyone was as nice as could be to him. So he was nice back to them, and the toys thought he was a fine fellow.

“We do hope that horrid black sheep will never come back again,” said the pink cat to the sheep. “We really do. If only he had been as nice as you, he would have been all right—but he was a rude fellow.”

The sheep said nothing; but then, whatever do you think happened?

Fanny found the sheep in the toy-cupboard and took him out in great surprise.

“Why!” she cried. “Are you a new toy? No—you’re not! You’re just my dear old black sheep covered in whitewash! Alice told me you had fallen into the bucket. Well, I’ll soon get you right again.”

She took a stiff brush and she brushed the sheep. How she brushed him! The whitewash flew off him in clouds of dust. He became grey—he became black—and at last there he stood, as black as before, with a little pile of dry whitewash dust beside him.

The toys stared in surprise. They didn’t know what to think or say. And then the golliwog spoke.

“Black sheep, so it was really you all the time! We didn’t know—we thought you were somebody new and nice.”

“Well,” said the black sheep, “I’m not somebody new—but I hope I’m nice. Surely if I am nice when I am white, I must be nice when I am black? I’m just the same inside.”

“So you are, so you are,” said the golliwog. “I feel ashamed of myself for having been horrid before. We’ll be friends now, Black Sheep—and we’ll never, never ask you again if you’ve any wool.”

So now they all live happily together in the nursery. Wasn’t it a good thing the sheep fell into the pail of whitewash!

Mister Gobo's Green Grass

There was once a funny little man called Mister Gobo. He lived in Twisty Cottage, and he had a nice little garden.

How he loved his green grass lawn! He wouldn't let a single daisy grow there. He pulled up every bit of clover. He even drove away the worms, and poured boiling water on any little brown ant he saw hurrying over the lawn.

"The Prince of Ho-Ho is coming to see me this summer," he told every one. "And I am going to give him tea on my lawn. There mustn't be a single weed there, or a single worm or insect. No, not one!"

He set his little servant to work each day on the lawn. The servant was small and thin, and her name was Tiny. She had to pull the heavy roller over the grass two hundred times each day to make it smooth and even. She had to cut the grass with the lawn-mower twice a week. She had to sweep away any worm-casts that dared to show themselves in the morning.

Tiny was very tired of Gobo's beautiful green grass. She leaned over the fence and talked to the maid next door about it.

"I like the field grass," she said. "It has tiny flowers growing in it. It has ants and spiders and bright little beetles hurrying through it on their busy ways. I don't like Mister Gobo's lawn. It breaks my back when I have to roll it each day. If only he would do it himself!"

But Mister Gobo wouldn't do any of the hard work himself. No—Tiny must do that. He would pour hot water on a hurrying ant, or stamp on a poor worm, or pull up a small daisy—but Tiny must roll and cut and sweep.

The lawn was really beautiful. It looked like a piece of green velvet. Gobo grew more and more proud of it.

"I can't imagine what the Prince of Ho-Ho will think when he sits on it to have his tea," he boasted. "I am sure he has no grass as beautiful as mine. Well, he may have his palace, his hundred rooms, his golden plates—but I have a better lawn than he has!"

"But what's the use of your lawn?" asked Jinks, his next-door neighbour. "You never play games on it. You never let your dog have a run round it. You even chase your soft-footed cat off it!"

"I should think so!" said Gobo. "And let me tell you this, Jinks—*your* cat was stamping about on my beautiful lawn yesterday! If you don't stop her doing that, I'll shoot peas at her from my pea-shooter."

"Don't you dare to do anything of the sort," cried Jinks fiercely. "I love my cat, and I won't have her hurt!"

As the day drew nearer for the Prince of Ho-Ho to come and visit him, Gobo grew more and more careful of his lawn. He shooed the birds off it. He killed every worm he found. Not an insect dared to fly over it.

Once his dog forgot, and ran lightly over the smooth green grass. Gobo was so angry that he whipped his dog till the poor dog cried.

He shot at Jinks' cat with his pea-shooter the next time it dared to walk on his lawn, and the cat bounded off in fright.

Tiny had to work with the roller and the broom till she was tired out. Up and down the lawn she went, up and down in her rubber-soled shoes, till she never wanted to see a roller, a mower, or a broom again.

The day before the prince's visit came, Gobo stood in his garden and looked proudly at his lawn. It was perfect. He was simply delighted with it. How envious the Prince of Ho-Ho would be! And how proud Gobo would feel when the prince admired his lawn!

Suddenly, as he stood there, two cars came by his gate. A dog ran across the road in front of them; they both swerved to the middle of the road to save the dog—and CRASH! They bumped into one another!

"Oh dear, oh dear!" cried a voice from one car. "This is such a shock! I think I shall faint!"

It was little Mother Tickles, who drove her car very carefully, because she was so afraid of accidents—and now she had had one! Her cheek was cut by the flying glass of her broken wind-screen. She looked very pale indeed.

Mr. Curly was in the other car. He jumped out at once and hurried to Mother Tickles in dismay. "Now, now! Don't faint or do anything silly!" he said. "You are not really hurt. Come along into this garden here, and I'll get some water to bathe your cheek."

He hurried Mother Tickles into Gobo's garden gate, and made her sit down on the lawn. He shouted to Gobo, "Bring some water! There's been an accident!"

"Please get off my grass," said Gobo, horrified to see anyone on his precious lawn. "Get on to the path."

"Don't be silly," said Mr. Curly crossly. "The grass is soft to sit on. We shan't hurt it. Get some warm water."

Gobo was very angry. He ran up to Mother Tickles, pulled her off the grass, and sat her down hard on the dusty path. "How dare you use my grass!" he shouted.

Jinks, next door, saw and heard all this. He was shocked. He called to Mr. Curly, "Bring Mother Tickles into my garden. *I'll* fetch some water and a towel."

So poor Mother Tickles was taken into Jinks' garden and he bathed her cut cheek and looked after her. Gobo glared at them over the fence, and then went to see if his beautiful lawn had been hurt.

"You know, Mister Gobo wants a good lesson," said Mr. Curly, looking at the grass next door. "Spending all his time making quite a useless lawn just to make the prince envious! Can't even let poor Mother Tickles sit down on it! The wretch!"

"Yes," said Jinks slowly, looking at the grass next door. "He *does* need a lesson. You're right! And he'll get it too, before the Prince of Ho-Ho comes! Yes, he'll get it all right!"

When Mother Tickles and Mr. Curly had gone, Jinks put on his hat and went to Tibby Lickle, who was a queer old woman living alone on the hill. She knew every creature of the woods and fields, and could talk to them as easily as she could talk to Jinks.

"Tibby Lickle," said Jinks, "I want something done."

"And what's that?" asked old Tibby Lickle, her bright green eyes twinkling up at Jinks. "I'll do anything for *you*, Jinks. You're a good kind fellow. That I know!"

"Well, Tibby Lickle, what I'm asking you to do will not seem kind," said Jinks, "but it needs to be done. Now, I want you to go to the moles, who live under the ground, and ask them to tunnel up and down beneath Mister Gobo's lawn to-night. Will you do that?"

"Indeed I will," said old Tibby Lickle, and she went straight off to give the message.

And that night six velvety moles tunnelled underground till they came to Gobo's beautiful lawn. And then, all night long, they tunnelled below his grass, making passages underneath it, up and down, up and down. Here and there they threw up hillocks of fine earth on the grass. How those moles worked—and then they slipped away silently along their underground passages.

And when Gobo awoke next morning and looked out of the window, *what* a shock he got! His lawn was completely spoilt! It was bumpy and uneven, where the moles had tunnelled beneath it. It was covered with hillocks of earth. It wasn't a lawn at all!

"Oh! Oh! Look at that!" he wept. "Tiny, where are you? Oh, look at that!"

Tiny stood and looked at the lawn. "Ah, master," she said, "you wouldn't let an old woman sit on your precious lawn yesterday—and now it is spoilt! It serves you right! Whatever will the prince say?"

The prince came—and how he did turn up his nose at poor Gobo's spoilt lawn!

"Dear me!" he said. "You must take a few lessons from one of my gardeners, Gobo! This is dreadful! How you have let your lawn go to pieces!"

"I don't need any lessons," said Gobo, his face very red. "I've had one big lesson—and that's quite enough for me! In future my lawn isn't going to be beautiful—it's going to be useful!"

And so it is. The dog plays on it, the cat washes herself there, the birds fly down to it, and the worms have a fine time. What could you want better than that?

Answers to Puzzles on Page 46.

1. Cabbage.
2. It is my Name.
3. The word COT. 'Ot is what a Cockney says for hot. Co. is short for Company. The middle letter is O, which is nothing.

Solution to Mr. Tan's Old Puzzle on Page 64.

The Stolen Shadow

Mark and Eileen were very happy. They were going for a picnic, and they had walked to Pixie Hill in the warm sunshine. Mark carried a bag in which was a bottle of lemonade, two apples and a book, and Eileen carried one with some sandwiches, two pieces of cake and a slab of chocolate.

"Isn't it fun to go off alone like this!" said Eileen. "Just ourselves—no one to say 'Don't!' no one to say 'Now mind you're good'."

"We'll have a picnic on the side of Pixie Hill," said Mark. "I'm getting hungry—aren't you? Wasn't it nice of Mummy to pack us such a lovely lunch!"

They went up the hill. There were gorse bushes there and soft heather. Bracken grew around too, and a few pretty silver birches. Mark looked round for a nice place to sit.

"Look at that little clearing over there," he said, pointing to a round piece of grass under a silver birch. "Let's go there. If we sit in the heather we shan't be able to stand our lemonade bottle up properly."

They went to the round patch of green grass and sat down. Soon they had spread out their feast and were busy eating it.

"Eileen!" said Mark, suddenly. "I thought I saw something moving in the heather over there. Maybe it was a bird or a rabbit—but it seemed to have a *face*!"

"Ooh! Was it a pixie, do you suppose?" said Eileen excitedly. "They were once believed to live on this hill, you know! Look again, Mark!"

"There it is!" said Mark, and he pointed. Eileen saw a mischievous little face peeping out of the heather. Then out hopped a small pixie, with a large pair of scissors!

"Good day to you," he said in a high, twittering voice, like a bird's. "Will you sell me something?"

"It depends what you want," said Mark, staring at the pixie in surprise.

"I want a shadow," said the pixie. "My master, the Enchanter Bushy-Brow, needs one to make a spell. So he has sent me out to buy a nice black shadow. I will give you one golden piece if I may cut off yours!"

"You can't cut a shadow off!" said Mark. "You know you can't!"

"You can't with ordinary scissors," said the pixie. "But you can with these. They have been dipped in magic and can cut anything! Watch me cut this tree's shadow!"

He ran to where the shadow of the silver birch tree waved on the ground. He snipped with his scissors—and hey presto, they cut the shadow, and the pixie tossed it over to the astonished children.

"There you are!" he said. "What did I say?"

Eileen picked up the little shadow snippet. It was cold, light and as soft and silky as spider thread. It was like nothing she had ever seen, and shone now purple, now black.

"Well!" she said. "This is very strange. But, pixie, I'm sorry, you can't possibly cut either of our shadows. We should hate to be without them. They follow us wherever we go. We

shouldn't feel real without them, you know. Sometimes they are long, and sometimes they are short—but they are always there, as long as there is any daylight or light of any kind!"

The pixie looked sulky. He made a rude face at the children, hopped back into the heather and disappeared.

"I don't think I like that pixie much," said Eileen. "But fancy seeing one, Mark! How awfully exciting!"

"I wonder if he has a little house in that heather," said Mark. "Let's go and look."

The two children left the shade of the birch tree and went towards the heather. Their shadows stretched dark behind them, for the sun was very strong.

They peered down into the heather. They did not hear a tiny burst of laughter, nor did they see the small pixie creeping behind them with his big scissors.

He ran to the edge of Eileen's short shadow. Snip-snip-snip went his scissors, and soon he had cut her shadow all round the edge!

Then he gave two sharp snips by her feet—and he had her shadow! Quick as lightning he rolled it up, tucked it under his arm, and fled off, laughing like a little waterfall.

Mark looked round at once, for he knew it was the pixie. "Look, Eileen, look!" he cried. "It's the pixie again! What's that he's got under his arm?"

"Oh, oh! It's my shadow!" Said Eileen, looking down at her feet. "See, Mark, there's *your* shadow—but there isn't one for me. That horrid, horrid little thing snipped mine away when we were looking into the heather just now!"

"Oh, Eileen, how dreadful!" said Mark, staring down at Eileen's feet. "You do look strange without a shadow. Whatever shall we do?"

"We must get it back!" said Eileen, and she began to run after the pixie. "Come on, Mark, quick! I'm not going to lose my shadow. Hurry!"

They tore off, and the running pixie heard them. He ran to a small yellow door set closely into the hillside, opened it, and disappeared. The door slammed.

"Quick! He's gone in here!" said Mark, and he banged at the door. It opened, and a rabbit looked out. She had a large apron on, and big glasses that kept slipping down her nose.

"Oh!" she said in surprise.

"Oh!" said both children, just as surprised.

"What do you want?" asked the rabbit. "First a pixie bursts into my house, slams the door and runs out the back way—and now you come banging. On my baking morning too!"

"So sorry!" said Mark, stepping inside. "But tell us where that pixie went. He's got my sister's shadow."

"Oh, the mischief," said the rabbit, putting her glasses on her forehead. "He's a rogue, he is. He came last week and wanted two of my whiskers for something, and the faces he made at me when I told him to grow some of his own, and cut those."

She shook her head and her glasses slid down her nose again. She pointed to her back door.

"He went out there," she said. "Hurry up, and you'll catch him!"

The children shot out of the door, and to their enormous surprise found themselves in a large open field, instead of inside the hill. They looked all about—but not a sign of the pixie was to be seen!

"Bother!" said Eileen. "Where's he gone?"

"To Bushy-Brow the Enchanter, I suppose!" said Mark gloomily. "We shall never get him now, Eileen. He has got too big a start, and we don't know which way he went."

“Well, we know where he’s going, don’t we!” said Eileen. “If we find the way to the Enchanter’s, we might get there first, and stop him just as he’s going in!”

“Good idea!” said Mark. “We’ll ask the way, as soon as we see someone.”

“Look, we’ll ask this person,” said Eileen. “He looks like a gnome.”

It *was* a gnome—he came shuffling over the field towards them, his long beard nearly reaching the ground. He muttered something as he went, and the children felt half afraid of speaking to him.

“Threepence and twopence and a penny, how much change from a shilling?” they heard him say. “Threepence and twopence and a penny, how much——”

“The answer is sixpence,” said Mark.

“Ooh!” said the gnome, startled. He stopped and stared at Mark. “Sixpence did you say? Ah, then I have the right change after all! I can cheer up! I thought I should have sevenpence.”

“Can you tell us where Bushy-Brow the Enchanter lives?” asked Mark, pleased to see the gnome smiling brightly.

“Certainly, certainly,” said the gnome. “Do you see that hill over there? Go up it, take the mat at the top, slide to the bus, take the bus to the pond, hop on a duck and there they you are!”

He went off, whistling cheerily.

“What funny directions,” said Eileen, puzzled. “They sound quite mad to me.”

“Well, I suppose this must be part of Fairyland,” said Mark, “so we must expect funny things. Come on. Let’s go up that hill and see if there really is a mat at the top.”

“Slide to the bus, take the bus to the pond, hop on a duck and there you are!” repeated Eileen. “Well, it’s easy enough to remember!”

They ran to the hill and began to climb up. It was steep and they puffed and panted. When they got to the top they exclaimed in delight—for below them lay Fairyland, smiling in the sun! Castles and palaces, crooked houses and toadstool villages spread before them. It was a marvellous sight!

The two children gazed for a long time and were too delighted to say a word. Then they looked for the runaway pixie—but he was nowhere to be seen.

“Oh, Eileen, here’s the mat! Do come and look!” cried Mark. Eileen ran to him—and sure enough, there was a large blue mat, hanging on a peg—and stretching down the hill in front was a long, steep, slippery slide!

“We go down the slide on the mat!” said Mark. “Eileen, what fun!”

Before they could use the mat, a brownie came running up, unhitched the mat from the peg, set it at the top of the slide, and down he went, his hair streaming out behind him.

“Oh, now he’s taken the mat!” said Eileen in disappointment. The brownie reached the bottom, threw the mat into the air, and, to the children’s great astonishment, it flew up the hill again on a pair of butterfly-like wings! It hung itself on the peg, and closed its wings tightly, so that they could hardly be seen.

“Quick, before anyone else takes it,” said Mark. He caught up the mat and put it at the top of the slide. He and Eileen got on, and pushed off. Whoooooooosh! Down flew the mat at top speed, right to the very bottom. It was a most exciting feeling.

“I wish we could do that again,” said Mark, getting off. He threw the mat into the air, as he had seen the brownie do, and at once it spread its wings and flew up to the hilltop, where it once more hung itself up.

“Fairyland is much more exciting than *our* world!” said Eileen. “Come on. We must look for the bus.”

“There it is, in front of you!” said Mark. “You don’t need to look for it!”

“Oh, isn’t it small!” cried Eileen, in delight. So it was—very small indeed. It was painted yellow, and had bright red wheels, so it was very gay. There was no conductor and no driver, so the children wondered what to do.

A large fat rabbit walked by, wheeling a pram with six baby rabbits in. Mark ran up to her.

“Please, what time does the bus go?” he asked.

“Any time you like,” said the rabbit, looking puzzled. “Just get in if you want to and drive off!”

“Oh! Do you mean *we* can drive it?” asked Eileen, in delight. “Well, where’s the pond? We have to drive to that.”

“Just say ‘Pond’ to the bus, and it’ll know the way,” said the rabbit. Two of her baby rabbits began to cry, so she hurriedly said good-bye and wheeled her pram away, saying: “Sh! Sh! Sh!”

“Isn’t everything simply lovely here?” said Eileen. “I should be perfectly happy if only I had my shadow back again!”

They climbed in at the front of the bus. Mark took hold of the wooden steering-wheel, and said “Pond!” in his loudest voice. The bus shook itself, and began to trundle away down a narrow lane. It rumbled on for a long way, and at last ran down to a big pond. To the children’s surprise it ran right into the water and floated towards some big ducks who were quacking together nearby.

When the ducks saw the children two of them swam up at once. Mark and Eileen stepped neatly on to their backs, and the bus floated back to the bank. It got out, shook itself, and trundled back up the lane, gleaming in the sun. It was really a very good and clever little bus. The children felt quite sorry to see it go.

“Take us to Bushy-Brow the Enchanter,” said Mark to the duck.

“Quark!” said the duck, in a deep voice. “Quark, quark!”

Instead of swimming, the ducks suddenly spread out big white wings and rose into the air. The children were so astonished, that they nearly fell off! Mark half slid off, and then, catching tight hold of the duck’s neck, he pulled himself up again.

“Quark!” said the duck severely. “If you do that sort of thing I shall choke! I could hardly breathe then.”

“So sorry,” said Mark humbly. He and Eileen sat very still after that, and looked down on the palaces and castles of Fairyland as they flew over them. At last the duck flew down to a strange tower-like house, set on the top of a hill.

“Quark!” said one of the ducks. “Here you are!”

The children slipped off their feathery backs and looked at the tower-like building. The ducks flew away and left them there.

“How do we get in?” said Mark puzzled. “There isn’t any door!”

There certainly didn’t seem to be! The children walked round and round—but no, not even the tiniest door was to be seen! Then they suddenly saw one!

It appeared before their very eyes—a bright blue one with a brass knocker! It opened—and out shot, who do you think? Yes—that mischievous pixie who had taken Eileen’s shadow.

Someone kicked him out—and at the same time an angry voice cried: “You meddlesome creature, you! You’ve spoilt my spell!”

Then the door shut—and immediately vanished again! The pixie sat up and began to cry. But as soon as he saw Mark and Eileen, he looked most astonished and stopped.

"How did you get here?" he asked.

"Never mind that!" said Mark in a cross voice. "Tell me this—where's my sister's shadow that you stole, you wicked little creature?"

"Bushy-Brow has got it!" said the pixie with a grin. Mark looked so angry that his grin stopped and he jumped to his feet. Mark shot out his hand to get hold of him—but he dodged away, shouting: "Can't catch *me*, can't catch *me*!"

"Let him be," said Eileen in disgust. "He is a most tiresome little fellow—but he hasn't got my shadow now, that's plain. Let's bang on the place where the door was, and see if we can get the Enchanter to speak to us."

So they went to where the door had been and banged hard. A cross voice came from inside.

"If that's you again, pixie, I'll turn you into birdseed and give you to my canary!"

"It isn't the pixie," said Mark. "It's two children come to see you."

At once the blue door appeared again, and was thrown open. The children saw a tall, kindly-faced old man, wearing an enormous pointed hat, and a curious black cloak that flowed round him like water.

"This is an honour and a pleasure!" he said. "I don't often have children to visit me! Come in!"

The children went inside the tower-house. It was small inside, but the ceiling was so high that they couldn't reach it. A fire burned in one corner and in the middle of the floor was a deep hole out of which came a bubbling and some strange yellow mist.

"Don't be frightened," said Bushy-Brow. "That's only where I make my spells."

"Oh," said Mark, "isn't it strange?"

"It may be strange to *you*," said Bushy-Brow politely, "but quite ordinary to *me*."

He smiled at Mark, and then stared hard at Eileen. He stared so hard that the little girl felt most uncomfortable. He looked at her feet, he looked at her face, then he looked back at her feet again.

"Little girl," he said in a puzzled voice, "there is something very strange about you—you have no shadow! Did you know this?"

"Oh, yes," said Eileen. "Of course I knew. That wicked little pixie of yours stole it from me this morning. He snipped it off with his scissors!"

"Stars and moon! So it was *your* shadow he brought," cried Bushy-Brow. "He told me it was the shadow of an old woman who didn't want hers any more. The naughty little creature! I'll certainly turn him into birdseed."

"Oh, no, don't do that!" said Eileen. "I really shouldn't like you to do that, although I don't like the pixie a bit. But I *would* like my shadow back, please!"

"My dear little girl, I've used it in that spell you see being made at this very minute!" said the Enchanter, and he pointed to where the strange yellow mist came up from the bubbling hole in the floor.

"Oh, I say! *Now* what shall I do?" said poor Eileen, with tears in her eyes. "I *must* have a shadow!"

"You shall have one!" said Bushy-Brow, patting her on the back, kindly. "Don't cry! I wouldn't have used your shadow for worlds, if I'd known it was yours."

He went to the door and stared out. “Pippetty, Pippetty!” he called. “Come here! I want you!”

The naughty little pixie came running up. The Enchanter took hold of him and marched him into the tall room.

“This little girl says you took her shadow,” he said sternly. “I have used it in my spell, thinking it was an old woman’s. You are a wicked fellow, Pippetty. I shall take away *your* shadow and give it to this little girl!”

The pixie began to cry, but it was no use. The Enchanter took some big scissors and neatly snipped away all the pixie’s purple-black shadow. Then he smacked him and sent him outside, looking very strange without his shadow!

The Enchanter took a needle and threaded it with purple silk. Then he picked up the shadow and went to Eileen.

“Oh dear, are you going to sew it on me?” said the little girl, frightened. “Will it hurt?”

“Not a bit!” said Bushy Brow. He dug the needle into his hand, and then into Eileen’s—she couldn’t feel the slightest prick!

“It’s magic!” he said.

He bent down and swiftly sewed the little shadow to Eileen’s feet, watered it with something from a can, and then muttered some queer words. The shadow stretched itself, shivered a bit, and then lay still.

“It’s yours now,” said the Enchanter. “A bit small for you, perhaps—but no one will notice. Once a year, on Midsummer’s Night, it will try to get away from you to go to the pixie’s ball, but just wish a wish, and it will be still again.”

“Wish a wish!” said Eileen in delight. “Will it come true?”

“Of course,” said the Enchanter. “Try a wish now, if you like, and see.”

“I wish we were home!” said Eileen, at once—and hey presto, there came an enormous wind that caught them up, twisted them round seven times and set them down again—in their very own garden! What do you think of that?

“I can’t believe it!” cried Eileen.

“Oh, Eileen, why did you wish us away?” said Mark. “We were having such a grand time!”

“Never mind! I’ve got one wish every year!” said Eileen. “I’ll wish us back again, if you like, next Midsummer’s Night! Oh, what fun! I’m glad, glad, glad I’ve got a pixie-shadow instead of my own!”

“You must be the only girl in the world who has!” said Mark. “I wish I had too!”

“Perhaps I’ll wish one for you too, one year,” said Eileen. “Come on—let’s go and tell Mummy all about it!”

They did—and Mummy said yes, it was perfectly true, Eileen’s shadow *was* small for her—and the shadow’s ears always looked pointed, like a pixie’s. Isn’t it strange?

The Enchanted Button

Once there was a little cheat called Crooky the goblin. He was very clever, so he managed to make a lot of money by his cheating. He kept a little shop and sold nearly everything.

He cheated in nasty little ways. He put in a bad potato or two when Dame Flip called for a basketful. He sold old eggs for new when he could. And he put a few little pebbles into the chicken-food that Mother Grumps had from him, for he knew she would never notice the pebbles when she threw the grain to her hens—and certainly the birds wouldn't say anything about them!

Now one day Witch See-a-lot felt certain that Crooky had cheated her over some fruit. Certainly he weighed it out under her eyes, but he must have taken one or two of the plums out of the bag when he twisted it up.

"I'll give him an enchanted button," said Witch See-a-lot, with a grin. "That'll puzzle him a bit—and if he's a cheat, we shall soon know it!"

So the next time that Dame Flap took Crooky's dirty washing home to do, Witch See-a-lot watched for it to be put on the line to dry. Dame Flap lived next door, so it was quite easy to see it blowing there.

When Witch See-a-lot saw Crooky's blue shirt drying in the breeze, and knew that Dame Flap had gone out to do her shopping, she grinned to herself. She took up her button-box, her needle and cotton and her scissors, and out she went into her garden. She climbed over the wall and jumped down into Dame Flap's yard.

Then she went to where Crooky's blue shirt was blowing on the line. She snipped off a button, and then sewed on one of her own, which really looked exactly like the one she had taken off. As she sewed she chanted a queer little spell:

"Button, dear, if Crooky cheats,
Shout it out to all he meets!
Put him in a dreadful fix,
Make him stop his cheating tricks!"

She snapped off the cotton, and climbed back over the wall, chuckling loudly. Crooky was going to have a fright!

Of course, Dame Flap didn't know anything about it at all. She ironed the shirt and took it back to Crooky the same evening. He put it on clean the next day, and did up all the buttons.

Now that morning into the shop came Mother Jinks. She wanted a pound of tea. She didn't look at the scales as Crooky weighed out the tea, so he gave her a little less than a pound. But as he was wrapping it up, a little high voice under his chin yelled out loudly:

"Isn't he a cheat! That isn't a pound of tea! *I* watched him weigh it out!"

Crooky almost dropped the parcel in fright. He looked all round to see who had spoken. Mother Jinks stared in astonishment. She was puzzled.

"Put that tea on the scales again," she said suddenly. So Crooky had to—and, of course, it didn't weigh a pound.

"So you *did* cheat me!" said Mother Jinks in disgust. "Well, keep your tea! I'll get what I want at the Pixie Stores over the way." And out she walked.

Crooky was puzzled and frightened. Who had shouted out at him? Who could it have been? He hunted all round the shop, and then he heard a little chuckle under his chin:

"I can see you but you can't see me! You're a cheat, that's what you are, Crooky!"

Crooky nearly jumped out of his skin. He felt in his pockets to see if there was anything magic there, but there wasn't.

"I don't like this," he said. "I think I'll just go out delivering potatoes to Father Lucky—and then maybe whatever spell is in the shop this morning will fly away."

So off he went with his barrow and potatoes. But, of course, he still had on his shirt, and he took that enchanted button with him. It was the top one, just under his chin.

When he got to Father Lucky's, he put a sack of potatoes in the old man's shed. Father Lucky was out, so as there was no one to see him, Crooky put his hand into the sack and took out a few of the biggest potatoes. He knew that Father Lucky would never bother to weigh the sack.

The button didn't say a word. "Ha!" thought Crooky, "I expect the magic *was* in the shop, then."

He went back home, and on the way he met Father Lucky. "I've just taken your sack of potatoes," said Crooky to him. "Finest potatoes I've had. You owe me seven shillings, please."

"He took out some of the biggest potatoes," shouted the button. "He's a cheat. Don't you believe him, Father Lucky. Don't you pay him till you get home and weigh that sack."

Father Lucky stared at Crooky in the greatest astonishment. He couldn't *imagine* where the voice came from!

"I think I *will* weigh that sack before I pay you, Crooky," he said. "And if you *have* cheated me, I'll get my potatoes somewhere else. Good morning!"

"Goodness!" said Crooky to himself in dismay. "This is dreadful really. Where *is* that voice coming from? I've got something enchanted on me, there's no doubt of that. Well, I'll undress myself when I get home and see what it is. Maybe it's an enchanted spider or ladybird."

So when he got home the goblin carefully undressed himself. He shook out each of his clothes. He emptied his pockets. But he couldn't find a single thing that he thought might be magic. He didn't think of the button, of course! There it sat on the collar of the shirt, a little pearl button that looked exactly like the others!

"Well," said Crooky, dressing again, "it's a mystery. I can't find a single thing in my clothes that might be magic."

As he dressed he heard the door-bell ring, and in came three customers. Crooky ran into the shop.

"Good morning," said Mrs. Tibble. "I want six new-laid eggs."

"Certainly, madam," said Crooky. He put one old egg into the bag with the five new-laid ones, and handed them to Mrs. Tibble.

"Cheat!" said the button. "One of those eggs is bad! Cheat!"

Crooky was so surprised that he dropped the bag of eggs. They all broke—and a dreadful smell came from one of them!

"What did I tell you?" said the button, and it laughed, just under Crooky's chin. "Pooh! What a smell!"

"I think I'll buy my eggs somewhere else," said Mrs. Tibble in a huff.

"What can I do for *you*, madam?" asked Crooky, very red in the face, to his next customer, who was looking very nervous. It wasn't nice to hear a voice and not see who was speaking.

"I want some apples," said Miss Wriggle.

Crooky went to get them. He was just about to pop in a bad one, when the button spoke again:

"Now, naughty, naughty, naughty! That's a bad apple and you know it! Cheating again!"

Crooky hurriedly put a good apple into the bag instead. But when he turned round to give them to Miss Wriggle, she had gone—and so had the other customer too. They simply couldn't bear the button's remarks—they sounded too strange for anything.

Witch See-a-lot popped her head in at the door just then, and grinned.

"Hallo!" she said—to the magic button, not to Crooky.

"Hallo!" said the button at once.

"How are you getting on?" asked the witch.

"Oh, having a fine old time," answered the button. "We're cheating hard, and I keep talking about it!"

Crooky stared down at his coat and wondered in despair where the voice came from. "*You've* done something magic!" he said to Witch See-a-lot.

"I have!" grinned the witch. "But I shan't tell you what! Cheat all you like, Crooky—every one will know, and soon you'll have to shut up shop."

Well, Crooky didn't cheat at all after that. He really was too much afraid to. Maybe he'll learn one day that it's better to be honest—but if he doesn't, that enchanted button is still on his shirt, waiting to talk. Wouldn't I just love to hear it!

Colin is a Good Policeman

Colin was saving up to buy a pair of skates. He had put all his Christmas money into his money-box and had put his Saturday pennies there too, and a sixpence that his Daddy had given him for sweeping the snow away from the front path.

The money-box was a fat pig with a slit in its back. The money came out of its tummy, for there was a lock there, and when Colin put in the key and undid the lock, a little trap-door opened and the money fell out.

"Next week I shall be able to buy myself a pair of skates!" said Colin one morning, as he counted out his money. "Hurrah! Then I'll be able to go skating with Ned and Bill! I *shall* feel grand!"

But something horrid happened before he bought his skates. A burglar came one night, broke into Colin's house, and took Colin's money-box, Mummy's purse, Daddy's lovely field-glasses, some silver from the sideboard, and a beautiful cup that Daddy had won for a golf-prize.

Mummy was dreadfully upset. The policeman came and took notes about everything. Daddy told him to be sure and catch the thief if he could, for Mummy had had a lot of money in her purse.

"And I had a lot in my money-box pig," said Colin, almost crying. "I saved it up to buy some skates. Now my money is all gone. Please do catch the thief, policeman."

"I'll do my best," said the policeman, shutting his note-book. "Let me see where he got in, please."

The burglar had got in at a small window that led into the larder. The policeman made some more notes, and then went.

The thief was not caught, because the policeman had no idea who the burglar could be. Day after day went by and still there was no news. Colin got more and more impatient.

"Mummy," he said, "won't that thief ever be caught? What about my money-pig? I wanted to buy my skates with the money this week. Can't I get it back?"

"No, dear, not unless the burglar is caught," said Mummy. "And it doesn't seem to me as if he will be, now."

"But, Mummy, he simply *must* be caught, because I want the money for my skates," said Colin in despair.

"Well, dear, unless you catch him yourself, I don't see how you're going to get back your pig," said Mummy, laughing, "The policeman has done his best."

Colin went out into the garden, nearly crying. To think he had lost all his money like that, when he had saved up so hard. It was too bad.

Then he thought again of what Mummy had said—"Unless you catch him yourself, I don't see how you're going to get back your pig."

"If only I *could* find out who it was," thought Colin. "But I don't know how to begin. I don't know if the burglar was tall or short, fat or thin. I don't know anything about him at all."

He thought hard for a minute, and then he frowned. "Wait a minute—I *do* know something about him! He must have been very small to get through that tiny window!"

He jumped up and went to the larder window. Certainly it was very tiny. Colin jumped up to the sill—and he noticed that as he jumped he left deep marks in the bed below. And there, beside his own marks, were two other marks, made by someone else!

He jumped down to look at them. They must have been made by the burglar, for the ground was soft, and there had been no rain to wash out any marks since the robbery. They were deep, too, just as if the man had jumped up to the sill as Colin had done.

The little boy suddenly felt excited. He knew two things about the burglar now—he was small, because the window was very tiny, and he had big feet, because the marks outside in the bed were large. Good!

Colin found his mother's measuring tape and measured the footmarks carefully. Then he measured his father's slippers, and found that the footmarks were even bigger than the slippers. The burglar had bigger feet than Daddy's!

"A small man with very big feet," said Colin to himself. "What else?"

He sat and thought—and then he rubbed his hands together, for he had thought of something else. Mummy had said how queer it was that Micky the dog hadn't barked at the burglar that night, for Micky always barked at strangers.

"Well, if Micky didn't bark, he must have known the man's voice and smell," said Colin to himself. "And if he knew the man, it means that the robber must have come here often and spoken to Micky and given him tit-bits to make friends with him. I'm getting on! I'm looking for a small man with big feet, some one who comes here fairly often, and whom Micky is friendly with."

Colin felt tremendously excited. He went to the window and jumped up to the sill again. He thought he would jump down into the larder and see how much noise he made. So down into the larder he jumped—and as he did so his coat caught on a nail just below the window and tore.

"Bother!" said Colin, and looked angrily at the nail. And caught on that nail was a piece of brown cloth with a little red line running through it!

"Gracious!" said Colin. "That's not a bit of *my* coat! The burglar must have caught his coat on that nail just as I did—and this is a bit of the coat that he wore then! Oh, I *am* getting on! Yes, I really am. I know the robber was a small man with big feet, who comes here often, is friendly with Micky, and wears a brown coat that has a little red pattern running through it!

The little boy rushed into the garden and thought of all the men who came to the house. Not the milkman—he was tall. Not the butcher—he had small feet. Not the dustman, nor the postman, nor the baker, because Micky wouldn't be friendly with any of them, and barked madly as soon as they appeared.

"What about the window-cleaner?" thought Colin. "No—he only comes once a month and, besides, he is fat. He could never get into that tiny window."

There was the man who brought the eggs—but Micky hated him. There was the paper-man—it might be him. He was very friendly with Micky, and he was small too. Also he wore a brown coat!

"I don't remember if he has big feet, though," thought Colin, jumping up, excited. "I must go and see."

The paper-man lived down the road. Colin did hope it wasn't him, because he was a nice man, and always ready for a joke. He was standing at the door of his shop as Colin ran up.

Yes, his coat was brown, but it had a blue pattern running through it instead of red—and his feet were not even as large as Colin's Daddy's feet; so it couldn't be the paper-man. Colin was glad.

And then suddenly the little boy thought of the man who sometimes came to dig in the garden. He was a bad-tempered little fellow, and Mummy didn't like him. But Daddy said he needed help, and so he gave him a job in the garden whenever he could, and Mummy made him up parcels of bread and cake and fruit.

"We must always help others who are not so well off as we are," Mummy said to Colin, so the little boy had given Walters, the odd-job man, a whole shilling out of his own money at Christmas-time. He had emptied his money-pig and chosen the shilling himself to give to Walters.

"Could it be Walters?" wondered Colin. "He is quite small enough to creep in at the window—and I know he has big feet because I heard him grumbling that he couldn't wear Daddy's boots, they were too small. Micky likes him because he throws him bits of his bread. But I simply *can't* remember the coat he wears."

Now the very next day the odd-job man came again to dig the garden over. But as it was too frosty Daddy said he could chop wood. Colin went down the garden to tell him, and to the little boy's great excitement he saw that Walters was wearing a brown coat with a little red pattern in it—and at one side it was torn!

Colin's heart beat fast. So it *was* Walters who had been mean enough to steal from Daddy and Mummy, who had always been so kind to him!

The boy ran into the house as fast as he could and shouted for his Daddy. "Daddy! I want you! I know who the burglar was last week! Oh, do get my money-pig from him and Mummy's purse and your golf-cup!"

"Colin! Whatever do you mean?" said Daddy, astonished.

"Listen, Daddy," said Colin. "I know all about the burglar. He's small, because he couldn't get in at the larder window if he were big. He has large feet, bigger than yours, because I measured his footmarks in the bed below the window. He's a friend of Micky's, because Micky didn't bark at him—and that means he comes here fairly often—and he wears a brown coat made of cloth like this!"

He gave his Daddy the bit of torn cloth. "I found it caught on the nail just below the larder window," he said. "And, Daddy, the burglar is Walters! He has got a coat on like that this morning, and it's torn!"

Daddy listened, getting more and more astonished. Mummy couldn't believe her ears.

"Why, you're a splendid policeman, Colin," she said.

"Oh, Daddy—I never did like Walters. You were always so kind to him, and now see how he has returned your kindness! What are you going to do?"

"Ring up the police!" said Daddy, and he did. Well, Colin was quite right, for when the policeman went round to Walters' house, the first thing he saw on the mantelpiece was Colin's money-pig! And in a drawer were Mummy's purse, quite empty, and Daddy's field-glasses. The golf-cup was in a cupboard, but the sideboard silver was gone. Walters had sold it.

Colin was so pleased to get back his pig—but, alas, it was empty! The thief had taken all the money out. Colin nearly wept with disappointment. "I shan't get my skates after all!" he said.

But he did. The policemen were delighted to have found the robber, for Walters had not only robbed Colin's Daddy and Mummy, but many others besides. And soon, no doubt, he

would have taken things from other houses too. The police were glad to have found the thief, for they had been looking for him for a long time—and what do you think they did? They sent to the toy-shop, and they bought a fine pair of skates for Colin!

The little boy opened the parcel, and saw the note with it: “A pair of skates for a good policeman!” and he squealed in delight.

“They are much finer than the ones I had saved up to buy. Oh, I *am* lucky!”

And you should just see him whizzing along on them! Goodness me, he goes as fast as the wind!

The Clockwork Steamer

John had a lovely clockwork steamer. It was blue, with red funnels, and although it wasn't very like the *Queen Mary*, John thought it was. So he called it the *Queen Mary*, and was very proud of it indeed.

He used to wind it up and sail it in his bath every night. Chug-chug-chug-chug, it went, and sailed up and down the bath, knocking into the sponge as it went. It looked fine.

"Mummy, I wish I could sail it on the river," said John one day. "It doesn't get a proper chance in the bath. It's such a fine steamer, it ought to sail on something big, like the river or the sea."

"You would be silly if you did that, John," said his mother. "It would sail right away from you, and you might not get it back again."

"But, Mummy, I could take a stick with me and guide it," said John. "If it tried to get away I could pull it towards the bank."

"No, you mustn't sail it anywhere except in the bath," said Mummy.

Now John was not always obedient, and the more he thought about sailing his boat on the river the more he wanted to. And when he told his friend Joan about it, she longed to see it sailing there too.

"Bring it out this morning and we'll try it," said Joan. This was very naughty of her, because she knew John had been forbidden to do this. "We'll both take long sticks and then we can make sure the steamer will keep near the bank."

So John took his steamer to the river. He wound it up very full. He set it on the water. Chug-chug-chug-chug! it went. The children squealed with joy.

"Doesn't it look lovely! Oh, look at our fine *Queen Mary*!"

The steamer swung away from the bank. John tried to reach her with his stick, but she sailed away so quickly that he couldn't. He slipped—and fell into the river, splash! Joan screamed, and caught hold of his coat. She pulled him out, wet and muddy.

They both began to cry. "I'm wet and cold!" sobbed John. "And my steamer's gone!"

"Come home and get dry," said Joan. "We can't get the *Queen Mary* back. We oughtn't to have brought her. Now we shall be punished."

So two sad children went home, and the little *Queen Mary* went chugging all by herself down the river. She was having a lovely time! This was better than the silly little bath!

"Chug-chug-chug-chug!" Along she went, and came to a family of ducks. "Chug-chug-chug!"

The ducks saw the steamer coming towards them and they quacked in alarm.

"Quack! Quack! What is this creature coming to eat us? It has three red beaks sticking up. Quack! Quack!"

The steamer sailed straight at them and the ducks fled in fright. The steamer laughed in its chuggy voice. What fun it was having!

It sailed on, and soon came to where two moor-hens were playing in the water. "Chug-chug-chug!" said the *Queen Mary*, and sailed straight towards them.

The moor-hens heard it and looked round in alarm. “What is it?” cried one.

“A fish with three mouths sticking up!” cried the other. “Swim away quickly!”

They dived beneath the water and swam away to the opposite bank, only a ripple showing the way they went. The steamer was startled to see them disappear so suddenly, and it wondered what had happened to them.

On it went, enjoying itself tremendously. “Chug-chug-chug! Chug-chug-chug!”

It came to a family of frogs playing in the water. When they heard the *Queen Mary* they looked round, and their big froggy eyes popped in alarm.

“It’s a blue tadpole with three red tails sticking up!” cried a frog, and he dived under the water in alarm. All the others followed him, hoping that the strange creature would go away and leave them in peace.

But the *Queen Mary* stayed there. You see, her clockwork had run down, and she couldn’t sail any more until she was wound up again. So there she floated on the water, no longer saying “chug-chug-chug.”

One by one the frogs popped up their heads and watched her. She seemed quite harmless.

“Do you know,” said one frog, who was wiser than the rest, “I believe it’s a boat. Let’s go and tell the elf who lives on the bank over there.”

So they swam to tell her, and she sat on a frog’s back and rode to the steamer. She clambered on board and cried out in delight to see such a lovely steamer.

“Who will come and see over this fine ship with me?” she cried. Only one frog was brave enough, but he was fond of the little elf and climbed on board. She showed him everything—and then she leaned over and saw the key in the side.

“I believe if we turned that key round and round we could make this steamer go!” she said. “Oh, Frog! This boat is just what we elves want! We could use this steamer to take us from one side of the river to another. Some of us live on one bank and some on the other, and it is such a nuisance to have to sit on a wet frog’s back, with our legs in the water, whenever we want to visit one another! Shall we take this steamer for our own?”

They wound up the *Queen Mary* and the frog steered it from one side of the river to the other. The elf clapped her hands in joy.

“I shall make you a captain’s cap and uniform,” she said, “and you shall be captain of this ship. Will you like that?”

The frog was delighted. In a few hours the elf had made a smart, peaked cap, and a blue uniform with brass buttons all down it. The frog dressed himself up and got into the ship. The elf showed him how to wind it up, and then he started on his new job as captain of the little *Queen Mary*!

And now you should see him every day, taking the elves to and fro in his steamer, looking as smart as can be in his cap and uniform. He says “Aye aye,” instead of “Yes,” whenever anyone speaks to him, so you can tell he is a real sailor now.

As for poor John, he never saw his steamer again—but if he ever tells you how he lost it, just show him this story, will you? I can’t help feeling he would be rather pleased to know that his little *Queen Mary* has a frog for a captain, and elves for her passengers every day of the week!

Hats for a Party

When you next have a birthday party, make some hats for your guests to wear. I will tell you how to make a pointed, magician's hat, a Chinaman's hat and a witch's hat. They are all very easy.

You will want some stiff paper. You can colour it, or you can try and buy coloured paper. You can often buy sheets of this at Christmas-time.

Now we will make the magician's pointed hat first. Cut this out in newspaper first, so that you get an idea of the right size. Once you have the size, you can use the pattern for the real hat.

Now lay your paper, which should be about two and a half feet square, flat on the table. Draw a large circle, as big as you can get on the paper. Mark it into quarters, and cut out one of them. Roll it round and you have a magician's pointed hat. You can adorn it with stars and quarter moons cut out of silver paper. Stick the edge of the hat firmly together with seccotine.

For the Chinaman's hat you will need to cut out *three* quarters of the circle. Stick the edges together and you have a flat, Chinaman's hat. As it won't keep on very well it is best to put something inside as a lining, to make it safe.

The witch's hat is easy. It is just the magician's hat with a round flat brim added. All you need to do to make the brim is to draw a large round circle and cut out a hole big enough to fit your head, and just big enough for the cone-part to slip through, and be held in place by seccotine.

Your guests will love to be presented with one of these hats when they arrive, so make them as gay as possible.

The Peculiar Boots

There was once an impatient pixie who expected every one to be as quick as himself. His name was Lightfoot, and it suited him well, for he was very quick and light on his feet.

"Lightfoot never walks, he always runs!" said his friends, with a laugh. "Look—there he goes, rushing along as usual!"

And there, sure enough, was Lightfoot, hurrying down the village street to do his shopping. But how he hated waiting in the shops to be served! How he hated having to walk slowly behind prams, or behind the old women who went to market each day! How he hated having to walk along with old Father Tap-Tap, who had to go slowly because of his poor bad leg!

Lightfoot lived with his Aunt Snow-White. She had snow-white hair, and was gentle and kind. She used to get cross with Lightfoot because he was so impatient with those who were slower than himself.

"Lightfoot, old people can't help being slow," she would say. "They cannot hurry as you can. Wait till you are old, Lightfoot, and you will soon see how hard it is to hurry or to rush."

"Oh, when I'm old I shall be just as quick as I am now," said Lightfoot scornfully. "You won't see me hobbling along, holding everybody up on the pavement because I am so slow! Indeed you won't!"

He went out and slammed the door, a thing that his Aunt Snow-White hated. He ran down the street in a hurry, nearly knocking over Mrs. Jinky and her pram.

"Bother prams!" said Lightfoot. "Bother all slow people! I don't like them a bit. I believe they are slow on purpose!"

The pavement was crowded with people doing their shopping. Just in front of Lightfoot was an old dame he didn't know. She plodded along slowly, helping herself with a stick. She was big and tall, and Lightfoot tried to push past her. She turned and looked at him angrily.

"Now, now! Who is this, so impatient behind me? What! A young pixie like you pushing an old woman to make her go more quickly! How dare you!"

"Well, you are so slow!" said Lightfoot rudely. "I'm in a hurry. I believe old people are slow just so that they can stop people like me going along quickly."

"What you want is a good lesson," began the old dame, rapping her stick on the pavement. But Lightfoot wasn't going to listen to any lecture. No—he pushed by her and ran down the street as fast as he could go!

He did his shopping and then he thought he would go for a walk on the nearby common, which was a blaze of golden gorse. Off he went, and had a lovely time smelling the delicious gorse-scent, and singing to the rabbits that popped out of their holes. Then he felt tired, so he lay down by a gorse-bush and fell fast asleep. He didn't see the old woman come slowly by. He didn't hear her say, "Oho! Here is that horrid pixie!"

He didn't feel her slip off his pixie-shoes and put them into her bag. He didn't see her put down a pair of fine-looking red boots near him—No—he was fast asleep.

But when he awoke, how surprised he was to find his shoes gone and the beautiful boots standing in their place! He sat up in delight.

"Ah! A present from somebody! How lovely!" said Lightfoot, and he put on the boots at once. They fitted so tightly that he was quite surprised. He stood up and walked a few steps. Yes—there was no doubt about it at all, the boots looked simply grand!

He began to walk home, hoping that every one would admire his boots. But there was suddenly something very peculiar about them. They felt dreadfully heavy—so heavy that Lightfoot could hardly walk along.

"Goodness! They feel as if they are made of iron or something!" said Lightfoot in amazement. "I can't bear it. I shall take them off!"

But he couldn't take them off! They fitted so very, very tightly that it was quite impossible to tug them off his feet. They simply wouldn't come! So he had to go on walking in them.

They hurt him because they were so tight. They hurt his toes, they hurt his heels, they hurt his ankles. They felt as heavy as lead! It was dreadful! Lightfoot found that he could only just hobble along, very, very slowly indeed.

"If only I had a stick!" he groaned. "That would help me!" So he cut himself a stick from the hedge and helped himself along with that. Hobble, hobble, hobble, he went, just like an old, old man.

Every one stared at him. Why, here was Lightfoot, who always ran and never walked, hobbling slowly along with a stick! Whatever had happened to him?

Every one was kind to him. They came and asked him what was the matter. They gave him an arm across the road. They helped him up the hill. They were as kind as they could be, and were not a bit impatient with him.

Only one person was not kind. That was the old woman who had exchanged Lightfoot's shoes for the boots. She was there in the town and she smiled to herself as she saw Lightfoot hobbling past.

"You must have suddenly become old," she said to him as he passed. "Is it nice to have heavy, slow feet, Lightfoot? Is it nice to be slow when you want to be quick?"

Lightfoot went red. He remembered that he had been rude to the old woman. He had pushed her. Now he was walking even more slowly than she had been. He said nothing, but hobbled home to his Aunt Snow-White. She listened very gravely when he told her everything.

"I'm afraid those are magic boots," she said, looking at them. "They have been given to you to teach you a lesson, Lightfoot. They will fall off when you have learnt the lesson!"

So for a whole week poor Lightfoot had to hobble painfully about in the heavy, tight boots, and his feet hurt him so much that he could hardly get along. But his friends were very kind and patient with him and helped him all they could.

And at the end of the week, Lightfoot had learnt his lesson! "I am very sorry I ever was rude or impatient with old or slow people," he said. "I know what it is like now to have slow feet that won't hurry, however much I want them to. And my friends have been so kind to me —far kinder than I ever was to old people myself! I am really ashamed of myself."

And as soon as he said that, the boots fell off his feet, broke into bits and disappeared! Oh, how glad Lightfoot was to see them go! Now he could run and jump again, now he could hurry!

He hurries as much as ever—but he is sweet with old people now, and helps them along all he can. "I'm lucky to be young and quick," he says to them. "Let me help you!" It's no

wonder they all love to see Lightfoot hurrying along down the street to meet them!

The Toy Soldier's Adventure

Once Emily and Robert took some toys out into the garden to play with them. They took the wooden soldier and the clockwork clown. They took the money-box pig, who was quite empty, because the children had taken all their pennies out of his middle the week before to buy a present for their mother's birthday. And they took Waddle, the yellow duck whose head could twist round and round.

Now, when they went into the house again, they quite forgot to take back the money-box pig. They left him out on the grass. But they took the wooden soldier, the clockwork clown, and the yellow duck.

When the children had gone to bed and the nursery was quite quiet, there came a voice that wailed through the nursery.

"Has any one seen my lovely, lovely sword?"

It was the wooden soldier. As soon as he had come alive that night he had found that his fine sword was missing! A wooden soldier is nothing without his sword, and he was most upset.

"We'll look around for it," said the clockwork clown. So he looked. And Waddle the duck looked, and all the dolls, both big and small. But nowhere could they find the sword of the poor wooden soldier!

"It's not among the bricks," said the clown.

"It's not in the toy station anywhere," said the yellow duck.

"It's not anywhere in the dolls' house," said the dolls, walking out of the front door in a row.

"I say!" said the clown suddenly, "where's the old money-box pig? I haven't seen him anywhere to-night!"

"I do believe he must have been left out in the garden!" said the duck, in alarm. "Oh dear—and he is such a timid creature! He is even scared of a spider!"

"Yes," said the big doll, "he is certainly timid. Once when a fly walked over his back he squealed out loudly and said a lion had jumped on him! Whatever shall we do? He will be so very very frightened out in the garden all by himself."

"Wooden soldier, you must go and find him," said the clockwork clown. "Soldiers are always brave."

"I don't feel brave without my sword," said the wooden soldier. "I don't want to go. Suppose I met a cat—or even a mouse—and I hadn't got my sword to frighten it away—I should have to run away myself."

"Don't be such a coward," said the duck. "I always thought you were the bravest of us all. Go out and find the money-box pig and bring him home, soldier."

"I feel too unhappy about my lost sword to do anything at all but wish and wish I could find it," said the soldier sulkily. "Don't bother me about fetching the pig. He's got four legs, hasn't he? Well, then, he can walk home himself."

"That's just what he won't do," said the duck. "He'll be too scared to move a step."

The wooden soldier sat down sulkily on the brick-box, wondering where his nice sword was. But after a bit he began to think of the money-box pig out in the dark and the cold all alone.

"I'd better go and look at him," thought the wooden soldier. "I don't like to think of him squealing out there every time a spider walks over his toes!"

So he slipped down the stairs and out of the back door. He ran down the path to the place where the children had been playing that morning. He ran into a big snail and fell over. He slipped on a fat worm and sat down suddenly. It was very difficult to see anything coming in the dark.

He called the money-box pig softly.

"Pig! China pig! Where are you?"

"Here! Here!" squealed the pig. "Oh, is that you, wooden soldier? I have nearly died of fright out here all by myself. A spider is making a web between my ears, and is tickling me dreadfully, but I can't laugh because I am too frightened. It is terrible to be tickled and not be able to laugh."

"I'm coming, money-box pig," said the wooden soldier, and he made his way over the grass. It was very wet. The soldier got his red trousers dripping wet. He saw a big mouse looking at him with shining eyes, and he wished he had his sword to frighten it away. A mouse was very big to the little soldier.

The mouse ran away. The wooden soldier at last came up to where the pig stood in the damp grass. "Take hold of my coat," said the soldier. "I will lead you back to the nursery."

"Could you take away the spider that is spinning its web between my ears?" asked the pig. "I can't laugh yet, and it does tickle me so."

The soldier brushed away the spider, and it ran into the bushes. Then he and the pig made their way back to the nursery—but at every step the money-box pig rattled in a most peculiar manner!

"What's the matter with your middle?" asked the wooden soldier in surprise. "Have you any pennies in you again? You do make a funny noise when you walk."

"I don't know what's inside me," said the pig mournfully. "A cheeky little pixie spoke to me this evening and popped something into my money-slit—but it wasn't money. Whatever it was makes me rattle dreadfully. I don't like it."

The pig was so glad to be back in the nursery again—and the toys laughed at him because he rattled so loudly when he moved.

"Let's see what the pixie put inside him," said the clockwork clown. So they turned him upside down and shook him till the thing that rattled slid out of the money-slit.

And what do you suppose it was! It was the wooden soldier's sword! Fancy that! It had dropped off into the grass when the children had played with him that morning! The pixie had found it as he came running by that night, and had popped the sword into the money-box pig for mischief! And there it was, as good as ever.

"My sword, my beautiful sword!" cried the soldier in delight, buckling it on again. "Oh, how very happy I am!"

"And so am I," said the money-box pig, standing the right way up again. "You came to find me, all in the dark and cold, soldier—and I brought you back your sword, though you didn't know it! You were kind to me, and your kindness gave back to you the sword you had lost!"

"That's *wonderful*," said the clockwork clown. And so it was.

The Little Brownie House

Kim and Mickle were very worried. They were brownies who lived in a tree-house—and now the woodman had come to chop down their tree.

"We shall have to move," said Kim. "And quickly too, or the tree will come down and all our furniture with it! Hurry, Mickle, and get it all out."

So the brownies took their furniture on their shoulders and piled it on the grass outside. There it stood, and there the brownies stood too, wondering where to go.

They borrowed a hand-cart from Bonny the pixie and put the furniture on it, ready to wheel away. But there really seemed nowhere at all to go. There had been so many old trees cut down in the wood that other people had taken all the empty houses there were.

"There's not even a hole in a bank we can have," said Kim. "At least, there's one—but the fox lives there, and he doesn't smell very nice."

"Oh, we can't go there," said Mickle. "We'd have to hold our noses all the time!"

"Well, let's wheel our barrow round a bit and see if there's any empty house we can go to," said Kim. So, with the noise of the woodman's axe ringing in their ears, they wheeled their cart away, with their two little beds, their two little chairs, their table, cupboard, curtains, and mats on it, looking rather forlorn.

They came at last to a high hedge. At the bottom was a gap, so they wheeled the barrow through—and there in a garden was a little empty house! It was painted brown, and had a big open doorway.

With the noise of the woodman's axe ringing in their ears, they wheeled their cart away.

"I say! Look at this!" cried Kim, running to it. "An empty house—just our size too! What about living here? There's nothing in the house at all, except some old straw."

"It's fine," said Mickle. "But it's rather a funny house, Kim—there's no door—and no window either!"

"Well, that doesn't matter, Mickle!" said Kim. "We can easily make a door, and just as easily make a window! Oh, Mickle—it will be fun living in this little house, won't it!"

Well, the two brownies moved in. The house was exactly right for them. They put in their beds, one on each side of the room, for the house had only the one room. "Our beds can do for couches in the daytime," said Kim.

They put the table in the middle, and the chairs beside it. They put the cupboard at the back, and spread the rugs on the floor. You can't think how lovely it all looked when it was done.

They had a tiny jam-jar and Kim went to fetch some daisies for it. He put the vase of daisies in the middle of the table.

Mickle put the clock on the cupboard and wound it up. Tick-tick-tock-tock! it went.

"There now," said Kim. "Flowers on the table—and a clock ticking. It's home, real home, isn't it!"

The brownies were very happy. The little house looked out on to a garden belonging to a big house built of brick. People lived there, and two children often came out of the house to play. But they never came to the brownie's house.

"It's a good thing our house is right at the bottom of the garden, where nobody ever comes," said Kim. "Now, Mickle—what about making a door? The rain came in yesterday and wetted the carpet."

So the two brownies set about making a door. They found a nice piece of wood, and with their tools they made it just the right size for a door. They painted it blue, and hung it on the doorway with two little brass hinges. It opened and shut beautifully.

They put a knocker on it and made a slit for a letter-box. It did look nice.

"And now we'd better make two little windows," said Mickle. "When we have the door shut our house is very dark and stuffy. We will make a little window each side and find some glass to put in."

So they carved out two squares for windows, and found some broken glass by the garden frames. They cut two pieces to the right size, and fitted them in. Then they cleaned the windows, and hung up blue curtains.

"Really, it looks simply lovely now!" said Kim. "The door is such a nice blue and the knocker shines so brightly, and the curtains at the windows look so pretty. I think we ought to have a party."

"Yes, we ought," said Mickle. "But if we give a party, we must make cakes. And we can't bake cakes unless we have an oven and a chimney—and there isn't a chimney, you know."

So they made a chimney, and bought a nice little oven from the pixie down the way. They fixed it into the corner, and then lighted a fire. The smoke went straight up the chimney and away into the garden. It was marvellous! The oven cooked beautifully, and what a delicious smell came from it the first time that the brownies cooked buns and cakes!

They made a chimney, and bought a nice little oven.

They sent out the invitations to the party. "Every one will love our little house," said Kim. "They will think we are very, very lucky to have found it. I do wonder who it belonged to. We have never heard."

Now, on the day of the party, Kim and Mickle began to do a great cleaning and cooking. All the mats were shaken, the windows were cleaned, the knocker was polished, and the stove cooked cakes, buns, and biscuits without stopping. It was great fun.

And then something extraordinary happened! A voice outside the house cried out, "Look at this! There's somebody living here!"

The brownies peeped out of the window and saw two children, a boy and a girl, staring in the greatest astonishment at their house. "Goodness!" said Mickle, "do you suppose it's *their* house, and they want to come back and live in it? Oh dear, I do hope they won't turn us out!"

"We'd better go and ask them," said Kim. But before he could do that, somebody knocked at the door. They used the little knocker—rat-a-tat-tat! Kim opened the door. He saw the two children looking down at him in delight and surprise.

"Hallo!" said the boy. "Do you really live here?"

"Yes," said Kim. "I hope you don't mind. It was empty when we found it, and there was nobody to say who it belonged to. Do *you* want to come and live here?"

The children laughed and laughed. "No, you funny little thing!" said the girl. "Of course we don't. We live in that big house up the garden."

"Oh, then this isn't your house?" said Kim.

Kim opened the door.

It was such a treat to sit and look at all the little folk coming to the dog's kennel.

"It used to be our dog's kennel," said the boy with a giggle. "But we don't keep a dog now, so the kennel has been empty for a long time. To-day we saw smoke at the bottom of the garden, and we came down to see what it was. And we suddenly saw a chimney on our dog's kennel, and two little windows, and a front door with a knocker!"

"We *did* get a surprise!" said the girl. "But oh, it's simply lovely! You have made the kennel into the dearest, prettiest little house I ever saw in my life!"

"So it was your dog's kennel!" said Mickle. "Oh, I do hope you won't want it for another dog."

"No; Mummy says dogs bark too much," said the boy. "So you're quite safe."

"May we really go on living here, then?" asked Kim, in delight.

"Of course," said the girl. "We'll never tell anyone about you; we promise. But please, please may we sometimes come down, knock at your door, and talk to you? You know, it's *awfully* exciting to have a brownie house at the bottom of our garden, with real brownies living there."

"You *are* nice," said Mickle. "Listen—we're having a party this afternoon. Would you like to come? You can't get inside the house comfortably, I'm afraid, but you could eat buns and biscuits out on the grass."

The two children squealed with joy. "Oh, *yes*!" said the girl. "Do, do let us come. We shall see all your friends then. And oh, little brownie, would you like me to lend you my best doll's tea-set for the party? It's very pretty, with a blue-and-yellow pattern."

"Thank you very much," said Mickle. "We haven't really got enough cups and plates, and we'd love to borrow yours."

So they borrowed the tea-set, and it looked fine in the little brownie house, set out on the round table. The party was simply lovely—but the two who enjoyed it most were the children, as you can guess. It was such a treat to sit and look at all the little folk coming to the dog's kennel, dressed in their best, knocking at the blue door, and saying, "How do you do?" to Mickle and Kim!

I won't tell you the names of the children, in case you know them—because they don't want anyone else to visit the brownie house and frighten away their tiny friends. But don't you think they're lucky to have a dog-kennel that is used by Mickle and Kim? Wouldn't I just love to visit there!

Cross Aunt Tabitha

Aunt Tabitha was rather a strict old lady. When her nieces went to stay with her, they were very careful how they behaved. They said “please” and “thank you” when they should, and they always opened the door for Aunt Tabitha and fetched her footstool as soon as she sat in her chair.

When Phyllis and Jane went to stay with her, they felt rather frightened. They did hope they would do everything they should. They meant to try very hard.

But Phyllis was rather a noisy child and banged doors behind her. So Aunt Tabitha was cross and spoke sharply.

And then Jane upset her tea all over the clean tablecloth and that made Aunt Tabitha cross too. They went to bed the first night feeling rather upset.

“I hope Aunt Tabitha isn’t going to be cross all the time,” said Phyllis.

“I shall go home if she is!” said Jane. “I don’t like her.”

“Well, we’ll see what happens to-morrow,” said Phyllis. “I shall try my hardest not to bang doors.”

She didn’t bang a door—but she forgot to wipe her feet on the mat and brought mud in all over the blue drawing-room carpet. Aunt Tabitha frowned when she saw it.

“Get the dust-pan and brush and sweep up the mud as soon as it is dry,” she said.

And then Jane knocked against a little table, upset a glass vase and down it went with a crash. It broke into about a hundred pieces!

Aunt Tabitha was very angry. “If you are clumsy again I shall send you up to bed,” she said.

Poor Phyllis and Jane! It was really very difficult for them to be sweet and smiling to some one who scolded them so hard. But they knew that Aunt Tabitha was old, and Mother had said that old people were not so patient as younger ones.

“She’s nice when she smiles,” said Phyllis. “But I wish she’d smile oftener.”

“I think we’ll go home,” said Jane, who was rather afraid of being sent to bed if she did anything else to displease her aunt. “I’ll pack our bag. We can slip out of the house and go home without anyone knowing.”

Just then the maid came in, looking very pale. “Please, Miss Phyllis and Miss Jane,” she said. “I feel ill. Do you think you could manage to get your aunt’s tea if I leave it ready?”

“Of course,” said Jane at once. “Go and lie down, Mary. You do look ill. We can manage.”

“I meant to finish turning out your aunt’s little sewing-room,” said Mary. “I’m in the middle of it now. But I feel so queer I really think I’d better leave it till to-morrow.”

The maid went to her room. The two girls looked at one another. “We can’t slip home now,” said Jane. “It would be mean. We must stay and help.”

“Do you think we’d better try and finish turning out Aunt Tabitha’s sewing-room?” said Phyllis. “It would be kind to Mary to do it. And Aunt Tabitha does hate to see a room upside down. Let’s do it!”

So the two girls got dusters, brooms and mops, and went to finish turning out the sewing-room. Aunt Tabitha was having a nap in the drawing-room, and didn't know what they were doing at all.

The room was upside down, for Mary had been in the middle of turning it out. The girls swept the ceiling free of cobwebs. They swept the carpets. They polished the boards. Then they wondered if they ought to take the chair cushions into the garden and bang them to get rid of the dust.

"Well, we might as well be thorough!" said Jane. "Look—the seat of this chair comes out. Shall we take it right out and dust underneath properly?"

"Yes," said Phyllis. "Come on—tug!"

The seat of the chair, which was an enormous velvet cushion, came out with a jerk. The girls were just going to take it downstairs to beat, when Jane caught sight of something deep down in the under-seat of the chair. She put her hand down and pulled it out. It was a flat leather case. She opened it—and gave a loud cry.

"Phyllis! This case is full of paper money. Look—pound notes—and ten-shilling notes! Good gracious! Who do you suppose it belongs to?"

"I can't imagine. We'll tell Aunt Tabitha at tea-time and see what she says," said Phyllis, excited. "I daren't wake her now. Come on—let's finish our job. Put the case somewhere safe till tea-time."

At tea-time the two girls took in the tea-tray most carefully. Phyllis had made the tea, and had filled the hot-water jug. The bread-and-butter was already cut. The cake Jane had taken out of the tin and put on a plate.

"Dear me! Where is Mary?" asked Aunt Tabitha in surprise, when the girls came in with the tea-things.

"She's not feeling well," said Jane. "So she is lying down for a little while. She was in the middle of turning out your little sewing-room, Aunt Tabitha, and we thought we would finish it for her. We took the big seat out of the old arm-chair there, to beat the dust from it—and right down under the seat we found *this*!"

Jane gave her aunt the leather case. Aunt Tabitha stared at it in the greatest amazement and delight.

"My lost note-case!" she cried. "Oh, to think it's found again! There are twenty pounds in it! I lost it nearly two years ago, and hunted for it everywhere! Well, well, well!"

"Oh, Aunt Tabitha—I *am* pleased for you!" cried Phyllis. "I know how horrid it is to lose things—and how lovely to find them again!"

"I do think you are good children to finish turning out the sewing-room," said Aunt Tabitha. "And to think you were thorough enough to take the cushion-seat out of the chairs to beat! Well, well! I've thought you were rather careless children—but I'm sorry I thought that now. I think you are good and helpful children, and I am pleased with you!"

Phyllis and Jane went red with pleasure. They each thought how nearly they had slipped away and gone home, but they did not want to tell Aunt Tabitha that. Instead they sat and ate a good tea, and had two slices of cake each because Aunt Tabitha was so pleased with them.

And the next day their aunt took them shopping. She bought a big baby-doll for Jane, with eyes that opened and shut, and a doll's house for Phyllis, with real electric lights in the rooms. It was marvellous.

"That's your share of the twenty pounds you found!" said Aunt Tabitha. "Nice children! Good children! I'm glad you are staying with me!"

“We’re glad, too,” said Jane, and she hugged her aunt hard. And, dear me, wasn’t it a good thing they didn’t run away the day before! You never know how things are going to turn out, do you? It’s always best to go on trying, no matter what happens.

The Balloon in the Tree

Once there was a pixie called Winks who had a fine big blue balloon. He had got it at a party, and he was very proud of it indeed. It had a long string, and Winks took it with him wherever he went.

One day he went out with his balloon, and the wind blew so hard that it tugged the string out of Winks's hand. The balloon went up into the air, and flew straight into a tall tree. There it stuck, high up on a branch, wobbling a little whenever the wind blew.

"Oh!" cried Winks in dismay. "Come down, balloon! How silly you look up there! Come down."

The balloon took no notice of Winks at all. It just sat up in the tree and wobbled. Winks wondered if he could climb the tree and fetch it down. But it was much too hard a tree to climb.

"Oh dear! I can't lose my lovely balloon!" said Winks. "I really can't. I wonder what I can do to get it down."

Now just then who should come by but Mister Hobble with his stick. Winks ran up to him.

"Mister Hobble! Give me your stick for a minute! I want to get down my balloon."

He snatched away Mister Hobble's stick and ran back to the tree. But the stick wouldn't reach even half-way to the balloon. So Winks threw the stick up into the tree, hoping to move the balloon and make it float down.

But alas! The stick flew up and stayed in the tree. Its curved handle hung on a branch and there the stick swung, just by the balloon. Mister Hobble was very angry indeed.

"How dare you do that!" he cried. "You wicked pixie! If you don't get my stick down for me I will shake you till your teeth rattle like dice!"

Winks was frightened. Then he saw Miss Sally Simple coming along with a fine fat red umbrella. He ran up to her.

"Sally Simple! Let me have your umbrella for a minute. Mister Hobble's stick is stuck up in the tree and I must get it down for him."

He snatched at Sally's umbrella, and ran back to the tree. He sent the umbrella flying up into the branches to hit the stick down—but alas and alack, it too stuck up in the tree, its handle swinging from a high branch!

Well, if Mister Hobble was angry, Sally Simple was even angrier. She shook Winks hard and cried, "If you don't climb up that tree and get down my umbrella I'll drop you splash into that pond over there!"

Winks began to cry. This was dreadful. Whatever was he to do?

Then he saw Mister Dig the gardener coming along, his spade over his shoulder. He ran up to him.

"Mister Dig, dear Mister Dig, lend me your spade to get down Sally Simple's umbrella from that tree!" he cried.

Before Mister Dig could say yes or no, Winks had snatched the spade from him and had run back to the tree. Up went the spade—crash into the tree. It didn't hit the stick. It didn't hit

the umbrella. It just broke two or three small branches—and then stayed high up in the tree, looking very peculiar there along with the balloon, the stick, and the umbrella!

"Now, look here, Winks, what in the wide world do you think you are doing?" cried Mister Dig angrily. "Are you making that tree into a Christmas-tree and hanging it with presents for somebody—because that is what it is beginning to look like! Now just you get my spade for me, or I'll put you into that holly bush over there!"

Well, Mister Dig looked so fierce that Winks began to shiver and shake. He couldn't think *what* to do. And then he saw little Mrs. Dot coming with her tennis-racket. She was on her way to a party. He ran up to her at once.

"Mrs. Dot, be a pet and lend me your racket for a minute. I want to get Mister Dig's spade down from that tree. It's stuck up there."

"But how did it get up there?" asked Mrs. Dot in great surprise. "My goodness—look at the things up there! Whatever's happened? Winks, you are not to throw my racket up into that tree. I forbid you to!"

But the racket had already gone! And there it stuck, of course, looking just as silly as all the other things. Mrs. Dot was so angry that she went as red as the bow on her frock.

"Mister Dig! Sally Simple! Mister Hobble! How can you stand there and let Winks do these things. Here, take hold of one of his arms, Mister Dig. We'll send him up into the tree to fetch down our things! Now, are you ready—one—two—three—and *up* he goes!"

And up Winks went! My goodness, what a shock he got! He flew through the air right up into the tree and landed just by the spade. He wept bitterly and pushed the spade off the branch. It fell down to the ground and Mister Dig went off with it.

Then Winks pushed down Sally's umbrella. She went off with that. Next, Mister Hobble's stick fell down, and after that Mrs. Dot's racket. The two of them walked off, talking loudly about people who threw things up into trees.

"Hie! Come back and help me down!" yelled Winks, who knew quite well that he couldn't climb down by himself. But nobody paid the least attention to him and soon he was quite alone up in the tree. The wind came to have a look at him—and it blew the balloon right out of the tree! Winks saw it flying down, down, down—and he saw the sandy rabbit come out of his hole to have a look at it. He saw the sandy rabbit nibble it to see if it tasted good—and he heard a loud POP and the balloon burst into bits! The sandy rabbit turned and fled for his life and didn't come out of his hole again for two days.

"There goes my balloon!" wept poor Winks. "Oh, dear, what an unlucky fellow I am! Whenever shall I get down from this horrible tree? Perhaps I shall be here all my life long!"

Well, he won't be—but he'll have to stay there until the evening when Mister Dig comes back from his work and will get a ladder to help him down. Poor Winks—he won't throw things up into trees again for a very long time!

The Little Lost Hen

One afternoon, when Harry was coming home from school, he saw a little red hen. That doesn't sound very surprising, but when I tell you that the hen was just about to cross the road in the busy street, all by itself, you will see why Harry was rather astonished.

"Goodness!" said Harry, in surprise. "What is that hen doing in the middle of the town all by itself? It will get run over if it tries to cross this busy street. It must have escaped from somewhere and got lost."

A car hooted at the hen and it ran back to the kerb, fluttering its red feathers and squawking loudly. Harry was worried. What was he to do? You couldn't tell a hen to go home, as you could tell a dog.

"There's nothing to be done but to pick up the hen and take it home with me," thought Harry. "I can put it into my nursery until I know who the owner is."

Now Harry wasn't very good at picking up birds. Some people love picking up anything, and don't mind touching worms or spiders. It is good to be like that, but Harry wasn't. He shivered when he tried to pick up the hen. He didn't like it at all.

The hen was so frightened that she let herself be picked up without struggling a bit. Harry managed to get her under his left arm, and held her there with his right hand. She tried to peck him and he nearly dropped her. But he just managed to hold on, and off he went home, with the hen under his arm.

When he got home he called for his mother, but she was out. Jane, the maid, was in the garden hanging out some tea-cloths. So Harry went into the house by himself, carrying the little lost hen.

He went to his nursery and looked round. Where could he put the hen to make her comfortable? He saw his barrow there, and he carefully put the hen into it.

But she was out at once and ran clucking all round the nursery in a great way because she didn't know where she was.

"Oh, Hen, don't be so silly," said Harry. "Are you hungry? Stop pecking at my soldiers, please!"

Harry went out and shut the door. He went to the cupboard where Mother kept the seed for her pigeons and got a handful from a bag. Then back he went to the nursery.

"Kuk-kuk-kuk-kuk-kuk!" said the hen, running to Harry.

"Kuk-kuk," answered the boy, and threw a handful of seed on the carpet. The hen pecked it up greedily. Then she cocked her bright-eyed head on one side and looked at Harry.

"Kuk-kuk-kuk!" she said in a very kindly tone. Harry didn't understand what she said, but what she meant was that she thought he was a very kind little boy. She began to peck up the rest of the seed.

Then Harry heard his mother's voice and he flew downstairs to tell her about the little lost hen. But Mother had a visitor with her, and Harry had to be quiet and not say a word except how-do-you-do. Mother wouldn't let him talk when visitors were there, unless he was spoken to.

But after a while Mother heard a peculiar noise from the nursery, and she frowned.

"I wonder what that funny noise upstairs is," she said. "It's very queer!"

Everybody listened—and they could hear the hen clucking loudly. Then suddenly she cackled at the top of her voice!

"Cackle-cackle-cackle, cluck, cluck, cluck!"

"It sounds like a hen!" said Mother in astonishment. "Well, I never!"

"It *is* a hen!" said Harry, and he told his mother all about the little hen he had found trying to cross the street.

"Harry! Do you really mean to say that you put the hen in the nursery!" said Mother. "Oh, whatever will you do next!"

"It must be Mrs. White's hen," said the visitor, Miss Brown. "She told me this morning that her favourite red hen had escaped, and she didn't know where it had gone!"

"Oh, then, do you mind taking it back to her?" cried Harry. "The poor little hen feels so strange in my nursery. It would be so pleased to go back home again to all its friends."

"Of course I will," said Miss Brown, and they all went upstairs. There was the hen, scratching at the carpet, and clucking softly to itself. It ran to Harry and pecked at a freckle on his legs. Miss Brown picked it up.

"Would you like a basket to take it home in?" asked Harry's mother.

"Oh no. I like the nice soft warm feel of a hen," said Miss Brown, cuddling the little red hen to her. "My word, won't Mrs. White be pleased when she sees me walking in with her lost hen! It is her very favourite one, and lays her a big brown egg every day."

"I love brown eggs," said Harry. "They taste much nicer than white ones. I wish I had a hen that laid me brown eggs."

"We haven't room in our garden to keep hens," said Mother. "Well, good-bye, Miss Brown, and I do hope the hen will behave itself and not try to get out of your arms!"

Miss Brown and the hen went away. Harry felt quite lonely without the little red hen in his nursery. He wandered round by himself, wondering what to play with. He thought he would play with the soldiers in his toy fort.

So he went over to the fort—but before he could pick up any of his soldiers he saw something that made him stare and stare!

In the very middle of his toy fort was a big brown egg! Yes—there it lay among the soldiers, big and brown and smooth. Harry gave a scream of joy and picked it up. It was warm—as warm as toast!

"Mother! Mother! Come and look here!" yelled Harry. "Oh, quick, do come!"

Mother came rushing in—and when she saw the egg she laughed and laughed.

"Well, really, Harry, this is the funniest thing I ever heard of! You find a hen and bring it to your nursery and feed it—and it lays an egg in your toy fort! I will ring up Mrs. White and tell her, and you can take the egg round to her in a basket."

So Mother rang up Mrs. White and told her. When she put down the telephone she turned to Harry.

"Mrs. White says that the hen must have meant the egg for *you*, Harry, in return for your kindness," said Mother. "She says you are to keep it and eat it for breakfast!"

"Oh, Mother! What a surprise! And I do so like brown eggs!" said Harry in delight. "How kind of the hen to think of me like that!"

So Harry had the brown egg for his breakfast, and he told me that it was the very nicest one he had ever had in his life. Wasn't he lucky?

Peggy Dolls

Have you ever made Peggy-dolls? They're so easy to make, and it's a bit of fun for a rainy day.

Ask Mummy for some of her clothes pegs. Get some wire, a pen and ink, and ask Mummy if you can borrow her scrap-bag for the afternoon.

Now for a Peggy-doll. Take a peg. Draw a face at the top. Wind a bit of wire round, near the bottom of the face, and leave two ends loose for arms.

Now rummage through Mummy's scraps and see what you can find for clothes. Your Peggy-doll will want a hat, of course. If it's a boy doll, the bottom part of the peg takes trousers well. If it's a girl-doll, tie the dress round in the middle to give her a bit of a waist.

You can easily draw socks and shoes on the ends of the peg. If you want the doll to stand up, get a big flat cork, and slice it in half. Make slits in it. Stick your doll's feet into the slits—and she will stand!

You can make a whole family of Peggy-dolls, and stand them up on your mantelpiece. They will look a most amusing collection standing up there in a row.

The Wishing Wand

Once there was great excitement in Feefo Village because the Lord Chamberlain had promised wishing-wands to all the pixies and fairies.

"You have behaved very well this year," said the Chamberlain. "Every one has been kind and good, so, on the first day of spring, I will come to each house and give all of you a wishing-wand."

Now the pixies and fairies long to have a wishing-wand more than anything else in the world, because if they have a magic wand their wishes will come true. So you can imagine that every one in Feefo Village was very excited.

Most excited of all were the two pixies who lived in Corner Cottage. They hadn't always been very good, but that year they really had tried their best—and now they were to have a wishing-wand like everyone else. They *were* pleased!

When the day came for the wands to be given to each of them, the two pixies, Pickle and Goof, went out into their little front garden to enjoy the sunshine of the first day of spring. They had on their best suits, for they knew that the Lord Chamberlain would call on them before long.

They sat on the edge of their well and waited. They talked about their wands.

"I shall wish such a lot of wishes with my wand," said Pickle. "I shall wish for a pair of new shoes, to begin with. I haven't had a new pair for years, and my old ones look dreadful with this nice new suit."

"I shall wish for a new hat, with a pink feather," said Goof.

"A *pink* feather!" said Pickle. "Why a *pink* feather? Pink's an ugly colour."

"It isn't," said Goof. "It's lovely. Why, roses are pink, aren't they, and the sunset clouds? So I shall have a pink feather. And what's more, I shall wish for pink cushions in the kitchen chairs, and a pink carpet on the floor."

"Indeed you won't," said Pickle. "I won't have pink things all over my kitchen. I shall wish for blue."

"And I shall wish for a nice large brown dog," said Goof, taking no notice of Pickle. "One that will belong to me and nobody else."

"You can't wish for a dog," said Pickle at once. "You know how we've always said we'd have a cat. Well, I want a cat, and your dog won't get on with it. I shall wish for a cat with long, long claws that will scratch your dog if you wish for one."

"Be quiet, Pickle," said Goof crossly. "I'm thinking of my wishes. My dog will eat your cat if you are so silly as to wish for one. I shall wish for a motor-car too—a yellow one with blue spots."

"How terrible!" said Pickle. "I won't be seen out in a car like that."

"Well, you needn't come out with me if you don't want to," said Goof. "I can go out with Gobo or Tinks."

"Whatever car we have *I* shall share," said Pickle crossly. "And I tell you I won't have a yellow one with blue spots. I shall wish for my own car—it shall be dark blue with red

wheels."

"Our garage will only take one car," said Goof. "So you'll have to put up with mine. Ha ha!"

Pickle glared at him. "Then I shall wish for another garage!" he said. "And I shall put my car in that."

"You can't wish for another garage," said Goof. "There are houses each side of us, and there's no room for one. Ha ha, again!"

"Stop ha-ha-ing at me!" said Pickle, getting really angry. "If I want another garage I shall have one. I shall wish away the houses next door, and then there will be plenty of room for a garage for my blue car."

"You wicked pixie!" cried Goof. "How dare you wish away Dame Clap's house and Mister Tibs' house! What would they do?"

"Oh, I'd wish away their houses to the hilltop over there," said Pickle. "And if you aren't careful I might wish you and your horrid dog away to the hilltop too."

"*Pickle!*" cried Goof in horror. "You wouldn't do such a thing!"

"Well, *I* don't want to live with a person who wears pink feathers and drives about in a yellow motor-car with blue spots. So there!"

"Pickle, if you aren't very careful, I shall wish you a hard spanking," said Goof solemnly. "Yes, a very hard spanking that you won't like at all."

"And who'll give me the spanking I'd like to know?" shouted Pickle angrily. "Not you, Goof, I know that!"

"Oh yes, I would," said Goof. "I can spank hard."

"You can't," said Pickle. "I wouldn't let you. I'd spank you first!"

"Oh no, you wouldn't," said Goof.

"Oh yes, I would," said Pickle.

"Oh no, you wouldn't," said Goof. "I'd get my spank in first—like that!" And he slapped Pickle hard on the arm. Pickle gave a roar of rage and smacked Goof on the chest. Goof slapped Pickle on the cheek and Pickle hit Goof so hard on the nose that poor Goof fell backwards, lost his balance—and disappeared down the well!

"Oooooh!" shrieked Pickle in fright, for he hadn't meant to push Goof down the well. He clutched at him and caught Goof's leg—but alas for Pickle! he fell over the edge too, and down they both went—down, down, down into the dark cold water at the bottom.

Splash! They hit the water, went under and bobbed up again. The well was not very deep. They could just stand—but, oh dear, how in the world were they to get out again! The sides of the well were made of brick and were steep and smooth. It was no use trying to climb up.

"Let's shout!" said Goof, shivering. So they shouted, "Help! Help! We're down the well!"

But their voices were lost in the deep round well, and nobody heard.

It was a pity they had fallen down the well just at that moment, because the Lord Chamberlain came down the lane to their house, to give them their wishing-wands. He went up the path to the front door and knocked. Nobody answered, of course, because the two pixies were at the bottom of the well. The Lord Chamberlain knocked again and again. Still no answer.

"Most extraordinary," said the Chamberlain crossly. "Nobody about at all, and orders were given to everyone who wanted a wand to be at home to-day. Well, if Pickle and Goof are not at home they can't have their wands. I shall send them back to the Fairy Queen, and she can give them to someone else."

He went to the next house. He didn't hear Goof and Pickle calling and shouting. Nobody heard them at all, and it wasn't until Mother Clap came to get some water that evening, that the pixies were found.

"Oooooh!" shrieked Mother Clap, when she saw two round, white faces looking up at her out of the bottom of the well. "What's down there—what's down there?"

"It's only us," shouted Goof. "It's Goof and Pickle. We fell down. Get a ladder for us, dear Dame Clap."

"I can do something better than that for you," said Dame Clap, and she took her wishing-wand and waved it over the well. "I wish you both out here beside me."

At once Pickle and Goof flew out of the well and landed in surprise beside Dame Clap.

"Oh dear! Has everyone got their wands?" said Goof sadly.

"Every one but you," said Dame Clap. "The Chamberlain said you weren't at home this afternoon, so he has sent your wands back to the Queen. Whatever were you doing?"

"Well—er—well, we—we just fell down the well," said Goof, feeling very much ashamed. "That's all."

"Quarrelling again, I suppose!" said Dame Clap. "I thought you had given that up, and meant to behave yourselves. Well, you've lost your wishing-wands *this* year—and serve you right, if you can't be nice to one another!"

Off she went, and left Goof and Pickle alone. They looked at one another, very red in the face.

"Sorry, Goof," said Pickle in a small voice.

"Sorry, Pickle," said Goof in a smaller voice. Then, arm in arm, they went indoors to get dry. Weren't they a couple of sillies?

A Box of Smoke Rings

"Granpa, I wish you'd blow some smoke-rings," said Eileen. So Granpa put back his head, pursed up his lips and blew out smoke.

But it wouldn't come out in rings. It was most disappointing. "Never mind," said Granpa. "I'll make you a box of smoke-rings. You go and ask Mummy for an old cardboard box—an empty porridge carton will do. And ask for a sheet of grease-proof paper. Then you'll just see what I can do!"

Eileen fetched an old cardboard box and a sheet of grease-proof paper. Granpa took the box and cut away both ends. Then he pasted a piece of grease-proof paper neatly over each of the open ends. He cut a small hole in one end, about an inch across.

"Now," he said, "I'll just light my pipe and get it going. Then I'll fill this box with smoke—and you can make dozens and dozens of smoke-rings for yourself!"

Eileen watched whilst Granpa lighted his pipe. He puffed hard at it and got it going. Soon thick smoke rose up from it. "Now," said Granpa, "I'll puff through the hole in that box and fill it full of smoke. Watch."

So he puffed the smoke in at the hole. "Now," he said to Eileen, "tap the other end of the box with your finger. That's it. Now see what happens!"

As Eileen tapped, a beautiful ring of smoke came out of the hole and rose into the air. Eileen tapped again. Another ring appeared, and as she went on tapping, more and more rings came out and floated gently across the room.

"Oh! It's a lovely idea!" said Eileen. "A box full of smoke-rings! Thank you, Granpa."

"So long as you keep the box out of a draught, you can tap out as many smoke-rings as you like," said Granpa. "Tell me when you've no more smoke left—and I'll puff plenty in through the hole again!"

Ask *your* Granpa to fill a box full of smoke-rings for you. Tap it—and see them come out. It really is fun to watch.

The Broken Gate

Old Man Twinkle wanted a boy to help him in his shop. He needed a boy who could drive Jenny, the pony, for all Twinkle's goods were taken round in the cart.

So Old Man Twinkle put a notice in his window: "WANTED—BOY TO HELP (After School Hours)."

All the boys saw the notice and many of them thought they would try for the job. They could do it after school, and on Saturdays, and it would be a good job, for Old Man Twinkle was generous and kind.

"It means good food, good pocket-money, and great fun driving Jenny round to deliver goods," said George. "I'm going after that job!"

"So am I," said Henry. "My mother could do with a bit of extra money and so could I."

"And I'd love to drive old Jenny," said Peter. "I could give you all rides."

"You're not allowed to do that," said Jack, the smallest. "Old Man Twinkle always says that Jenny has enough to pull without taking on extra passengers."

"Pooh! I don't care what Old Man Twinkle says," said Harry. "If *I* got the job I'd do the same as Peter—give you all a ride if I met you!"

"Shall you try for the job too, Jack?" asked George.

"No! What good would I be?" said Jack. "I'm too small—and look at my clothes! I don't look good enough to go after a job."

"I bet *I*'ll get it," said George. "I'm the biggest of you all!"

"Well, I'm top of the class, so my brains ought to get it for *me*!" said Henry.

"And I *look* the best," said Harry, smoothing down his new suit. He was always nicely dressed and neat.

"My father knows Old Man Twinkle well," said Peter. "I guess I'll get the job because Twinkle likes my father."

"Well, we'll see," said George. "It's a pity Jack can't try for the job too—but he's so small, and not a bit strong, and he does look rather ragged. I wonder which of us will get it. Hope *I* do! I'd like a good meal every evening, and money in my pocket—and shouldn't I feel grand trotting along with Jenny the pony!"

That evening all the boys went to see Old Man Twinkle. Jack went too, to see who would get the job. Old Man Twinkle wasn't ready to see anyone for the moment, so he told the boys to play in the yard till he called them.

"I say! Let's have a swing on that gate!" said Harry, seeing an enormous yard-gate swinging to and fro in the wind. "Come on—let's get up on it and pretend we are riding a horse!"

All five boys climbed up on to the gate. They shouted and pretended to whip the gate to make it gallop. It swung to and fro, and the boys shouted with delight.

And then suddenly something happened. The gate was old, and was not meant to carry five heavy boys! It broke away at the hinges, and the boys found themselves sliding off! The gate gave a groan and hung all crooked, swinging in a very peculiar manner.

"I say! We've broken the gate!" said Harry in a small voice.

"What will Old Man Twinkle say?" asked Peter. "He will be angry!"

"Don't let's tell him," said George. "He's at the front of the shop. He can't see what's happened."

"But we *ought* to tell him," said Jack. "It's rather cowardly not to. My mother says we always ought to own up at once when anything's broken. Can't we all five go and tell him?"

"No," said Henry. "He might say he won't give any of us the job if we've done a thing like that. We won't say a word."

"Right," said Harry. "Look—Old Man Twinkle is shouting to us. I'll go first."

He went to see the old man. Twinkle asked him some questions, and at the end he suddenly said, "Do you know anything about that broken gate?"

"Er—is it broken, sir?" said Harry, pretending to be surprised.

"Yes, it is," said Twinkle, rather sharply. "You can go now. Send in the next boy."

Peter came in, and Twinkle asked him the same sort of questions that he had asked Harry. And at the end he suddenly shot the same question at him, "Do you know anything about that broken gate?"

"Oh no, sir!" said Peter untruthfully.

"You may go," said Twinkle. "Send in the next boy. I'll make my choice when I've seen you all."

George came in, and after a while Twinkle asked him the same question, "Do you know anything about that broken gate?"

"It was broken when we came in, sir," said George most untruthfully, and he blushed red, for he knew he should never tell stories like that.

"Really?" said Twinkle, and he frowned. "You may go. Send in the next boy."

Henry came in, and he had the same question asked him at the end, "Do you know anything about that broken gate?"

"*I* didn't break it, sir," said Henry.

"Are you sure you didn't?" asked Twinkle.

"Quite sure," said Henry.

"You may go," said Twinkle. "Send in the next boy."

"I'm the last," said Henry. "And please, sir, I'm the top of my class and my master says I've got good brains. I'm sure I'd do well for you, sir."

"I'll make my choice this evening, sometime," said Twinkle. "It's not only cleverness I want. It's something bigger."

"And what's that, sir?" asked Henry. But Twinkle waved him out, and he went to join the others.

"He'll make his choice sometime this evening," said Henry. "We'd better go home and wait and see who it is. Come on."

They all went off—except Jack. He was worried about the broken gate. It was dreadful to break a thing and not to tell about it—and not even to try and mend it. He wondered if he *could* mend it. He swung the gate a little to see how much it was broken.

Old Man Twinkle saw Jack from the window. He called him in. "Are you another boy after this job?" he asked.

"No, sir," said Jack. "I'm too small and not very clever—and I'm a bit ragged, too, because my mother hasn't much money."

“Hm!” said Old Man Twinkle. “I see. Well, what are you doing out there in my yard? Do you know anything about that broken gate?”

“Oh dear!” thought Jack. “Now what am I to say? I don’t want to get the other boys into trouble!”

He went red—and then he said, “Yes, Mr. Twinkle, I do know about that gate.”

“What do you know about it?” asked Old Man Twinkle.

“I was swinging on it when it broke,” said Jack bravely, though he didn’t feel at all brave, for Twinkle was frowning.

“Oh! So your weight broke my gate, did it?” said Old Man Twinkle, and he looked fierce.

“Well—not exactly,” said Jack.

“What do you mean—not exactly?” asked Twinkle.

“Oh, please, sir, don’t be angry, but you see, some other boys and I were all swinging together on it, and it broke,” said Jack. “I wanted to come and tell you, really I did. But the others said no, and I couldn’t give them away, could I? I stayed to see if I could mend the gate. That’s what I was doing out in your yard.”

“I see,” said Old Man Twinkle, and he didn’t look quite so fierce now. “Well—who were the other boys?”

“Don’t be angry with me, Mr. Twinkle, but I really can’t tell tales,” said poor Jack. “They are my friends, you see, and I don’t want them to get into trouble.”

“Quite so,” said Old Man Twinkle. “And now I am going to tell *you* something. The boys’ names were Harry, Peter, George, and Henry! You see—I know them all!”

Jack stared in surprise. “How did you know?” he asked. “Did the boys tell you after all?”

“Not one of them,” said Old Man Twinkle. “They pretended to be surprised. They pretended not to know. They told me untruths. But I happened to see you all swinging on the gate when it broke. So I knew all about it, you see.”

“Oh,” said Jack, and he stared at Mr. Twinkle again. “Well, please choose one of the boys,” he said. “They are nice boys, really—although they didn’t own up about the gate.”

“I’ve chosen my boy,” said Mr. Twinkle.

“Who is he?” asked Jack.

“He is *you*!” said Mr. Twinkle. “Yes, I know you are small—but you’ll grow, especially if Mrs. Twinkle makes you puddings every night. And I know you’re at the bottom of the class for lots of things—but good food will make your brains grow too! And I know you’re a bit ragged—but a little pocket-money will buy you better clothes!”

“Oh, Mr. Twinkle!” cried Jack. “But—but—why do you choose a boy like me? The others are bigger and cleverer.”

“They may be,” said Mr. Twinkle. “But what I want is a boy who is brave enough to own up when things go wrong. I want a boy who can speak the truth. I want a boy who is loyal—and if you are loyal to your friends, as you have been just now, you’ll be loyal to me too! I’ve chosen the right boy, Jack—ah, I’ve chosen the right boy!”

So he had, for Jack is with him still—but not as errand-boy. Oh no—he is the head of the shop now, and doing very well indeed. All because of a broken gate—wasn’t it strange?

A Riddle-Me-Ree

My first is in pudding but isn't in meat,
My second's in treacle but isn't in sweet,
My third is in nougat but isn't in toffee,
My fourth is in chocolate, but not in coffee,
My fifth is in orange but not in pear,
My sixth's in meringue but not in eclair,
My seventh's in sandwich but isn't in roll,
My eighth is in salmon but isn't in sole,
My last is in dinner and breakfast and tea,
My whole is a treat that at Christmas you see!
What is it?

A Riddle for You

My first is in cat but not in dog,
My second's in pig but not in hog,
My third is in rabbit and also in hare,
My fourth is in camel but not in bear,
My fifth is in buffalo but not in ox,
My sixth is in squirrel but not in fox,
My whole in a ring will quite easily go,
You *must* go and see this magnificent show!
What is it?

Answer, see page 191

He was Much Too Clever!

There was once a rabbit who was very greedy. Nobody was pleased to see him popping in at tea-time, for they knew that when he went there wouldn't be a sandwich left on a plate or a bun in the tin.

"Hoppitty is such a greedy chap," said the hedgehog. "If ever I see him coming along *my* way I lock up my larder door at once."

"And I put all my cakes into a tin marked 'TEA' and hope he won't think of looking for them there," said the squirrel.

So, very soon, Hoppitty found that it really wasn't much good popping in at tea-time—for his friends never seemed to have anything to offer him. This upset him very much.

"If only somebody would give a party!" he said to himself. "A real, good, old-fashioned party, with heaps of jellies and trifles and blancmanges and sandwiches and chocolate biscuits and lemonade! If only somebody would!"

One day Hoppitty mentioned his idea of a party to Brock the badger.

Brock was a kind and generous animal, and he really loved being friendly to every one. He listened to everything that Hoppitty said, and nodded his striped head gravely.

"Why don't *you* give a party, Hoppitty, as you are so anxious to have one?" asked Brock.

"Well, you see, I'm very poor," exclaimed Hoppitty. "I'd *love* to give one, but it wouldn't be much of a party, I'm afraid, Brock—just a few grass sandwiches, that's all! Now if *you* gave a party—my word, how grand that would be! How people would love to come!"

"It *might* be a good idea," said the badger, who loved having all his friends around him. "Yes—I'll give one, Hoppitty. You shall make out the list of guests and write the invitations, for I'm no good at that sort of thing. I'll see to the food—you see to the other part."

Hoppitty was delighted—especially as a very clever idea had come into his long-eared head!

"Now just suppose I ask all those animals who go to sleep for the winter!" he said to himself. "They won't any of them come to the party, of course—so when I arrive I'll be the only guest, for *I* don't sleep in the cold weather. And I can eat everything! My word, that *is* a good idea!"

He did a little jig of joy as he thought of it. Then he sat down to think again. "Whom shall I ask?" he said. "Well now, Prickles the hedgehog sleeps in the winter-time, so I'll ask him. And Dozy the dormouse does too—and so does Flitter the bat. That's three. Then there's Bushy the red squirrel. He's nearly always asleep in the winter-time. And Slither the snake too. I found him asleep in a hollow tree last winter, so I know he doesn't like the cold weather. Oh, and Croak the frog and Crawler the toad, of course! They sleep soundly in the winter-time!"

Very soon Hoppitty had sent out the invitations for the seven guests. He told Brock about them—but he didn't tell the badger that each of the guests would be fast asleep by the time the party-day came! Oh no—Hoppitty was really being very clever.

"Well, they sound all right," said Brock, pleased. "With ourselves, that makes nine. A very nice number for a party. And here is the list of things we're going to eat, Hoppitty."

He handed Hoppitty a list. The rabbit's eyes nearly fell out of his head as he read it.

"Twenty radish sandwiches. Twenty lettuce sandwiches. Twenty tomato rolls. Six chocolate blancmanges. Six trifles. Six pink jellies. Six yellow jellies. Two pounds of chocolate biscuits. Six jugs of sweet lemonade."

"Oh, fine, fine!" said Hoppitty. "This will be the best party ever given in Bluebell Wood, Brock. You are really most generous. Now, what about the date? I think the first of November would be a good time."

"Very well," said Brock, who hadn't much idea of time. "I've got a calendar on the wall of my den. I tear a day off each morning. I shall know when November the first is coming near. You can depend on me."

All the guests answered their invitations, and they all said they would come. Hoppitty grinned when he read the letters.

"They will all be fast asleep for the winter!" he chuckled. "They will none of them be able to come—and I shall have the finest feast I've ever had. Brock will eat a few of the things, I dare say—but I'll eat the most."

Hoppitty could hardly wait till November the first. Frosts came in October, and the animals shivered. The last swallows left. The leaves fell, and a good many of the smaller animals began to feel very sleepy.

The hedgehog found a hole in a bank, lined it with moss and dead leaves, and fell fast asleep. The dormouse slept in a cosy hole underneath a tree-root. The snake found a hollow tree and coiled up there with its brothers. The toad slept soundly under a big mossy stone, and the frog went down to the mud at the bottom of the pond. The squirrel decided to take a nap too, till a warm spell came, and the bat shivered and went to hang himself upside down in an old barn he knew.

November the first came at last—a fine cold day with a round red sun in the sky. Hoppitty was tremendously excited. His sister had knitted him a new blue scarf to wear for the party, so he really looked very grand.

"I'll try and bring you home a lettuce sandwich," he promised her. "Now, it's four o'clock—I must be off. My, there *will* be a spread in Brock's den!"

He sped off, chuckling to think that all the other guests were fast asleep. How silly they were—and how clever *he* was!

He came to Brock's hole. It was blocked up, but there was a bell-pull outside. Hoppitty rang it and heard the bell jangling loudly. Nobody came to open the hole.

Hoppitty rang again. Still there was no answer. The rabbit was puzzled and cross. This was November the first—and Brock should have got everything ready! Wherever was he?

"Brock!" shouted Hoppitty. "Do come and open the door! It's me! Hurry, because it's cold standing out here."

There was no answer at all. Hoppitty began to pull at the bracken that was stuffing up the hole, but it was so firmly wedged in that he couldn't move it.

"I say, Brock!" he called, drumming on the ground with his hind feet. "Come at once!"

A thin red nose poked out of a hole nearby, and Rufus the fox looked at Hoppitty with a sly grin.

"Why do you want Brock?" he asked.

“Because he’s giving a party to-day,” said Hoppitty, rather scared of the fox. “I can’t *think* why he doesn’t come to the door!”

“But *I* can,” said Rufus slyly. “He’s asleep.”

“Asleep!” cried Hoppitty. “You don’t really mean that?”

“Of course I do,” said the fox. “Don’t you know that badgers sleep in the winter-time, the same as hedgehogs and dormice and snakes? Brock stuffed up his hole two weeks ago, and he and his family are snoring away deep down at the bottom. I know, because I’ve heard them. There won’t be any party to-day.”

“Oh dear!” wailed Hoppitty in despair. “And I did so want a really good tea. I’m terribly hungry.”

“So am I!” said Rufus the fox, coming out of his hole. “I want a really good tea too—a rabbit tea!”

He shot after the frightened bunny, who ran for his life. He was very nearly caught, for the ends of his new blue scarf flew out behind him and the fox caught one of them in his teeth. But the scarf tore in half, and Hoppitty just managed to run down his burrow in time, startling his sister almost out of her skin when he rushed full-tilt into her.

He told her all about the party, and how he had had such a good idea, asking guests that he knew couldn’t come.

“But I didn’t think that Brock the badger would be asleep too,” he said sadly.

“The trouble with you is that you’re much too greedy and think yourself too clever,” said his sister, who was cross about his torn scarf. “I’m glad this has happened. Perhaps it will teach you a lesson.”

“It will,” said Hoppitty mournfully. “I’ll never do such a thing again!”

Billy-Bob's Coconut

Once Billy-Bob and Belinda saw that a fair had come to their village.

It was a fine fair, with all kinds of roundabouts and swings set up in the big field at the end of the village.

Mother said she would take Billy-Bob and Belinda. So they put on their hats and coats and scarves, and off they went to the fair.

"I shall have a ride on the roundabout," said Billy-Bob. "On that animal roundabout, I think. I shall choose a giraffe. Which animal will you choose, Belinda?"

"A duck," said Belinda. So they both got on the roundabout when it stopped. There was Billy-Bob high up on an enormous giraffe with a long neck, and there was Belinda on a small duck that wobbled from side to side as the music played. Round and round they went—it was great fun.

Then they wanted a slide on the slippery-slip. So they gave a man a penny, and he lent them a mat each to slide down on. They climbed up some steps, put their mats at the top of the slippery-slip, and then slid down it. Oh—what fun that was!

They did that again—and then they went on the roundabout again. Mother had given them each a whole shilling to spend, so they really did have a good time. At last Billy-Bob had only twopence left and Belinda had a penny.

"When you've spent that, we must go home," said Mother. "It's nearly tea-time."

"I shall spend mine on having a throw at those coconuts," said Billy-Bob, who rather thought he would be a good shot. So he gave the girl a penny, and she handed him three wooden balls to throw at the coconuts at the back. He threw one hard. It missed. He threw another. It just touched a coconut.

"That was quite a good shot," said Mother. Billy-Bob aimed very carefully with his third ball. He threw it hard—and it hit a coconut right off its stand. Billy-Bob was so pleased.

The girl picked it up and gave it to him. "Can I eat it when I get home and give Belinda some too?" asked Billy-Bob.

"I'm afraid not," said Mother. "Coconut isn't good for children. It gives them a pain."

"Oh, Mother! Then what can I do with my coconut? It will be wasted," said Billy-Bob sadly.

"Oh no, it won't," said Mother. "You can hang it outside your bedroom window, with a hole in each end, and the tits will simply love it. They will feast on it all the winter through, and be your friends."

"Oh, I really should like that," said Billy-Bob, pleased. "I'll hang up my coconut by my window."

"I'd like a coconut, too, to hang by *my* window," said Belinda at once.

"Well, you've got a penny left. Get some of those wooden balls to throw, and you may knock a coconut down as well," said Billy-Bob. So Belinda gave her last penny to the girl, and took the three balls. But, you know, she threw very badly indeed.

The first ball hit poor Billy-Bob on the back! It didn't really hurt him very much, but he felt rather angry.

"Can't you see the difference between me and the coconuts?" he said to Belinda. Belinda frowned, and threw her second ball. This time it hit the girl who gave out the balls!

"Really, Belinda!" said Mother. "You must *look* where you are throwing! Now do be careful of your last ball."

"*I'm* going to get out of the way," said Billy-Bob, and he stood yards away. Belinda threw the ball. It went high into the air, and dropped down nearly on top of her own head.

"You're a dreadful thrower!" said Billy-Bob in disgust. "A waste of a penny, I call that."

"I haven't got a coconut," wailed Belinda. "I want another penny."

"Well, you can't have one, Belinda," said Mother firmly. "Firstly, because you're acting like a baby and you know I never give you anything then. Secondly, because you've used up all your money. And thirdly, because I've none left in my purse, anyhow."

Billy-Bob felt sorry for Belinda. "Look, Belinda," he said. "I'll spend my last penny on some more balls and *I'll* throw them and get you a coconut to take home."

So he got the three balls in exchange for his last penny, and aimed very carefully. But not one of them hit a coconut at all. Billy-Bob was very sorry.

"Now we *must* go home," said Mother. "Didn't we have a lovely time? Cheer up, Belinda. The world isn't coming to an end because you haven't got a coconut!"

So Belinda cheered up; but when they got home and Mother knocked a hole in each end of the coconut and then threaded string through the holes to hang the nut up by Billy-Bob's window, Belinda was very sad.

"I want some birds at my window too," she said. "I don't see why Billy-Bob should have all the birds. I love them too."

Well, the birds *did* come to Billy-Bob's coconut. They came all day long! There were great-tits with black heads and bright green and yellow feathers, and blue-tits with blue caps and shrill high voices. It was such fun to watch them.

"I do wish I could have the birds at my window," said Belinda a dozen times a day to Billy-Bob and Mother. And then one day Mother said something exciting.

"Belinda, if you really want birds by your window, you have something in your own garden that they will love to eat if you hang it up on string."

"Oh, Mother, what?" cried Belinda.

"Come and see," said Mother. She and Belinda went down the garden and Mother pointed to the big old heads of Belinda's giant sunflowers. "Look," said Mother. "Those old sunflowers of yours have made heaps of seeds in their big fat middles. The finches and the sparrows love those. Shall we cut one down and hang it up for you?"

"Oh yes!" cried Belinda joyfully. So they cut the biggest one down, and Mother put some string round it and hung it up by Belinda's window.

And now *Belinda* has birds all day long at her window too—not the same ones as Billy-Bob, but sparrows and chaffinches and greenfinches, and sometimes a shy bullfinch with its black velvet head and deep red chest. Oh, Belinda has plenty of bird-friends now!

Can you get a coconut or an old giant sunflower head? If you can, hang one by *your* window! You'll have just as much fun then as Billy-Bob and Belinda do!

Fly-Pie

There was once a big cat called Paddy. He was black and white, and had enormous whiskers. He was a great mouser—and alas! he caught birds too.

But very soon the birds in the garden began to know Paddy, and to fly away as soon as he came near. The mice feared him, and ran to the fields. Even the rats wouldn't come into the garden. So Paddy couldn't catch anything at all.

He didn't really need to catch birds or mice, because his mistress fed him well. Three times a week she bought fish-scraps and boiled them for Paddy—and every day he had fresh milk and bacon rinds and scrapings of pudding, so he had plenty to eat.

But he loved catching birds and mice. One day he sat in the garden looking up into the blue sky—and up there, flying high, he saw hundreds of birds! Far more than he ever saw in the garden, thought Paddy.

He sat and watched them. They were swallows with curved wings and forked tails. You can see them any day in the summer and early autumn, if you look up into the sky.

"If only I could get those birds down here!" thought Paddy. "Tails and whiskers, what a fine feast I would have!"

He went to visit Kirry, the little pixie who lived under the hedge at the bottom of the garden.

"Kirry, what do those birds up in the sky eat?" he asked. "Do they nibble the clouds for their dinner—or eat a star or two?"

Kirry laughed loudly. "Those are swallows!" he said. "And they certainly don't eat the clouds or the stars—they catch flies all day long!"

"Oh, *flies*!" said Paddy, and he began to think. "Do they ever come down to earth, Kirry? There are such a lot of them up there."

He went to visit Kirry, the little Pixie . . .

"No—the swallows hardly ever come down to earth," said Kirry, "Only when they want mud for their nests, you know, and that's in the spring-time."

"I wish I could get them down here," said Paddy. "I'd like to see them."

What he *really* meant was that he'd like to catch and eat them. But he didn't tell Kirry that, because Kirry loved the birds.

"Well—you won't get the swallows down here unless you give them as many flies as they can catch up there!" said Kirry.

"Oh," said Paddy, and he began to think hard. "Kirry," he said, "if I catch you a lot of flies, will you make me a fly-pie, please? And send a message to the swallows to ask them to come down to tea here and eat the fly-pie?"

"Well, that's very kind of you, Paddy," said Kirry, pleased. "Yes—I'll certainly make a fly-pie for you."

So for the next few days Paddy caught flies instead of mice or birds! There were a great many of the noisy blue-bottles about just then, and many Daddy-long-legs, which the grown-ups hated because their grubs ate the roots of plants. So Paddy had a fine time catching these flies, and soon Kirry had enough to make a big fly-pie for the swallows.

He sent a message to the birds. "Please come down to tea to-morrow. There is a big fly-pie for you!"

The swallows twittered in the greatest excitement. "Fly-pie! Fly-pie! Did you hear that? We'll go and eat it, eat it, eat it! We'll go and eat it, eat it, eat it!"

So they sent a message back to Kirry. "Yes! We'll all come down to-morrow to eat your nice fly-pie. Thank you very much!"

Kirry told Paddy. Paddy sharpened his claws and licked his lips. He would wait under the hedge for the swallows—and then spring out when they came, and catch dozens and dozens of them! What a feast he would have! He looked at the fly-pie which Kirry had baked. It looked fine, with a big crust on top, and a little pattern round the edge of the crust.

"They'll be here at four o'clock to-morrow," said Kirry. "Put a new bow of ribbon on, Paddy, and wash yourself well. It will be quite a party. It's so kind of you to think of fly-pie for the swallows!"

Paddy grinned to himself. Yes, he had thought of a meal of fly-pie for the swallows—but he had also thought of a meal of swallows for himself!

The next afternoon Paddy was well-hidden under the hedge. Kirry put out the fly-pie, and put ready a little knife to cut it with. Now everything was ready. Only the guests had to come.

But they didn't come! No—not a swallow came! Kirry waited and waited—and Paddy hid and waited too. But no swallow flew down to the fly-pie! Kirry looked up into the sky. It was quite empty of birds! Not a swallow darted in the air up there. It was very, very strange.

"Paddy!" called Kirry. "It's funny—but all the swallows have gone. I can't see a single one!"

Paddy came out, swinging his tail angrily. "*Gone!*" he said. "What do you mean, 'gone'? Just when I was looking forward to a good meal, too!"

"A good meal?" said Kirry, astonished. "What do *you* mean? A good meal of what? I thought the fly-pie was for the swallows!"

So Paddy had a fine time catching these flies.

Kitty looked up into the sky. It was quite empty of birds.

"A good meal of swallows, silly!" squealed Paddy, in a temper. "Are you so foolish that you didn't know that the fly-pie was only a trap to catch swallows for me?"

"Oh! You wicked cat!" cried Kirry. "No—I didn't know that at all, or I would never have made the fly-pie for you! Now see what you have done! The swallows must have heard of your wicked trap—and they have all gone! Not one is left! Maybe they will never, never come back."

Paddy felt rather scared. Certainly the swallows had gone, there was no doubt about that—and how dreadful it would be if people got to know that he, Paddy, had driven them away because of his trap!

Paddy began to slink away, ashamed of his trick. But Kirry was very angry and shouted after him: "You're a bad cat! I don't want you for a friend any more! You and your fly-pie! Here, take it—you're the only one likely to have it now!"

He threw the fly-pie after Paddy. It broke over his head—and Paddy had to spend a most unpleasant half-hour licking the fly-pie off his thick black-and-white fur. Well, it served him right!

As for the swallows, they hadn't heard about the trap at all! You see, a cold wind had begun to blow the night before, and the chief of the swallows had decided that it was time to leave our country and fly to warmer countries far away!

So, with many twitterings, the swallows had gathered together, and then, with one accord, they had risen into the air and flown to the south! They would come back again in the spring—but Paddy didn't know that!

He just sat licking the unpleasant fly-pie off his fur, thinking, "Well, never again will I try a trick like this! No, never again."

Solutions of Riddle-me-Rees on Page 175

1. Pantomime.
2. Circus.

Three Things to do in the Autumn

Sometimes there isn't much to do when you are sent out of doors to play in the autumn. I will tell you three things you can do, and all of them are fun.

1. Take a bag and go to a wood where there are fir-trees or pine-trees. Hunt about on the ground for the woody cones and put them into your bag. Take them home, store them in a dry place, and then, when you have somebody to tea, put them on the fire for a treat. They will flame and crackle and glow, and make the jolliest fire you can wish for!

2. Another interesting thing to do is to go round the garden and see which plants still have their seed-heads full of seed. The poppies? The clarkia? Sweet pea pods? Candytuft? Love-in-the-mist? Well, take small envelopes with you and shake the seed-heads into them, a separate one for each different kind of plant. Stick them up. Scribble the name on each envelope, and when you are sitting down indoors, draw and colour the flowers on your seed-packets. Put them aside for the spring and then plant the seeds.

3. The third thing you may often have done already. When gardener has a bonfire, ask Mother for some small potatoes, still in their skins. Pop them into the hot ashes and cook them! Eat them with a little butter and salt—and you will say they are the most delicious potatoes you ever tasted in your life!

TRANSCRIBER NOTES

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[The end of *The Third Holiday Book* by Enid Blyton]