

Johnnie and Billie Bushytail

Howard Roger Garis

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I. JOHNNIE AND BILLIE LEARN TO JUMP

SAMMIE and Susie Littletail, the rabbits of whom I told you in the book just before this, lived in an underground house called a burrow, but Johnnie and Billie Bushytail had their home in a nest on a tall tree. No, they were not birds, though they did live in a nest. Yes, you have guessed it. They were squirrels.

Once upon a time Billie and Johnnie, who were brothers, lived with their papa and mama in a nice nest, on the

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Orange Mountains, but one day the papa and mama squirrels were caught in a trap by a boy. He did not mean to be cruel, but he did not know any better, so he took the two poor, frightened squirrels away with him. He put them in a nice cage, with a wheel that whirled around faster than the fastest merry-go-round you ever rode upon.

The boy gave the squirrels nice things to eat, and was very kind to them, but of course he did not know that they would much rather have been let loose, to run in the woods. They would rather have done this than play all day in the wire house with the whirling wheel, that went around so fast. But the boy kept Mama and Papa Bushytail shut up, though one day they got loose, and, oh, how glad they were! But I am not going to tell you about that now. I will save that for another story and for this time I will tell you how Johnnie and Billie Bushytail learned to jump.

When their papa and mama were taken away from them, the little boy squirrels were much frightened, until their grandpa came for them, and took them home with him.

"You and I will have to look after Billie and Johnnie until their papa and mama come back," said Grandpa Lightfoot to Grandma Lightfoot, for that was their name. They could jump from a tall tree and land on one lower down so lightly that you could not hear them. That is why they were called Lightfoot.

"Yes, we will take good care of them," agreed Grandma Lightfoot, and she arranged the softest leaves she could find in the nest on the tall oak tree, so Johnnie and Billie would sleep well.

The two little squirrels lived with their grandparents for several weeks, until Johnnie and Billie were pretty well grown. All this while they stayed in the nest, or else went only a little way out on a limb, for they were afraid of falling.

One day Grandpa Lightfoot said to his wife:

"I think it is time we taught Johnnie and Billie to jump. They are getting big now and will soon have to learn to gather nuts and things for themselves."

"It is a good idea," agreed Grandma. "I will watch you teach them."

So Grandpa Lightfoot took the two little boy squirrels to the edge of the nest.

"We will begin with a very easy lesson," said he. "You see that big limb down there?" and he pointed to one about ten feet away.

"Yes," said Billie, "I see it." "I see it, too," added Johnnie, who did not want his brother to get ahead of him.

"Well, watch me jump to it," said Grandpa, and, though he was quite an old squirrel, he jumped and landed on it, just as a man in a circus leaps over the elephants.

"Now you two boys try it," suggested Grandpa, as he scrambled up the tree, digging his sharp claws into the bark.

"I'm afraid," answered Billie.

"So am I," echoed his brother.

"Oh, nonsense!" exclaimed Grandpa. "It can't hurt you. Look, I will jump again," which he did, even better than before.

But still the two little boy squirrels were afraid, and they stayed on the branch close to the nest.

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"If you jump, you shall have some hickory nut pudding for supper, and I will have Jennie put some acorn sauce on it," promised Grandma Lightfoot. Oh, I forgot to tell you that living with the Lightfoot family was a little orphan girl named Jennie Chipmunk. She was a jolly little girl, always laughing and happy. She used to wash and dry the dishes and help Grandma Lightfoot. But even the promise of hickory–nut pudding with acorn sauce on it would not make Billie and Johnnie jump. They were afraid, and, though Grandpa and Grandma, and even Jennie jumped several times to show them how it ought to be done, they would not try.

Then, all at once, when the old squirrels were down on a far limb, what should come flying out of the woods but a big owl. He wanted to eat Billie and Johnnie and he swooped right at them. Then they were too frightened to stay up there alone on the limb by the nest, and they jumped down where their Grandma and Grandpa were, and the owl did not get them.

"Fine!" cried Grandpa Lightfoot. "You have at last learned to jump!"

"Now, if you do not pull the cat's tail once to–morrow, I shall tell you, to–morrow night, how Billie Bushytail found some Christmas nuts.

II. HOW BILLIE FOUND THE NUTS

AFTER Billie and Johnnie Bushytail learned to jump, they kept at it nearly all the while. You know how it is; when a boy learns to go on roller skates, he doesn't want to stop, does he? Anyway, in a few days the little squirrels got to be very good jumpers, and they could do almost as well as their Grandpa and Grandma Lightfoot.

"Keep on practising," said Grandpa. "You will need to be very nimble when the hunting season opens."

One day Billie and Johnnie thought it would be fun to go off in the woods and wander about, jumping from tree to tree. "Don't you want to come, Jennie?" asked Billie.

"Oh, I have to do the dishes," answered Jennie, with a laugh, that showed her sharp little teeth.

"Do you like to do dishes?" asked Billie.

"Yes; it's lots of fun to splash in the water, and get your paws nice and white. I just love it!" and Jennie laughed so heartily that she rattled down some of the acorn–top cups that she had just set on a shelf to dry.

"Let's help her," suggested Billie, "then she can come with us in the woods."

"Sure," agreed his brother; so they set to work and those dishes were done up in less than no time, which, as you all know, is very quick, indeed.

Grandpa and Grandma Lightfoot were out for a walk, and Billie, Johnnie and Jennie did not have to lock any doors when they left, for there were no doors to the nest. They ran down the tree trunk, jumped from branch to branch, and were soon nearly a half mile from the place where they lived.

"Supposing something happens to us?" suggested Jennie, with a laugh, as they leaped along.

"What could happen?" asked Billie.

"An adventure," replied Jennie, and she laughed again. "I would just love to have an adventure happen to me."

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"Maybe one will happen," went on Billie.

Then they went on for some distance farther, until they came to the edge of the woods. There stood a house a house just like the one you boys and girls live in, only, perhaps, it was smaller.

"What is that?" asked Billie, for it was the first house he had ever seen.

"That," said Jennie, "is a house where people live," and she laughed so that the little dried fern she was standing under shook as though the wind had blown it. Jennie had traveled around more than the little squirrels had, so she knew more than they did.

"Maybe there will be an adventure here," said Johnnie. "Let's go look."

"All right," agreed his brother, and, after Jennie had stood up on her hind legs, and listened with all her might, moving her whiskers to and fro, like a cat smelling for a mouse, she said:

"I guess it will be safe. No one lives there. It is a deserted house, and, very likely, we shall meet with an adventure."

Then the squirrels and Jennie ran up the porch pillars and down the chimney of the house, coming out through a fireplace into a large room. No one was in it in fact, no one was in the whole house. Billie ran across the floor, and in one corner what do you think he found? Why, a stocking filled with nuts. There were many kinds, such as you get at Christmas, and they were strange to the squirrels, who only had such kinds as hickory-nuts, acorns, beech-nuts and black walnuts. But they ate some of each kind, and liked them very much.

"How do you s'pose they got here?" asked Johnnie.

"That must be the adventure part of it," said Billie.

"No," said Jennie, "these are Christmas nuts, they are not adventure nuts. Some little boy or girl hung this stocking by the fireplace for Santa Claus to fill, but something happened, and they did not take the nuts out. Maybe the family had to move away in a hurry, and forgot them, or maybe the little boy or girl got sick on candy, and was not allowed to eat the nuts. Anyway, here are the nuts, and I think we ought to take some home to Grandma and Grandpa."

Which the squirrels and Jennie did, and, just as they had all they could carry, what should happen but a big rat came running right into that room, and scared them so that Jennie almost forgot how to smile. They ran home in a hurry, I can assure you, and all agreed that it was a most wonderful adventure indeed, but it was nothing to what happened the next day, as I shall tell you to-morrow night, when the bedtime story will be about a trick that Billie Bushytail played.

III. BILLIE BUSHYTAIL'S TRICK

BILLIE and Johnnie Bushytail were jumping about from tree to tree. They could do this quite well, since Grandpa Lightfoot had taught them, and they enjoyed doing it.

"Let's take a nice long trip through the woods," suggested Johnnie to his brother. "I know a place where there are lots of acorns. It's in a hollow stump. I saw them yesterday."

"Pooh! those are wormy acorns," replied Billie. "I saw a woodpecker bird hide them there, so the worms would

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get in them. They are no good for us." "What did the woodpecker do that for?" asked Johnnie.

"Because he likes worms better than nuts. But I don't mind going with you. Maybe we'll find some more Christmas nuts. They were fine."

"Shall we ask Jennie?" inquired Johnnie.

"No, let's run off by ourselves. We don't want a girl with us."

So the little boy squirrels started off without the little orphan chipmunk, and it was too bad that they did so, for if Jennie had been along something that did happen might not have happened. But that is always the way in this world, isn't it, children?

Well, Johnnie and Billie jumped along through the trees for quite a distance, and Johnnie showed Billie where the acorns were in the hollow stump.

"I told you they were wormy," said Billie, after tasting one. "Maybe there are some at the bottom of the stump which are not," said Johnnie. "I'll look."

So he began throwing out the acorns until he had dug all the way to the bottom, and there, sure enough, were some good nuts, that the worms had not yet reached.

"Goody!" exclaimed Billie. "Now we will have a feast."

So the little squirrels carried off as many of the acorns as they could, and took them up into a tall tree to eat them, as it was safer there than staying on the ground.

All at once, as Billie was eating his fifth nut, he looked down, and saw a big creature asleep under the tree.

"Oh, look!" cried Billie to his brother, "What's that down there?"

Johnnie took a look, and said: "That's a man. I know because I heard Grandpa telling about them. He is asleep. Don't wake him up, or he may shoot us."

"Why not?" asked Billie. "I never saw a man awake, and I'd like to see one. I'm going to wake him up."

"You had better not," warned his brother.

"I am going to," insisted Billie. "I am going to play a trick on him. I am going to drop an acorn on his nose."

Then he got out on a limb, right over where the man was sleeping, and dropped down a nut. It struck the man right on the end of his nose, and he woke up just as quick as a wink, if not quicker.

"Ha! Ha!" laughed Billie, only of course the man did not understand squirrel laughter.

The man sat up, and he looked up through the trees, but he could not see the little squirrels. Then Billie, who was a mischievous little chap, dropped another acorn. It hit the man on the head and bounced off, just like a rubber ball.

"I am a fine shot!" said Billie to Johnnie.

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"You had better be careful," warned his brother. "I think the man is angry. He may shoot us."

"He has no gun," said Billie, which was true enough. "I am going to drop another nut."

"You had better not," said Johnnie. But Billie did. He got farther out on the limb, and dropped an acorn down, and, as the man happened to be looking up, with his mouth open, the nut went right into it, and he choked and sneezed and coughed, and had a dreadful time indeed before he got the nut out of his mouth. All this while Billie was laughing so that his bushy tail shook to the very tip. Then, all at once, the man saw the squirrels, and, oh, how angry he was! He took up some stones, and threw them at Billie and Johnnie, though Johnnie had done nothing. And one of the stones hit Billie on the left hind paw, and made him lame. Then the two little squirrels were very much frightened, and dropping all their acorns, that pattered down on the leaves like rain, they ran home to the nest, the man throwing stones at them as far as he could see them. So that is the trick Billie Bushytail played, and to-morrow night, providing nothing happens in the meantime, you shall hear about Johnnie and the tame squirrel.

IV. JOHNNIE AND THE TAME SQUIRREL

JOHNNIE BUSHYTAIL was lonesome. Grandpa and Grandma Lightfoot had gone to see some cousins who lived away off in the woods, and had taken Billie Bushytail and Jennie Chipmunk with them. The reason they did not take Johnnie was because he had a sore throat and they thought it best for him to stay at home.

"Never mind, Johnnie," Jennie had said when all the family were going away, "I will bring you some hickory nuts with sugar and sassafras on when we come back," and the little orphan chipmunk smiled in such a jolly way that Johnnie did not feel so lonesome. But after Jennie, Grandpa, Grandma and Billie had been gone nearly two hours Johnnie felt lonesome again. It was quite warm outside the nest, so he thought he would jump about from one branch to another. He did so, and felt much better. All at once he saw another squirrel on the ground at the foot of the tree. At first Johnnie thought it was his Grandpa who had come back, but he soon saw that it was a much younger squirrel than old Mr. Lightfoot.

"Chip, chip!" called Johnnie, for that was his way of saying "Hello!" Then he went on, "Hello, down there! What are you doing?"

"Hello, up there!" answered the other squirrel, looking up. "What are you doing there?"

"Oh, I asked you first, and you ought to answer me," said Johnnie. "I will," replied the other squirrel. "I am doing nothing. What are you doing?"

"I am getting over a sore throat," said Johnnie. "Can't you come up here?"

The other squirrel said he would, so he scrambled up the tree trunk, and was soon beside Johnnie.

"What is your name?" asked Johnnie.

"Jacko," said the other.

"Where do you live?" went on Johnnie.

"No place in particular. I am a tame squirrel, and a traveler."

"What is a tame squirrel?" asked Johnnie.

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"A tame squirrel is one that is not afraid of people," answered Jacko, "and while I am about it I may as well tell you what a traveler is, for I don't suppose you know."

"No," said Johnnie, "I do not."

"Well," said the other, "a traveler is a squirrel who has been everywhere and seen everything there is to be seen. I am that." "I have traveled, too," went on Johnnie. "I once went to a deserted house, and I found some Christmas nuts in a stocking. Did you ever do that?"

"That?" exclaimed Jacko. "That is nothing! I have lived in a public park, and the children have fed me peanuts."

"Tell me about it," pleaded Johnnie, and Jacko did. He told how he had been tamed when he was a very little squirrel, and how he had been taken to live in a tree in a big city park, where boys and girls and big people came every day.

"I was once in a place called Central Park, in New York," said Jacko, frisking his big tail, "and then they brought me over to Newark, and put me in Lincoln Park. Only I didn't get quite so many peanuts in Lincoln Park, so I ran away, and here I am. Oh, I am a great traveler." "Tell me some more," pleaded Johnnie, who had forgotten all about his sore throat now. So Jacko told of other woods he had visited, and how he had once just missed being shot by a hunter. Then he and Johnnie had a game of tag in the tree, and they were in the midst of the fun when Grandpa and Grandma Lightfoot, with Billie and Jennie, returned. They were much surprised to see the tame squirrel, and when Johnnie told them who he was, they had to hear his story all over again. Then Jennie gave Johnnie some of the sassafras nuts she had brought home, and the whole family sat down to supper.

"Where are you going to stay to-night?" asked Grandma Lightfoot of Jacko, and when the tame squirrel said he thought he would have to go to a hotel, Grandma invited him to sleep with Johnnie and Billie, which Jacko was very glad to do, as it was getting chilly. So Jacko stayed with the Bushytails for some days, and was the cause of quite an adventure, as you shall hear to-morrow night, if nothing occurs to prevent it.

V. A BOY CLIMBS A TREE

WHAT fun the Bushytail boys and Jacko were having in the tall tree! The little boy squirrels and the tame squirrel, who was spending a few days with them, tried to see who could jump the greatest distance; they played tag and hide-the-acorn, and then one of them would go up to the top of the big tree and drop a leaf down, and see if he could get to the ground before the leaf did. Almost every time the squirrel was quicker than the leaf, which shows you that a squirrel is very quick, indeed, quicker even than a wink.

Well, after they had become tired of such play, the squirrels sat in a row on a straight limb and looked down at the ground.

"What shall we do next?" asked Jacko, the tame squirrel. "It seems to me we have done everything we can do."

"Oh, there are lots more things to do," spoke Johnnie Bushytail. "We can jump over stumps, and we can race up and down the tree trunk, and we can hide in the dry leaves and find each other."

"I don't think that is much fun," said Jacko. "If I were in a city park now, I would be on the watch for some boy or girl to come along with peanuts for me."

"Hickory nuts are as good as peanuts," said Billie, "and if a boy or girl should come here we would be very frightened."

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"I would not," answered Jacko. "Besides, I think peanuts are better than hickory nuts. The shells are not so hard." "Well, there aren't any boys or girls here," said Johnnie, "but I can ask Jennie Chipmunk for some black walnuts. They are very nice. She does them up in maple sugar for the winter."

"Humph! Maybe they would be nice," admitted Jacko, so Johnnie got some.

"Didn't you want Jennie to play with us?" asked Billie, after they had eaten nuts. "She is very jolly."

"She is a girl," objected Jacko.

"Well, I think Jennie is very nice," said Billie.

Then the three squirrels looked down at the ground again, and all at once Jacko cried out:

"Well, I declare, if there isn't a boy! I'm going right down. Maybe he has some peanuts."

"No, don't," cried Billie. "He might catch you." "I am a tame squirrel," said Jacko, "and it doesn't much matter whether or not he catches me. So I am going down. I am hungry for peanuts."

So, though Johnnie and Billie asked him not to, Jacko scrambled down the tree, and ran right up to that boy, who was out walking in the woods to see what he could find. Well, you can imagine how surprised that boy was, to have a squirrel run right up to him in the woods. Jacko perched upon his shoulder, and made a funny little noise. He was really asking for some peanuts, but the boy did not know what. He tried to catch Jacko in his hands, but the tame squirrel did not like that, and hopped down off the boy's shoulder.

Then, all at once, the boy called out:

"Hey, fellers, come over here. I've struck the funniest thing! A squirrel came up on my shoulder, and there are two more sitting on the branch. Let's climb up and get them. Come on."

Then, before Johnnie and Billie or Jacko could say a word, what should happen but that a lot of boys came running up where the first one stood. By this time even Jacko was frightened, and he scrambled up into the tree again. But this made no difference to the boys. One of them climbed right up that tree, and saw the nest where the squirrels lived. Grandpa and Grandma Lightfoot were just sitting down to a quiet acorn-cup of oak tea, when the boy looked in on them. Johnnie, Billie and Jacko had run to the very top of the tree, to be out of danger, and had forgotten to tell the old squirrels what was happening.

But Jennie Chipmunk was on the watch, and as soon as she saw that boy reach his hand in the nest to catch grandpa and grandma she ran up and bit him on the finger. Oh, what a sharp nip she gave him. That boy was glad enough, I tell you, to slide down the tree again.

"Did you get the squirrels?" asked the other boys.

"No," said the first one, "I didn't, and I wouldn't advise you to try it," and he put his bitten finger in his mouth because it hurt him, and he did not know what else to do with it. The boys stayed under the tree for some time, but the squirrels went and hid under the leaves, and pretty soon the boys went home. The tame squirrel was very sorry he had put his friends in such danger, and he did not get any peanuts after all. Now, let me see, what shall I tell you about to-morrow night? Oh, I know; it will be about how Billie went up in a balloon.

VI. BILLIE IN A BALLOON

BILLIE BUSHYTAIL was lost. There was no doubt about it, he did not know how to get home. You see, it was this way: Billie had been sent by his Grandpa Lightfoot to the drug store for some powdreed wild cherry bark, because Grandpa Lightfoot had a cough that troubled him very much. The drug store was kept by an old crow who lived in a nest on top of a dried-up hemlock tree, and Billie managed to find his way there all right. But when he wanted to go back, that was a different matter.

He started off all right, but he took the wrong path through the trees. Instead of turning to the left, he went the other way when he got to the toadstool corner, and then he was lost. It did not take him long to find this out, and then he was very much frightened. Of course, if Billie had taken Johnnie Bushytail, his brother, with him, he might not have been so frightened, but there he was, a little squirrel, all alone in the woods.

When he made sure that he was lost, the first thing he did was to climb a tree. He thought that he might possibly see his nest, where he lived with his grandpa and his grandma, and Jennie, the little orphan chipmunk, who used to wash and dry the dishes and laugh while she was doing them. But though Billie climbed the tallest tree he could find, he could not see his nest. He was just scrambling down when he heard a whirr of wings, and he was more frightened than ever, for he knew there must be a big bird near him.

Sure enough, there was. A great big bird, with sharp eyes and a sharp beak and sharp claws, and with great flapping wings, settled down on a limb close to where Billie Bushytail was crouching. Billie tried to hide behind a piece of bark that stuck out on the branch, but the bird saw him.

"Hello," said the bird.

Billie didn't say anything.

"Can't you talk?" asked the bird.

"Ye yes," said Billie.

"Then why don't you?" asked the bird.

"Well, I I'm afraid," answered Billie.

"Of what?" inquired the bird.

"Of you," replied Billie. "Aren't you a hawk?" "Of course I'm a hawk," went on the big bird.

"Well, I'm always afraid of hawks," said Billie. "Hawks always eat squirrels."

"No, you're mistaken," said the big bird in as gentle a voice as possible. "You are very much mistaken. I know what you mean, though. You mean that some hawks eat squirrels, but I am a different kind of hawk. I am a fishhawk, and I only eat fishes."

"Then why are you here?" asked Billie. "There are no fishes around here; at least, not such fishes as you would eat."

"I know," went on the hawk. "You see, I flew inland from the seacoast. I live down near Atlantic Highlands, where there are plenty of fish. But this weather is so cold that they go down to the bottom of the ocean, and I can't

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catch them. So I went off on a little trip. But what are you crying about?"

"I am lost," said Billie.

"Tut, tut! You must not cry about that," said the fishhawk. "Now, be a good boy. You know I am not going to eat you, for I eat only fish, and there are so many of them in the sea that they don't mind it in the least, I assure you. Now I will help you find your home. Were you ever up in a balloon?"

"No," said Billie, "I never was. What is a balloon?"

"A balloon," said the hawk, "is something that goes up in the air. I go up in the air. I am a balloon."

"Really?" asked Billie.

"Really," answered the fishhawk. "You shall soon see. Now if you will get on my back I will take you up in the air, and you can look down. And when you see your house you can call to me and I will fly down with you to it."

"That is very kind of you," said Billie.

So he tucked the powdered wild cherry bark under his paw and climbed upon the hawk's back. Then the big bird rose up in the air just like a balloon and circled around. Billie was a trifle dizzy, but he soon got over this. He kept looking down, and pretty soon he saw his nest. And there was Grandpa and Grandma Lightfoot, and Johnnie and Jennie Chipmunk looking for him. Only they were looking toward the ground and not up in the air. Then Billie called to the fishhawk, and she came down with him just as gently, and he jumped off her back into the nest. And, oh, how glad he was to get home, even if he did have to ride in a balloon! Grandpa Lightfoot at once took some of the cherry bark for his cough, and felt better, while Billie told of his adventure. Now to-morrow night I hope to tell you how Billie and Johnnie made a trip to a city called Newark with the tame squirrel.

VII. JOHNNIE AND BILLIE IN THE CITY

JOHNNIE and Billie Bushytail and Jacko, the tame squirrel, sat on the branch of the tree where the nest was built. Grandpa Lightfoot was smoking his pipe, and reading the paper, and Grandma Lightfoot was mending some stockings what's that? You didn't know squirrels wore stockings? Well, that's because you never saw the little fellows put them on and take them off. The stockings are hard to see, I admit that, but you must not interrupt me again, if you please. Well, then, Grandma Lightfoot was darning stockings, and Jennie Chipmunk was washing the dishes and singing. She always sang when she washed the dishes, just as she always laughed when she made the beds, and swept the nest.

"I don't call this much fun, do you?" asked Jacko, the tame squirrel, of Johnnie when they had sat there ten minutes.

"Well, it isn't so bad," replied Johnnie. "See, there is a little bird, getting some grass to build a new nest. I think it's lots of fun to watch her."

"I don't, do you?" asked the tame squirrel of Billie.

"No; but it's fun to see that toad hopping along," said Billie. "Why, I can go ten times as fast as he can, and not hurry, either. It's fun to watch him."

"You wood-squirrels have queer ideas of fun," spoke Jacko.

Johnnie and Billie Bushytail

"What do you call fun?" asked Billie.

"Why, going about and seeing things. There is nothing to see here. Now down in the park, in Newark, where I was, why there was something exciting going on every minute. Yes, sir, think of that, every single minute in the day, and sometimes at night."

"Oh, I'd rather sleep at night," said Johnnie.

"So would I," added Billie.

"Pooh! You don't know what life is," exclaimed the tame squirrel. "Now, I'll tell you what I'll do. I'll take you two down to Newark with me, and show you the sights, if you like! How is that for something exciting?"

"Will you really?" cried Johnnie.

"Of course I will. Come on."

"We'd better ask grandma or grandpa," objected Billie.

"Oh, never mind bothering them. Come along," urged Jacko. "If you tell them, they may stop you. We'll go and hurry back before they miss you."

"But how can we go?" asked Billie. "Isn't Newark a long way from the Orange Mountains?"

"Well, it is quite a distance admitted Jacko, ``but "

"I'll take you!" exclaimed a voice high up in the tree, and who do you suppose it was? Why, of course, the fish-hawk that had brought the little lost squirrel home. There he was, sitting up on top of the tree, looking off toward the ocean. "I'll take you to Newark," he said, just as kind as could be. "I'm going down that way, and you all three can ride on my back. I sha'n't mind it a bit."

"Will you bring us home?" asked Billie.

"Of course," answered the fish-hawk, "you shall be back here by night."

So Billie and Johnnie and Jacko all got upon the broad back of the fish-hawk, and Grandma and Grandpa Lightfoot never knew a thing about it. Now, what do you think of that? Of course, Jennie Chipmunk knew, for she was looking out of the window; but then she was sure the fish-hawk would be kind to the squirrels, so she said nothing. Well, after a while the three squirrels came to Lincoln Park, where Jacko used to live. He knew it at once, though it was not so nice as in the summer time.

"Now you boys will see some excitement," said Jacko, when he got off the fish-hawk's back. The big bird sailed away, after promising to stop for them on his return.

"Come on, let's have some fun!" cried Jacko, and he began racing up and down a tree.

Then, all at once, there was a dreadful noise, and something big and yellow dashed down the street. "What was that?" cried Johnnie.

"That," said Jacko, "was a trolley car. Don't be afraid, silly."

Johnnie and Billie Bushytail

But Johnnie was, and so was Billie. Then pretty soon something big and shiny, with sparks shooting out from it, dashed by with a clang of bells.

"What's that?" cried Billie.

"That," said Jacko, "is a fire engine. Don't be afraid of that, silly."

But Billie was, and so was Johnnie. Then after a while some boys saw the squirrels in the tree.

"Oh, come on!" they cried. "Here are some squirrels! Let's throw stones at 'em!" And they did, and Billie was nearly hit. And a big dog barked at them. Oh, how loudly he barked, and more boys came, and girls, too, and looked at the little squirrels until a policeman hurried up and drove the crowd away. All that day Billie and Johnnie and Jacko stayed up in the tree, and they didn't dare go down for fear of being hurt. So they didn't have a nice time at all, and were glad when the fish-hawk came to take them home. To-morrow night you shall hear about Billie and Johnnie and the toads.

VIII. AT THE TOAD SCHOOL

GRANDMA and Grandpa Lightfoot were quite surprised when Johnnie and Billie Bushytail and Jacko, the tame squirrel, came home from Newark on the back of the fish-hawk. Grandpa was so surprised that he put his bottle of wild cherry bark cough medicine on the mantel, and could not find it for ever so long. You see, the squirrels' grandparents did not know they had gone to the city, but supposed they were off playing in the woods.

Johnnie and Billie told what they had seen, and how frightened they were, and how glad they were to get back home, and they said they would never go away again. But they did, as you shall hear, perhaps, in a few nights.

"I wouldn't go with Jacko any more," said Jennie Chipmunk to Johnnie and Billie that night when she was washing the dishes, and she laughed so she showed all her teeth. "He might get you into trouble."

"I guess he won't come after us any more," said Billie. "He said he was going to travel and see things. But I've seen all I want to for some time. Come on, Johnnie, let's go to bed now, and we'll get up early in the morning, and see if we can find some ears of corn to eat."

So Johnnie and Billie got up early the next morning, and they were just starting off, when Grandma Lightfoot called to them:

"Why don't you take Jennie with you?" she asked, for she wanted the little orphan chipmunk to have a good time.

"Oh, because," answered Billie, just like that.

"That's no reason," said grandma. "Jennie has the beds all made, and the work done, and I want you boys to take her with you, off into the woods to play."

At first Johnnie and Billie did not want to do this, but when they thought how kind Jennie always had been to them, and what a jolly little creature she was, always smiling and happy, no matter what happened, they were sorry that they had not at first asked her.

"Come along, Jennie," called Johnnie, and then the three started off through the forest, leaping from tree to tree, and sometimes running along the ground. They went on and on and on, and pretty soon they came to a place in the woods where there were no trees. It was a very nice place, all covered with grass, and in the grass were a

Johnnie and Billie Bushytail

number of toad stools.

"Oh, I know what let's do," said Billie.

"What?" asked Johnnie.

"Let's play leapfrog over these toad stools. They will be fine for that, and the grass is so soft to fall on."

"Just the thing!" cried Johnnie. "We'll see who can jump over the most. Come on, Jennie. We'll leave the small ones for you? because you're a girl."

"You don't need to," answered Jennie, and she laughed right out loud; yes, that's exactly what she did; I'm not making this up at all. Well, you should have seen those squirrels and Jennie jumping over those toad stools. Over they went, one after the other, landing on the soft grass, and Jennie leaping just as high as Johnnie and Billie, if not higher. But a funny thing happened. The toad stools were so tender, probably from being baked in the sun too long, that every one broke off.

Would you believe it, children? Well, anyway, every one did break off, close to the ground, as fast as the squirrels and Jennie leaped over them, and pretty soon there was not one left. But the squirrels had lots of fun.

Then, all at once, what should happen but that a lot of toads came hopping through the woods to the grassy spot. They were led by a great big toad, who had an immense wart right on the end of his nose, and lots of warts all over his body, and some even on his legs. As soon as the squirrels and Jennie saw the big toad, and all the other toads, Johnnie cried: "What's this?"

The big toad heard him, and replied:

"This is the school for toads, and I'm the teacher. But, goodness me, sakes alive, and a penny and a half! What has happened?" he cried out, just like that. "All our toad stools are broken! There is no place for the pupils to sit down, not even a little toad stool left for the kindergarten children. Oh! Oh! Oh! and a three-cent piece! Our school is spoiled!"

Then Johnnie and Billie, and Jennie Chipmunk felt very bad indeed for breaking the toad stools by playing leapfrog over them. They wouldn't have done it for the world, if they had known. And they told the big toad, with the wart on his nose, how sorry they were. And what do you think they did? Those squirrels, I mean. Why, they went up in the trees and gnawed off some branches and out of them made benches for the toad scholars, and the benches were even nicer than the toad stools had been. At least the big toad with the wart on his nose said so. Then school began, and one little toad couldn't spell "fly", now, what do you think of that? But Jennie could, and did. Then she and Johnnie and Billie went home, and if there is no skating to-morrow, I will tell you how Johnnie and Billie ran away.

IX. LOST IN THE DARK WOODS

DID any of you children ever run away? No, I'm sure you never did, and I hope you never will. But you can't always tell what squirrels are going to do, especially when their names are Billie and Johnnie. Of course, I'm not saying that if their names had been something else they wouldn't have run away from Grandma and Grandpa Lightfoot, for I can't be sure of that. Anyhow, Billie and Johnnie Bushytail ran away, and this is how they did it:

In the nest at the top of the big tree everything had been going nicely for some days. Johnnie and Billie went out day by day and gathered acorns, nuts and grains of corn, or else they got some sweet bark or some chewing gum

Johnnie and Billie Bushytail

from wild cherry trees. They practised jumping, and they washed their faces and hands and kept their bushy tails in order. In fact, they were as good squirrels as they could be, until suddenly an idea popped into Billie's head.

One day, when everything was as still and as quiet in the woods as it is in church when nobody is there, Billie said to his brother:

"Let's do something."

"What shall we do?" asked Johnnie.

"Let's run away," suggested Billie.

"Where?" asked Johnnie. "I don't want to go down to that park in Newark again, where the fire engines and the trolley cars make so much noise."

"No, we'll not go there," agreed Billie.

"Where will we go, then?" "Oh, let's run off in the woods, and see what happens."

"What for?" asked Johnnie. "Isn't it nice here? We have a good nest and plenty to eat."

"Yes, but nothing ever happens here," complained Billie. "Come on, let's run away. Jennie Chipmunk isn't looking, grandma is taking a nap, and grandpa has gone to the postoffice."

So the little squirrel brothers ran away. Would you believe it? They did. Yes, sir, they slipped into the nest, got some nut sandwiches to take along in case they got hungry, and ran away.

At first it was lots of fun. They jumped about in the trees and saw many strange sights. They got farther and farther away from home, into a part of the big park on top of Orange Mountain, where they had never been before. They looked up at the blue sky and they looked down at the earth, which was just getting green, ready for spring, and they shouted and called to each other, they were so happy.

"Let's eat our sandwiches," suggested Johnnie, after a while, so they sat down on a log and finished them up in less than no time, if you know how long that is. This done, they went on again, playing tag and leaping about, until it began to get dark. Then they were not quite so happy, and Johnnie would have been glad to go home, only he did not like to say so, for fear Billie would think he was afraid. So they kept on, and it was getting darker and darker and darker.

"Where will we stay to-night?" asked Johnnie.

"Oh, we will find a hollow tree somewhere," said Billie. "We are travelers now, seeking our fortune, and it does not much matter where we stay."

They looked and looked, but they couldn't find a hollow tree to stay in, and it got darker and darker, and colder and colder. Pretty soon they heard a noise in a tree over their heads, and a big bird swooped down on them. It almost caught them, only Billie pulled Johnnie away in time. Then a snake tried to catch them, and they had to hide under the leaves. Oh, how frightened they were, and, all at once, just as they were wishing they were safe home, what should they hear but some one calling:

"Who? Who? Who?"

Johnnie and Billie Bushytail

"It's me Billie Bushytail," answered Billie, but the voice called again:

"Who? Who? Who?" and Billie told Johnnie to answer, so Johnnie said: "It's me Johnnie Bushytail." But the voice sounded again, "Who? Who? Who?" oh, so loud and shivery. Maybe those little squirrel boys weren't frightened! They cuddled down under the leaves as far as they could cuddle, when all of a sudden they saw two big fiery eyes staring at them. And the eyes came nearer and nearer, and the squirrels were shivering and wondering what was going to eat them up, when what should happen but that they heard a jolly laugh! Oh, such a jolly laugh! And who should the eyes belong to but Jennie Chipmunk. They knew her at once by her laugh. Then she called: "Oh, you poor, frightened little chaps. Lost all alone in the deep, dark woods! My, how worried grandpa and grandma are! I've been hunting everywhere for you, and now I'm going to take you straight home."

Which she did, leading them through the forest by the light of a last year's firefly preserved in a bottle. And who do you suppose it was that called to them? Why, of course, you've guessed it an owl! What do you think of that? Now, provided the doctor says it is all right, you shall hear about Possum Pinktoes to-morrow night.

X. POSSUM PINKTOES AND BILLIE

GRANDMA and Grandpa Lightfoot were so glad to have Jennie Chipmunk bring back Johnnie and Billy Bushytail, after they had run away, that they did not scold the little boy squirrels very much. Indeed, Johnnie and Billie were quite ashamed of themselves for making their kind grandparents worry, and they promised never to do so again.

Well, it was about three days after this, or maybe it was three days and a half I can't be quite sure, because, you see, Jennie Chipmunk took my calendar to use for paper on the pantry shelves anyhow, it was not very long after, that Billie Bushytail was walking alone in the woods. Johnnie had gone to the drug store after some more wild cherry bark for Grandpa Lightfoot's cough, and Billie was all alone. He jumped from one tree to another, his tail whistling in the wind, when all at once, he heard some one call to him;

"Where did you learn to jump?" asked a voice.

"My grandfather taught me," answered Billie, "or, to be more correct, it was a big bird that scared me and Johnnie, so that we jumped before we knew it. But who are you?"

He looked down, and all he could see was a little bunch of fur, curled up on a limb of the tree.

"I'm here," the voice continued. "I'm practising sleep, so when I'm caught folks will think I'm dead, and let me alone." And what do you suppose? if it wasn't that bunch of fur that was talking. Yes, sir; that bunch of fur, that looked just as pussy does when she curls up in front of the stove. Now what do you think about that for something strange?

"Who are you, anyhow?" asked Billie, and he was beginning to get frightened.

"Oh," said the bunch of fur, "I'm Possum Pinktoes," and with that out of the fur came a little sharp nose, and some sharp claws, and a long tail, and two bright eyes looked up to Billie.

"Possum Pinktoes," repeated the squirrel. "Why are you called that?"

"Well, because I have pink toes," answered the little creature. "My father is Dr. Possum, you know, and he named me. He ought to know what to name me."

Johnnie and Billie Bushytail

"I suppose he ought," said Billie. "But what are you doing here?" Then Possum Pinktoes told how he had to practise making believe he was asleep. Don't you think that was a very strange thing to do? But, you see, he did it for a reason. When some animals see what they think is a dead creature, they will not touch it, and Possum Pinktoes, by making believe he was asleep, could look as if he really were dead, when he was very much alive. But think of making believe he was asleep! I've known lots of children who pretended they were wide awake, when they were as sleepy as they could be, but I never saw any children who made believe they were asleep when they were awake.

"Is that all you are doing?" asked Billie.

"Oh, no, indeed," answered Possum Pinktoes. "That is only one of the things I can do. Presently I am going to hang by my tail. I have to do that. Watch me." He made a quick motion, and would you believe me? there he was hanging down from the limb of the tree by his tail.

"My gracious!" cried Billie Bushytail. "That is a very good trick indeed! A very good one! I wonder if I could do that?"

"Did you ever try?" asked Possum Pinktoes.

"No," answered Billie, "I never did."

"Then," said Possum Pinktoes, "you don't know whether you can do it or not. You never know whether you can do a thing until you try it. Watch me carefully, and see if you can hang by your tail. You have a nice, large one. I should think you could."

So, after Billie Bushytail had watched Possum Pinktoes for a few minutes, and saw how gracefully the furry creature hung by his tail, the little squirrel decided to try it.

"Who knows?" said Billie. "Perhaps some day I may get into a circus, and can do this trick."

So he tried to wind his tail around the limb, as he had seen Possum Pinktoes do, and he let himself drop toward the ground. Then, what do you suppose happened? Why, Billie Bushytail fell right to the earth, as quick as could be, and my! what a bump he gave his nose. It bled a little, not quite as much as did the maid's nose who was out in the garden hanging up the clothes, but pretty much. Then Billie ran home crying, and his grandfather told him he was a foolish little squirrel, and should never try hanging by his tail again. And Billie never did. Now, what shall I tell you about to-morrow night? Oh, I know. How would you like to hear about Johnnie and the sly, sly old fox?

XI. JOHNNIE BUSHYTAIL AND THE FOX

YOU see, it all happened this way: Johnnie and Billie Bushytail had quarreled. Johnnie wanted to play with Billie's bow and arrow, or else Billie wanted to take Johnnie's knife. I really can't, at this moment, remember just what it was. But I'm sure of this, either Billie wouldn't let Johnnie have what he wanted, or else Johnnie wouldn't give in to his little squirrel brother. So they quarreled. Then Johnnie puffed up his tail, just as a cat does when it gets angry, and he went off by himself in the woods. He didn't much care where he was going, and he thought maybe, if he went a long way off, and never, never, never came back, or if a Wahoo should catch him, why then maybe Billie would be sorry for being so cross to him. I don't just know what a Wahoo is, but I'm sure it is something dreadful.

So Johnnie wandered off by himself in the woods. Grandpa Lightfoot didn't say anything when he saw his little grandson going off like that. The old gentleman squirrel just looked over the edge of his glasses and said to

Johnnie and Billie Bushytail

Grandma Lightfoot:

"Well, maybe a long walk will do him good."

"I'm sure it will," said grandma, "only I hope he comes to no harm," for she loved Johnnie, and, for that matter, so did grandpa, only he knew that sometimes boys had to learn by experience.

Well, Johnnie walked a long, long way into the woods, and the first thing he knew, some one shouted at him:

"Hello, Johnnie Bushytail!"

Johnnie looked up, and then he looked down, but he could see no one, and he thought perhaps he had dreamed it. Then he heard the voice again:

"Hello, Johnnie Bushytail!"

He looked up, and what should he see but a great big, red, furry creature, with a big tail and a sharp nose and a pair of the brightest eyes you ever saw. Brighter even than Jane Fuzzy-Wuzzy's eyes.

"Oh," said Johnnie, "who are you?"

"Why," said the creature with the big tail, "I'm a squirrel, just like you"; and he wasn't at all; he was a big fox now, what do you think about that, eh? "Yes," he went on; "I'm a squirrel. Won't you come over to my house and play? We'll have lots of fun." "I never saw a squirrel as big as you," said Johnnie.

"Oh, well, you see I am quite an old squirrel," said the fox, cunningly, for he wanted to get Johnnie into his den, where he would probably eat him. "When one gets old, one gets larger."

"My grandfather is old," said Johnnie, "but he is not as large as you are."

"Well," said the fox, "of course that may be true. Perhaps he doesn't eat enough. It takes lots of eating to make one fat. I eat lots. I am always hungry."

"Are you hungry now?" asked Johnnie.

"Yes!" cried the fox, and he smacked his lips, and then he said, quickly: "Oh, I mean no I'm not a bit hungry," for he thought maybe Johnnie would be frightened.

"I never saw a squirrel with such a big tail," went on Johnnie. "Oh, well," answered the fox, "that is a small matter. You see, I got this big tail when I was a boy, and I never bothered to change it. But I do assure you that I am a squirrel, and I'd like to have you come and play with me. I have lots of nice things in my den, and if you'll come along, I'll recite a little verse for you."

"Will you, really?" asked Johnnie, who was fond of poetry.

"I will," said the fox. "Listen to this," and he recited:

I dearly love a little duck,

A chicken or a turkey,

Johnnie and Billie Bushytail

And when I see a great big goose

It makes me feel

"What rhymes with turkey?" asked the fox, suddenly.

"How should I know?" answered Johnnie. "I don't know how to make poetry. I thought you did." "I do," said the fox, "only I have just forgotten the right word. However, it is no matter. Come along to my house, and we will play 'Pop Goes the Squirrel' I mean weasel, and 'Hide the Tail,' and all games like that."

Then that bad fox, who was pretending he was a squirrel, just to fool Johnnie Bushytail, went up to him and took hold of the little boy squirrel, and was going to lead him off to his den, and maybe eat him all up, when who should come along but Jennie Chipmunk and Billie. And as soon as Jennie saw the fox, she knew right away that he was going to harm Johnnie. So she took up a piece of bark and dropped it on the fox's head, and it frightened him so that he ran away. By that time Johnnie was all over being angry, and he was very glad his brother and Jennie had come along in time to save him. So the squirrels and the chipmunk went home very happy together. Now, if the Wiggitywog doesn't make any trouble, you shall hear to-morrow night about how Grandpa Lightfoot fell down the gatepost.

XII. GRANDPA LIGHTFOOT IN A HOLE

ONE day it happened that there was nothing more left to eat in the squirrels' nest, for all of the nuts which they had stored up for the winter were gone.

"My goodness me!" exclaimed Grandpa Lightfoot, when Grandma Lightfoot told him this. "I must go out at once and see if I can't find some stray acorns or other nuts for breakfast. This is very serious, indeed. Oh, my goodness me, yes; and an apple core besides."

So Grandpa Lightfoot started off, before Johnnie or Billie or Jennie Chipmunk were up, and he looked under the leaves and in hollow trees, but not a nut could he find. Pretty soon he came to a little pond of water, with some ducks paddling about on it.

"Excuse me," said Grandpa Lightfoot, "but could you ducks tell me where I might find some nuts to eat? We haven't any at our nest."

Then all the ducks looked up and said: "Quack! Quack! Quack!" all at once, just like that. Then they put their heads down under the water and stuck their tails up in the air, and wiggled their feet, and didn't say another word. Grandpa Lightfoot was much disappointed. But he walked on, and pretty soon he saw something else swimming in the water, and who should appear but Jane Fuzzy-Wuzzy, the muskrat nurse of the Littletail family. You see, it was her day out, and she was taking exercise for her health. "Why, Jane Fuzzy-Wuzzy! How do you do?" cried grandpa.

The muskrat nurse said she was pretty well, and then Grandpa Lightfoot asked about Sammie and Susie Littletail.

"Well, Sammie got his feet wet from going out in the wet without his rubbers," said Miss Fuzzy-Wuzzy, "and he has a bad cold. But Susie is well."

Then, after grandpa had told about his family, he asked the muskrat if she might happen to know where he could find some nuts. And what do you think? She did! She told Grandpa Lightfoot of an old house with a gatepost in front of it. The post was hollow, she said, and in it were some nuts. Some squirrels had put them there, but they

Johnnie and Billie Bushytail

had to move in a hurry, and could not take them along, so the nuts were there yet. Grandpa Lightfoot, after asking Jane Fuzzy–Wuzzy to bring Sammie and Susie to see Billie and Johnnie some day, hurried off and found the hollow post filled with nuts, just as the muskrat had said.

Grandpa got on top of the gatepost and looked down in. He was just wishing he had brought along a bigger bag to carry the nuts home in, when, all of a sudden, he fell right down yes, sir, right down that hollow gatepost. Wasn't that terrible? And when he tried to climb up he couldn't, for the wood was so soft and rotten that his claws wouldn't stick. Wasn't that worse? Oh, how frightened he was! He tried and he tried and he tried, but he couldn't get up, and began to think he'd have to stay there forever.

It was long past breakfast time, and was coming on for dinner time, and when Grandpa Lightfoot didn't come back,

–84a– Grandma Lightfoot was worried. So she told Billie and Johnnie and Jennie Chipmunk that he had gone to look for nuts, and asked their advice.

"We will go and find him," said Billie.

"Of course we will," spoke Johnnie. "Come on, Jennie." The little orphan chipmunk didn't smile or laugh, she was so worried.

So the three started off, leaving Grandma Lightfoot at home, because she couldn't travel very well, and whom should they meet but Jane Fuzzy–Wuzzy, just as Grandpa had. So the muskrat told about having sent Grandpa Lightfoot to the hollow gatepost, and, hurrying there, Johnnie and Billie and Jennie Chipmunk heard him calling for help right through the post, as if it were a telephone.

"You must try to get me out," he said. "How can we?" asked Johnnie, and, really, it did seem a hard thing to do. They tried several ways, but none would answer, and they were just going to give up, when they heard a hissing noise, and what should they see but a long snake. At first, the squirrels were going to run away, but the snake said he would not hurt them, as he was a good snake, and not a bad one.

"I will help get Grandpa Lightfoot out," he said. So he crawled up the post and stuck his tail down inside. Then he wound it around grandpa and pulled him up as if he were a bucket in the well. My, but maybe grandpa wasn't glad, and Billie and Johnnie, too! And maybe they didn't thank the snake! But the snake only said: "Oh, a little thing like that isn't worth speaking about. Come, I will show you how to get the nuts out. I will lower Billie and Johnnie into the post; they can grab up all the nuts they can hold, and I will pull them up."

"No, thank you," said grandpa. "I have a better plan than that. I will gnaw a hole in the bottom of the post, and all the nuts will roll out. I should have done that at first." Then the squirrels gnawed a hole, out came the nuts, and they had as many as they wanted, and the snake helped carry the nuts home. Would you like me to tell you, to–morrow night, how Johnnie and Billie went sailing?

XIII. JOHNNIE AND BILLIE GO A–SAILING

YOU can all imagine how glad Grandma Lightfoot was when grandpa came back with Billie and Johnnie and Jennie Chipmunk, after the snake had pulled the old gentleman squirrel up from the hollow gate post. And, of course, she was also glad that they brought some nuts with them, for she was hungry, and there had been nothing in the house to cook. Just think how hard it would be to get along without anything to cook even harder than when everything is so expensive, as it is now.

Johnnie and Billie Bushytail

Well, after Grandpa Lightfoot had found the nuts it wasn't so bad, and Johnnie and Billie Bushytail felt better. So did Jennie Chipmunk, and she laughed so much when she was washing the dishes that the boy squirrels thought she had been reading a funny story, but she hadn't, at all.

"What shall we do, Johnnie?" asked Billie one day when they were out in the woods, about a week after they had found Grandpa Lightfoot in the hollow gate post.

"I don't know," answered Johnnie. "Let's play tag. You are it!" he cried, as he ran up and touched his brother, and then scrambled up a big tree.

"Ah, tag's no fun," said Billie, who didn't want to run after his brother.

"Well, let's wait until Jennie gets through the sweeping, and we can play hide the acorn, or blind-squirrel-buff. I'll be it."

"That's no fun, either. Those are girls' games." "Well, what do you want to do, then?"

"Oh, I don't know. Let's pretend "

But just then the little squirrel boys heard now what do you think they did hear? Well, I'm just as sure as if I had a four-cent piece in my pocket that you could never guess, so I'm going to tell you. It was a voice singing, yes, children, a voice singing a funny little song, and this is the way it went, if you can get some one to sing it for you:

I love to hear the wild winds blow,

And see the billows heaving,

This woodland life's too tame for me,

I shortly will be leaving.

I'm going to fly far, far away

Across the bounding ocean,

The woods and trees for those who please,

A sailor's life's my notion.

"Who was that?" cried Billie

"I don't know," answered his brother, and they both looked up, and they both looked down, and then right out of a tree flew a big bird.

"It was me," the bird said, just like that, and not a bit different, honestly.

"Who are you?" asked Billie.

"I'm a seagull," replied the bird. "I just came ashore for a little trip, but I'm going right back to sea again. I don't like life on shore. Was either of you ever a sailor?" the seagull asked, and it walked out on a limb with a rolling, heaving motion, just like a sailor on a sloping deck.

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"No," said Johnnie, "we were never sailors."

"Indeed," went on the seagull, "then it's high time you learned, my dears."

"But there's nothing to sail on," objected Johnnie. "You have to have an ocean to be a sailor, and there's no ocean in the woods, Besides we are used to living on land." "That's no objection; none at all, I do assure you," spoke the seagull. "I see a little pond of water over there," and he pointed a webbed foot toward it. "Now a piece of bark will do for a boat. Some ships are called barks, you know, so that makes it all right. Of course, you can't be salt water sailors on fresh water, but that can't be helped. Here, now, you have everything water, a boat and some one to teach you. You can become sailors in a minute," and the seagull threw down some pieces of bark that he pulled off with his sharp beak. The bark was shaped just like little boats.

"But we have no sails," objected Billie. "We can't sail without sails."

"No more you can," said the seagull. "I hadn't thought of that. ``Ah," the bird exclaimed suddenly. "I have it your tails! They are big and bushy and if you sit down and hold them up they will catch the wind fine. I read that in a book, but I had forgotten it for the time being. Now, get on your barks and sail away, and you'll be sailors sure this day."

So Billie and Johnnie carried their barks down to the edge of the small pond. Then they got on the little boats, and hoisted their tail-sails, or their sail-tails, whichever way you choose, and away they went over the pond, as nice as nice could be. They were so delighted with the new sport that they kept at it and almost forgot to go home for dinner. They had races, and once Billie nearly fell overboard, which made the seagull laugh. Then the bird flew away, singing his funny little song, and pretty soon Jennie Chipmunk came to tell Johnnie and Billie to come home. And, oh, I almost forgot, to-morrow night you shall hear how they were shipwrecked.

XIV. JOHNNIE AND BILLIE ARE SHIPWRECKED

"NOW where are you going, boys?" asked Grandpa Lightfoot, as Billie and Johnnie Bushytail started from the nest one morning.

"We are going to the pond to play at being sailors, the way the sea-gull taught us," answered Johnnie. "May we go, grandpa?"

"Hum, well, ahem! Let me see," replied the old gentleman squirrel, and he looked over the tops of his glasses, right straight at those boy squirrels, until they began to be afraid they couldn't go. "Will you be very careful?" asked grandpa. "Yes, sir," they both exclaimed at once, just as quick as quick could be.

"Hum, ha Ahem. Well, since you have learned to jump and dodge behind trees, and climb quickly and crack hard nuts with your teeth, perhaps sailing will be a useful thing to know. Yes, you may go."

"I wish they'd take Jennie Chipmunk with them," remarked Grandma Lightfoot, who was greasing the pans to make a hickory nut cake. "That child has worked so hard she deserves a holiday."

"Aw, we don't want " began Billie, but his grandpa looked over the tops of his glasses at him so quickly that Billie changed what he was going to say and Johnnie finished it for him. You see Billie was afraid to object, for fear he couldn't go."

"Yes, Jennie can come," finished Johnnie "We will teach her how to sail." "That will be nice," said Jennie, and she laughed so that she showed all her pretty, white teeth.

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So the two little squirrel boys and the orphan chipmunk girl, who washed the dishes and swept out the nest, went on through the woods until they came to the pond. Then Johnnie and Billie showed Jennie how to sit on her boat, with the tail in the air for a sail. They all got on strips of bark, Johnnie on a big piece, Billie on a piece that wasn't quite so large, and Jennie Chipmunk on a real, small, tiny, little piece of bark; just like the three bears, you know. Then, as they started off Billie began to sing, and he sang:

I love to hear the woodlands bound,

And see the flying winds blow.

"That isn't right!" called his brother.

"Why isn't it?" asked Billie. "Because it isn't. That's not the way the seagull sang it. Besides, you can't hear woodlands bound, nor see wind blowing."

"Well, maybe I got it wrong," admitted Billie. "When that bird comes back I'm going to learn it. Come on, let's have a race. My ship will beat yours, Jennie."

Then they all stuck their tails up in the air as far as they would go, and the wind blew, and they sailed, and they sailed, and they sailed. Right across the little pond they went, and toward a little island that was in the middle.

Then, all at once, just as quick as you can put coal on the fire, something happened. There came a strong puff of wind, and Jennie Chipmunk's ship blew over, and she fell right in the water.

"Oh, save me! Save me!" she cried, and she was so frightened that she forgot to smile. Besides, if she had smiled her mouth would have gotten full of water, so it was a good thing she didn't smile, I think, don't you?"

"Get on my boat, quick!" called Johnnie. "It's large enough to hold you. Hurry!" and he steered his piece of bark over to her. Jennie scrambled up, and then well, I'm almost afraid to tell you for fear you'll worry about it, but I can't help it, anyhow. What should happen next but that Billie's boat tipped over, and there he was in the water.

"Save me! Save me!" he cried, just like Jennie.

"Come on, get in my boat!" shouted Johnnie as quick as you can blow out a match on a dark night. So Johnnie helped pull Billie up on his boat, and there they all three were on the one piece of bark, and I guess you're glad it was large enough; now, aren't you? Well, they all three held up their tails, and the wind blew them along, and then, would you believe me, what happened but the breeze got so strong that it tipped that piece of bark over and there they all were floundering about in the water and no other boat near at hand to save them. Oh, how awfully wet and frightened they were, and, you know, it's quite serious to be wet and frightened at the same time.

"Swim for the island! Swim for the island!" cried Johnnie, and, sure enough, they all did, for it was not very far off. They crawled out on the land, just as wet as when Kittie falls in the bathtub, and Billie said, with his teeth chattering: "Now, I s'pose we're shipwrecked, aren't we?" His brother said they were and so did Jennie Chipmunk, and the funny part of it is that they really were shipwrecked on a desert island. But I'm not going to leave them there like that; no, indeed, I'm not. You see, I have to stop this story right here, but if my typewriter is working, why, to-morrow night we'll see what happened.

XV. THE BUSHYTAILS ARE RESCUED

WHERE did we leave off? Oh, I remember now. Billie and Johnnie Bushytail and Jennie Chipmunk were

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shipwrecked on a desert island, weren't they? Well, they were very unhappy, indeed, all wet through; but then, you see, the sun and the wind, which, as it happened very luckily, was in the south that day, dried out their coats of fur. They were not like children, who, when they fall in the water, have to change everything they have on. The squirrels didn't have to change a thing.

"Well," asked Billie, when he was pretty dry, "how are we going to get off this island? We never can swim to shore, as it's too far. It's your fault, Johnnie, for wanting to come sailing; isn't it, Jennie?"

"It is not," declared Johnnie. "You wanted to sail as much as I did."

"Then it's Jennie's fault," insisted Billie, who wanted to blame some one.

"No, it isn't," replied his brother, "It's the fault of the wind."

"Well, I knew it wasn't mine," went on Billie. "But no matter about that; how are we going to get home? There are no trees here, to get bark from to make boats."

"No trees! I should say not!" exclaimed Johnnie. "This is a desert island; nothing grows here."

"How do you know it is a desert island?" asked Jennie, who was beginning to smile again. She was always curious, was Jennie.

"I know," answered Johnnie, "because there is nothing on it but a desert, and, besides, that's the only place you can be shipwrecked on a desert island. It's in all the books."

"Don't tell me that!" cried a hoarse voice right close to them, and who should come hopping along but a frog. "Don't tell me it's in all the books," he said. "Whenever I hear that it makes me shiver," and, sure enough, the frog began to shiver.

"Why does it make you shiver?" asked Billie.

"What is your name?" inquired Johnnie at the same time.

"I will answer you both at once," spoke the frog. "My name is Bully, and the reason I shiver when I hear about something being in all the books is that once a blue heron told me that. He said it was in all the books that cranes, storks and herons ate frogs, mice and so forth. Then he tried to eat me, but I hopped away. Do you know Sammie and Susie Littletail?"

"We have heard of them," answered Jennie.

"Well, they are great friends of mine," went on the frog. "Sammie and I used to jump together. He knows about the blue heron. But how comes it that you are here?"

"We are shipwrecked," answered Johnnie. "Perhaps you can help us to get to the mainland from this desert island." Then he told Bully the frog how it all happened, and he didn't leave out a single thing, not even about getting wet in the water.

"Well, I can't carry you over, because I'm not big enough, or I would," said Bully, the frog.

"Must we stay here forever?" asked Jennie, and she stopped the smiling which she had started when she saw the frog.

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"No," said Bully, as quick as a cat can wink her eye. "You won't have to stay here. I have thought of a plan. I must find a spider."

So they hunted around until they found a spider, though the squirrels couldn't imagine how that was going to help them. The spider was spinning her web, and when she saw the shipwrecked ones, and the frog, she asked them if they had seen any flies, as there were very scarce on the desert island.

"We will tell you where there are some if you will spin a long web to reach to the mainland," said Bully.

"What for?" asked the spider.

"Well, then, Billie and Johnnie and Jennie can walk across it over the water."

"Oh, my goodness me and a bushel of elephants!" cried the spider, just as cross as could be. "I never could spin a web strong enough to hold up those boys. Perhaps Jennie Chipmunk could walk on it, but not Johnnie or Billie. Oh, my goodness me and a peck of monkeys! No, indeed."

"Maybe Jennie can cross over and get help," suggested Billie.

"No," said Jennie, "I will not leave you on this desert island all alone."

"But we will have Bully and the spider for company," said Johnnie. But that did not matter. Jennie would not go. Then the frog said he did not see what could be done, and they all felt pretty miserable, even the spider. When all at once who should come sailing along but Mrs. Quack-Quack. Who was she? Why, of course, I forgot to tell you; she was a lovely white duck. When she saw the shipwrecked ones she took them all upon her broad back, and before you could say the longest word in the dictionary she had them safely on the main shore. And, oh, how glad they were! Now what would you like to hear about to-morrow night, if you don't go sleigh-riding? How would a story do about Johnnie and Billie going to a picnic?

XVI. THE BUSHYTAILS AT A PICNIC

PERHAPS you think it is rather early in the season to go on a picnic. Well, perhaps it would be for children, but you see, squirrels are different. They don't mind the cold a bit, for they have nice fur coats that they never have to take off. So, though winter had hardly gone, and though spring was a little late in arriving, Billie and Johnnie Bushytail and Jennie Chipmunk went to a picnic. Bully, the frog, had asked them.

"If you would like to go to a picnic," Bully said, "I know where there is going to be one." "Where?" asked Johnnie.

"Down by my pond," answered Bully. "The ducks are going to have it, but that doesn't matter; you can come just as well as not."

"But we're afraid of water since we were shipwrecked," remarked Jennie Chipmunk, who had just finished doing the dishes, and had hung the towels up to dry.

"Oh, well, you don't need to go in the water," said the frog. "The ducks will do that. They are used to it."

So Johnnie and Billie and Jennie asked Grandma and Grandpa Lightfoot if they might go to the picnic.

"Yes," grandpa said, "if you are careful not to take cold. A cold at this time of the year is very bad, indeed. Oh,

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my, yes, and a mustard plaster besides!"

So they went to the picnic, Johnnie and Billie and Jennie Chipmunk, and they took their lunch in a basket Mrs. Wren made for them out of grass and straw. They had several kinds of nut sandwiches, some wild cherry tea and some soft maple-tree buds that were just swelling up.

Through the woods they went, the two little boy-squirrels and the orphan chipmunk, laughing and shouting and having a fine time. Pretty soon they came to the pond where the picnic was to be held. And oh, what a lot of ducks were there! There were big ducks and little ducks, and white ducks and gray ducks, and ducks of all colors. And Mrs. Quack-Quack was there, also. She came right up to Johnnie and Billie and asked them:

"Well, are you all right since the shipwreck?"

"Oh, yes, thank you so much for saving us," spoke up Jennie, who was very polite indeed.

"Well," said Mrs. Quack-Quack, "the picnic is about to begin, so I must leave you, but I will see you again. We are to start off with a grand swim."

Then all the ducks formed in line on the pond, and they wobbled their tails, and wiggled their yellow legs, and opened their bills, and quacked until you would have thought something dreadful had happened. Around and around they swam until Johnnie and Billie were almost dizzy from watching them.

"Don't they swim fine!" cried Jennie Chipmunk.

"Pooh! That is nothing," croaked Bully the frog. "Nothing at all. You should see me swim. I can swim under water."

Just then one of the ducks put her head under water and stuck her tail up in the air, standing on her head, just like a man in the circus.

"There is a duck going to swim under water," said Billie.

"Oh my, no! She is only reaching down for a few snails to eat," said Bully. "Watch me swim," and with that in he plumped, and swam out of sight for ever so long.

When he came up with his big eyes blinking, the grand swim was over, and all the ducks came out on land, walking as well as they could, which was not very fast. Then Mrs. Quack-Quack called out that it was time for dinner, and they all sat down and began to eat right off the ground; now, wasn't that rather odd? I thought so, myself. So Johnnie and Billie and Jennie took their nut sandwiches and maple-tree buds out of their basket, and they began to eat, too, and right in the middle of their lunch who should come along but Mrs. Spider the one who lived on the desert island.

"Where are the flies you promised me?" she asked.

"Oh, we forgot all about them," said Billie. "But what are you doing here?"

"I am on my way to visit Miss Muffet," answered the spider. "You know I have to go and sit down beside her, because I'm a spider while she's on her tuffet, little Miss Muffet, eating her curds and whey. It really is quite a trial to me, as much as it is to her, but I have to do it, you know, because it's in all the books."

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"Don't say that, please," croaked the frog, rubbing his cold nose. "You make me shiver," and would you believe it, he began to shiver then and there. Pretty soon the spider went away, and Billie and Johnnie and Jennie finished their lunch. Then the ducks went in swimming again, and once more after that, because it was their picnic, and they could do as they pleased. Then came all sorts of games, in which the squirrels took part, but they could run so much faster than the ducks that they caught the ducks every time. Then the picnic was over and Johnnie and Billie and Jennie went home. To-morrow night you shall hear about playing soldier.

XVII. PLAYING A SOLDIER GAME

"COME on," cried Billie Bushytail to Johnnie Bushytail, his brother, one day. "I've got my bow and arrow; now let's play at being soldiers."

"All right," agreed Johnnie. "Wait until I get a few more arrows and then we'll have a make-believe fight. Only I wish we had some of those sandwiches like we had at the ducks' picnic."

"What for?"

"Well, soldiers have to eat, don't they? They carry things to eat on their backs, with the blankets they sleep in." "Oh, we can pretend we have something to eat," said Billie. "Come on."

"Where are you going, boys?" called out Grandma Lightfoot, looking from the window of the nest.

"We are going to play soldier," said Johnnie.

"You must ask grandpa first," went on the old lady squirrel. "I'm not sure he will let you."

So up the tree they scampered, their little feet going pitter-patter just like a little doggie's when he runs across the oil-cloth in the kitchen. Grandpa Lightfoot was shaving in the bathroom, and his face was all covered with lather. What's that? You didn't know squirrels shaved? Well, that's strange. I believe I did forget to mention it, but please excuse me, and I'll see that it does not happen again. Well, grandpa was shaving, and when the little squirrel boys hurried in to ask him if they could play soldier, he cried out:

"Easy now, boys! You startled me so that I almost cut me with my razor. You must come in more quietly when I am shaving, for my paw trembles a little. What is it you want?"

Then they told him, and he said: "Yes, you may play if you will be careful. But I wish you would take Jennie Chipmunk with you. She needs to have some fun."

"Aw, a girl can't be a soldier," complained Johnnie. "She wouldn't know how to fight."

"She wouldn't need to fight," went on Grandpa, carefully taking out a bit of lather that had gotten into his mouth. "She could be a Red Cross nurse, and look after wounded soldiers."

"Oh, that will be fine!" cried Billie. "Come on, Johnnie, we'll get Jennie. She can be a nurse, and when I am hurt she can carry me away on a stretcher."

"No, I'm going to be hurt, so she can carry me," said Johnnie very quickly.

"I chose that first," cried his brother, and it really did look mind you, I'm not saying for sure but it did look as if there would be a quarrel. Then Jennie Chipmunk, smiling so she showed her pretty teeth, called out:

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"Never mind, boys, you can both be wounded, and I'll carry you both. Will that do?"

"Oh, yes!" the squirrel brothers answered quickly, just like that "Oh, yes!"

So they got their bows and arrows and scrambled down the tree to the ground, and Grandpa Lightfoot was glad to see them go, for they made him nervous, and his paw shook so when he was putting lather on his face, that he got a lot more in his mouth, and it did not taste very nice, I do assure you.

Johnnie and Billie took their bows and arrows, and Johnnie got behind one tree, while Billie hid back of another. Then Jennie got some soft bark and leaves to make a little cot bed, on which to carry away the make-believe wounded squirrels. Then they played.

First, Johnnie shot an arrow, then Billie sent one from his bow, but the boy squirrels didn't hurt each other, because, you see, they were behind the trees. Oh, what lots of fun they had! They called out orders, made believe they were firing guns, and shouted "bang-bang" and "bung-bung," just like a gun goes off, you know; and one was a general-squirrel and the other a captain, and they made believe they had cannon, and they had to call out pretty loud when they fired the cannon, louder than when they shot the make-believe guns. Next they shot more arrows, and jumped up and down, and sideways and pretended to be dead; and oh, I don't know what they didn't do!

Then, all at once, Johnnie shot an arrow, and Billie didn't happen to be behind the tree, and the arrow hit him on the nose. My goodness me and a bag of peanuts! But how it did hurt, and how he cried! Just like a new baby.

"You did that on purpose!" he shouted to Johnnie, and Johnnie said he didn't at all. Then, before Billie knew what he was doing he shot an arrow at his brother, who wasn't behind the tree, and Johnnie was hit on the leg. It hurt, too, let me tell you. Then Johnnie cried, and Billie cried, and they had a very dreadful time indeed, until, all at once, Jennie Chipmunk began to laugh; and when they wanted to know why she was laughing, she said: "Why, you are both wounded, and don't have to make believe at all, and I will have to carry you both away on the stretcher. I wonder if I can?"

And Jennie Chipmunk laughed again. Then Billie's nose felt better all at once, and so did Johnnie's leg, and they ran and got on the cot bed, but they were so heavy that Jennie could not carry them, and they had to walk. Then they played soldier once more, but they were careful not to shoot one another. An arrow did happen to hit Jennie by mistake, but it did not hurt her much, and she only laughed. Then they all went home. If the weather is fair to-morrow night, would you like to hear how Johnnie's and Billie's papa and mama came home from the boy's cage?

XVIII. PAPA AND MAMMA GET BACK HOME

YOU remember I told you some nights ago how it was that Johnnie and Billie Bushytail had to live with their grandpa and grandma and Jennie Chipmunk. It was because Papa and Mamma Bushytail had been captured by a boy, and put into a cage with a wheel that went around faster than the fastest merry-go-round you ever saw. Well, now I am going to tell you how the squirrels escaped from the cage.

The boy who had them was very kind to them, and gave them nice nuts to eat, but still they wished they could be free, to run about in the woods, and even the wheel that went around did not make them forget their little squirrel children.

So one day, after the boy had fed his pets, and cleaned the cage, what do you think happened? Why, he forgot to fasten the door. Yes, sir, that's just what he did, I'm not fooling a bit. He went out of the room, and left the cage

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door open, and Papa Bushytail saw that it was swinging to and fro.

"Come on, quick!" he called to Mamma Bushytail. "This is the very chance we have been looking for. We will run out and go back to our dear children and Grandpa and Grandma Lightfoot and Jennie Chipmunk."

"But how are we going to get out of this big house?" asked Mamma Bushytail, and she felt so badly that a tear came in each eye, and fell into the drinking water.

"Oh, we'll find a way," replied her husband. "Come on, now. Run!" So out they ran, faster than an elephant running after a peanut and a lump of sugar. They scrambled out of the cage on to the table, down to the floor, and, my, what good luck they did have! If there wasn't a window open in the room. They jumped right out of the window on a porch, and from there they could easily reach a tree. Oh, how glad they were to be in a tree again! They had thought they never again would run up and down the branches, and hide under the leaves.

"Which way is home?" asked Mamma Bushytail.

"Leave that to me," answered Papa Bushytail. "I can find it."

"I hope you can," said his wife, "for I am so anxious to see my dear children again."

Then Papa Bushytail ran to the very top of the tree, until he could see the Orange Mountains, where he used to live. He caught a glimpse of them, a long way off, and then he and his wife hurried toward them as fast as they could go. And, oh, how very glad they were when they reached the place where they used to live.

"Now, we will go right to father's house, and see Johnnie and Billie," declared Mamma Bushytail, for, you see, Grandpa Lightfoot was her papa when she was a little girl, and, of course, he kept on being her papa after she got married, which is perfectly natural, you know.

Now it happened that on the very day Papa and Mamma Bushytail escaped, Johnnie and Billie had gone to play in the woods. They had their bows and arrows, but they did not shoot at each other, for they had become tired of playing soldier, and were pretending they were hunting bears. Well, all at once, just as Billie was aiming at a big stump (which was a make-believe bear, you know), what should happen but that two squirrels ran up to him. One of them hugged him from in front, and the other hugged him from in back. And then both of the big squirrels cried out:

"Oh, it's Billie! It's our little Billie! Where is Johnnie?"

Billie was so surprised he hardly knew what to do, but just then out ran Johnnie from behind a tree, and the two big squirrels hurried over to him, and hugged him with their paws until he could hardly breathe. And they exclaimed:

"Oh, it's our dear little boy, Johnnie! How he has grown," cried Papa Bushytail. "And so has Billie!" declared Mamma Bushytail. Then the two little squirrel boys knew their papa and mamma had come back to them. "Oh, mamma," cried Johnnie. "We can jump! Grandpa Lightfoot taught us!"

"And we found some Christmas nuts!" added Billie.

"And we were shipwrecked!" went on Johnnie.

"And I went up in a balloon," continued Billie.

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"And we were lost and an owl hollered at us!" cried the two boys at once. "Oh, mamma and papa, how glad we are that you are home."

"Bless your dear little hearts, we are glad to get home," said Papa Bushytail.

"Now we'll go see grandpa and grandma and Jennie, and have a cup of oak-leaf tea, for we never had a bit in the cage." Then the papa and mamma squirrels hugged their little boys again, as hard as ever they could, and they all hurried to the nest. So I shall have some more to tell you about what happened after that, if you are good, and I think to-morrow night the bedtime story will be about how Billie and Johnnie found a little sister.

XIX. BILLIE AND JOHNNIE'S SISTER

WELL, you all happened to be good children to-day, or I couldn't tell you, now, how Billie and Johnnie Bushytail found a little sister, after their papa and mamma came back to them, escaping from the cage where the boy had them.

It was this way: Grandpa and Grandma Lightfoot were so glad to see Mr. and Mrs. Bushytail back, that they hardly knew what to do. You can also imagine how delighted the two little boy squirrels were, to say nothing of Jennie Chipmunk, who smiled so well, I'm really afraid to tell you how much she smiled and laughed, she was so happy. "Now," said Papa Bushytail, "we must get a nest of our own, for you boys have visited your grandparents long enough."

"Yes," said Mamma Bushytail, "I shall be glad to go to housekeeping again. Boarding in that cage, with the wheel that went around so fast, did not please me at all. We must find a nest at once."

So, though Grandma and Grandpa Lightfoot would have been glad to keep the Bushytail family longer, it was decided that it would be best to live in separate nests, but not far away from each other. Papa Bushytail managed to find a nice home for his family in a hollow tree, lined with soft leaves and grass, which a squirrel had given up to go South for the winter. There Johnnie and Billie went to live, and the very first morning they awakened in their new home something very strange happened. Billie was the first to get up, but Johnnie was not far behind him, and as they looked out of the hole in the tree they heard a funny little noise on the ground. They looked down, but they couldn't see anything.

"What was that?" asked Billie, and he sniffed the air and wiggled his little whiskers to see if he could discover any danger.

"I don't know, unless it's Bully, the frog," answered his brother.

"Bully doesn't squeak that way," said Billie. "I'm going down to see."

"Maybe it's an owl," spoke Johnnie, "Better call grandpa Oh, no, I mean papa," he said quickly. You see he forgot for a moment that he was in his new home.

"No, he's asleep yet; don't wake him up," went on Billie. "Let's go down and see what it is," and all the while the funny little squeaking noise kept up. So the two little squirrel boys scampered down the tree to the ground, and the noise kept getting louder and louder, until they could hear it quite plainly, and then they could tell that it came from a little bunch of leaves at the foot of the tree.

"Who's there?" asked Billie, as bold as bold could be.

Johnnie and Billie Bushytail

"It's me," answered the little squeaky voice, and what should come out of that bunch of leaves but the cunningest, nicest, darlingest little squirrel you ever say. Oh, it was just as nice as it could be! But, Oh! so little and shivery and trembling, and it was crying! Wasn't that too bad?

"Who are you?" asked Johnnie, and he spoke very softly to the baby squirrel, for he didn't want to frighten it.

"I am Sister Sallie," replied the baby squirrel, and she stopped crying at once, because

–132a– Johnnie's voice was so gentle, which shows that you should always be gentle to those smaller than you are.

"How do you know your name is Sister Sallie?" asked Billie. "You are so little I shouldn't think you would know."

"Oh, yes, I know," the baby squirrel said. "I was named that by a little girl when I was quite a baby. She was going through the woods, where I used to live, and eating peanuts, and she sang a little song that went:

Hippity–hop to the barber shop

To buy a lolly–pop–lally;

One for me and one for thee

And one for Sister Sallie.

"And just then she dropped a peanut for me, and so I knew my name was Sister Sallie," went on the little squirrel, drying her eyes. "My name's been that ever since." "That isn't the way I learned that verse," said Johnnie.

"Besides, it was all an accident, anyway. The girl didn't mean you."

"Hush!" exclaimed Billie, who didn't want to hurt Sister Sallie's feelings. "Tell us how you came to be here all alone and why you are crying," he went on.

So the little squirrel told how her papa and mamma had become ill and died, and how she had no one to look after her, so she became an orphan just like Jennie Chipmunk. Then Billie and Johnnie felt very sorry for Sister Sallie. They ran right up to the nest and cried:

"Mamma! Papa! We have found a little sister!"

Wasn't that good of them? At first Mr. and Mrs. Bushytail were much surprised, but they took in little Sister Sallie, and gave her some nice, warm breakfast of nut pudding, and said she could always live with them, and be a sister to Johnnie and Billie. So that is how they found a little sister, and to–morrow night, if I do not have the toothache. you shall hear about Sister Sallie's doll.

XX. SISTER SALLIE'S DOLL

I SUPPOSE some of you think I made a mistake about that verse Sister Sallie recited last night. Well, maybe I did, but you see it's very hard to get something to rhyme with Sallie and I think the baby squirrel did pretty well to remember lolly–pop–lally. You just try it yourself and see how hard it is. Except, maybe, alley, but you see there aren't any alleys in the woods, so that wouldn't do.

Johnnie and Billie Bushytail

That verse bothered Johnnie Bushytail a little bit, too, for he knew Sallie hadn't said the verse right, but then the little baby squirrel was such a darling that he didn't want to find fault with her. You can imagine how proud Johnnie and Billie were to have a little sister. Oh, how they loved her! and they used to steal in to look at her when she was asleep, and they made up their minds that they would never let anything hurt her, just as you boys do to your own real sister. Isn't it nice to have one? Nicer than anything else in the world, I think, except, maybe, to have a little brother, or maybe a big brother, for that matter, or a papa and a mamma and a grandpa and a grandma, and some uncles, aunts and cousins.

"Now, boys," said Mamma Bushytail to Johnnie and Billie one day, "I want you to take Sister Sallie out for a walk. Show her all around the woods, take her over to grandma's house and teach her how to jump and leap about."

"Come on, Sister Sallie!" cried Johnnie, and he and Billie each took hold of one of her cute little paws, and led her along.

They had lots of fun in the woods, playing under the leaves, and, pretty soon, they came to grandma's house, where Jennie Chipmunk had just finished doing the dishes, and was singing away as hard as she could sing.

"Well, well, whom have we here?" cried grandma, for she had heard about Sister Sallie, but had not seen her.

So Johnnie told how they had found their little sister, and grandma gave them some slices of hot acorn bread with wild cherry jam on it, and oh! I just wish I had a piece now, it was so good.

"Haven't you got a doll to play with?" asked Jennie Chipmunk, after a while.

"No, said Sister Sallie, ``I never had a doll."

"What!" cried Grandma Lightfoot. "Never had a doll? Oh, my goodness me and a bag of marbles! That's too bad. I wish I had a doll for you."

"Maybe Billie or Johnnie could make her one," suggested Jennie Chipmunk.

"To be sure!" exclaimed grandma. "Couldn't you, boys?"

"Boys never make dolls," said Johnnie.

"Maybe they do for their little sisters," whispered Billie, who always thought twice before he spoke once.

"I'd like a doll very much," sighed Sister Sallie. "I never had one, never. What is it like? Do you eat it?"

"Oh, oh, oh!" cried Jennie Chipmunk with a laugh. "Eat a doll! Whoever heard of such a thing! No, my darling, you play with a doll, just as boys play with marbles and kites, and "

"Bows and arrows!" finished Billie quickly. "Do you remember how we played soldier, Jennie?"

"Indeed I do," she answered. "But now you must make Sister Sallie a doll."

"Oh, I should just love to have a doll," said the little baby squirrel, and then Billie and Johnnie made up their minds they would get her one, no matter what it cost. But grandma, who knew boys were not very wise when it came to dolls, whispered to them how to make one.

Johnnie and Billie Bushytail

So, frisking their big tails, Johnnie and Billie ran down the tree, leaving Sister Sallie with grandma. The two boy squirrels went to a cornfield they knew of, and searching around, found a corncob, with all the kernels off.

"This will do," said Johnnie, but just as he was carrying it away what should happen but that a big rat ran out from a hole and cried: "Here! Where are going with my corncob?" Yes, sir, that's just the way he called, as cross as cross could be. Oh, yes, indeed.

"If you please," said Billie, "we want to make a doll for our little Sister Sallie."

"Oh, that's all right then," spoke the rat, not so cross this time, and he combed his whiskers with his left forepaw. "Run along with it, then, and come and see me sometime."

So Johnnie and Billie ran off with the corncob. Then they got some pieces of wood, gnawing them with their sharp teeth, and made arms and legs. They made eyes from some dried huckleberries, and drew a nose, mouth and ears with a burned stick. Then they dressed the doll in leaves, tying them on with bits of grass, and pretty soon they had the nicest corncob doll you can imagine.

"Oh, how perfectly scrumptious lovely!" exclaimed Sister Sallie, when she saw it, and she hugged it close in her arms. Then she kissed Billie and Johnnie for being so kind to her, but they said it was nothing. And they told about the rat, and Sister Sallie thought they were very brave indeed, as, of course, they were. Then the boy squirrels and their new little sister ran home, and the next day little Sallie had quite an adventure, as you shall hear to-morrow night, if the stars are out.

XXI. SISTER SALLIE'S ADVENTURE

SISTER SALLIE was walking in the woods with the corncob doll Billie and Johnnie had made her. It was the first time she had gone out alone since coming to the Bushytail home, and she felt that she was getting to be quite a big girl, indeed. She had her doll in a carriage made from a last year's bird's-nest, with pieces of wood that the little boy squirrels had gnawed out for wheels. But the wheels were not exactly round, and when Sister Sallie wheeled the carriage it went along with an up-and-down wabby-motion. At first you might think that rather odd, but the corncob doll liked it, for the carriage was like a carriage and cradle made into one.

Now you boys needn't stop reading this story, because you think it's going to be all about dolls and girls and doll carriages. Something is going to happen pretty soon, and Johnnie and Billie are going to have a fight. You just wait a minute and you'll see.

Well, now, to go back to where I left off. Sister Sallie was wheeling her doll through the woods, when, all at once, when she was quite a way from home, what should happen but that she heard a savage voice calling to her from behind a big stump:

"Here! Where did you get that corncob doll?"

Oh, what an ugly voice it was, and how poor Sister Sallie shivered and shook and trembled with fear! She stood right still, and looked all around, and what should come from behind the stump but a big rat, with sharp teeth that showed when he moved his whiskers to and fro.

"Where did you get that corncob?" he asked again. "Give it to me this instant! It's mine!"

"If you please," said Sister Sallie, "I I don't think it can be yours, kind sir. Billie and Johnnie gave it to me, kind sir." You see, she said "kind sir" twice because she thought it would please the old rat, and he wouldn't hurt her.

Johnnie and Billie Bushytail

But do you suppose he cared for that? Not in the least. He just showed his teeth more than ever, and he growled just like a dog, would you believe me? He did, indeed!

"Give me that corncob!" he said again, oh, so cross! "I was wondering who took it. There are some kernels of corn on it that I have been looking for." "Oh, no, indeed, there are no kernels on this cob, kind sir, kind sir," replied Sallie, still trembling. "Besides, Johnnie and Billie got this from a kind rat, and "

"What's that? Don't you think I'm a kind rat?" cried the old fellow, wiggling his whiskers, just like a fan on a hot day.

"Well, you you don't seem to be very kind," spoke Sister Sallie.

"You give me my corncob!" cried the rat, crosser than ever. "Johnnie and Billie, whoever they are, had no right to take it. I'm not afraid of them, nor half a dozen like them!"

Then what should he do but rush right at the doll carriage and grab up Sister Sallie's doll. Then the little girl squirrel screamed and tried to grab her dollie away from that bad rat. You see, he was a bad rat, and not the pretty good rat that had given Billie and Johnnie permission to take the cob. It just shows you how mean a rat can be when he tries real hard. But I know a good rat, and some day I will tell you about him.

Where was I? Oh, I remember. The rat had just grabbed Sister Sallie's doll. He started to carry it off, but when the little squirrel caught it away from him, he turned on her, and grasped her in his mouth. Now what do you think about that? Yes, sir, that's just what he did. Only he took her by the back of the neck, just as you lift up a kitten, and it didn't hurt her hardly any, only, of course, she was very frightened. Then the rat started to carry her off to his den O. No. I don't exactly mean that. It was the fox, and his dear little foxes, Eight, Nine, Ten, who lived in a den O.

But just as the rat was carrying Sister Sallie off, what happened but that out from the woods rushed Billie and Johnnie Bushytail. Right at that bad, ugly rat they rushed, and they had their bows and arrows with them!

"Shoot him!" cried Johnnie.

"Hit him!" yelled Billie.

"Save me! Oh, save me!" pleaded Sister Sallie.

"Don't be afraid, we'll save you!" declared Johnnie.

Then he put an arrow to his bow, and he shot that rat on the nose. And Billie, he put an arrow to his bow, and he shot the rat on the left ear. That made the rat so mad that he dropped Sister Sallie, and rushed right at Billie and Johnnie. But they weren't a bit afraid, no indeed! They stood there, and shot some more arrows at the rat. Then they didn't have any left, and the rat was still rushing at them, and they hardly knew what to do until Billie took his bow and hit him over the head. Then Johnnie took his bow and also hit that bad rat over the head, until the old fellow gave a squeal oh! such a squeal! and ran away. So that is how Johnnie and Billie saved Sister Sallie from the adventure. Then they took her home, after her heart stopped beating so fast. Papa and Mamma Bushytail praised the two little boy squirrels, who happened to be out hunting when they came upon the rat carrying Sister Sallie away, and Mamma Bushytail gave them some maple sugar hickory nuts to eat. And after that Sallie never went out alone. Now, if the wind should be in the south to-morrow night, you shall hear how Billie kept store.

XXII. BILLIE BUSHYTAIL KEEPS STORE

DID any of you children ever play keep a store? I suppose you have, with an old board for a counter, some clam and oyster shells full of sand and sticks for things to sell, and bits of paper, or, maybe, pebbles for money. Isn't it fun? Well, squirrels have to play just as you boys and girls do, so, a few days after the adventure with the bad rat (not the good one, you understand, for I'm going to tell you about the good rat by and by) a few days after that adventure Johnnie and Billie were sitting on a branch near the nest in the hollow tree, looking around for something to do. "Let's take our bows and arrows and see if we can hunt that rat again," suggested Johnnie.

"All right," agreed Billie. "Only I shot away all my arrows. We will have to gnaw some more out of pieces of wood."

"Oh, boys, please don't go off into the woods after that bad rat!" begged Sister Sallie. "He might catch you."

"Pooh! He couldn't catch us!" cried Johnnie, and he straightened up, just like a soldier, and looked very brave.

"No, indeed," added his brother. "We're not afraid of him!"

"Besides, we want some excitement," went on Johnnie. "I'm tired of sitting here doing nothing. We haven't had anything happen to us for ever so long almost three days."

"I know what let's do," cried Sister Sallie, and she put her corncob doll into the nest, carriage, and covered it up with a pine-needle robe, embroidered with pussy willows. "My doll is asleep now, and we can play store."

"How do you do that?" asked Johnnie.

"I'll show you," answered Sister Sallie. "Billie can be the storekeeper, and the store will be that low stump over there. He can have acorns and nuts and little stones to sell, and pieces of dried leaves will be money, for they will rustle just like dollar-bills, you know."

"If Billie is storekeeper, what can I be?" asked Johnnie.

"Oh, you and I will come to buy things," explained the little girl squirrel.

"Two aren't enough to buy things," objected Billie. "There ought to be more."

"Well, perhaps others will come," said Sallie. "Come on, now, we will help you fix up the store."

So they got some pieces of bark to put the things on that were to be sold. And when Mamma Bushytail saw what they were doing she gave them some bits of cake, a little maple sugar, some odds and ends of nuts and other good things left over from breakfast, so they actually had really and truly things in the store.

Then Billie got behind the counter, which was made of little round limbs of trees, placed close together, just like the sides of a log cabin that Abraham Lincoln lived in, and these pieces were laid across two small stumps. Then Billie was ready to sell.

Sister Sallie came to the store first with some pieces of dried leaves for money.

"My mamma wants three and a half of granulated sugar, a quart of beans, and a yeast cake," she said, just like a real little girl.

Johnnie and Billie Bushytail

"We are all out of yeast cakes," said Billie, just like a real storekeeper, "but we have some prunes that will do just as well."

Well, you should have heard Sister Sallie laugh at that! The idea of prunes being just as good as a yeast cake! But then you see, Billie didn't know any better.

Then Johnnie came, and he bought some pieces of maple sugar and some nuts, and sat right down in the store and ate them.

"Hold on!" cried Billie. "That isn't fair. You get all the good things to eat and I only get dried leaves for them."

"That is money," answered his brother, with a laugh. "Besides, storekeepers never eat the things in their store. They sell them to other people."

"Well, I'm going to eat some," declared Billie, and he did. Then who should come along but Bully, the frog, and he bought some water cress, and a little while after that Jennie Chipmunk came along smiling, and she bought some nuts, and they all had a jolly good time. Even the fish-hawk, who happened to be passing, took a little sugar for his digestion, which was not very good.

Then, all at once, who should come running through the woods but a sly old fox. He saw the store, and he was hungry, but he had no money, because all the dried leaves had blown away by that time. So he didn't know how to buy anything at Billie's store. Then he thought of a plan.

"Have you heard about Eagle Rock?" he asked, waving his tail to and fro.

"No, what has happened to it?" asked Johnnie, for it was on the mountain where they lived. "It is all cracked," said the fox. "You had better go look at it."

So Johnnie and Billie and Sister Sallie ran off in a hurry to see the cracked rock, and that was just what the fox wanted, for he ate up everything there was left in the store, and never paid a cent, and the rock wasn't cracked at all; what do you think of that? Johnnie and Billie were quite angry at the mean trick the fox had played on them, but after all, they had had a nice time playing store, so they ran home. In case you would like to hear it, I have a story about Billie, Johnnie, and the fairy hen for to-morrow night.

XXIII. BILLIE, JOHNNIE AND THE FAIRY HEN

OF course, you know there are all kinds of fairies. There are the story-book sort, that are really delightful, and then there are fairies that you meet every day, even on your way to school. Some of them are real fairies, and some are make-believe. Then there are creatures which some persons do not call fairies at all, but which really are, for they do the most wonderful things, more wonderful even than making a palace out of an old lamp or turning a mouse into an elephant. So, you see, if you don't believe in one kind of fairies, you must believe in the other; that's certain. Now, Billie and Johnnie Bushytail met a real fairy—a fairy hen, and I'm going to tell you all about it, if you don't wiggle too much.

The two little boy squirrels, with Sister Sallie, went out in the woods playing one day. They played tag and leapfrog, only they didn't leap over the toadstools, for they didn't want to make any more trouble for the old toad with the wart on his nose, who taught school.

"Oh, I'm tired of this," said Billie, at length. "Let's do something else."

Johnnie and Billie Bushytail

"What shall we do?" asked Johnnie, and he ran up a tree and down again as fast as he could, just to keep in practice.

"I know!" exclaimed Sister Sallie. "Let's play house. I have my corn-cob doll with me."

"No, I think it would be more fun to go sailing again," went on Johnnie. "Sallie never went sailing. The wind is not strong to-day, and I don't believe we'd tip over."

"I think I'm afraid of the water," said Sister Sallie timidly. "Can't we take a nice walk in the woods?"

"Yes," agreed Billie. "Maybe we will have an adventure like finding the Christmas nuts."

So they started off through the woods, Sister Sallie wheeling the corn-cob doll in the carriage with the wheels that weren't quite round. They went on and on and on, and pretty soon they came to a part of the woods where they had never been before. The trees grew up straight and tall, and there was moss on the ground, and a little pond close by. Oh, it was such a beautiful place that they wanted to stay there a long time.

Pretty soon they heard a noise in the bushes, and what should come walking out but a nice, big hen. As soon as she saw the squirrels she ruffled up her feathers, and made a funny noise in her throat, but as soon as she knew they were not going to harm her, she quieted down and said. "Cluck-Cluck," which was her way of saying "How do you do?"

"Hello," spoke Johnnie, quite boldly. "What is your name?"

"My name is Mrs. Cut-cut-ka-dah-cut Cluck-Cluck," she answered, "but every one calls me Mrs. Cluck-Cluck, so you may too, if you like," and she scratched on the ground, as if she were bowing.

"What are you doing here?" asked Sister Sallie.

"Why," said Mrs. Cluck-Cluck, "I am a fairy hen. I thought every one knew that. and I'm here to perform a wonderful trick."

"Oh, fine!" cried Billie, who loved tricks "May we see it?" "You certainly may," replied the fairy hen. "I invite you all to see the magical, tragical, incomparable, serio-comical task I am about to perform. I will conceal nothing from you, and show you that I have nothing up my sleeves."

Then the fairy hen held up one leg after another, and flapped her wings to show that she had nothing hidden about her.

"Come this way," she said, and she led the squirrels through the bushes into a deep, dark part of the woods.

"Perhaps we are going to the fairy castle," whispered Billie.

"Hush!" cautioned Sister Sallie.

Pretty soon Mrs. Cluck-Cluck stopped, pulled aside a bush with her wing, and, pointing to some white things in a heap on the ground, asked:

"Do you know what those are?" "Yes," answered Johnnie; "those are eggs."

Johnnie and Billie Bushytail

"Correct," replied the fairy hen. "They are eggs, and the trick I am going to do is to change those into dear little chickens. Watch me closely."

"Pooh!" exclaimed Billie. "I don't think that is much of a trick. Just make little chickens come out of an egg."

"It is as much of a trick as to make a rabbit come out of a hat," said Mrs. Cluck-Cluck, indignantly. "Just you watch."

"I think it will be a lovely trick," spoke Sister Sallie. "I love little chickens, and they will be just in time for Easter."

"It will take me some little time to do this trick," said the fairy hen, "but I am sure to do it. Please come back in a few days, and the trick will be done."

So the little squirrels went back home, quite pleased after all at meeting the fairy hen, and when they went back where the eggs were, would you believe me? if there weren't a number of dear, little, soft, downy chickens, peeping and cheeping, and all wanting something to eat, and all that was left of the eggs was shells. Now I call that a wonderful trick, don't you? Sister Sallie and Johnnie did, but Billie was a bit doubtful. Then the fairy hen saw this, so she said, "I will do a trick especially for Billie. Go home and you will find something strange at your nest." So they all hurried home, leaving the little chickens with the fairy hen, and what Billie found you shall hear to-morrow night.

XXIV. THE BUSHYTAILS HAVE COMPANY

BILLIE BUSHYTAIL was so anxious to get home to his nest and see what trick the fairy hen was to perform for his special benefit, that he ran ahead of Johnnie and Sister Sallie.

"Can't you wait?" called Johnnie after his brother.

"No," answered Billie, "I can't. I want to see what it is" just as you children do on Christmas morning, you know.

Well, as he was running through the woods he met Grandma and Grandpa Lightfoot, and Jennie Chipmunk.

"Where are you going in such a hurry?" asked grandpa, who, being a little lame, from having stepped on a pine needle, walked with a cane.

"I am going home to see what trick the fairy hen has done," answered Billie.

"Well, we are going to your house; so tell your papa and mamma we are coming," added grandma, and as for Jennie Chipmunk, she just laughed, she was so glad to see Billie again.

When Billie got to the nest he scrambled up the tree as fast as he could, as fast as a fly walking on a window-pane, I do believe. The first thing he saw was a sharp little nose poked out from the hollow in the tree, then he saw some wiggily whiskers, and next two of the sharpest eyes he had ever beheld.

"This must be the trick," he thought. "I wonder what it is?" and he trembled, he was so anxious. Then he looked again, and saw some sharp teeth, and, a moment later, what should happen but that Nurse Jane Fuzzy-Wuzzy sprang up and looked right at him. You remember Jane Fuzzy-Wuzzy Sammie and Susie Littletail's nurse?

Johnnie and Billie Bushytail

"Oh!" exclaimed Billie, just the least bit disappointed. "I thought there was going to be a trick here."

"There is," said Jane Fuzzy–Wuzzy. "I am the trick and here are two more," and she waved her paw, and what should happen but that Sammie and Susie Littletail, those little bunny rabbits, came running out of the leaves where they had been hidden at the foot of the tree, and sat up on their hind legs. Just then up came Johnnie Bushytail and Sister Sallie, and they wanted to know what the trick was that the fairy hen had done. They all agreed, even Billie, that it was a wonderful thing for the hen to know without being there, that something strange was going to be at the squirrels' nest.

"How do you suppose she did it?" asked Johnnie.

"Easy enough," answered Nurse Jane Fuzzy–Wuzzy. "I happened to meet Mrs. Cluck–Cluck in the woods, and I told her we were coming here, so, of course, she knew."

"Then it isn't a trick at all," declared Billie.

"Well, it's a sort of a trick," said Sammie Littletail. "I think that fairy hen is wonderful. We are going to have some of her eggs to color for Easter, Susie and I."

Then who should come along but Grandpa and Grandma Lightfoot, and Jennie Chipmunk. Mr. and Mrs. Bushytail and Sister Sallie began to set the table, for they wanted their friends and relatives to have a quiet cup of tea, and Sammie and Susie and Billie and Johnnie began to play about in the leaves.

Then, all at once, along came Papa and Mamma Littletail, and, right behind them, limping on his crutch, which Jane Fuzzy–Wuzzy had gnawed out of a cornstalk, walked Uncle Wiggily Longears, and his rheumatism was almost as bad as ever. Doesn't it make you sorry to hear that?

"Well, well!" cried Uncle Wiggily Longears, "this is quite a family party. Oh, my, yes, and some pepper–hash besides!"

"Where did you come from?" asked Papa Bushytail of Papa Littletail. "I haven't seen you in some time."

"No," answered the rabbit, "my family and I have been away on a visit."

Then Papa Bushytail told the rabbits how glad he was to see them again, and Johnnie and Billie and Sister Sallie told about meeting the fairy hen and the trick she had performed.

"I can do some tricks too, if some one will help me," said Sammie Littletail. "I learned them in a circus."

"I'll help you," agreed Billie Bushytail.

"Then come over here where we can practise," whispered Sammie, and so the little boy rabbit and the little boy squirrel went behind a big tree. Pretty soon they were all ready to do their tricks. They had quite an audience, and they used a large, flat stump for a platform. They turned single and double somersaults, they stood on each other's head, they jumped over each other's back, and they juggled acorns until you would wonder how they did it. Then they stood on their hind legs and danced, and Billie Bushytail took a stick and chewed it in three pieces, right in front of the audience. Oh, it was a most delightful time! and I wish you all could have been there. I'm sure you would have enjoyed it.

But, after a while, it was time for the rabbits to go home, and they started off. Billie Bushytail said he would walk a short distance with Sammie, and he did.

Johnnie and Billie Bushytail

"If you see any horse chestnuts save me one," begged Uncle Wiggily Longears. "I need it for my rheumatism. Even though the red fairy did cure it for a while, it came back on account of me getting my feet wet the other night. Oh, dear, yes, and a bit of horse-radish besides!"

So Billie and Sammie said they would, and they went off looking for the horse chestnuts, and the first thing they were all alone in the woods, the others having gone on ahead. Well, they found a horse chestnut, and soon caught up to Mamma and Papa Littletail, and Susie and Uncle Wiggily and Nurse Jane Fuzzy-Wuzzy. Then, at last, they were at the rabbit house, and Sammie asked Billie:

"Can't you come and stay a few days with me?"

"I guess so," answered Billie, "if I could send word home."

"Oh, I'll go tell your papa and mamma," offered Jane Fuzzy-Wuzzy, and she went as quick as you can blow out a match.

Well, Billie stayed with Sammie several days, and he had quite an adventure, too. It was one day when Sammie was out trying to dig a hole down through to China. A big hawk grabbed Billie and carried him away up in the air, and Sammie was so frightened he didn't know what to do. But if a little green fairy man whom Sammie knew didn't suddenly appear, and change into an eagle, and chase after that hawk! And the eagle took Sammie on his back, and Sammie hit the hawk with a stick and saved Billie Bushytail, which adventure you can read all about in the first book of this series, entitled, "Bedtime Stories: Sammie and Susie Littletail." Well, you know you never can tell when fairies are going to appear, nor what they are going to do, and, as it happens, some are going to appear in this book, and to-morrow night I'll tell you a fairy story about Johnnie Bushytail, and how he was shut up in a hollow tree by a bad fox, and how he got out again. Now, go to sleep, and wait for to-morrow.

XXV. JOHNNIE BUSHYTAIL IN A TREE

OF course, as soon as Billie Bushytail got home he told his brother Johnnie about the little green fairy man turning into an eagle and flying after the hawk that had caught the little squirrel boy. That's the story I mentioned to you last night, you remember. Well, Johnnie laughed when Billie told him that a fairy had helped Sammie Littletail at the rescue.

"I'm not going to believe in fairies, even if you do," said Johnnie. Oh, dear, isn't it terrible when people or squirrels don't believe in fairies? It's so troublesome, I think. Now I know you children aren't that way. If you were I'm afraid I could never tell you another bedtime story. Anyhow, Johnnie didn't believe, just as usual.

But one day Johnnie was out all alone in the woods. He was looking for some last year's acorns to take home to Sister Sallie, and he skipped up one tall tree and another, and down to the ground again, chattering to himself and feeling as happy as you do when you're going to have a party.

All at once Johnnie saw a big tree, and the minute he saw it he knew that it was hollow, that is, it had a big hole in it, and, what's more, he knew the hole was full of acorns. How he knew I can't tell, except that he was a very wise little squirrel.

"Now I'll get some nice acorns for Sister Sallie," he cried, and he ran up that tree, and down the inside before you could rub the kittie's back three times and a quarter. "Oh, what a nice lot of acorns there are!" said Johnnie, as he saw them.

The little boy squirrel was gathering up a whole lot of them to take home when, all of a sudden, he heard a noise

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outside the tree. It was a funny sort of noise, and when he looked up at the hole by which he had come in a sort of front door to the hollow tree, you know why, if that hole wasn't all dark. Yes, sir, that hole was shut tight, and there poor Johnnie was, a prisoner in the hollow tree. Oh, how frightened he was, and he wondered who had been so cruel as to stop up the hole. Then, all at once he heard some one exclaim:

"There, I guess I've got you now, Johnnie Bushytail! You won't get out of there in a hurry!"

And who do you suppose it was that shut that little squirrel up? Why, nobody but that bad old fox. Yes it was, really. Not the one who was turned into a village called Foxtown, but another fox entirely.

"Now I've got you!" the fox cried, "and to-night I am coming back and eat you all up all up all up!" and he laughed something terrible, did that fox.

Well, of course poor Johnnie tried to get out. He looked for a back door to the tree, but there wasn't any. Then he looked for a window, but there wasn't any.

"Oh, dear!" he cried, "I guess I've got to gnaw my way out."

Well, he tried that, but he couldn't do it. You see, the tree was too thick for him to gnaw through. He could bite through a hickory nut, or maybe a black walnut, but not the big tree. Then he felt very badly indeed, and he feared he would never see his brother, or Sister Sallie, or his papa, or mamma again. Then, as quick as the cat can wiggle her whiskers, if Johnnie didn't hear another noise outside the tree. At first he thought it was the fox who had come back, but it wasn't. It was a bird called the woodpecker.

The woodpecker pecks holes in trees to get at worms and bugs to eat. As soon as Johnnie knew it was a bird pecking he called:

"Please help me out."

"Of course I will," answered the bird, very kindly, and he tried, but his bill wasn't strong enough.

"Maybe you can knock out the stone which that bad fox put in the front door," suggested Johnnie. So the woodpecker tried, but he couldn't.

"No," he said, "it's all stopped up but the keyhole, and I don't s'pose you can get through that." "No," answered Johnnie, "I can't," and he felt worse than ever. Well, the woodpecker said he would fly off to get a lot of birds, to see if they couldn't peck a hole in that tree, but in the meanwhile something happened. Johnnie was sitting there in the dark, thinking of his home, when, all of a sudden, right through the keyhole (which, you know, was a knot-hole in the tree) there shone the loveliest colors you ever saw! Oh, they were just fine! As soon as Johnnie saw them he cried:

"Is that a rainbow shining in here?"

"No," answered a voice, "it is not a rainbow. Those are colors from my wings."

"Who are you?" asked Johnnie.

"I am the sky-blue-pink fairy," replied the voice. "You see, I live near a rainbow, and that's why I am colored so prettily."

"Oh, won't you please help me out of

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–178a– here?" asked Johnnie, who was nearly crying now, and I don't blame him, either.

"Of course I will," answered the sky–blue–pink fairy.

So she took up a stone, and hammered three times on the outside of that tree, and all at once a little door opened in the bark, and Johnnie could come out as nicely as you please. And when he saw the beautiful fairy he thanked her six times, he was so glad.

"Why!" he cried, "you must be the fairy who colored Sammie Littletail, the day he fell in the dye for the Easter Eggs."

"I am," she said with a smile. "But run along home now, Johnnie, before that bad fox comes back, and never again say you don't believe in fairies."

"I'll not," he replied, and he never did. Then the fairy turned into pussy cat and ran away, and when the woodpecker and some of his friends came back to try to get Johnnie out, there wasn't anything for them to do, for which they were very glad. But a little while after this that bad fox came back to get the little boy squirrel, and what happened then I'll tell you to–morrow night, if you don't tumble out of bed.

XXVI. SALLIE AND THE BAD FOX

SISTER SALLIE was very glad when Johnnie came back home with the acorns, but she felt sorry that he had had so much trouble in getting them, and had been in such danger.

"Oh, but it was all right when the sky–blue–pink fairy came and let me out," he explained. "I'd like to punish that bad fox, though," he went on, and he snapped his teeth.

"So would I," spoke Billie, when he heard his brother tell about being shut in the tree.

"Oh, don't go near him!" exclaimed Sister Sallie. "I would be afraid to speak to him, even," and then Sister Sallie said, "Oh, dear!"

"What's the matter?" asked Billie.

"Oh, dear!" cried Sister Sallie again. "I just wish I could see a fairy some day. Of course, I know that when you want to see one you never do, never, never, but I can't help wishing all the same. You've seen one, Billie, and so has Johnnie, and so did Sammie and Susie Littletail, and Uncle Wiggily Longears, and I never have."

"You saw the fairy prince who was at Alice and Lulu Wibblewobble's party," said Johnnie.

"Oh, well, so did every one else. That doesn't count. I want to see a fairy all by my own self," and then she exclaimed, "Oh, dear!" again, and just as she did, there sounded, up in the air, the blast of a silver trumpet blowing "Ta–ra–ta–ra–ta–ra!" "What was that?" cried Johnnie.

"It sounded like the horn that blew when the fairy prince came," answered Billie.

But though they looked up, and though they looked down, they couldn't see anything. But, nevertheless, something happened, or, rather, was soon going to happen, even if they couldn't see anything. You know, I told you something always took place when any one said, "Oh, dear!" three times, in the right way. Well, Sister Sallie had said it.

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Pretty soon Mamma Bushytail called to the squirrel children: "Come, my dears, I want you to run over to Grandpa Lightfoot's house with some pudding I have made for him. And you may stay a while and play with Jennie Chipmunk."

Then they all laughed, they felt so happy, and in a little while they set off through the woods to visit their Grandpa and Grandma Lightfoot. They had a nice time playing with Jennie Chipmunk, the little orphan, who washed the dishes, and smiled so you could see her nice, white teeth. After they had eaten some hickory–nut cake, Johnnie and Billie and Sister Sallie started for home. And, would you believe it? on the way Sister Sallie got lost. The first thing she knew she was all alone, and Billie and Johnnie had gone on ahead. Well, she tried not to be frightened, but she was, just the same, and pretty soon she came to a big hollow tree, and she heard a funny noise. Then out from behind a bush came a funny animal. He was all covered over with leaves.

"Who are you?" the animal asked Sister Sallie. So she told him, and said she was lost, and she asked him who he was. "Oh, I am a fairy," said the odd creature, and Sister Sallie felt so happy she laughed, even if she was lost.

"Oh, how nice!" cried Sister Sallie. "And will you give me three wishes, fairy, like Susie Littletail had?"

"To be sure I will," answered the animal all covered with leaves. And now, what do you think? It wasn't a fairy at all, but the bad fox, who had pasted leaves all over himself so as to fool Sister Sallie. But she didn't know that until later.

"May I wish now?" asked the little girl squirrel.

"No, you must first get inside this hollow tree," spoke the fox, and if he didn't point to the same tree in which he had shut up poor Johnnie Bushytail. "You must get inside this tree, and then you can have as many wishes as you like," he said.

So Sister Sallie, never thinking anything wrong, got inside the tree, and, no sooner was she there, than that bad fox closed the door on her, and he smacked his lips, and he thought what a good meal he would have. But just then, as true as I'm telling you, if along didn't come the little green fairy man who once saved Billie Bushytail from the hawk. And he was real angry at that fox for pulling off so many leaves from the trees, to stick on himself to fool Sister Sallie.

"What have you in that hollow tree?" asked the green fairy man very sternly.

"If you please," replied the fox trembling, for he knew he couldn't deceive the fairy, "I have my dinner in there."

Then the fairy knew everything, and he decided to play a trick on that fox. So he put a magic spell on him, and made him keep quiet, and then the fairy called out to Sister Sallie, who was shut up in the tree: "Make a wish, my dear," and Sister Sallie wished for a ring with a blue stone in, like Susie Littletail had, and in an instant it wasn't on her little paw. Then she wished for a gold bracelet, and got that, and when she was going to make the third wish the green fairy said:

"This third wish I give to thee,

Wish that you were out of that tree."

Then Sister Sallie did so, for she felt that something was wrong, and in an instant the tree opened, and she could come out. And it's a good thing she wished that, for if she hadn't she would have had to stay there for ever so long, until the sky–blue–pink fairy came, for the green fairy wouldn't have had any power over the tree after Sister Sallie had made her third wish. So everything turned out all right, and to punish that bad fox the green fairy

turned him into mosquito that never could bite any one, and the biteless mosquito flew away, buzzing as hard as he could buzz. Then the green fairy showed Sister Sallie the way home, and she reached it safely. Now to-morrow night, if the ceiling doesn't fall down, I'll tell you about Jennie Chipmunk and the fairy dishes.

XXVII. JENNIE CHIPMUNK AND THE FAIRY DISHES

DID you ever have a lot of company come to your house? I suppose you have; uncles and aunts and cousins and brothers-in-law and all sorts of relations. Well, when they come, and have had dinner or supper or whatever it is, aren't there a lot of dishes to wash and dry? Oh, ever so many.

Well, that's the way it was at Grandma Lightfoot's house one day after they had had company. Mr. and Mrs. Bushytail, that is, Johnnie and Billie and Sister Sallie Bushytail's papa and mamma, had been on a visit, and also Mr. and Mrs. Littletail, and Sammie, and Susie, and Uncle Wiggily, and Lulu and Alice and Jimmie Wibblewobble, and so many others I can't tell you. Of course there were lots of dishes for Jennie Chipmunk to wash, and she started to do them, singing, as she always did, and smiling so as to show her teeth.

Billie and Johnnie Bushytail and the other children were out playing, but Jennie couldn't go, because she had to do the dishes. She was splashing away in the water and in the suds, wishing she could some day see a fairy, when Johnnie Bushytail came in.

"Oh, come on out and play, Jennie," he said. "Let the dishes go until morning."

"No," she answered, "I must do them to-night, for that's what grandma expects."

"But if you do them all now it will be dark when you get through, and you can't play." "I can't help it," answered Jennie, with a sigh, for she did not want to go and play. Then Johnnie coaxed her some more, and so did Billie, and Sammie and Susie Littletail, but Jennie would not leave the dishes. I suppose if Grandma Lightfoot had been there, she would have let the little orphan chipmunk go, but you see grandma wasn't, having gone to take a walk in the woods with Mr. and Mrs. Bushytail, and Mr. and Mrs. Littletail.

Well, all the children ran out again to play that is, all but Jennie, and she remained in to finish the dishes. And she kept on singing, for that made her feel happier.

Then, all at once, when she reached over to get a saucer that had contained cornstarch pudding, if out of it didn't pop a little creature all made of soap bubbles. Oh, it was the oddest little creature you ever saw, with pretty colors going and coming, prettier even than the sky-blue-pink fairy.

"Why!" exclaimed Jennie, "I I didn't know you were there. I didn't see you a minute ago."

"Of course not," answered the little soap-bubble lady, for she was a perfect lady, "I wasn't there a minute ago. I just arrived."

"And who are you?" asked the little orphan chipmunk, but she didn't stop doing the dishes, for she wanted to finish, and go out to play.

"Why," replied the soap-bubble lady, "don't you know? I am the magical dish-washing fairy. I thought everyone knew that."

"No," said Jennie. "I didn't," and she looked at the big pile of dishes she had yet to do, before she could go out. "Are you wonderful?" she asked. "Yes," went on the magical dish-washing fairy, "I am wonderful. Now will you

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kindly go sit down in that chair, and watch me carefully."

"Oh," objected Jennie. "I can't sit down. I have to wash these dishes."

"You leave them to me!" exclaimed the soap-bubble lady, stepping out of the saucer, and she puffed out her cheeks, and believe me if a whole lot of the most beautifully colored bubbles didn't float right up to the ceiling! Well, of course Jennie Chipmunk didn't want to sit down in a chair, but when a fairy tells you to do anything, why you just have to do it, that's all, or something is bound to happen oh my, yes, and a waste-paper basket, too.

Then if that soap-bubble fairy lady didn't begin to do things. "You just watch me," she called to Jennie. "See, I roll up my sleeves to show you that I have nothing hidden in them."

Then she waved her magic wand three times and, dear me, if hundreds and hundreds of soap-bubbles didn't appear in that dishpan, and the dishes began jumping up from the table, and into the soapy water, where they sozzled themselves around, getting all clean and shiny, and then they leaped right out of the suds into the rinsing water, all piping hot, and then they jumped out of that into the draining pan, white and glistening, and goodness gracious me, sakes alive, if the dish towel didn't hop off the rack and begin to dry those dishes as quick as a piece of sand-paper! right before Jennie Chipmunk's eyes!

And more than that, if the dishes, as soon as they were dry, didn't float off through the air the plates, the cups, the saucers, the platters and the butter plates, all of them floated right to the pantry and hopped up on the shelves, each one in the proper place. And all the while that soap-bubble fairy just stood there, smiling and waving her wand and not doing a thing else.

Then, believe me again, if you please, if the dish rag didn't wring itself out, and hang itself up to dry, and the dish towel hopped back on the rack, and the dishpans were all wiped out, and put over the stove to dry, and then, presto chango, lack-scaddedo! the dishes were all done!

"What do you think of that?" asked the fairy, throwing a red and blue and a yellow bubble up in the air, and catching it on the end of her wand. "What do you think of that, my dear?"

"Wonderful! Wonderful!" cried Jennie, as happy as could be. "Ah, a mere trifle, my dear. Such things are nothing to me. I always love to help children!" cried the fairy, putting a red bubble in her left ear and a purple one in her right ear, just like earrings. Then she waved Jennie good-bye and disappeared. And Jennie went out to play, and the others couldn't believe she had the dishes done so quickly. But she didn't tell them about the fairy, for it was a secret. Now to-morrow night, let me see, Oh, the story will be about Billie and the yellow fairy.

XXVIII. BILLIE AND THE YELLOW FAIRY.

BILLIE BUSHYTAIL was feeling pretty badly and the reason for it was this. He had been kept in at the owl school, because he missed in spelling, and when the teacher let him out it was too late to go off with the other boys playing ball. Billie had his ball and his bat and his catching glove with him, but that didn't matter. Johnny Bushytail and Sammie Littletail and Bully the frog had gone a long way off, to Farmer Tooker's meadow to play, and by the time Billie got there it would be dark. So he felt quite badly.

He walked on through the woods thinking all sorts of things, and then he threw his ball up in the air. He thought he would catch it, but the ball went in an empty bird's nest in a tall tree, and didn't come down. Then Billie threw his bat up after the ball, and if that didn't stay up in the tree too. Then he got real excited, and tossed up his catching glove, and, well, of course you may think I'm exaggerating, but I'm not a bit, if the glove didn't stay up there, too. Well, poor Billie! Not a thing to play ball with! He felt worse than ever.

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So he kept on through the woods wondering how he was ever going to get his things down, for the tree was a very tall one, and, even though he was a squirrel, his papa and his mama had told him never to climb tall trees when they were not around.

"Oh, dear! Oh dear! Oh dear!" cried Billie.

Just then if he didn't hear a bird singing. Oh, such a beautiful song it was! I couldn't begin to sing as nicely as that bird did. The words went something like this:

"Oh fie lum did-a-laddie ah!

Oh tra la did-a-lay!

Rum dum dum diddle-ideum,

Tu rum-lum skiddle-day!"

"Oh, what a pretty song!" cried Billie.

"Think so? Glad you like it," spoke a voice, and the little boy squirrel looked up, and saw a beautiful yellow bird sitting on a tree not far away. And as soon as he heard that song Billie felt better, even though he had lost his ball, his bat and his catching glove.

Well, just a moment later if some bad boy didn't throw a stone at that bird, that dear, little yellow bird, and break its leg. The poor bird stopped singing at once, and the bad boy came up, thinking he could catch it. But the bird didn't fall from the tree and then the bad boy went away, and pretty soon Billie came out from where he had hid behind a bush. Then the yellow bird got so weak from pain that it fell down on the ground.

"Oh dear!" cried Billie. "What can I do to help you?"

"I would like some water," said the yellow bird, faintly.

So Billie found an acorn cup, and scampered off to the brook, filled it with water, and brought it to the wounded bird. Then he got some more, as quick as you can eat a jam tart, and the bird felt much better.

"What else can I do for you?" asked Billie. "Maybe I could fix your leg for you. Or shall I go for Dr. Possum?"

"Thank you," answered the bird, "but if

-200a- you could find the little green fairy man, he would make my leg well in a minute."

"I will!" cried Billie, and he scampered off.

He found the little green fairy man leaning against a tree, and watching some butterflies get honey from flowers.

"Please come with me," said Billie. "The yellow bird has a broken leg."

"Of course I will!" exclaimed the green fairy. "The yellow bird is a friend of mine. How did it happen?" Then Billie told, and the little green fairy man said the little boy squirrel was very kind.

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Well, when they got back to where the poor bird was the green fairy did a magical trick. He took two pieces of wood, and three little stones, tossed them up in the air, and pronounced this word: "Ish-ka-loo-la-osh-ka-loo-la-bosh-ka-loo-la-lum!" and in an instant that bird's leg was all well again, and it sang its song some more, just like this, only, of course, I can't sing it very well:

"Oh fie lum did-e-laddie ah!

Oh tra la did-e-lay!

Hum dum dum diddle-ideum,

Tu rum lum skiddle-day!"

"Now do you feel better?" asked Billie.

"To be sure I do," was the yellow bird's reply, "and to pay you for what you did, you may have three wishes."

"What!" cried Billie, "are you a fairy, too?"

"I am a yellow fairy," was the answer.

"Then why didn't you cure your own broken leg?" asked the boy squirrel, thinking maybe the bird was fooling.

"Because," said the yellow fairy, "just because. It's against the fairy rules. But to show you I AM a fairy I will turn into an elephant," which it did, then and there, and turned back into a yellow bird again in an instant. "Now wish three times," the yellow fairy said to Billie, who of course could not help believing, after he had seen the elephant.

"I wish I had my ball back!" exclaimed Billie quickly.

"Very good!" cried the yellow fairy, "here it is," and she waved her bill in the air, and in an instant Billie's ball came bounding right to his feet. "Wish again," said the fairy.

"I wish for my bat," spoke Billie.

"Very good," went on the fairy, and once more she waved her bill, and if the bat didn't come sailing right from the tall tree to Billie's feet.

"One more wish!" cried the yellow fairy, and Billie wished for his catching glove, and got it quicker than a wink.

"I think I'll give you one more wish myself for good luck," spoke the green fairy, and Billie said:

"I wish I was with the boys playing ball," and, land sakes, goodness, gracious me, suz-dud! if he wasn't on the ball field in an instant, just in time to catch a ball that Sammie Littletail knocked, and he caught him out! Now, what do you think about that? To-morrow night, if the postman brings me a letter, I will tell you about Johnnie and Possum Pinktoes and the fairy prince.

XXIX. POSSUM PINKTOES WAKES UP

JOHNNIE BUSHYTAIL was scrambling up and down a big oak tree in the woods. He jumped from one branch to another, peeked in holes to see if there were any nuts there, and then sat up and chattered like mamma's sewing

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machine when she's sewing an apron or maybe even a bib for baby.

"Well," said Johnnie Bushytail after a while, when he had sat up and chattered three times, "Billie said he was coming here, after he went to the store for some peanut butter and a loaf of bread, but I don't see anything of him." Then Johnnie almost stood up on the end of his tail, so he could see farther, and he looked and he looked off through the woods for his brother, but he couldn't notice even his nose. "I guess he must have met Bully, the frog, and Sammie Littletail, and gone off to play with them." Johnnie went on after a while: "I wish I had some one to play with. Guess I'll go home and get Sister Sallie."

So he skipped down the tree, and was running along the ground, when suddenly he saw a little bundle of fur. At first the fur was moving along quite swiftly, but when Johnnie made a little rustling noise in the leaves, the fur stopped, rolled itself up into a little round ball, and lay still. Johnnie was quite surprised, until he happened to see some little pink toes sticking out. Then he cried: "Oh, you can't fool me! I know who you are. Come on, Possum Pinktoes, let's have a game of tag!" And if that bundle of fur wasn't the little possum boy; really, I'm not fooling a bit.

Possum Pinktoes, who was called that because all possum boys have pink toes, you know, unrolled himself like that cake you buy in the bakery; you know the kind, it's all rolled up and has jelly curled around inside, and you have it for supper sometimes. Well, Possum Pinktoes unrolled himself, stood up, and said:

"I didn't know it was you, Johnnie, or I wouldn't have gone to sleep so quick. You know, whenever I hear a funny noise, I curl up quickly, and pretend to go to sleep; then bad animals like foxes and savage dogs won't touch me."

"Doesn't it bother you to have to sleep so much?" asked Johnnie.

"Yes," said Possum Pinktoes, "it does. You see, there are not very many bad animals in these woods, but every time I hear a funny noise I have to go to sleep, whether I want to or not. All our family does," he added.

"Well, let's have a game of tag, anyhow," suggested Johnnie. "Maybe by that time Billie will come along."

So they started to play tag, but my good gracious me, sakes alive, every once in a while Possum Pinktoes would suddenly curl up and go to sleep. Yes, that's what he did; sometimes when he was "it" and again when he was being chased by Johnnie. Now, you know as well as I do that you can't play tag when one of you is always falling asleep. How would you like it if you were trying to tag a little girl or boy, and they stretched out on the sidewalk, and took a nap, just because they heard a funny noise? You couldn't play much tag, I guess. Well, after Possum Pinktoes had fallen asleep about a dozen times, and there hadn't been much tag played, Johnnie said: "Say, this has got to stop. Can't you keep awake?"

"No," replied Possum Pinktoes, "I'm sorry, but I can't."

"Well, then," said Johnnie, "I guess we'll have to stop playing tag. Let's take a walk. Maybe you can keep awake then."

So they walked in the woods, but they hadn't gone very far before Possum heard a queer noise, and he called out:

"Oh, Johnnie, I'm going to sleep again," and bless me, if he didn't right then and there.

"Oh, fiddlesticks!" cried Johnnie, which was what he always said when he didn't know what else to say. "Wake up!"

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Then, as the queer noise didn't sound any more, Possum Pinktoes awakened. Then they went on a little farther, and in about a minute, or maybe two minutes, what should they see but a boy sitting on the edge of a little brook, fishing.

"I think I'm going to sleep again," said Possum, who was afraid of boys.

"No, don't," begged Johnnie. "He won't hurt you. Let's watch him." So, by hard work, Possum kept awake, and they watched that boy. All at once the boy pulled up his line, and believe me, there wasn't even a hook on it, to say nothing of a fish.

"Why, that's no way to catch fish," spoke Johnnie, before he thought.

"I know it," replied the boy, "but you see I don't want to catch fish. I'm only pretending. It's just as much fun for me and doesn't hurt the fish. I don't eat fish anyhow, but I love to sit here, and dangle my line in the water, and think of the time when I was a mud turtle and lived there." "What?" cried Johnnie. "Are you the fairy prince who was once a mud turtle?"

"I am," replied the boy, throwing his hookless line in the water again. "I am that very person. What can I do for you to-day, my young friend?" and he spoke just like the grocery man.

"I don't want anything, thank you," answered Johnnie, "but perhaps you could make Possum Pinktoes stay awake. He is always sleepy."

"Yes, and I'm going to sleep now!" cried Possum. "I just heard a funny noise, Johnnie."

"Oh, stop it, Possum!" cried Johnnie. "Can't you stop him, fairy prince?"

"Of course I can fix him!" said the fairy prince. "Wait a minute." So he stood up on one foot, and swung his fish pole around his head three times, so that the line whistled in the wind, and then he pronounced the magical word, "Sneezumsnackum!" Then he cried: "You will not be sleepy any more, Possum Pinktoes, except when it's time to go to bed," and the funny part of it was that Possum Pinktoes wasn't. Now, of course, I'm not saying that if you pronounced the word "Sneezumsnackum" it would make you so you wouldn't be sleepy, but it will do no harm to try it, anyhow. Then Possum Pinktoes and Johnny Bushytail ran on, after thanking the fairy prince, who started to fish again, and they soon found Billie and Bully, the frog, and told them all that had happened. Now if a dog doesn't bark at me, I'll tell you to-morrow night about Grandpa Lightfoot and the purple fairy.

XXX. GRANDPA AND THE PURPLE FAIRY

ONE day Johnnie and Billie Bushytail were out walking with Grandpa Lightfoot, with whom they lived, when their papa and mamma were in a cage. They had come over to bring him some pieces of hickory-nut cake, which their mamma had made, and the old gentleman squirrel liked it very much, let me tell you. In fact, I'm very fond of that kind myself, and I s'pose you are too.

Well, as they walked along Grandpa Lightfoot kept going slower and slower, and sometimes he would have to use his cane to help him climb a tree and get down again. "Grandpa, what makes you walk so slowly?" asked Billie.

"I guess it's because he's tired," suggested Johnnie.

"No, boys, it isn't that," answered grandpa. "I'm getting old, that's the trouble. Getting old," and then he put his paw to his back, which, at that moment, had a pain in it. "I'm not a young and frisky squirrel like you boys," he

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went on. "I'm afraid your grandfather will never be able to jump from one tall tree to another any more," and he spoke quite sadly.

"Oh, yes, you will!" exclaimed Johnnie. "See, grandpa, here are some fine acorns. Are your teeth strong enough to crack them?" and he ran down to the ground, got some nice acorns, and brought them to his grandpa.

"Oh, yes, my teeth are all right," answered the old gentleman squirrel, "and I can see good. In fact, I don't think I am so very old. If it wasn't for my white tail and the pain in my back I'd seem quite young, I think."

Then they walked on a little farther, but Grandpa Lightfoot kept going slower and slower, until finally he said:

"I guess you boys had better run along without me. Grandpa is getting too tired. You run along home, and tell your mamma I'm much obliged for that cake. I'll just take a little nap in this tree, and then I'll go home too. Yep, grandpa is getting old," and the poor old squirrel gave a sigh, for you know it isn't nice to think you're growing old; that is, too old. Of course, I don't count nine or ten or even eleven or twelve or thirteen. But after that, well, it's getting on, let me tell you.

Well, Billie and Johnnie felt pretty badly when they saw how feeble their grandpa was. They started home, leaving him taking his nap, when all at once Billie said:

"Johnnie, if we could only find a nice, good, kind fairy, I think she would make grandpa feel better."

"How?" asked Johnnie.

"Well, she would take that pain out of his back, and make him younger."

"Fine!" cried Johnnie. "If we only could. Let's look around."

So they looked carefully around, but they couldn't see any fairies. All the fairies seemed to be away that day. At last Billie saw a lovely purple flower, and he was going to pick it to take home to his mamma, when Johnnie called out:

"Oh, it's too pretty to pick. Leave it in the woods, where it's cool and moist. It will last longer."

"All right," said his brother, "I will."

And the next minute if they didn't hear a voice coming out of that flower, saying:

"Thank you kindly, little boy,

Now my heart is filled with joy.

Since you've been so good to me,

I will give you wishes three."

"Oh, it's a fairy! It's a fairy!" cried Billie, and, sure enough, if a lovely little purple fairy lady didn't step down out of that flower.

"What are your three wishes, boys?" she asked, smiling at them.

Johnnie and Billie Bushytail

"Let's wish for an automobile!" whispered Johnnie to his brother.

"No," answered Billie. "I have an idea. Can you make old folks think they're young?" he inquired of the purple lady.

"Of course I can!" cried the fairy. "It's the easiest thing in the world. All I have to do is to make them happy and contented, and they'll be as young as ever. Of course, I have to say the magical word, too."

So Billie and Johnnie told the fairy about their grandpa, and how he was growing old.

"Take me to him at once," she commanded, and they led her to where the old gentleman squirrel was asleep in the tree, and he was snoring the least little bit.

"Grandpa, here is a fairy come to make you feel young," said Billie.

"Hey? What's that? A fairy to make me young? Stuff and nonsensicalness!" cried the old squirrel. "Fairies are all bosh! I think you boys have been dreaming of fairies lately," and he sat up, and rubbed his eyes and put on his spectacles, which had fallen off. "Fairies are all bosh!" he repeated.

"Oh, indeed they're not," said the purple fairy with a laugh. "Just you wait and see." So she pronounced the magical word, "Piddlepaddlepodlepum!" (only you mustn't say it, you know) and then she waved her magic wand three times.

Then a wonderful thing happened. Grandpa's bushy tail, that had turned white because he was so old, got a nice silver-gray in an instant, and the pain in his back went right away. Then he straightened up, and he cried:

"Well, well, I certainly do feel better! I feel ever so much younger again. I guess I'm wrong about fairies being bosh. I'm ever so much obliged to you, my dear little lady. I surely do feel fine! Thank you so much!"

"Oh, that's all right," spoke the fairy with a laugh that showed her little white teeth, smaller than Jennie Chipmunk's, "I'm glad you feel better. Now I must go." So she turned into a humming-bird and flew away, and Johnnie and Billie Bushytail went to their home, and Grandpa frisked along to his home, as lively as a young puppy dog. Of course he wasn't really any younger, but he felt so, and that made the difference. Now to-morrow night, if no one tickles me with a feather when I'm asleep, I'm going to tell you something wonderful about Grandma Lightfoot.

XXXI. GRANDMA AND THE JUMPING FAIRY

GRANDMA LIGHTFOOT was quite surprised when grandpa came home that afternoon, walking spryly along and even taking a jump now and then.

"Why, what in the world is the matter with you?" she asked, looking at him over the tops of her spectacles.

"Nothing, except that I feel fine," answered the old gentleman squirrel, with a laugh, and, just to prove it, he turned a somersault, a thing he had not done in years and years.

"And look at your tail!" cried grandma; "it's silver-gray, just as when you used to be a young fellow. Come, Jennie Chipmunk, look here! Would you ever believe it?"

"No," said Jennie Chipmunk, "I never would."

Johnnie and Billie Bushytail

"My tail isn't white any more," said grandpa, "and I haven't any pain in my back. Whoop!" and he hollered real loudly, he felt so fine.

"Who did it?" asked grandma. "Who changed your tail?"

"A purple fairy," answered her husband.

"Oh! Oh! Oh!" cried grandma, taking off her glasses. "Why, the very idonical idea! What do you mean?"

"That's right, it was a purple fairy," went on Grandpa Lightfoot. "Billie and Johnnie found her and brought her to me when I was asleep."

"Oh, nut-crackers!" exclaimed grandma, who was very odd at times. "You dreamed it, that's all. You fell asleep in the woods, and dreamed it."

"No, I didn't," declared grandpa. "I feel ever so much younger," and he danced a little jig and sung this little verse, which you may sing if you wish, as long as the baby isn't asleep:

"Oh, hi-diddle-dum-diddle-di-de-doo,

Sing potatoes, tomatoes, too.

I feel as fine as a fiddle-de-dee.

Won't you come and dance with me?"

"No," said grandma, very decidedly. "I won't dance. I'm too old, and besides, supper is ready. Now, don't tell me about those purple fairies again, for I simply won't believe it!" Oh, wasn't she the odd old lady, though, but she was as nice as could be, if you only knew her. "I wish I could get the purple fairy to make your tail silver-gray again," spoke grandpa, as he was eating his supper.

"Humph! I'd like to see a fairy!" cried grandma. "When I was a girl folks used to say there were such things. But I never saw any, and, what's more, I never will."

Well, the next day Billie and Johnnie Bushytail came to see how their grandma and grandpa were getting on, and they told about the purple fairy, but still grandma didn't seem to think such a thing could really happen. But now wait, something strange is going to take place in about a minute.

A few days after this, oh, maybe three or so yes, I guess it was about three days Jennie Chipmunk was taken sick. She couldn't do the work, and Grandma Lightfoot was very busy, and they had company, too, Mr. and Mrs. Wibblewobble, the ducks. Well, there was quite a lot to do, dusting and sweeping and cooking and making the beds.

Well, after the company had gone, Grandma Lightfoot tried to do the work, but she found it quite a task. She was rather old, you know, and not as spry as she once was. Grandpa had to go to the post-office, or he would have helped her. So poor grandma, after she had washed the dishes, had to sit down to rest, she was so tired, and there was the sweeping to do yet, and the dusting, and the beds to make, and, oh, I don't know what all!

"I never can do it," thought grandma. "I shall have to go out and hire some one."

Johnnie and Billie Bushytail

Just then there was a little noise in one corner of the room, and, bless me, if a little creature didn't jump right up and down in front of grandma's chair, and exclaim: "Where's the broom? Where's the dust-rag? Quick! Quick! Quick!"

"Why?" asked grandma, "who are you?"

"I am the jumping fairy," answered the little creature. "I am always on the jump," and she jumped some more. "I must jump right at this work," she went on. "Where is the broom? Where is the dust-rag? Quick! Quick! Quick!"

Then, before grandma could answer, if the jumping fairy hadn't jumped into a corner and got the broom, and then she began jumping all around the room, sweeping as fast as the wind blows. Then she jumped to another corner, and got the rag, and began dusting, jumping from chair to chair, and from the piano stool to the table, and back again, dusting, dusting, dusting, all the while.

"Now the beds!" cried the fairy, and she jumped up and down in the middle of each bed to make it soft. "Now the windows!" the fairy cried, and she jumped up and down on the panes of glass, just as you slide on the ice, making the windows shine like silver. And in less than no time, if that house wasn't in perfect order!

All this while grandma looked on, too surprised to speak. Then, when everything was done, the fairy jumped up and down in front of the old lady squirrel three times, and said: "Wishka, Washka, Wushka!" which is magical, you know, and then she added: "Look at your tail!" and believe me, if grandma's tail hadn't turned silver-gray, just like grandpa's, and she felt ever so much better. Then the fairy jumped out of the window and disappeared, after saying good-bye.

Well, when Grandpa Lightfoot came in, and saw how nice the house was, and he noticed that his wife wasn't tired, he asked:

"How did it all happen, my dear?"

"Oh," she answered, "the jumping fairy did it."

"The jumping fairy? Why, I thought you didn't believe in fairies."

"Oh, I guess I do a little bit," grandma admitted. "My, but I never saw such quick work, though, and I feel quite rested."

Then grandpa was real glad, and a few days after that Jennie Chipmunk got better, and the squirrels, all of them, including Johnnie and Billie Bushytail, and Sister Sallie, lived happily ever after.

Now we have come to the end of the book, children, but in case you would like to hear some more stories, I am going to put them in another volume. They will be about some nice ducks, Lulu, Alice and Jimmie Wibblewobble, and their friends, including Aunt Lettie, the old lady goat, Nero, the dog, and Grandfather Goosey Gander. That book will be named, "Bedtime Stories: Lulu, Alice and Jimmie Wibblewobble," which will tell all about the Ducks' children. So, now I'll say goodnight for a little while. THE END.

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