

# **LITTLE FOLKS' LAND**



# **LITTLE FOLKS' LAND**

**THE STORY OF A LITTLE BOY**

**IN A BIG WORLD**

**BY**

**MADGE A. BIGHAM**

**EDITED BY**

**LISA M. RIPPERTON**

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IN LOVING MEMORY  
OF  
LEWIE BIGHAM SMITH  
THE DEAREST OF LITTLE MOTHERS



## PREFACE

THE story of Joe-Boy spun itself through the inspiration of a merry band of kindergarten children who held the leading string while the teacher followed and guided.

It was early in January that the author began the story to them, thinking that in about four weeks' work we would cover, through the principles of co-operation and interdependence, the building and furnishing of a house, thereby impressing on the child mind something of the true worth and dignity of labor as brought into actual contact with his everyday life.

When the wee house had been built, however, and completely furnished by eager and busy fingers, the children had become so interested in the Gipsy baby that they were unwilling to give him up.

Each morning the teacher was met with such questions as: "Will you tell us more about Joe-Boy to-day?" "Did he ever grow large enough to go to kindergarten?" "How many people helped to get his clothes?" "His food?" "Did Joe-Boy have any pets?"

And so each day there was some new question arising, showing that the children felt an incompleteness to leave the story just where we had planned—and justly

so, since no life is complete that does not reflect its threefold relationship to Nature, God, and man.

They were instinctively reaching out for clearness in the complexities of life's relationships, in regard to themselves, through the Gipsy baby. His life was but the mirror reflecting their own life, and they were longing to solve it.

Thus days passed into weeks and weeks into months as we followed the Gipsy baby through the mineral, vegetable and animal kingdoms, and traced the laws of co-operation and interdependence, which weave all of life's relationships into one grand sweet song.

We little dreamed as we passed from subject to subject that the story would ever present itself in book form, but other kindergartners asked for the basis of the program, primary teachers asked for the use of the Nature stories, and even mothers wished to borrow them for bedtime use, so, through these interested suggestions, the book finally took shape.

Of course no kindergartner can follow with equal results another's plan of work, but the subject matter of this program is of such universal and vital interest that it can not fail to offer helpful suggestions. And that is all that any program can justly do. While the subject matter is given in daily program form, do not attempt to follow it literally— time, environment and adaptability are all to be considered, bearing in mind that the author began the use of the program in her own kindergarten early in January, hence the seasons fitted

to the subject matter. Should you begin the use of the program in September, it would necessarily require a different line of progression. Perhaps the chief charm of the program is found in its ready adaptability. While the stories are all connected, they may be also separated, and used independently, omitted and added to, without destroying their value: *e. g.*, one teacher may wish to use only the division on domestic pets; another birds; another insects; and another plant life.

The interest of the children should be your guide as to how much or how little time should be spent on a given subject. Necessarily, environment will have much to do with the source of true interest, as was illustrated through one class of children in the study of birds. Long walks through beautiful woods, the finding of the real nest, seeing the real eggs, and the real birds, supplemented in the schoolroom by fine pictures in natural colors made the month of birds one of the happiest of all the topics, and the children, seemingly, would have spent a much longer time happily on the same subject, asking again and again about the fifteen birds made familiar to them through the stories.

MADGE A. BIGHAM

*Atlanta, Georgia*



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## THE FOREST HOME

ONCE-UPON-A-TIME there were two Gipsies.

They are people, you know, who travel about a great deal and like to sleep and eat in the woods, where they can be near the tall forest trees, the wild flowers, the rocks and moss and the sparkling waters. Gipsies do not like to live in houses like you and me. No, no indeed, they would much rather live in tents, which can be quickly packed up and moved with them from place to place. I can show you with my hands how they look—so.

Now, isn't that a queer little house? and do you think you would like to live in it?

Well, anyway, these two Gipsies I am telling you about liked it very much. Why, when Mrs. Gipsy wanted to cook dinner, she did not need a stove. She would make a fire under the trees near the creek, and then she would hang her pot over it, and boil all kinds of nice things to eat. Then when she and Mr. Gipsy wanted water to drink they would go to the cool spring, where the ferns grew thickest. They did not sleep in beds either, like you and me, but they would sleep on a pallet under the tent, or in fine weather swing a hammock under the trees and sleep in that. So you see how happy they

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were. But they were happier than ever at this time I am telling you about, because they knew a great big secret. Something was going to happen to them! You see, somebody told them they were soon to receive a wonderful present—one they had longed for ever so many times—and now if they were only willing to wait cheerfully, the present was really to be theirs.

Now, what do you suppose it was? No, and I am afraid you will never guess! When Mr. and Mrs. Gipsy first saw it, why it was all wrapped up in a shawl, lying on the pallet under the tent. And when they peeped under the shawl, Mrs. Gipsy said: “Oh, isn’t he sweet! See what tiny pink fists all doubled up! What a queer little mouth just like a rosebud, and—my, my, my, not a single tooth and not a hair of hair on his pretty bald head! But we don’t care for that, he is the sweetest, prettiest thing in all the wide, wide world!”

Then they almost smothered the wonderful present with kisses. And what do you think? It began to cry. Of course you know now what the present was. Why, to be sure, a baby boy for Mr. and Mrs. Gipsy, and they were so proud of it they didn’t know what to do.

“We shall name him Joe for you, Father Gipsy,” said Mother Gipsy with a smile, “that is the prettiest name that I know—and we will call him Joe-Boy, so that he will not get mixed up with you.”

At first Joe-Boy slept nearly all the time and his mother couldn’t tell what kind of eyes he had. But then he was growing, you know, and getting so fat he was almost too heavy to lift.

## JOE-BOY'S HOUSE

ONE day Mother Gipsy said, "Do see here, Father Gipsy, Joe-Boy has his eyes open to-day. They are large and black like mine and merry and glad like yours. And he is growing so fast! I think we shall have to stop living in tents now, and build a real truly true house to live in, just like what the town people have. If we do not, I am afraid Joe-Boy will get cold and sick when the winter time comes."

"Yes, yes," said Father Gipsy, "I have been thinking about that very thing myself, but then, I knew how much you loved our pretty gipsy tent here in the woods and I thought you would not wish to leave it."

"Oh yes," said Mother Gipsy, "we both love our tent home very much, but we love Joe-Boy more. When he grows larger he will have to go to Kindergarten, you know, and there is none in the woods. And when he gets to be a big boy he will have to go to school and when he gets to be a *great* big boy, why he will have to go to college. So you see we will have to build a house in the town for Joe-Boy if he is to grow into a strong, wise man."

"That is true," said Father Gipsy, "but I can't build a house all by myself, so I must find someone to help

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me, and the new house will be ready for Joe-Boy when the cold winter time comes.”

“You can find plenty of helpers, I am sure,” said Mother Gipsy, “and we will pay them some of our money for helping us work. First we must find an architect to give us a plan for the house and then some carpenters and stone cutters and brick masons to build it for us.”

“How many rooms do you think we should have in the new house?” said Father Gipsy.

“Not very many,” said Mother Gipsy,—“let me see; a kitchen, a dining room, a parlor, a bed room and a play room for Joe-Boy, all his very own, so that when he grows large enough to have toys and other things he will have a nice place to keep them in. Then, of course there must be a broad porch all around the house, for when the weather is bright we shall stay out there a great deal—close to the air and sunshine and the beautiful, beautiful woods, that we love so much.”

“All right,” said Father Gipsy, “it shall be just as you wish, and to-morrow I will find the workmen who are to do the building—the very best ones that can be found, because we want Joe-Boy to have a strong, well-built house to live in.”

Then Mother Gipsy smiled and Father Gipsy smiled, and I am sure Joe-Boy would have smiled too, had he only known how much they loved him. But he only closed his pretty black eyes, nestled up close to Mother Gipsy’s heart, and went fast asleep.

## THE WOOLEN BALLS' STORY

IF you were a moonbeam fairy, now, and could peep into Joe-Boy's toy cabinet every night, as *they* did, you would see all of his playthings, for that is where he kept them, you know. But instead of the little red ball he used to play with and rock to sleep you would see *six* now, dressed in the brightest woolen dresses—a red ball, an orange ball, a yellow ball, a green ball, a blue ball and a violet ball. There they sat in a row on the top shelf. Then there was a wooden ball on another shelf with two other blocks, one that looked like a box, and one like a barrel, and down on the bottom shelf there was a rubber doll and a drum and the new linen picture book. I think Joe-Boy loved his balls best of all because he and Mother Gipsy had such merry games with them, playing, tossing and rolling across the low table. Sometimes they played the balls were ponies or dogs or sheep or kittens or birds, and always before putting them away they rocked them to sleep, Joe-Boy trying hard to hold his hands like a wee nest cradle, and walking on tip-toe as he placed them in the cabinet.

Away in the dark night after the clock had struck twelve, and when Joe-Boy and Mother Gipsy and Father Gipsy were sound asleep, *then*, the toys in the toy cabinet

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would talk together—but only the moonbeam fairies could hear them and not you nor me, nor Joe-Boy nor Father Gipsy nor Mother Gipsy, because we were not there, you know. And one night the wooden ball said, “Let us tell tales about where we came from—last go!”

“All right,” said the woolen balls, “we like to tell tales. It seems very funny to think about it now, but the first things we can remember, we were growing on a sheep’s back—soft, fleecy wool to keep them warm, you know. The sheep belonged to Farmer Green, and he had more than a hundred, father sheep, mother sheep and dear little baby lambkins. He kept them in a beautiful meadow with soft green grass and daisies and buttercups all mixed up together, and the clearest, merriest brook curled in and out, in and out, in and out, the long day through. Farmer Green came to see them often and sometimes brought them salt, which he sprinkled on a long row of rocks. The sheep liked that very much, and would rub their soft heads against him to say ‘thank you.’ Then Farmer Green would run his fingers through our long wool to see how thick it was, and by and by we found out that just as he raised cotton to be woven into cloth for summer clothes, so he raised sheep that their warm wool might be woven into cloth for winter clothes.”

“Well, well, well,” said the wooden ball, “I might have guessed that, because cotton and wool do look something alike when they are in bags, only they don’t feel alike. But do go on, how did you get off the sheep’s back?”

## THE WOOLEN BALLS' STORY

“Oh, that was easy enough,” laughed the woolen balls. “One day in early spring, Farmer Green and Dick drove all of the sheep knee-deep into the meadow brook, and such a scrubbing and a washing and a combing of wool you never saw! My, how clean and white we were! Then when the sunshine had helped to dry us off, why, the first thing we knew, Farmer Green and Dick had clipped the wool from every sheep’s back, just like shingling children’s hair, and bless you! the next thing we knew, we were tied up in bags on our way to the woolen factory, where we were pulled and twisted and spun and woven into all kinds of woolen goods—carpets, rugs, curtains, blankets, flannel, dress cloth and threads—dyed in all the colors of the rainbow! And singing as they whirled:

“Over and over and over we go,  
Weaving the wool into cloth, you know,  
Spinning the threads for dresses and wraps,  
Socks and zephyrs and shawls and caps,  
In rainbow colors from red to brown,  
Enough for all the children in town;  
So over and over and over we go,  
Spinning the woolen threads, you know.”

“We were spun into zephyr threads and dyed in colors red, yellow, orange, green, blue, violet. Then we were sold to the store man in this very town, and Mother Gipsy bought us and crotcheted us into pretty balls for dear little Joe-Boy to play with! And——” But just at that very minute the sunbeam fairies tripped through the playroom windows, and those balls wouldn’t say

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*another single word*—because toys don't talk in the day time, you know.

Oh, no, toys *can't* talk in the day time, you know.

## THE WOODEN BALL'S STORY

“THERE now!” said the wooden ball the very next night, “I’m ready to tell *my* story about where I came from. Isn’t it nice that Joe-Boy placed me up here on the top shelf near you woolen balls, when he finished playing with me to-day?”

“Yes, and isn’t he growing fast! Why, he can walk and talk as well as anybody, and it is too cute to hear him say ‘please’ when he wants Mother Gipsy to hold him up to the toy cabinet. The first thing we know that child will be going to kindergarten, and won’t he have a merry time then? But hurry and tell your tale; we are anxious to hear,” said the woolen balls.

“All right,” laughed the wooden ball, “if I can sit still long enough. Why, bless you! once upon a time I was a tree—now wasn’t that queer? I grew from a tiny acorn, my mother told me so, an acorn which fell from an oak tree, and of course when I grew I became an oak, too—just like my mother. So I grew and grew and grew and grew and grew, until many summers and many winters passed away, and I tell you I was large and straight and tall! Why, I could peep over the heads of nearly every tree in that forest—all the way to town I could see, and I saw so m-a-n-y things! There were

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houses and churches and stores and ships and cars and wagons and carriages and furniture, and, do you know, my mother told me every one of those things were made from trees—even Joy-Boy's house—and people called us wood—I was so surprised, I didn't know what to do! And then I began to wonder what people would make out of me—something, I hoped, because that was the way to become useful—my mother told me so. But I didn't have to wait very long to find out, for the very next week a man came and carried me away in his wagon. He trimmed off all of my branches, until I hardly knew myself, and *looked* like a great, long walking stick. But I wasn't any walking stick, because the man *called* me a *log*, and the next thing *I* knew, I was floating down the river, as merry as you please. There were other logs tied to me, so I didn't get lonely, and by and by we floated right to the side of a big saw mill, and there we stopped. And when those saw mill men finished working with us, we certainly did feel mixed up, and I didn't know which was who! Why, I wasn't a log any longer, but I was what people called *lumber*—think of it—and when they put me on the freight train and shipped me to the factory, I kept saying over to myself—tree, log, lumber, tree, log, lumber, tree, log, lumber—so I wouldn't forget my name, you know. And *still* that wasn't the end of me! Do you know that man whirled me around in his machine until, when I rolled out, sir, I was a wooden ball, and there were dozens and dozens of others just like me! My, I was like the old woman that lived in the shoe—there were so many of me I didn't know what to do!

*THE WOODEN BALL'S STORY*

“And how did I get here? Why, Mrs. Gipsy bought me for Joe-Boy. And do you know, she sometimes calls me a *sphere!* Now, don't you think that very queer?”

## WHY THE TREES SLEPT

WHEN the wooden ball had finished his story, and all the toys had had a big laugh, what else do you suppose wanted to tell a tale ? No, it wasn't the drum or the rubber doll or the linen picture book, but it was a big lump of coal, sitting on the hearthstone. "You see," said the lump of coal, "I am not a toy, but then I am kin to the wooden ball, for I am his great, great, great, great grandfather, though I am as black as black can be, and I can tell you a wonderful story. Listen:

"Hundreds and hundreds of years ago, when the world was new, I, too, grew as a tree, just as the wooden ball did—but a tree larger than any tree you ever dreamed of, with huge branches spread wide to the sunshine and a trunk whose top towered almost to the clouds. In those days great winds swept the earth which bowed me almost to the ground, and the rains came down in great torrents and washed about my roots. So fierce were the winds and so mighty the floods of water, that one day I fell and lay stretched upon the ground. And then something beautiful happened to me, and all the other trees which had fallen with me. The sunbeam fairies came to us, and gliding among our leaves and down each trunk they said:

## WHY THE TREES SLEPT

“Let us go to sleep together—we to mingle in the green of your leaves—you to sleep beneath the water and sand and gravel. For hundreds of years your sleep shall last, but when you awake, you shall be changed. People will no longer call you trees, but coal—great masses of black rock. You shall then be useful not only to the lizards which glide among your branches nor as shade for the creeping animals, but you shall be of use to the whole wide world as heat and light, and men shall seek deep into the depths of the earth to find you! We sunbeams will still be locked within you, and we shall make for you a great heat, whose power shall run steam engines and factories and foundries and mills. Churches and stores and houses shall be made warm and bright by you and people in many lands will call you blessed because of this warmth and light you bring. Are you willing to make the change?”

“‘Yes, yes, yes,’ sang the trees in one great chorus, ‘we will gladly sleep for thousands of years, and become the blackest of rocks—to bless and help the world like that.’

“And so it was. Year after year, year after year, sand and gravel and water pressed over us—layer after layer, tree over tree, beneath the marsh and the water of the swamp we sank deeper and deeper; and we slept and slept and slept.

“How long we slept in the earth I can not tell, but the change came as the sunbeams said it would, and we were no longer trees, but great walls of solid coal—as hard as rock and as black as black could be! And one

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day as we lay hidden in the earth, I heard a sound very near me—pick, pick, picking away, and digging nearer and nearer it came. Then all at once I heard the glad cry of a man, and his voice rang out: ‘Coal! coal! coal! we’ve found coal, great beds of coal, enough to heat and warm the world!’ And then I remembered what the sunbeams had told us, and waited. Day after day the miners worked away with pick and shovel, digging deeper and deeper beneath our bed, picking us out in great lumps and sending us out of the mine to be loaded in carts and cars and sent away to the people of towns and cities. Each miner had a tiny lantern in his cap as he bent over his work, for no daylight was there, and the darkness was very great. At last it came my turn to be sent to the sweet, fresh air of the outside world, and just as you were bought by Father Gipsy to make Joe-Boy happy, so did he buy me to brighten his home and keep him warm. Would you see the sunbeams of the long ago dance about us? Watch Mother Gipsy as she kindles a fire and see them curl and dance in flames of joy! Call it not fire, but pent up sunshine—set free after the lapse of ten thousand years.”

## HOW LADY COW WAS SAVED

THE fire engine house was on the next block from Joe-Boy's house, and, of course, when the fire alarm rang he was one of the very first to see the large strong horses dash out with the engine and wagons and gallop away to fight the fire. Often, at kindergarten, Joe-Boy played "fireman" with the other children, and that was almost as much fun as being a truly true fireman. Sometimes he would be one of the horses to dash off at the first tap of the bell and sometimes he would be a part of one of the long wagons and sometimes he would be one of the firemen to run up the ladders or throw the water from the hose pipes over the burning house.

But one day the children had a happy, happy time, because the kindergarten teacher took them all to the fire engine house, and let them see everything! There were the shining engines which the firemen kept so clean and bright, and the hose wagons and the hook and ladder wagon and the brave white horses, standing right under the harness, all ready to be buckled in, at the first tap of the bell. They knew as well as the firemen did what it meant to do their very best, and, I tell you, they could run! Upstairs were all of the iron beds where the firemen slept, and near by was the big brass pole

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that they had to slide down when the fire alarm rang in the night. They did not have time to come down steps, you know—no, indeed, that was too slow—for a fireman! He would just hold to the brass pole and down he would come in a twink! One of the firemen showed Joe-Boy just how he did it, and then Joe-Boy wanted to slide down, too, and the fireman helped him up two or three times and let him slide all the way down. Wasn't that kind of a fireman? Joe-Boy thought he was the very best one in all the world. And I will tell you why. One night—away late in the night—Mrs. Gipsy waked up, hearing people running and some one shouting, "Fire! fire! fire!" And then she heard the fire alarm ring out, "Ding-dong! ding-dong! ding-dong!" and then she knew there was a fire somewhere, and it sounded like the people running to her house. So she shook Mr. Gipsy to wake him, and they both ran to the window and threw open the blinds to look out, and then Mr. Gipsy said, "Goodness me! I do believe our barn is on fire! See how bright it is in our yard! Lady Cow and her brown baby will be burned up, I'm afraid—what shall we do?"

"No," said Mrs. Gipsy, "there come the fire engines and we need not be afraid, because the firemen will put out the fire, I know, before it burns the barn very much."

And, sure enough, just at that moment the strong white horses dashed into the yard with a gallop, and the brave firemen, dressed in their rubber clothes, were soon fighting the flames. Some of them threw a large stream of water over the barn and some of them ran up the ladders, and others watched the sparks to keep

## HOW LADY COW WAS SAVED

them from putting Joe-Boy's house on fire when they fell on the roof. When the fire was all out Joe-Boy waked up, and he was so surprised when he saw the big fire wagons standing in the yard; and Father Gipsy wrapped a big shawl around him and carried him to the barn to thank the firemen for putting out the fire. And the very first thing he said was:

“Oh, oh, oh, where is Lady Cow and her brown baby?” Then the fire chief said, “Look over there under the tree, Joe-Boy, and you will see the friend who went through the smoke and flames to bring your cow and calf safely out of the burning stable.”

And when Joe-Boy looked where the fire chief pointed, guess whom he saw? The very same fireman who had held him and let him slide down the brass pole the day the kindergarten children visited the fire engine house. And now he had saved Lady Cow and her brown baby from burning up, so you may know how very much Joe-Boy loved him after that.

“Well,” said Mother Gipsy, when they had all gotten back to bed, “I do not know what we would do without firemen to help in our towns. Why, just suppose our pretty home had caught on fire, too, and burned to the ground! Wouldn't that be most dreadful?”

“Yes, indeed,” said Father Gipsy, “and I am very thankful that the firemen put out the fire before the barn was burned down. Only the top was hurt, and tomorrow we must have a new roof put on it, or Lady Cow and her brown baby will have nowhere to sleep.”

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So the next day the workmen came and soon a new roof was fixed and the barn looked as good as new.

And, you know, Lady Cow was glad of that!

## MRS. SPIDER-BROWN

IF I told you Joe-Boy had a pet as big around as a bird's egg, and with eight legs and eight eyes, what would you guess it was? No, it wasn't a fly, because they haven't as many as eight legs, you know, and a great many more than eight eyes. But this pet of Joe-Boy's was very fond of flies—I can tell you that. It was a great big brown spider, and Joe-Boy named her Mrs. Spider-Brown the morning he found her in his room. Now, Mrs. Spider-Brown had always lived in the flower garden before this—her family did not like to live in houses very much—but for some queer notion she thought she would spin her a web in somebody's house. Maybe she thought there would be more flies to catch. Anyway, late one night, while everybody was sleeping, Mrs. Spider-Brown crawled into Mrs. Gipsy's house, and when she had looked all around she said to herself:

“I like this house very much indeed! It looks dainty and clean and has so many transoms over windows and doors that I could crawl out to the open air any time I chose. I just believe I will go right to work and build me a silken web, away up high, out of everybody's way, and then surely the people who live here will not care.

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But first I will look around and see which room I like best.”

So Mrs. Spider-Brown crawled into the parlor, but she quickly shook her head as she looked at the pretty walls, all sprinkled with violets, and said, “I guess I had best not build in here! Everything looks so fine, I don’t believe a fly ever looked inside of this room—I’ll try another room.”

So Mrs. Spider-Brown crawled into the dining room. But she slowly shook her head again and said, “No, this room looks rather fine, too; there are too many mirrors and bright things around. Why, that large sideboard glass over there would get me all mixed up. I would be sure to think there were two of myself, instead of one, and I might forget which was who! People are queer things, anyway.” And then she crawled on into the kitchen.

“No,” she said, “this will not do either; this is where the family do their cooking and, of course, when the baby spiders come I should not like to raise them altogether among pots and pans. I shall hunt longer.”

So then Mrs. Spider-Brown crawled all the way up the hall and went into Mrs. Gipsy’s room. “Ah,” she said, as she looked around, “I like this room better than any. It is bright and cozy—I always did like red—but before I decide to room in here I guess I had better just take a peep at those people over there in the bed—possibly they are fond of brooms and dusters.”

So up the wall by the side of the bed crawled Mrs. Spider-Brown and peeped with her eight eyes at Mother

*MRS. SPIDER BROWN*

and Father Gipsy, lying fast asleep. She looked a long time and then she shook her head three times and said:

“Mr. Gipsy has a fine face! I do not believe he would ever think of sweeping or dusting up high. But Mrs. Gipsy? No, indeed! I could not think of rooming in the same room with her! She has a face that is sweet and beautiful enough, but her hand—I believe Mrs. Gipsy almost lives with a broom in her hand, to say nothing of a duster! She would sweep me off the face of the earth in less than three minutes!”

So Mrs. Spider-Brown crawled down the side wall very quickly and went straight into Joe-Boy’s room.

“Dear me,” said she, as she went to the top of the toy cabinet for a good look, “isn’t this a dainty room! All in white, with daisies scattered around! Just the place for the baby spiders, and I know they would enjoy these birds along the walls—I could tell them stories of every one. But there is a little white bed over there, too; who sleeps in it, I wonder? Why, a little boy, I do believe,—how charming! I always loved children; they never dust high with brooms and dusters—bless their dear hearts! Yes, yes, yes, this is the place for me, and I shall room with the little boy. I believe he will treat me kindly and we will be great friends.”

Then Mrs. Spider-Brown crawled over in the corner and went to the top of the ceiling, where she began to spin a most beautiful silver web, which was to be her sitting room, you know, and the place where she always caught the flies she ate. The wonderful silken thread

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came from the tiny spinning holes near her hind legs, and Mrs. Spider-Brown could work those legs of hers as fast as you can work your fingers, and it did not take her very long to build her pretty web, from the thread of dark, rich blue. First she fastened a few long threads to stand on while she worked, and then she spun some cross threads, gluing them tightly to the wall. Then came the pretty part of her work, for she spun the threads round and round like a wheel, and by and by Mrs. Spider-Brown had finished one of the daintiest, prettiest silken rooms that ever you saw, with a small round window right in the center. And then she felt so tired she crawled in and went to sleep. The next morning when Joe-Boy waked up the very first thing he saw was Mrs. Spider-Brown peeping at him from her round window, and he thought her silken house was very beautiful.

“I’m glad she came to room with me,” said he, “and I shall have her for my own pet spider; she shall live with me as long as she chooses.”

“That’s good,” said Mrs. Spider-Brown, “I knew that was a polite child!”

But right after breakfast in walked Mrs. Gipsy and then something inside Mrs. Spider-Brown went “thump, thump, thump,” because, sure enough, in Mrs. Gipsy’s hand there was a broom and a great long duster.

“Just as I expected,” said Mrs. Spider-Brown, “and now my day has come!”

But when Mrs. Gipsy saw it she smiled one of her most beautiful smiles and said, “Oh, isn’t that a lovely

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web? Why, it must have been spun last night. I never saw it before. And I did not know that kind of web was ever found in houses at all. I thought the spiders always spun them in the gardens on bushes or in fence corners or barn windows and doors, and they look so much like silken fairy wheels that it is a pity to dust them down! I wonder if Joe-Boy saw it. Here he comes now.”

“Mother, mother,” said Joe-Boy, “I just remembered and ran in to tell you that Mrs. Spider-Brown in the corner belongs to me—I am going to have her for my pet, so be sure and do not clean her up, too!”

Then Mrs. Gipsy laughed merrily and long—the very idea of Joe-Boy’s saying, “don’t clean a spider up!” Why, she cleaned up rooms and not spiders, of course! So she said:

“Well, I never heard of anybody having a pet spider in all my life, but this is *your* room and not my room, and I suppose if you want to keep a spider in it, why, you can,—just so that it isn’t poisonous and won’t bite.”

“The idea,” said Mrs. Spider-Brown, “why do people always think we garden spiders are poisonous and bite? Why, we wouldn’t bite them for anything, and would be their friends if they would only let us! I am very glad the little boy there is to be my friend, and I believe I shall learn to love his mother, too,—see the smile around her mouth! She believes in letting even children have their rights, and that shows she has a kind heart. Now, if she would only let brooms and dusters alone!”

## MRS. SPIDER-BROWN'S CHILDREN

MRS. SPIDER-BROWN spent a very happy time in Joe-Boy's room and they were the best of friends. He had drawn her picture two or three times, and her silken house, too, and had even carried it to kindergarten and shown it to the children there. So when Mrs. Spider-Brown saw she need not feel afraid she decided to weave her nest and get ready for the baby spiders she had spoken about. "I believe I will make my nest here, under the window ledge," she said one day, "and lay my eggs in it."

You need not think Mrs. Spider-Brown was going to lay her egg in that pretty silken house with the round window in the center. No, indeed, that was for her sitting room and to catch any stray flies that happened near. She lived on flies, and woe be unto any of them that buzzed around Joe-Boy's room! It was Mrs. Spider-Brown's special pleasure to see that none of them ever specked the walls of Joe-Boy's room or those of her own. But, as I started out to tell you, Mrs. Spider-Brown built her nest under the window ledge by the transom—such a tiny, tiny nest, about the size of a thimble, and made out of that same silken thread which came from her

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body. When she had lined it soft and warm, then she laid her egg—only one egg, a wee, wee, wee egg, not even as big as a pea! But Mrs. Spider-Brown was very proud of it—she would even fight for that egg, because she knew the baby spiders were growing inside and would soon wake up. Why, she often carried it around on her back, and that is how Joe-Boy came to see it. He called Mrs. Gipsy to see it, too, and Mother Gipsy said:

“Well, I think Mrs. Spider-Brown is very glad that she isn’t like the speckled hen that has twelve eggs to take care of instead of one! And I also guess the speckled hen is very glad she doesn’t have one hundred babies to come out of just one egg, as Mrs. Spider-Brown will have when her egg hatches!”

But Mrs. Spider-Brown did not worry over that fact a single minute—she only wished her egg would hurry up and hatch, so she could have her baby spiders for company. She didn’t tell Joe-Boy so, but she said to herself that as soon as her baby spiders did hatch, and were large enough, she was going to turn them all into the garden to live, where they belonged. It was too dangerous to raise a hundred babies in the house with Mother Gipsy—she believed too much in brooms and dusters!

Well, by and by the egg hatched out, and my! I wish you could have seen those hundred babies roll out! Just exactly like their mother—legs and eyes and all! And Mrs. Spider-Brown made them mind, too, from the very beginning! She would not have one bit of foolishness,

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and those babies knew it, too! She told them they would all have to make their own living, but, of course, she meant to teach them how before she turned them out into the garden. So, every morning Mrs. Spider-Brown had school with them up over the transom window, and they were all learning very fast. She would first make them get in a long row, and then she would say, "Attention!" That meant for all the little spiders to look at her. And they looked, too, with all of their eight eyes.

"Now," said Mrs. Spider-Brown, "tell me where you came from?"

"We came out of one egg," piped all the baby spiders together.

"Don't say 'We came out of one egg,' my dears," said their mother, "why, that is too long; just say 'egg,' and be done with it. I like short answers!"

"Egg, and be done with it," said the baby spiders, trying their very best. Mrs. Spider-Brown sighed, because that is not exactly what she wanted them to say, but she went on to the next question, anyway.

"Now tell me," she said, "what do little spiders eat?"

"Flies," said the baby spiders, "flies!"

"Good," said Mrs. Spider-Brown, "that's a short answer! Now, how do you catch the flies?"

"Run after them," chimed the baby spiders.

"Tut, tut," said Mrs. Spider-Brown, "the idea! Whoever heard of a spider running after a fly! Why,

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they have wings! We could never catch one that way! Listen, every one. Spiders spin webs to catch flies in and they spin the web from a wonderful silken thread that comes from their bodies. Each one of you spiders has a silken thread in you, too, and you will find the little spinning holes by your hind legs—look for them now.” Then Mrs. Spider-Brown gave them a spinning lesson and they all learned how to spin a short thread.

“Good,” said Mrs. Spider-Brown; “now, where is the best place for spiders to make their webs?”

And all the spiders said, “Down on the barn, in the fence corners, by the side porch, and on the rose bush!”

“Very fine,” said Mrs. Spider-Brown, “most especially by the barn, because there will always be plenty of flies near. And don’t forget the pattern—round like a wheel. I will show you how pretty mine is by and by. Now, two more questions and school is out for today. Why should not spiders build their webs in houses?”

“Brooms and dusters!” said the little spiders—they knew that answer well.

“Yes, to be sure,” said Mrs. Spider-Brown. “Never build your webs in houses, unless you are very sure the people inside will be your friends. Now for the last question: Why shouldn’t spiders build their webs close to the ground?”

“Frogs! frogs! frogs! frogs!” said all the baby spiders. “Frogs!”

“Why, to be sure,” said Mrs. Spider-Brown; “I know

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you are the very smartest little spiders that ever drew the breath of life! Come, I shall give you all a ride on my back to see my pretty web—pile on!”

Then all the baby spiders that could find room got up on Mrs. Spider-Brown's back and she carried them over to her web, coming back for those which had been left behind.

“Hold tight,” she said, “whatever you do, don't fall onto Mrs. Gipsy's floor—brooms and dusters! Remember the silken thread you've learned to spin—if you *should* fall, just spin one quickly, fasten it to my body, and crawl up.”

After Mrs. Spider-Brown had taken them all to her web and let them watch her catch a fly, then she took them back to the nest for a rest, and the very next day she turned them out in the garden to make their living! And do you know, not a single one of those baby spiders forgot what they had learned at school?

## THE BROKEN TWIG

IF Mr. Jaybird was a farmer, because he planted trees, then the orioles were carpenters, because they mended things. Let me tell you about it. The orioles built the very prettiest nest that Charlotte Anne or Joe-Boy ever saw. But it was not in the buttercup meadow, nor in the deep woods beyond, nor on the lawn; but it was over at Charlotte Anne's house in an old apple tree, away down in the orchard. When Charlotte Anne first saw it she ran all the way across the street to tell Joe-Boy about it, because she wanted him to come and see her piece of red hair ribbon—the same that she had hung on the fence in the birds' store. Those orioles had woven it in and out of their pretty swinging nest, as well as you or I could have done. The orioles know all about weaving, and when they have finished their nest of long grasses and strings, woven deep like a pocket, they lace the edge of the nest to strong twigs, hidden among the leaves, and there they swing as happy as you please—to and fro in the pretty swinging cradle. Charlotte Anne thought it was very kind of the orioles to build their beautiful nest in her apple tree—maybe it was because they had used a piece of her red hair ribbon—but anyway, when the nest was finished, Mrs. Oriole laid five of the prettiest white eggs with queer brown marks on them, and of course

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she and Mr. Oriole were very proud of them. But one night a big wind storm came up, and blew and blew so hard against the tree that it broke the twig—the very twig that the nest was fastened to, and when Charlotte Anne saw it, there it hung, almost, but not quite, broken in two, and the orioles were flying round and round the tree, chirping. They were so afraid the nest would fall and break the pretty eggs they did not know what to do! And Charlotte Anne was afraid, too, so she ran to the house to ask her father to come quickly and help them, but her father had gone to town. And when she ran over to Joe-Boy's house to get *his* father to help, why, he had gone to town, too! And then it began to rain, and it rained so hard that Charlotte Anne's mother would not let her go back to the orchard all that day, because she was afraid she might get her feet wet and catch a cold. But the next afternoon the sun was shining bright, and when Charlotte Anne peeped out of the window there came Father Gipsy through the gate with a long ladder on his back and a pocket full of strings, and Joe-Boy was trotting right behind.

“Run, Charlotte Anne,” he said, “I told father about the oriole's nest, and he has come to mend it for them.”

So they all three went through the orchard gate and down the little path to the old apple tree, and *then*, what do you think? Father Gipsy said, “Why, I don't see any broken limb here, Charlotte Anne!” And Charlotte Anne looked and Joe-Boy looked, and sure enough the limb was all mended back again—just as good as ever. And then Father Gipsy said, “I'll just climb this tree,

## THE BROKEN TWIG

and see about this thing! And when he had climbed up to the limb where the nest swung, he said, "Well, sir! Did I ever! I didn't know birds were this smart before. Why, these orioles do not need us to mend this nest for them! They are better carpenters than we are, and have already mended the broken limb. They have wrapped moss and strings and hair round and round until the twig is just as tight and strong as I could ever fix it! And they must have worked in the rain, too—well, well, well! Now, wasn't that smart?"

"Oh, let me see! let me see!" said Charlotte Anne.

"Oh, let me see! let me see, too!" said Joe-Boy.

So Father Gipsy said, "Well, hurry along, before the orioles get back. They might not like to see us peeping in their nests, and I have heard that birds sometimes leave their nests for ever and ever if they catch people looking in them. We should be very sorry to have the orioles leave this nest after mending it so nicely."

So, then, Charlotte Anne scrambled up the ladder and looked at the mended limb, and then Joe-Boy scrambled up the ladder and looked at the mended limb.

And Charlotte Anne said, "Well, sir! did you ever!"

And Joe-Boy said, "Well, sir! did you ever!"

And then Father Gipsy took the ladder down, and said, "Run children, r-u-n! Mr. Oriole is coming! R-u-n! R-u-n! R-u-n!"

And away those two children scampered up that

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orchard path—and Mr. Oriole did not know one word about it.

NOTE.—A true incident.

## THE LITTLE WORM'S VISIT

THERE was something else besides the bulbs that went in the box to the hospital. *We* know what it was, but the kindergarten teacher and the children did not; because they did not know about the little worm that pushed away the stone from baby tulip's head and plowed the earth soft so he could grow. The little worm still lived in the box, and was as busy as busy could be every day plowing around the creeping rootlets of the bulbs. The Easter lily and the baby tulip knew that he was there—they could feel him as he worked about their feet.

“How very kind of our little friend,” they said, “to help us so! Our blossoms could not be half so lovely, if the little earth worm did not help to keep the dirt soft and rich. I wonder why he does not crawl up here to see us some day?”

But, dear me, they forgot that little earth worms do not have eyes—what would you want with eyes if you always lived in the dark, dark earth? The little worm could feel the way to go very well, and he was so busy with his plowing that he did not have much time to go up on the earth visiting. Anyway, the little worm did not like to go up on the earth very much, because that was where the people walked, and he was so very

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little, he was afraid some of the children might step on him—oh, no, not you; of course I knew you would not, but *somebody* might. But one day the little worm said, “I believe I will crawl up to the earth today, and take a walk in the fresh air and sunshine. I can feel the light, though I can not see the light, and it must be very beautiful. There are some little worms that live on top of the earth, and they have eyes—I like to hear them talk about the things they see. I believe I will crawl over and ask baby tulip to tell me the best way up.”

So the little worm crawled and crawled and crawled through the damp earth and tapped on baby tulip’s roots.

“Who is there?” said baby tulip.

And the little worm said, “It is I—the little worm. Don’t you remember?”

“To be sure,” said baby tulip, nodding and nodding his pretty head, “you moved the rough stone away that kept me from growing. Why don’t you crawl up here to the light and see my pretty red dress? The Easter lily has a white one and a golden heart within, and there are other pretty colors, too—pink and yellow—won’t you come?”

“That is just what I have been thinking I should like to do,” said the little worm, “and tapped on your roots to see if you could show me the best way up.”

“Of course I will,” said baby tulip; “I have been wishing and wishing to see you—ever since you helped

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me so. Just follow my stalk and crawl upward—you'll soon be on top of the earth."

"Thank you," said the little worm, "here I come."

And then he crawled up, up, up, up, and the first thing he knew he could *feel* the light, and then the little worm knew he was up on the earth.

"My, me!" said baby tulip, "how you have grown! Why, you are ever so much fatter than you used to be. Just see our pretty new dresses the sunbeams brought us. Aren't they pretty?"

"They must be," said the little worm, "though I can only feel them. How do you like it up here?"

"Oh, we like it much better than down in the ground," said the beautiful Easter lily.

"We thank you ever so much for helping us climb. This is not the place we first waked up in. That was at the kindergarten, where the happy children sang to us each day—they loved us so. But yesterday they brought us here to make the sick people happy."

"Oh," said the little worm, "I should like to do that, too, but people say I am very ugly, and then I can not see, you know."

"We don't think you are ugly," said baby tulip and the dear Easter lily.

"We think you are beautiful, because you are kind, and help us so—we love you."

"I am very glad," said the little worm, "but I am afraid I am staying too long. I will just crawl around

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the edge of the box and then I must go home again and do my work.”

And so the little worm went crawling and crawling and crawling around the edge of the box, feeling from side to side. And while the little worm was crawling around the edge of the box, guess who saw him? It was not the hospital doctor and it was not the hospital nurse—but it was something the nurse held in her arms, a little baby that had been sick a long, long time. You see the nurse had carried her up to the window to see the bright flowers, and while she sat there, the dear little baby saw the worm come creeping, creeping so slowly around the edge of the box, and she stretched out her tiny hands to the little worm and said, “Pretty, pretty, pretty!”

“Why, yes,” said the nurse, smiling, “a little worm has come to see this sick baby.”

And then she held out her pencil and the little worm crawled all the way across the pencil and the little sick baby laughed and laughed until she laughed out loud, and kept saying, “Pretty, pretty, pretty!”—the very first time she had laughed since she came to the big hospital. Then the nurse put the little worm back in the box with the bulbs, where she knew he liked to stay, and he crept into the dark earth again.

That afternoon when the doctor came—the very same doctor that knew Joe-Boy so well, he bent over the white bed where the sick baby slept, and took her tiny hand in his, as he said, “Why, this sick baby is very much better! She’ll soon be well, I think.”

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“Yes, indeed,” said the nurse, “why, she’s been laughing out loud today, and do you know, I believe it was a little *worm* that has made her better?”

Now, don’t you wish the little worm knew?

## THE PEA-PODS

WELL, of course the plants in the children's garden beds did not come up and grow as quickly as Jack's wonderful bean vine did, but it wasn't many days before they began to sprout, and the children found their tiny heads popping up here and there, everywhere all over the beds, saying "Good-morning" to one another, and taking their first peep at the world—and when they did begin to grow, my! how they did grow! It looked as if they were running a race to see which could grow fastest. The pea vines seemed to be ahead, for in a few days the children had to prop sticks for them to climb on, and every day was a busy day. You would see the little gardeners at work every morning before kindergarten, some sweeping and raking the walks, some with bright water-pots sprinkling, and some pulling little weeds away from the roots of their precious plant babies. Even the little earth-worms did not forget to help, too—the kindergarten teacher found one crawling across her bed, and she said, "Oh, here is a little earth-worm come to work on my garden bed!"

And then all the children crowded round to see, and Charlotte Anne said, "Oh, I wish I had a little earth-worm to help work on my garden bed."

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And then Joe-Boy said, "Oh, I wish I had a little earth-worm to work on my garden bed."

And then every one of those kindergarten children said, "Oh, I wish I had a little earth-worm to work on my garden bed!"

And then the kindergarten teacher laughed and said, "I guess somebody would like to borrow my little earth-worm, but I can not lend him today—see, he has almost gone down beneath the ground. Maybe he will tell the other earth-worms, and I am sure they will be glad to help."

I really believe he did tell them, too, because the plants grew faster and faster, and one morning, only think, the pea vines had little white blossoms on them, and oh, the children were so happy! Joe-Boy tried to count his, but he couldn't, there were so many, and some of the other children tried, too. A few mornings after that, Charlotte Anne ran out to her garden bed and found, and found—her pretty white pea blossoms scattered on the ground, and before she knew it there were tears all in her eyes, and she said, "Oh, somebody's been pulling my pretty white pea blossoms, and they are lying on the ground!"

And then Joe-Boy ran to his bed, and he said, "Oh, oh, oh! somebody's been pulling my pretty white pea blossoms and they are lying on the ground!"

And then the other children ran to their beds, and each said, too, "Oh, somebody's been pulling my pretty white pea blossoms, and they are lying on the ground!"

## THE PEA-PODS

Then the kindergarten teacher came hurrying out to see, and she said the very same thing!—"Somebody's been pulling my pretty white pea blossoms, and they are lying on the ground! And I know who has been pulling them, too!"

And then she laughed so merrily, that the children laughed, too, and said, "Who? Who? Who?"

Do you know who pulled those pretty white pea blossoms? Then, I shall have to tell you—the pea vines pulled those pretty white pea blossoms and scattered them on the ground—that's who pulled them. And when the kindergarten children heard, they said, "Oh-o! what for?"

And the kindergarten teacher said, "You just wait a few days, then you'll see. These pea vines are large enough to be little mothers now, and by and by they will show you something else growing, right where the little blossoms dropped off—something that I think you will like very much better."

So the children watched and watched and watched, and sure enough, one morning Charlotte Anne came skipping in and said, "Run, run and see! My pea vines have sure enough little green pea pods growing right where the blossoms dropped off!"

And then when all the children had looked, Joe-Boy jumped up and down and said, "Oh, oh, mine, too! mine, too! And there are little baby peas growing inside!"

And then everybody else found some—even the

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kindergarten teacher—and everybody was saying at the very same time, “Mine, too! Mine, too!”

## BABY DANDELION

BABY DANDELION grew on Joe-Boy's garden bed, and nobody knew how she got there. At first, Joe-Boy thought she was a little weed, and was just about to pull it up—root and all—when the kindergarten teacher said, “Wait, I think I see a tiny green bud.”

And sure enough, when they had looked closer, nestling close to the earth was a soft green baby bud, and Joe-Boy said, “Oh, maybe it wants to bloom.”

And the next day, just as if the little bud had heard, you could see tiny bits of yellow shining through, and the stem grew taller and taller and taller, and by and by the pretty baby dandelion burst forth into glorious bloom, wearing her golden crown, that every dandelion wears so gracefully. She nodded to all the flowers around her in the garden beds, called to the sunbeams and the breezes, and waved to the singing birds—all day she liked to play, when the sun was bright, but on cloudy days and late at night she closed up her bright yellow blossoms and went to sleep. Baby Dandelion heard the flowers wondering where she came from, and she laughed with glee—because they could not tell.

“Ho, ho, ho,” said Baby Dandelion, swaying in the

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sun, "I know! I know! I know! Baby Dandelion knows where she came from—ho! ho!"

"And where *did* you come from, you pretty Baby Dandelion?" said a sunbeam fairy.

"The children did not plant you, I am very sure; I heard them say so."

"No, no, no," laughed Baby Dandelion, shaking her head, "the children did not plant me, the birds did not plant me—you must guess who planted me."

But the sunbeam fairy guessed and guessed, but he could not tell—could you? Then, I will tell you—at least, what Baby Dandelion told the sunbeam.

"One day," she said, "when I was very, very small—only a little brown seed—I lived with my mother by the woods. She grew on a sunny bank, and her root was large and strong, and traveled very, very deep into the earth, hunting food for me. I had white wings then, beautiful wings, and oh, so many little brothers and sisters—and they all had white wings, too. We longed to fly away, but our mother held us tight, and would not let us go—because she said it wasn't time. She told us we were little seeds, that some day when we were quite ripe we would fly away and leave her—that we should take a long nap, that we should sleep beneath the ground, but that we should wake again, and should wear a golden crown, if we were brave and grew our very best. So, after that, I longed more than ever to fly away—I wanted to see more of the world before I went to sleep—but still, my mother said:

## BABY DANDELION

“‘Wait, there is a time for all things.’ One day a little girl came into the woods; her hands were full of wild flowers, and when she saw my mother’s silver crown of children, she stooped low on the bank, and said: ‘Tell me, Lady Dandelion, what time it is?’ Then she puffed out her cheeks and blew, counting between each puff—one, two, three, four. And then she laughed and I heard her say, ‘It is four o’clock—thank you, Lady Dandelion.’ Then off she tripped, and when I looked around, every one of my white winged sisters had flown away; I could see them flying merrily through the air, and I alone held close to my mother’s hand. I missed them very much, and kept wishing the little girl would come again and puff me away—I longed so to fly. She did not come, but some one else did,” laughed Baby Dandelion. “I knew they would, because my mother said so. It was a swift little breeze, and when he saw me, he said gaily, ‘Ho, ho, ho, Baby Dandelion!—you little white-winged seed. Are you left all alone? Come, go with me for a frolic.’

“Then with a great strong puff-f—stronger than the little girl’s—he carried me high in the air, and spreading out my white wings I sailed away with him! Oh, it was very fine—I felt like going forever—over fields and hills and meadows and fences; but by and by, the breeze said merrily, ‘We’ve traveled far enough now, little seed; I believe I will plant you here in the children’s garden. Go to sleep, and when you awake grow your very best, and some day you will wear a golden crown’—just what my mother told me, too.

“So the next thing I knew, I fell gently to the ground,

## LITTLE FOLKS' LAND

and I was so very, very tired, why, I went to sleep on the spot, and I must have slept a long, long time. But now—oh, I am wide awake! And see my golden crown. Isn't it pretty? The children tell me so; and the little boy with brown eyes, who so often jumps up and down, says I belong to him. He says some day I will wear a silver crown, like the one my mother wore—I hope I shall, and that I shall have many brown seed children, with white wings—just as my mother had. Do you think I shall?"

"Yes," said the sunbeam fairy, "if you keep on growing your very best, your golden crown will most certainly change to a silver crown——"

"Goldenlocks to silverlocks,  
Silverlocks to gold—  
So the change is going on  
Every year, I'm told."

Well, that is just what happened to Baby Dandelion—her golden crown was changed to a silver crown, because Joe-Boy saw it, and he said, "Tomorrow I shall gather the little white-winged seeds."

But only guess, the next day when he went to get them, why, there were not any—Baby Dandelion was bald-headed! Now what do you think of that?

"Ho, ho, ho! little black-eyed boy," she said, "you are too late! The wind came for my seeds, with their pretty white wings, early this morning and carried them off for a frolic—they are so fond of flying!"

And just then Joe-Boy looked up high, and what

*BABY DANDELION*

do you suppose he saw sailing above his head? One of  
Baby Dandelion's white-winged seeds!

## BUSY-WINGS

It was after the new Queen came out and began to keep house in the hive, that Busy-Wings was hatched. He was the dearest little bee that I ever knew, and just as soon as he came out of his little wax room and found that he was a grown up bee with wings, he ran up to the nurse and said, "Do tell me something to do! I want to work."

The nurse stroked his wings and gave him some bee bread to eat, and then she said: "I believe I shall have to name you Busy-Wings, because you love to work, and wanted something to do just the minute you got out of your cradle. What kind of work would you like to do?—nurse the babies or clean up or fan in fresh air or be a soldier to take care of the Queen, or gather nectar for honey and wax or pollen dust for the bee bread?"

And Busy-Wings thought a minute and then he said—you guess what he said—he said, "I would rather go out among the flowers and gather nectar and pollen to make bee bread for the babies."

"Very well," said the nurse, "you may begin right now! Slip through that little outside door there and you will be in the yard. You will find some tiny baskets on your hind legs to put the pollen dust in, and the little

## BUSY-WINGS

pocket by your throat is for the nectar juice. Be sure you bring the things right to me, when you come in. I need some very fresh for the youngest baby; hurry, and be sure to be kind to the flowers, and also carry some pollen dust for them, from flower to flower.”

“All right,” said little Busy-Wings, and then he slipped through the door of the hive, very happy because he was going away to work. When he first got outside, though, he almost forgot to work, he was so busy looking at things, for you must remember he had never seen the beautiful outside world before, and as he looked he kept saying over and over:

“Oh, how pretty,  
Pretty, pretty, pretty  
Oh, how pretty  
Everything is!”

Then he smelled something very sweet, and he saw many bright colors, and Busy-Wings said, “Those must be the flowers the nurse told me about, and I will get to work.”

So he bobbed into the red nasturtium and got some nectar juice and then he bobbed into a pink phlox and got some nectar, and then he bobbed to the clover bed and got some more nectar, and he bobbed to the morning-glories and got pollen dust, and then he bobbed to the petunias and got some pollen dust, and he got some more from the daisies. Then when he had filled his baskets quite full of pollen dust and had filled his pocket full of nectar juice, he flew quickly

## LITTLE FOLKS' LAND

back to the hive and carried it to the nurse, as she had told him.

“Let me see,” said the nurse, “pocket and baskets all full! Why, you have been a real busy little bee. But let me taste it before I give it to the babies, to be sure it is all right.” And when she had tasted some—a wee little bit—right on the very end of her tongue, why, she made a most dreadful face, and screwed up her mouth and said, “Perfectly h-o-r-r-i-d! My dear, it tastes like all kinds of flowers mixed up together! Where did you get it? I could never give this to the babies!”

And Busy-Wings said, “Why, I got it out of the flowers. I went to the nasturtiums and to the phlox and to the daisies and to the clover, and——”

And then the nurse threw back her head and laughed and laughed; she could not help it, and she said, “Why, of course, the honey tastes bitter, my dear! It was all my fault, though, and I should have told you to go only to one kind of flower each trip—if you go to the clover blossoms first, don’t gather nectar juice from any other flowers but *clovers*, until you come to the hive and empty your sack. Then the next trip you may choose some other flower.”

“Oh, yes,” said Busy-Wings, nodding his head, “I know now. Of course, it isn’t best to mix up so many kinds of nectar; I’ll try again.”

“That is the way,” said the nurse, “go empty that out in the yard, and bring me some more for the babies, and when you come back we will see if I can guess where you got it.”

## BUSY-WINGS

Busy-Wings thought that would be great fun; he thought he could fool the nurse, and she couldn't tell *where* he got his nectar juice, so he flew quickly away and emptied his pocket and baskets. He was just wondering which flower to go to, when he saw little Rosy Clover-Blossom-Boy, and his face looked so fresh and clean, Busy-Wings flew right straight down to him, and got some of the sweetest nectar juice, and then he flew around to the other clovers on the bed, and filled his pocket right full, and hurried back to the nurse.

“Now,” said Busy-Wings, “guess where I got it?”

“All right,” laughed the nurse; “wait until I taste it.” So she took some on the end of her tongue and tasted and tasted, and then she said, “Perfect-ly d-e-l-i-c-i-o-u-s! It came from the clover blossoms! Just the very thing for the babies!”

Then Busy-Wings laughed and laughed—he was so surprised that the nurse could tell where he had gotten it, and he was so very glad, too, that it was perfectly delicious. Then the nurse helped him empty his pocket and baskets, and Busy-Wings watched while she mixed honey and pollen dust, and made the bee-bread for the babies.

“Now, I think I shall go and get another kind,” said Busy-Wings; “I want to see if you can guess again.”

So he did; and he chose the petunias that trip, and Joe-Boy saw him flitting from one petunia to another, singing,

*LITTLE FOLKS' LAND*

“Oh, how pretty,  
Pretty, pretty, pretty,  
Oh, how pretty,  
Everything is!”

## BRIGHT-EYES

WHEN Busy-Wings flew out of the hive to go to work one morning, he saw a long, long string of tiny red ants, marching in a row, one behind the other. There were mother ants and father ants and nurse ants and soldier ants and other working ants.

“Where are you going, in such a long line?” asked Busy-Wings.

“We are hunting a new home,” said one of the soldier ants. “We had a beautiful home out in the woods, but yesterday a little boy poured a whole dipperful of water right down our front door, and it ran all over the halls and into the pantry and nursery and ruined our eggs and drowned our babies, and we just got out in time to save our lives.”

“My, my, my,” said Busy-Wings, “I didn’t know little boys ever did that kind of thing—I am very sure the little boys in this yard wouldn’t. Why don’t you dig your home over there by the edge of the clover bed? But I hope you will never crawl up into our hive, because you are so little you might get mixed up in our honey.”

“Oh, we wouldn’t do that,” said the ants. “So we

## *LITTLE FOLKS' LAND*

will go to work right now, and make our home before it rains—we ants do not like to get wet.”

Then the little ants began to dig a tiny, round hole in the ground; and one little ant dug out a grain of sand, and another little ant dug out a grain of sand, and another little ant dug out a grain of sand, and another little ant dug out a grain of sand, and another little ant dug out a grain of sand, and another little ant dug out a grain of sand, and another little ant dug out a grain of sand, and another little ant dug out a grain of sand! And so they worked all day long, and when night came they had a very nice little round door, that led into a narrow winding hall. The next morning Busy-Wings saw them hard at work again, digging out little grains of sand, and they told him they were making the pantry, then, to store away cake crumbs and biscuit crumbs and nut crumbs and grains of sugar, and other nice things to eat during the cold winter time when the frost and snow were on the ground.

“Well, sir!” said Busy-Wings, “that is just the way the bees do, because there are no flowers in the winter time to give us nectar juice for our honey.”

When the ants finished their pantry, then they began digging out bed-rooms for the big ants to sleep in, and last of all, they dug out a nice big room for the nursery, where the baby ants were to stay, and then they told Busy-Wings they were ready to begin housekeeping.

“Why, why,” said Busy-Wings, “your little round door is so very small, I’m afraid I can never come down to see your babies, because I couldn’t squeeze through such a tiny door, you know.”

## *BRIGHT-EYES*

“Our door is plenty large enough for little people like us,” said the ants; “but when you come to see us, just buzz at the door and we will hear and come out.”

Now in Busy-Wings’ house there was only one Queen Mother to lay eggs, you know, but in the ants’ home there were many, many little mothers to lay eggs, and many, many little ant babies that hatched out of the eggs—so many babies, that the red ants said, “We shall have to send off and get us some little black servants to help us take care of our babies and home.”

So ten of the big, red soldier ants marched away, and when they came back each one brought a little black baby ant, and then they went back and brought some more until they had a great many; and the other red ants fed the little black babies every day, until they were grown up, and able to go out and help them gather crumbs, and clean up and nurse the babies and keep house, and milk the cows—but I must tell you about that later. One of the little black servants was named Bright-Eyes—the dearest little black ant that ever was—and the red ants loved her very much, because she was such a bright, good little servant, and always tried to do her best. It was Bright-Eyes who always watched closely for the tiny eggs as soon as the red ant mothers laid them; and quickly picking up the wee, wee, wee eggs she would carry them to the nursery and watch over them until the little ant babies hatched out. Then she and the other nurses would carry the babies up through the little round door, to get the sunshine and fresh air—which made them grow so fast. But nursing the babies was not all that Bright-Eyes did—that was only one thing—all

## *LITTLE FOLKS' LAND*

day long she was kept busy waiting on the red ants, and they would say, "Bright-Eyes, won't you do this?" and "Bright-Eyes, won't you do that?" and "Bright-Eyes, won't you do the other thing?" until her busy feet were kept going from morning until night. Sometimes she would be out all day long hunting something good for the red ants to eat, and if she found a crumb of cake that some little child had dropped, why, she did not eat it herself, but tugged and tugged and tugged, until she got it through the little round door, and down the long winding halls, and to the red ants' pantry, where she put it away for their dinner. One day while Bright-Eyes was out she found a piece of candy—quite a big piece—too large for Bright-Eyes to carry in by herself, and what do you suppose she did? She hurried home and told the red ants about it, and they came out to see—another and another and another—and they all gathered round the piece of candy and broke it into many tiny little pieces, and then Bright-Eyes took a piece ever so much bigger than she was, and each one of the other ants took up a piece, and away they carried it off to their pantry, to keep for the winter time. Now, don't you think Bright-Eyes was a dear little servant?

## THE ANTS' BRIDGE

BRIGHT-EYES thought a great deal about the family of black ants Busy-Wings had told her about; she wondered and wondered about them and wished she might go and see them.

“These red ants are kind to me,” said Bright-Eyes to herself, “but I would rather live with black ants, because I am a black ant. I believe, like Busy-Wings, that red ants ought to live together, and black ants ought to live together—maybe those very black ants he told me about are my own brothers and sisters, and maybe mother is there, too. I should like very much to see them, if they are.”

But, of course, Bright-Eyes knew that the red ants would not like to have her go. They had sent their red soldier ants to get her when she was a tiny baby—just to be their little black servant—and they had never let her go away.

“Well,” said Bright-Eyes, “I must not worry about it, but keep on being the very best little servant that I know how to be, and things will come out all right—at least I shall be happy, because I try to do my best.”

Early the next morning Bright-Eyes' mistress called

## THE ANTS' BRIDGE

her and said, "I should like the nurses to take the babies in the woods today. The sun is so warm and bright it will do them good, so go right away and spend the day—unless it gets cloudy; then hurry home, because I do not want the babies to get wet, you know."

Then Bright-Eyes told the other nurses, and they bathed and fed the babies well, and hurried through the little round door out into the sunshine; and if you had been watching that day, why, you most surely would have seen Bright-Eyes carrying a big fat ant baby—almost as large as she was. Sometimes she would put the baby down on the ground and rest; but she never left it even for a minute,—because it would never do to let anything happen to the red ant's baby. The nurses went into the woods, a long way from the little round door, and crawled on and on and on and on. They even crawled over a little gully, with white sand on the bottom, and rested there and ate their lunch, and then crawled up the little ridge and farther and farther into the woods. They were having a fine time, but all at once it got very cloudy, and Bright-Eyes said to the other nurses, "Hurry! hurry! it is going to rain, and we must get the babies home before they get wet!"

But though the nurses hurried their very best, the merry raindrops came pattering down, and they had to hide under a log to keep the babies dry. It did not rain very long, though, and as soon as the sun came out each little nurse picked up her baby and away they went, trying to get home before another shower. By and by they came to the very same little gully, that they had

## LITTLE FOLKS' LAND

passed in the early morning; but now, instead of the pretty white sand, the bottom was covered with water.

“Dear me,” said the little nurses, “what shall we do now, and how shall we ever get across this water with the babies! We shall be sure to fall in if we try.”

What would *you* do, if you came to a stream of water and wanted to get across?

Well, I'll tell you what Bright-Eyes did. The other nurses said, “We can't get across this big water, and we are not going to try! We haven't any boat!”

“Oh, yes,” said Bright-Eyes, “let us try to get across anyway. We haven't any little boat, it is true, but maybe we can make a bridge that will reach across the water. And just as we moved the big nut away from our little round door, by working all together, so we can make a bridge across the water. One of us will stay with the babies and watch them, and the rest of us must catch hands and stretch out across the water until we reach the other side. None of us can fall, because we will all be holding hands. That will make the finest kind of an ant bridge, and then the nurse who has been left on this side can walk across the bridge and bring the babies.”

Well, all of the nurses said they were willing to catch hands and help make the bridge, but not one of them would stay behind and take care of the babies, and then bring them safely across the bridge—all of them said they were afraid to do that, because they might tumble in the water, and let the babies fall, too.

There was one little ant that said she would do it

## THE ANTS' BRIDGE

whether she was afraid or not, because the night was coming, and the red ants would be worried about their babies. You know the name of that brave little ant without my telling you. So all the other nurses put their babies down by Bright-Eyes, and then they all caught hands and reached out across the water, floating about until the end ant caught on a little blade of grass on the other side—she held tightly to it and the bridge was all ready.

“Hold tight!” said Bright-Eyes, “here I come with my mistress’ baby!” So she crawled across so carefully, and she didn’t fall either. And then she went back and brought over another baby; and then she went back again and brought over another baby—and another, and another, and another, until she had brought every baby safely across. Then she helped pull the nurses over, and everybody picked up a baby and away they went. And Mrs. Red-Ant was standing at the little round door waiting for them when they got home, and when she saw Bright-Eyes and the other nurses and heard about the little bridge they had made, why, she was very proud indeed, and said they were very, very smart little servants.

*What do you think about it?*