

FRECKLES

By Gene Stratton-Porter

COPYRIGHT, 1904, BY DOUBLEDAY, PAGE & CO.

SYNOPSIS.

Freckles, a homeless boy, is hired by Boss McLean to guard the expensive timber in the Limberlost from timber thieves.

Freckles does his work faithfully, makes friends with the birds and yearns to know more about nature. He lives with Mr. and Mrs. Duncan.

He resolves to get books and educate himself. He becomes interested in a huge pile of vultures and calls his bird friends his "chickens."

Some of the trees he is guarding are worth \$1,000 each. Freckles' books arrive. He receives a call from Wessner.

Wessner attempts to bribe Freckles to betray his trust, and Freckles whips him. McLean overhears them and witnesses the fight.

Freckles' honesty saves a precious tree. He finds the nest of the vultures and is visited by a beautiful young girl.

She calls Freckles McLean's son. Freckles calls her "the angel" and helps the Bird Woman in taking photographs. McLean promises to adopt Freckles.

Freckles and the angel become very friendly. Assisted by the Bird Woman, they drive Wessner and Black Jack, timber thieves, from the Limberlost.

McLean fears more trouble, but Freckles insists upon being the sole guard of the timber. Freckles calls upon the angel's father.

The angel receives him as her equal, and her father is kind. Mrs. Duncan has exciting adventures in the Limberlost.

The Bird Woman and the angel again visit Freckles, and Freckles falls in love with the angel. The angel kisses him.

Freckles is bound and gagged by Black Jack's gang, and the timber thieves start felling a very valuable tree.

(Continued from last week.)

CHAPTER XIV.

CAPTURED BY BLACK JACK. As they talked the angel was busy packing a box of sandwiches, cake, fruit and flowers.

She gave him a last frosty glass, thanked him repeatedly for bringing news of new material, and then Freckles went out into the night.

He rode for the Limberlost with his eyes on the stars. The one thing Freckles knew that he could do was to sing.

The Duncan heard him coming a mile up the corduroy and could not believe their senses. Freckles unfastened the box from his belt and gave Mrs. Duncan and the children all the eatables it contained.

except one big piece of cake that he carried to the sweet loving Duncan. He put the flowers back in the box and set it up among his books.

He did not say anything, but they understood it was not to be touched. Then Freckles started for the swamp.

As he rode he sang, and as he sang he worshipped, but the god he tried to glorify was a dim and far-away mystery. The angel was warm flesh and blood.

With the near approach of dawn Freckles tuned his last note. Worned almost to falling, he turned from the trail into the path leading to the cabin for a few hours' rest.

As Freckles left the trail from the swale near the south entrance four large, muscular men rose up and swiftly and carefully entered the swamp by the wagon road.

Two of them carried a big saw, the third coils of rope and wire, and all were heavily armed. They left one man on guard at the entrance. The other three made their way through the darkness and soon were at Freckles' room.

He had left the swamp on his wheel from the west trail. They counted on his returning on the wheel and circling the east line before he came there.

A little below the west entrance to Freckles' room Black Jack stepped into the swale and, binding a wire tight about a scrub oak, carried it to a tree in the swamp. Then he obliterated all signs of his work and arranged the grass over the wire until it was so completely covered that only minute examination would reveal it.

They entered Freckles' room with coarse oaths and jests. In a few moments his specimen case with its precious contents was rolled back into the swamp and the saw was eating into one of the finest trees of the Limberlost.

As soon as Freckles was well down the east line the watch was posted below the room on the west to report his coming. It was but a few moments before the signal came. Then the saw stopped, and the rope was brought out and uncoiled near a sapling. Wessner and Black Jack crowded to the very edge of the swamp a little above the wire and crouched, waiting.

They heard Freckles before they saw him. He came clipping down the line at a good pace, and as he rode he was singing softly:

"Oh, do you love— Oh, say you love!"

He got no further. The sharply driven wheel struck the tense wire and bounded back. Freckles shot over the handle bar and coasted down the trail on his chest. As he struck Black

Jack and Wessner were upon him.



BLACK JACK STOPPED HIM WITH AN OATH.

Wessner clapped an old hat over Freckles' mouth, while Black Jack twisted his arms back of him, and they rushed him into his room.

Almost before he realized that anything had happened he was trussed up to a tree and securely gagged.

Then three of the men resumed work on the tree. The other followed the path Freckles had worn to Little Chicken's tree, and presently he reported that the wires were down and two teams with the loading apparatus coming to take out the timber.

All the time the saw was slowly eating, eating into the big tree.

Wessner went out to the trail and removed the wire. Then he stood in front of Freckles and laughed in devilish hate. Freckles found himself looking fear in the face and marveled that he was not afraid. Four to one! The tree halfway eaten through, the wagons coming up the inside road, he bound and gagged! The men with Black Jack and Wessner had belonged to McLean's gang when last he had heard of them, but who those coming with the wagons might be he could not guess.

If they secured that tree McLean lost its value, lost his wager and lost his faith in him. The words of the angel hammered in his ears. "Oh, Freckles, do watch closely!"

And the saw ate on. When the tree was down and loaded what would they do? Pull out and leave him there to report them? It was not to be hoped for. The place had always been lawless. It could mean but one thing.

A mist swept before his eyes, and his head swam. Was it only last night that he had worshipped the angel in a delirium of happiness? And now what? Wessner, released from a turn at the saw, walked over to the flower bed and, tearing up a handful of rare ferns by the roots, started toward Freckles. His intention was obvious. Black Jack stopped him with an oath.

"You see here, Dutchy," he bawled, "mebbe you think you'll wash his face with that, but you won't. A contract's a contract. We agreed to take out these trees and leave him for you to dispose of whatever way you please, provided you shut him up eternally on this deal. But I'll not see a tied man tormented by a fellow that he can lick up the ground with, loose, and that's flat. It raises my gorge to think what he'll get when we're gone, but you needn't think you're free to begin before. Don't you lay a hand on him while I'm here! What do you say, boys?"

"I say yes," growled one of McLean's latest deserters. "What's more, we're a pack of fools to risk the dirty work of silencing him. I don't mind lifting the trees we came for, but I'm cursed if I want blood on my hands."

"Well, you ain't going to get it," belated Jack. "You fellows only contracted to help me get out my marked trees. He belongs to Wessner, and it ain't our deal what happens to him. It's all planned safe and sure. As for killing that buck—come to think of it, killing is what he needs. He's away to good for this world of woe anyhow. His dropping out won't be the only secret the old Limberlost has never told. It's too dead easy to make it look like he helped take the timber and then cut. Why, he's played right into our hands. He was here at the swamp all last night and back again in an hour or so. When we get our plan worked out even old fool Duncan won't lift a finger to look for his carcass."

"You just bet," said Wessner. "I owe him all he'll get. But I'll pay!" he snarled at Freckles.

So it was killing them. They were not only after this one tree, but many, and with his body it was their plan to kill his honor. To brand him a thief, like them, before the angel, the Bird Woman, the dear boss and the Duncans! Freckles' body sagged against the ropes in sick despair.

There was no hope of McLean's coming. They had chosen a day when they knew he had a big contract at the south camp. The boss could not possibly come before tomorrow, and there would be no tomorrow for him. Duncan was on his way to the south camp, and the Bird Woman had said she would come as soon as she could. After the fatigue of the party it was useless to expect her and the angel today, and God save them from coming!

The sweat broke out on Freckles' forehead. He tugged at the ropes whenever he felt that he dared, but they were passed about the tree and his body several times and knotted on his chest. He resolved that he would bear in mind what he had once heard the Bird Woman say. He would go out bravely. Never would he let them see if he grew afraid. After all, what did it matter what they did to his body if by some scheme of the devil they could compass his disgrace?

Then hope suddenly rose high in Freckles' breast. They could not do that. The angel would not believe. Neither would McLean. He would keep up his courage. Kill him they could; dishonor him they could not.

Yet, summon all the fortitude he might, that saw eating into the tree rasped his nerves worse and worse. With whirling brain he gazed off into the Limberlost, searching for something, he knew not what, and in blank horror found his eyes fastened on the angel. She was quite a distance away, but he could see her white lips and wide, angry eyes.

Last week he had taken her and the Bird Woman across the swamp over the path he followed to going in from his room to the chicken tree. He had told them last night that the butterfly tree was on the line close to this path. In figuring on their not coming that day he failed to reckon with the enthusiasm of the Bird Woman. They must be there for the study, and the angel had risked crossing the swamp in search of him. Or was there something in his room they needed? The blood surged in his ears like the roar of the Limberlost in the wrath of a storm.

He looked again, and it had been a dream. She was not there. Had she been? For his life Freckles could not tell whether he had really seen the angel or whether his strained senses had played him the most cruel trick of all. Or was it not the kindest? Now he could die with the vision of her lovely face fresh with him.

"Thank you for that, O God!" whispered Freckles. "'Twas more than kind of you, and I don't s'pose I ought to be wanting anything more, but if you can, oh, I wish I could know before this ends if 'twas me mother"—Freckles could not even whisper the words, for he hesitated a second and ended—"if 'twas me mother did it!"

"Freckles! Freckles! Oh, Freckles!" the voice of the angel came calling. Freckles swayed forward and wrenched at the rope until it cut deeply into his body.

Black Jack whipped out a revolver and snatched the gag from Freckles' mouth.

"Say quick, what's that, or it's up with you right now and whoever that is with you!"

"It's the girl the Bird Woman takes about with her," whispered Freckles through dry, swollen lips.

"They ain't due here for five days yet," said Wessner. "We got on to that last week."

"Yes," said Freckles, "but I found a tree covered with butterflies and things along the east line yesterday that I thought the Bird Woman would want extra, and I went to town for her last night. She said she'd come soon, but she didn't say when. I take care of the girl while the Bird Woman works. Untie me quick until she is gone. I'll try to send her back, and then you can go on with your dirty work."

"He ain't lying," volunteered Wessner. "I saw that tree covered with butterflies and him watching around it when we were spying on him yesterday."

"No, he leaves lying to your sort," snapped Black Jack as he undid the rope and pitched it across the room. "Remember that you're covered every move you make, my buck," he cautioned.

"Freckles! Freckles!" came the angel's impatient voice, nearer and nearer.

"I must be answering," said Freckles, and Jack nodded. "Right here!" he called, and to the men: "You go on with your work, and remember one thing yourselves. The work of the Bird Woman is known all over the world. This girl's father is a rich man, and she is all he has. If you offer hurt of any kind to either of them this world has no place far enough away nor dark enough for you to be hiding in."

"Freckles, where are you?" demanded the angel.

Soul sick with fear for her, Freckles went toward her and parted the bushes that she might enter. She came through without apparently giving him a glance, and the first words she said were: "Why have the gang come so soon? I didn't know you expected them for three weeks yet. Or is this some special tree that Mr. McLean needs to fill an order right now?"

Freckles hesitated. Would a man dare lie to save himself? No. But to save the angel—surely that was different. He opened his lips, but the angel was capable of saving herself. She walked in among them, exactly as if she had been raised in a lumber camp and never waited for an answer.

"Why, your specimen case!" she cried. "Look! Haven't you noticed that it's tipped over? Set it straight quickly!"

A couple of men stepped out and carefully righted the case.

"There's that's better," she said. "Freckles, I'm surprised at your being so careless. It would be a shame to break those lovely butterflies for one old tree. Is that a valuable tree? Why didn't you tell us last night you were going to take a tree out this morning? Oh, say, did you put your case there to protect that tree from that stealing old Black Jack and his gang? I bet you did! Well, if that wasn't bright! What kind of a trap is it?"

"It's a golden oak," said Freckles. "Like those they make dining tables and sideboards out of?"

"Yes."

"My, how interesting!" she cried. "I don't know a thing about timber, but my father wants me to learn about just everything I can. I am going to ask him to let me come here and watch you until I know enough to boss a gang myself. Do you like to cat trees, gentlemen?" she asked of the men with angelic sweetness.

Some of them looked foolish and some grinned, but one managed to say that they did. Then the angel's eyes turned full on Black Jack, and she gave the most beautiful little start of astonishment.

"Oh, I almost thought that you were a ghost!" she cried. "But I see now that you are really and truly. Were you ever in Colorado?"

"No," said Jack.

(Continued next week.)

The Modern "Seven Wonders of the World."

According to a vote recently taken by a magazine, the greatest scientists accord to the wireless the enviable position of being first of the modern seven wonders of the world. Following it come the telephone, the aeroplane, radium, antiseptics and antitoxin, spectrum analysis and the X-ray.

This order was evolved from nearly seven hundred replies from as many noted men of science in various countries. Wireless received 244 votes as against 185 for the telephone, its nearest rival. The X-ray received 111, although 100 were cast for the Panama Canal.

This list is interesting when compared with that made up by antiquaries, the Baedeker of Sidon, some two centuries before Christ.

He heads his selection of wonders of the world he knew with the Pyramids. Following these comes the famous Pharos lighthouse at the entrance of Alexandria harbor, the hanging gardens of Babylon, the statue of Jupiter by Phidias, the mausoleum of Artemisia and the Colossus of Rhodes.

Of the seven wonders of the modern world, all are of incalculable benefit to man; all mark great steps forward in his march of triumph.

A comparison with the ancient list is an eloquent demonstration that the advance of the race has been along the lines of the greatest good for the greatest number. Luxury was the password of the ancients; usefulness that of the present.—New York American.

Unhealthy Exercise.

Almost everybody rides the wheel today, and there is a certain ambition in most bicyclists to show a good record of "run," both men and women, to aspire to records of "centuries." It is always doubtful whether so protracted a run as a century run is not too great a strain upon the body. But even ordinary runs may be an injury rather than a benefit if the physical condition is weak. Exercise benefits only when the condition is healthy. When there is weakness, especially stomach weakness, the exercise only increases the ailment. Many bicyclists have proven this, and recall violent nausea, loss of appetite, headache and other physical results of an extra long run.

Dr. Pierce's Golden Medical Discovery strengthens the weak stomach. It does more, it increases the blood supply and so increases the vital force of the body. It makes the body muscular, builds it up with sound flesh and not with flabby fat. It is not a whiskey medicine and contains no narcotics. It is the ideal medicine for the athlete, who needs physical strength and development.

—Subscribe for the WATCHMAN.

Medical.

They Come Together

BACKACHE AND KIDNEYACHE ARE USUALLY INSEPARABLE. SOME BELLEFONTE PEOPLE ARE LEARNING HOW TO GET RID OF BOTH.

Does your back ever ache? Feel lame, weak—so sore you can hardly work? Are you making the common mistake—waiting for it to pass away? To cure the backache, you must cure the kidneys. The pain may cease, but is sure to return. You may feel tired and worn-out all the time. Urinary troubles may annoy you, headaches and dizziness. Make up your mind your kidneys need attention. Begin taking Doan's Kidney Pills at once. Doan's have strengthened thousands of sick, weakened kidneys. Have driven out kidney backaches for good. No Bellefonte reader can doubt the following statement. It's from a resident of this locality.

Mrs. James Rine, 259 W. High St., Bellefonte, Pa., says: "Some years ago I procured Doan's Kidney Pills at Green's Pharmacy Co. and their use cured me of kidney complaint and backache that had caused me no end of suffering. At that time I told of my experience in a public statement and I now take pleasure in confirming that testimony. The relief Doan's Kidney Pills gave me has been permanent."

For sale by all dealers. Price 50 cents. Foster-Milburn Co., Buffalo, New York, sole agents for the United States. Remember the name—Doan's—and take no other.

Medical.

It's A Cure That's Sure FOR RHEUMATISM, GOUT, SCIATICA, AND LUMBAGO

We have cured thousands with JONES BREAK-UP AND IT WILL CURE YOU Always in stock at SIDNEY KRUMRINE, Druggist, Bellefonte, Pa. 57-25-3m.

Dry Goods, Etc.

LYON & COMPANY.

La Vogue Fashions

We take pleasure in announcing to the Ladies of Centre county that we are the sole agents of the well-known La Vogue

COATS AND COAT SUITS.

It will also prove quite interesting to all women who are particular in the matter of selecting their garments.



You will find in La Vogue not only pleasing, stylish models of fashionable trend, but quality, wear-giving material, neatly and exactly made by expert tailors. In fact the best in clothes Linings and Trimming effects await you in a La Vogue garment. The new fall styles in La Vogue Women's and Misses' Suits and Coats are ready for your inspection.

Lyon & Co. 57-34-1y Bellefonte

Shoes.

Shoes.

Yeager's Shoe Store

Fitzezy

The Ladies' Shoe that Cures Corns

Sold only at

Yeager's Shoe Store,

Bush Arcade Building, BELLEFONTE, PA.