

## FRECKLES

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Porter

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### 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 learns 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 pair of vultures and calls his bird friends "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 tells Freckles McLean's son. Freckles calls him "Dad" 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 a very valuable tree.

Wessner is to kill Freckles after the tree is stolen. The angel makes a daring effort to save Freckles and the tree.

[Continued from last week.]  
CHAPTER XVI.  
FRECKLES RELEASED.

**T**HE boss rode neck and neck with the angel. He glanced back and saw that Duncan was near. There was something terrifying in the look of the big man and the way he sat his beast and rode. It would be a sad day for the man on whom Duncan's wrath broke. There were four others close behind him and the pike filling up with the rest of the gang.

The angel turned into the trail to the west, and the men bunched and followed her. When she reached the entrance to Freckles' room there were four men with her and two more very close behind. She slid from the horse and, snatching the little revolver from her breast, darted for the bushes. McLean caught them back and, with drawn weapon, pressed up beside her. There they stopped in astonishment.

The Bird Woman blocked the entrance. Over a small limb lay her revolver, and it was trained at short range on Black Jack and Wessner, who stood with their hands above their heads.

Freckles, with blood streaming down his face from an ugly cut in his temple, was gagged and bound to the tree again, and the rest of the men were gone. Black Jack was raving like a maniac, and when they looked closer it was only the left arm that he raised. His right, with the hand shattered, hung helpless, and his revolver lay at Freckles' feet. Wessner's weapon was still in his belt, and beside him lay Freckles' club.

Freckles' face was of stony whiteness, with colorless lips, but in his eyes was the strength of undying courage. McLean pushed past the Bird Woman, crying, "Hold steady on them for just one minute more!"

He snatched the revolver from Wessner's belt and stooped for Jack's.

At that instant the angel rushed in. She tore the gag from Freckles, and, seizing the rope knotted on his chest, she tugged at it desperately. Under her fingers it gave way, and she hurried to McLean. The men were crowding in, and Duncan seized Wessner. As the angel saw Freckles stand out free she reached her arms to him and pitched forward. A fearful oath burst from the lips of Black Jack. To have saved his life Freckles could not have avoided the glance of triumph he gave Jack as he folded his angel in his arms and stretched her on the mosses.

As McLean rose from binding Wessner there was a cry that Jack was escaping. He was already well into the swamp, working for its densest part. Every man that could be spared plunged after him. Other members of the gang arriving, they were sent to follow the tracks of the wagons.

Watchers patrolled the line and roads through the swamp all that night with lighted torches, and the next day McLean headed as thorough a search as he felt could be made of one side, while Duncan covered the other, but Black Jack could not be found. Spies were set about his home in Wildcat hollow to ascertain if he reached there or aid was sent in any direction to him, but it was soon clear that his relatives were ignorant of his whereabouts and themselves searching for him.

Great is the elasticity of youth. A hot bath and a sound night's sleep renewed Freckles' strength. Freckles was on the trail early the next morning. Besides a crowd of people anxious to witness Jack's capture, he found four stalwart guards, one at each turn. In his heart he was compelled to admit that he was glad to have them there.

Near noon McLean turned his party over to John Duncan's and, taking Freckles, drove to town to see how it fared with the angel. McLean visited a greenhouse and bought an armload of fine products, but Freckles would have none of them. He would carry his message in a glowing mass of the Limberlost's first goldenrod.

The angel was in no way seriously injured. She reached both hands to McLean. "What if one old tree is gone? You don't care, sir? You feel that Freckles has kept his trust as nobody ever did before, don't you? You won't forget all those long first days of fright that you told us of, the fearful cold of winter, the rain, heat and loneliness and the brave days, and, lately, nights, too, and let him feel that his trust is broken?"

"Oh, Mr. McLean," she begged, "say something to him! Do something to make him feel that it isn't for nothing he has watched and suffered it out with that old Limberlost. Make him see how great and fine it is and how far, far better he has done than you or any of us expected! What's one old tree anyway?" she burst out passionately.

"I was thinking before you came. Those two other men were rank cowards. They were scared for their lives. If they were the drivers I wary you gloves against gloves they never took those logs out to the pike. My coming upset them. Before you had any more you go look and see if they didn't run out of courage the moment they left Wessner and Black Jack and dump that timber and go on the run. I don't believe they even had the grit to drive out with it in daylight. Go see if they didn't figure on going out the way we did the other morning, and you'll find the logs before you strike the road. They never risked taking them into the open when they go away and had time to think. Of course they didn't."

"And, then, another thing. You haven't lost your wager! It will never be claimed, because you made it with a stout, dark, red faced man that drives a bay and a gray. He was right back of you. Mr. McLean, when I came up to you yesterday. He went deathly white and shook on his feet when he saw those men would likely be caught. Some one of them was something to him, and you can just spot him for one of the men at the bottom of your troubles and urging those other younger fellows on to steal from you. I suppose he'd promised to divide. You settle with him, and that business will stop."

She turned to Freckles. "And you be the happiest man alive, because you have kept your trust. Go look where I tell you and you'll find the logs. I can just see about where they are. When they go up that steep little hill into the next woods after the cornfield why they could unloose the chains and the logs would roll off the wagons themselves. Now, you go see; and, Mr. McLean, you do feel that Freckles has been brave and faithful? You won't love him any the less even if you don't find the logs?"

The angel's nerve gave way and she burst into tears. Freckles couldn't bear it. He fairly ran from the room with the tears streaming from his own eyes. But McLean took the angel out of the Bird Woman's arms and kissed her brave little face.

As they drove back to the swamp McLean so earnestly seconded all that the angel had said that he soon had the boy feeling much better.

"Freckles, your angel has a spice of the devil in her, but she's superb. You needn't spend any time questioning or bewailing anything she does. Just worship blindly, my boy. By heaven, she's sense, courage and beauty for half dozen girls!" said McLean.

"It's altogether right you are, sir," affirmed Freckles heartily. After a little he added. "There's no question but the series is over now."

"Don't think it," answered McLean. "The Bird Woman is working for success, and success along any line is not won by being scared out. She will be back on the usual day, and ten to one the angel will be with her. They are made of pretty stern stuff, and they don't scare worth a cent. You may do your usual walking, but those four guards are there to stay. They are under your orders absolutely. I have listened to your pride too long. You are too precious to me to run any more risks."

"I am sorry to have anything spoil the series," said Freckles, "and I'd love them to be coming, the angel especially, but it can't be. You'll have to tell them so. You see, Jack would have been ready to stake his life she meant what she said and did to him. When the teams pulled out, Wessner seized me, and he and Jack went to quarreling over whether they should finish them or take me on to the next tree they were for fellings. Wessner wanted to get at me right then, and Jack said he shouldn't be touching me till the last tree was out and all the rest of them gone. They tied me up again. To keep me courage up I twits Wessner about having to tie me and needing another man to help handle me. I told him what I'd do to him if I was free, and he grabs up me own club and lays open me head with it. When the blood came streaming, it set Jack raving, and he cursed Wessner for a coward and a softy. Then Wessner turned on Jack and gives it to him for letting the angel make a fool of him.

[Continued next week.]

Re-action is the thing to fear in the use of the common cathartic medicines. One of the features of Dr. Pierce's Pleasant Pellets is that they do not re-action upon the system.

Every dose leaves the system stronger, and of weaker, and tends to establish a healthy regularity which can entirely dispense with medicine.

The "Pellets" are very small in size and small in the dose prescribed. One produces a laxative, two a cathartic effect.

For high class Job Work come to the WATCHMAN Office.

The blow which knocked out Corbett was a revelation to the prize fighters. From the earliest days of the ring the knock-out blow was aimed for the jaw, the temple or the jugular vein. Stomach punches were thrown in to worry and weary the fighter, but if a scientific man had told one of the old fighters that the most vulnerable spot was the region of the stomach, he'd have laughed at him for an ignoramus. Dr. Pierce is bringing home to the public a parallel fact; that the stomach is the most vulnerable organ out of the prize ring as well as in it. We protect our heads, throats, feet and lungs, but the stomach we are utterly indifferent to, until disease finds the solar plexus and knocks us out. Make your stomach sound and strong by the use of Dr. Pierce's Golden Medical Discovery, and you protect yourself in your most vulnerable spot. "Golden Medical Discovery" cures "weak stomach," indigestion, and other diseases of the organs of digestion. It is a temperance medicine, entirely free from alcohol and narcotics.

### Fishing for Fish.

Many people there are who delight in just fishing for fish. Such an one was John Quincy Adams. The story was told by one of his clients, whose case was to be tried on a certain morning, that he could not get his counsel to leave his fishing-boat except long enough to write a note to the Judge which read: "Dear Judge: For the sake of old Izak Walton, please continue my case until Friday. The smelt are biting, and I can't leave." And the Judge having read the note announced to the Court: "Mr. Adams is detained on important business." —Christian Herald.

They entered the swamp, taking the route followed by the Bird Woman and the angel. They really did find the logs, almost where the angel had predicted they would be. McLean went on to the south camp and had an interview with Crowden that completely convinced him that the angel was correct there also. But he had no proof, so all he could do was to discharge the man, though his guilt was so apparent that he himself forced to withdraw the wager.

Then McLean sent for a pack of bloodhounds and put them on the trail of Black Jack. They clung to it, on and on, into the depths of the swamp, leading their followers through what had been considered impassable and impenetrable ways, and, finally, around near to the west entrance and into the swale. Here the dogs bellowed, raved and fell over each other in their excitement. They raced back and forth from swamp to swale, but follow the scent farther they would not, even though cruelly driven.

At last their owner attributed their actions to snakes, and, as they were very valuable dogs, gave over and placed one near Little Chicken's tree and the other at the carriage. He was firm about the angel's remaining in the carriage, which he did not offer to have unchained. He went with the Bird Woman for the picture, which was the easiest matter it had been at any time yet, for the simple reason that the placing of the guards and the unusual movement about the swamp had made Mr. and Mrs. Chicken nervous, and they had not carried Little Chicken the customary amount of food. Freckles, in the anxiety of the last few days, had neglected him.

When the Bird Woman proposed to look for other subjects about the line Freckles went so far as to tell her that Jack had made fearful threats against the angel. He implored her to take the angel home and keep her under unceasing guard until Jack was located. He let her go, and then blamed himself fiercely that he had done so.

"McLean," said Mrs. Duncan, "as the boss paused to greet her in passing the cabin, "do you know that Freckles hasn't been in bed the last five nights and all he's eaten in that many days you could pack into a pint cup?"

"Why, what does the boy mean?" demanded McLean. "There's no necessity for his being on guard with the watch I've set on the line. I had no idea he was staying down there."

"He's no' there," said Mrs. Duncan. "He goes somewhere else. He leaves on his wheel just after we're abed and rides in about cock crow or a little earlier, and he's looking like death and nothing short of it."

"But, where does he go?" asked McLean in astonishment.

"I'm no given to bearing tales out of school," said Sarah Duncan, "but in this case I'd tell ye if I could. What the trouble is I dinna ken. If it is not stopped he's in for dreadful sickness, and I thought ye could find out and help him. He's in sair trouble; that's all I know."

McLean sat brooding as he stroked Nellie's neck.

At last he said: "I suspect I understand. At any rate, I think I can find out. Thank you for telling me."

"Ye'll no need telling once ye clap your eyes on him," prophesied Mrs. Duncan. "His face is all a glist'ny yellow and he's peaked as a starving caged bird."

For sale by all dealers. Price 50 cents. Pleasant Pellets Co., 229 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 trouble. I had been bedridden and 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 the statement. The Doan's Kidney Pills gave me permanent relief."

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