



Children's Column

A Little Girl's Story.

To take her nap, I put my doll
In grandpa's garden chair.
The robins found her right away,
And tried to steal her hair.

They pulled so hard she sat right up,
And opened wide her eyes.
Those foolish things supposed 'twas me,
And hopped off in surprise.

And then it was I found their nest:
They were so droll, you see,
As up they flew, and down they flew,
Glancing sideways at me.

But now they know me very well,
And eat the food I bring.
'Cheer up! Cheer up! Cheer up! Cheer,
chee!'

Is what they say and sing.
—Christian Register.

The Woodchuck.

H. D. Reed and Verne Morton, in country life in America, tell an interesting and pictorial story of the woodchuck, or ground hog.

"Perhaps no wild mammal," says Mr. Reed, "is more familiar to country people than the woodchuck. Every hillside and meadow is dotted with the small piles of earth which mark the doorway to his home. The woodchuck prefers a hillside or a knoll in which to dig his hole, for here he can easily make the end of his den higher than the beginning, thus avoiding the danger of being drowned out."

"What could be more unlike in general appearance than a woodchuck and a squirrel? Yet they are cousins, both belonging to the same family of mammals. The trim body, sharp claws and agility of the squirrels make it possible for them to lead an arboreal life, jumping recklessly from branch to branch, while the flabby form and short legs of the woodchuck better adapt him for digging than for running or climbing."

"The nature of the food of the woodchuck is such that he cannot lay up stores as the chipmunks do, nor is it of such a kind that it can be obtained during the winter. The case of this creature during the winter seems to be, therefore, one of sleep long and soundly or starve. During the winter's sleep or hibernation, life processes go on very slowly. Breathing is reduced, and the heart beats become so slow and feeble that they cannot be felt. They come from their winter's sleep about the first of March, in New York.

How Elephant Seals Live.

These curious animals the elephant seals, also known as sea elephants, have been recently studied by Professor C. Chun, a German scientist, as well as by Robert Hall, a well known naturalist, and as a result many new facts have been gathered in regard to their life and habits.

These seals are only to be found in the southern seas, and mainly in the vicinity of the Kerguelen islands, where they go in August for the purpose of pairing. They remain there until February or March. During the winter they are very dull and apathetic, but as spring approaches they become more lively. Mr. Hall says that he went several times through a herd of 40 or 50 animals while they were dozing, and only a few were disturbed by him.

These seals live in communities, and in a single bay may often be seen from 5 to 10 colonies. Hitherto it has been supposed that there is never more than one male in a single herd, but there now seems to be abundant proof that each herd contains seals of only one sex. Thus, in one bay there will be five or six herds of males, and in another five or six herds of females.

Professor Chun, who has studied the seals thoroughly in their native haunts, says that for a long time after the animals return to the Kerguelen in the autumn they do not take any food but remain torpid in beds which they form until they have shed their old hair and put on a new coat. During the winter he saw several seals killed, and not a particle of food was found in their stomachs.

Mr. Hall, on the other hand, says that the seals during this period feed once a day, going down to the water to obtain a supply of fish. In any case, it is certain that these animals can live without food for a long time, since they have under their skin a layer of fat which is 15 centimetres in thickness.

How the Beaver Breathes in Winter.

"The beaver is really a sort of portable pulp mill, grinding up most any kind of wood that comes his way. I once measured a white birch tree, 22 inches through, cut down by a beaver. A single beaver, generally, if not always, amputates the tree, and when it comes down the whole family fall and have a regular frolic with the bark and branches. A big beaver will bring down a fair sized sapling—say three inches through—in about two minutes, and a large tree in about an hour.

"One of the queerest facts about the beaver is the rapidity with which his long, chisel shaped teeth recover from an injury. I have known beavers to break their teeth in biting a trap, and when I caught them again 10 days afterward you couldn't see a sign of the break—the teeth had grown out to their former perfection in that short period.

"As compared with the otter or mink the beaver is a very slow swimmer. His front legs hang by his sides, and he uses only his webbed hind feet for purposes of swimming. It is easy to capture one in a canoe if you can find him in shoal water. He is a most determined fighter, but clumsy and

easy to handle. If he could get hold of you with his teeth he would almost take a leg off, so you want to watch him sharply. The place to grab him is by the tail.

"The ability of a beaver to remain under water for a long time is really not so tough a problem as it looks. When the lake or pond is frozen over a beaver will come to the under surface of the ice and expel his breath, so that it will form a wide, flat bubble. The air, coming in contact with the ice and water, is purified, and the beaver breathes it again. This operation he can repeat several times. The otter and muskrat do the same thing.

"It almost takes a burglar proof safe to hold a newly captured beaver. I once caught an old one and two kittens up the north branch of the South West, put them in a barrel and brought them down to Miramichi lake. That night she knawed a hole through the barrel and cleared out, leaving her kittens. They were so young that I had no way of feeding them, so I released them. Soon after that I caught a big male beaver. I made a large log pen for him of dry spruce, but the second night he cut a log and disappeared.

"Beavers, when alarmed, generally make up stream, so I went to the brook where a little branch came in, and I thought I would go up that a little way, and I hadn't gone more than 10 rods before I came across my lad sitting up in the bed of the brook having a lunch on a stick he had cut. He actually looked as if he knew he was playing truant when he caught sight of me out of the side of his eye.

"I picked him up by the tail, brought him back, put him in the pen, supplied him with plenty of fresh poplar, and he seemed as tame as possible and never gave me any more trouble. I brought him out to Stanley, where he lived a long time. Turnbull had a mongrel dog, which was jealous of the beaver, and one day attacked him. He did that only once, for the beaver nipped the dog's tail off quicker'n a cat would catch a mouse."—Rod and Gun.

The Discontented Geese.

Once upon a time a flock of wild geese started out to see the sights. They were led by an old goose who, no doubt thought she was very wise. As if anybody ever did see a wise goose.

"I'm going out," she said, "to see more of the world. We really know nothing of what is going on outside of this pond. Don't you find it very dull? Only last week a swallow pausing in his flight to have a bit of conversation with me, told of the wonderful things to be seen. If you care to come along," she added, "I shall take you with me."

Now, to tell the truth, the young geese, one and all, were perfectly delighted at the proposition (because that dangerous little seed of discontent had already taken root).

Such a cackle as they set up Cackle! cackle! cackle! So they flew away over brown marshes and green meadows, over rivulets and streams, until they came to such a lovely place where there were beautiful flowers and trees. There were rustic bridges spanning limpid streams, and last, but not least, a beautiful pond.

"How lovely!" they exclaimed in one breath. "I wonder where we are," said one little goose.

"This," said their leader with an air of importance, "is Central Park. My friend, the swallow, told me all about it."

And sure enough, it was Central Park, down by the duck pond, where, no doubt, you have walked many and many a time.

"The ducks and geese you see swimming about," said the old goose, "are tame. How beautifully they behave. It all depends," quoth she, "on one's bringing up. Hush, my dears," as the young geese, one and all, began to cackle. "Don't be rude! Let me, I beg of you, speak to our friends."

The tame geese, however, were not in the least inclined to be sociable. They glided about majestically, quite ignoring the presence of the intruders. "See that pretty little house over there?" said the little goose. "Can it be possible that it has been built for our accommodation?"

How absurd this was. Of course your mamma has a room set apart as a guest chamber, and those ridiculous little geese thought the duck house had been especially built for them, just like invited guests, you know.

"To be sure," said the old goose, shaking the water from her back, "my friend, Mr. Swallow, must have told them we were coming." She waddled over, followed by the entire flock. Hardly had they entered the duck house when they heard a click. The spring door closed with a snap and lo! they were prisoners. Just then the keeper came out. "Heigh-ho!" exclaimed he; "what's this? A flock of wild geese, on my life. Come here, Bill (to a great, sturdy fellow near by). Here is work for you to do. Clip the wings of these geese as once." The man went to work and did as he was told, clipping all their wings, while a big park policeman looked on and laughed.

The geese were then let out on the pond to swim about majestically like their neighbors. Oh! how they longed to fly home. Never before did freedom seem so dear to them.

"Why didn't you tell us," said the little goose in tone of reproach to one of her new found friends, "that we were going to have our wings clipped?" "Because," replied her companion, "you wouldn't have believed us; and after all, my dear, experience is the very best teacher."—New Idea Magazine.

Australia has more than 1000 newspapers.

LIGHTNING RODS.

A Recent Discussion of Their Value by English Engineers.

At the annual meeting of the British Association for the Advancement of Science in Glasgow last month, the engineering section listened to a paper on lightning rods contributed by Killingsworth Hedges. He described the rods in use on St. Paul's cathedral in London, which, though erected less than 30 years ago, had been found to be defective. He had himself planned the rearrangement and also one for Westminster abbey. The conditions prevailing in big cities are somewhat different from those in rural districts, perhaps, but the fact that experts still consider lightning rods necessary in the one justifies faith in their utility in the other, especially if rightly constructed.

Mr. Hedges said that on St. Paul's cathedral the number of ordinary conductors from air to earth had been greatly increased; and, besides these, horizontal cables were run on the ridges of the roofs and in other prominent positions so as to encircle the building, being interconnected to the vertical conductors wherever they cross one another. The horizontal cables were furnished at intervals with aigrettes, or spikes, which were invisible from the ground level, and designed to give many points of discharge. At the same time they, in conjunction with the cables, should receive any side flash which might occur should any portion of the building receive a direct stroke of lightning. The unreliability of soldered joints for conductors, whether of cable or tape, led the author to design a special joint box. Owing to the difficulty of sinking an earth plate of sufficient area, on account of old foundations at St. Paul's, a tubular earth had been designed.

He had recommended keeping the conductor away from the building, because that was the plan followed on the continent, where lightning storms were much more frequent than in England. It was very difficult, in following the shape of the building, to avoid corners and sharp turns, which would prevent the current from following the conductor. In a case in which a chimney had been struck at Wallend, the lightning went to the chimney first, then to the conductor, and after that back again to the chimney, knocking part of it down. He had preferred round rods to flat strips on the authority of Dr. Oliver Lodge; and agreed that architects might get puzzled if first one thing were recommended and then another. He would, however, prefer not to lay down any rules as absolutely definite until more results were brought in from various persons who were making observations all over the country. It was in order to get these data that the lightning committee had been constituted.

Barbers' Fashion Plates.

Barbers, like tailors, have fashion plates, and in various suburban shops the latest plates upon the ways to wear the hair are now pasted up. The October plate devotes itself to six styles, the legal, the medical, the French, the professor, the student and the business man. The pictures are interesting. The legal style shows a smooth shaven young man with his hair cut very short and parted and brushed up in a smooth, lustrous wing over either temple. The medical picture is of a foolish looking person with an immense nose and with light hair parted on the side and brushed far back off the brow. The French shows a youth with his hair a mass of small corkscrew curls. The student has long hair, parted in the middle and smoothed down almost to his eyebrows. The professor has what is called a round cut, his locks, that is to say, end at a certain point on his neck in a rounded mass, and beneath this mass the shaved neck of the professor looks very white and clean. The business man, according to the fashion plate, wears his hair short at the back and sides and long on the top of his head, and his parting is in the middle, this arrangement making a kind of scallop or double semi-circle of hair upon his forehead. "What kind of a cut will you have, sir?" the suburban barbers now say. "Shall it be medical, legal, student, French or what?" And they point with their combs at the fashion plate and wait blandly for the customer's reply.—Philadelphia Record.

Old Names for Guns.

As the use of artillery became more common and the advantages of portability and a greater rapidity of fire were recognized, guns, except among the Orientals, became smaller, but of better workmanship and construction. Inventors began to try their hands at all sorts of improvements or attempts at improvement, and in the course of a hundred years or so the number of different pieces of cannon, large and small, muzzle or breech loading, was simply legion. There were cannon, cannon royal, and demi cannon, three or four classes of culverins, bombard, mortars, perriers, serpentes, carthouns, curials, passevolants or zebrotanas, basilisks, orgues, sakers, minions, mojanas, falcons and falconets, robinets, fowlers, bases, slings, port-pieces, murderers, drakes, aspics, double dogs and lagtors, to say nothing of ribadons, flying dragons and partridge mortars.—Gentleman's Magazine.

A Great Mistake.

The late Lord Morris did not gain a very favorable impression of the house of lords when he made his first speech there. When asked how he had got on, he replied: "Well, I made a mistake. I should have practiced spakin' to a lot of gravestones before I addressed their lordships."

Civilization of the Crows.

The Crow Indians, once the terror of the plains, are now scheduled as among the most industrious and prosperous Indians in the country. There are about two thousand of them on the Crow reservation in Montana, and they have been reported at Washington as "self-sustaining." There are gradations of worthlessness even among the savages, and the Crows were more energetic in their wild life than were many of the other tribes, and especially those of the Coast. It is not surprising, therefore, that they are more energetic in semi-civilized life than the others and are ready sooner to dispense with government rations.

Unable to Stand For Months Because of Sprained Ankle.

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(From the Cardiff Times.)

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Mrs. Thomas does not enlighten us as to what treatment she pursued during the months she was unable to stand, and during which time she was suffering so much, but we venture to suggest that had she called in any well known medical man he would have at once prescribed St. Jacobs Oil, for it has conquered pain upwards of fifty years, and doctors know there is nothing so good. The proprietors of St. Jacobs Oil have been awarded twelve gold medals by different international exhibitions as the premier pain-killer remedy of the world. The committees who made the awards were in each instance composed largely of the most eminent medical men obtainable. Mrs. Thomas evidently did not know the high opinion in which St. Jacobs Oil is held by almost every progressive medical man.

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