

Our Boys and Girls.

I DON'T WANT TO.

There's a lazy little sprite
That takes supreme delight
In spoiling children's faces. Deary me!
Such a tiresome, tiresome elf.
I've wished often to myself
He was out of sight forever at the bot-
tom of the sea.

Just look at Freddy's lips
When asked to pick up chips,
Or rock the little sister, Baby Grace,
"I Don't Want To" (that's his name)
Begins his little game,
And you'd hardly know 'twas Freddy's
pretty face.

How quickly his ugly mask,
Though 'twas an easy task,
Slipped o'er little Ellen's face to-day,
When mamma kindly said:
"Please, daughter, bring my thread;
'Twill take you but a moment from your
play."

"Don't Want To"—There he goes,
Whining always through his nose,
Spoiling all the lovely faces. Deary me!
The smiles he puts to route,
And the dimples, I've no doubt,
If they were drops of water, would al-
most fill the sea.

—Selected.

THE MUSKRAT'S WINTER HOME.

All summer Mitty Muskrat had lived in a big cave in the bank, just above the pond. One day in October she was delighted to hear that it was time for the family to build their winter home.

Soon after sunset one night she started out with her mother; they crossed the pond, swimming with their fore feet tucked up under their throats, and using their broad flat tails as rudders. Mitty, indeed, was in such a hurry, that she wriggled her tail from side to side like a tadpole.

They entered the ditch which led into the swamp, but soon left it, and, making their way through mud and grass for a short distance suddenly came upon several muskrats building a platform of sticks upon some alder roots.

The house itself was begun by weaving green twigs, flags and reeds into a kind of fence around a circular enclosure. Mitty helped fetch reeds from the swamp all night. She slept all the next day, and did not awaken until after sundown. With several companions she went out to get food. Some dug yellow lily roots, towed them ashore, and feasted on their crisp, white centers. Mitty fancied a rush-banana. Diving to the bottom of the pond, she bit off a big rush, carried it to her usual eating-place, sat up on her hind legs, and began to peel it, holding it in her paws and biting off the end of the soft white pith, as if it were really a banana.

Suddenly one of her companions plunged noisily into the pond. This was a signal that danger was near. Although Mitty could see nothing, she dropped her supper and dived into the pond. An instant later, Slyfoot, the weasel, appeared on the bank, disgusted that his prey had escaped. Swimming under water, Mitty, with a few swift strokes, reached home.

That night the rain fell in torrents, and no one worked on the new house. Muskrats are not afraid of rain, their coats being quite waterproof; but the heavy clouds made the night pitch-dark,

and they preferred to wait for moonlight.

When the weather was again pleasant, the house progressed rapidly. A dome-shaped structure was formed of reeds, and plastered on the outside with mud which the builders mixed in their paws and smoothed with their tails. On the top the reeds were more loosely woven and not so thickly covered with plaster, so that air might enter. There was no door above water; a passageway led from the upper chamber into the lower one, and this room entered directly into the water.

One night it began to rain, and the children said gayly, "This will make a pond of the meadow." And, indeed, it did. A neighbor's house was swept away. Their own soon followed. The children mourned, but the elders said, "How fortunate the flood came early in the season! Now we will have time to build again before winter."

Then it suddenly grew cold. The ground froze, and ice formed on the pond.

"How can we build a house now?" wailed the children.

"Wait a little," replied the elders, "it is too early for winter yet; we shall have another warm spell."

Sure enough, Indian summer soon came, with mild days and clear moonlight nights. How fast the muskrats worked on a new house! Every one did as much as he was able.

The new house was larger than the old one, and had another chamber on top, quite above high water. When it was completed, the muskrats moved in. Then the water froze over, and their only escape from the pond was through the brook.

All day there was a great noise overhead. All the muskrats rushed downstairs into the water. Through the ice they could see figures moving swiftly about. They were boys skating on the pond. Now two of them were pounding on the muskrat house. It was frozen so hard that after a time they went away. The next day they came back with sharp instruments, and tore away the earth and reeds from the roof. Then they put a queer iron thing in the chamber and went away. Three-toes called it a trap the moment he saw it, and said a similar one had once stolen his other toes.

So all the muskrats fled from the house, and as it was impossible to build another, they were obliged to live in their summer caves on the shore.

"How fortunate for us," remarked Mitty's mother, cheerfully, "that our old home is so high up in that bank that it is not flooded! We can keep quite comfortable there until spring."—*Bertha Louise Colburn, in Holiday Magazine.*

THE BOBBIN-MILL.

Charlie Crosthwaite lived at the Bobbin-mill. Now the Bobbin-mill was at the head of a long, twisting, narrow lane, deeply cut with ruts, made by the carts going to the mill. By the side of the road was a jolly little mountain stream that splashed and prattled and sparkled and helped to turn the great creaking wheel that worked the machinery.

Charlie used to watch the men chop up the wood into proper shapes, and then make them into reels or bobbins, as they called them. He liked the click-clack of the old machinery, and the nice tidy little reels made out of the rough wood.

Charlie generally played behind the mill, where there was a waterfall. Fancy

having a real, true waterfall to play by! And at the side of the fall was a deep pool and a lovely cave. This was a splendid place to play robbers, and pirates, and savages, and all sorts of fine things.

Charlie's mother used to say sometimes:

"It is not safe for the child to play by that deep pool."

But the father used to answer:

"Tut! tut! mother. The boy musn't be coddled. He must learn to look after himself."

It was a beautiful spring day, after many hours of ceaseless rain. The stream was very full of water, and the fall sounded quite angry as it dashed down. The pool at the foot looked black, and ugly, and silent. Charlie stood at the top of the fall, watching the unhappy scraps of wood and refuse that were being swept along whether they would or no.

Suddenly he was startled by a little frightened cry. He looked up, and there, being carried along in the middle of the stream was a little lamb. The poor little creature was not yet drowned, but in a minute it must be carried over the rocks and be dashed down, down into the deep pool beneath.

Charlie did not stop a minute. He crouched down upon the bank, and then leant as far as he could over the stream.

The little white body was coming nearer and nearer, but, alas! it must miss Charlie's eager fingers. In his anxiety he stretched further, further! He felt the soft wet fleece between his fingers, grasped it quickly, and then found that he too was struggling in the water.

Charlie could remember nothing more but a confused buzzing din in his ears till he suddenly found himself in his own little warm bed, with his mother, the doctor, and a stranger, standing by the bedside.

"There, now, that's fine!" said the doctor; "drink some of this." And he put a cup to his mouth with something warm in it.

Charlie drank, and tried to speak, but his voice sounded very funny to himself.

"How's the lamb?" he murmured.

"Bless the lad," said the stranger; "he's thinking of the lamb! Well, I declare!"

But Charlie's mother told him that the lamb was being cared for in the kitchen, and was getting warm and dry.

Then Charlie looked wonderingly at the stranger. He was dressed in very rough clothes, but he had a kindly face.

He's wanting to know who I am," he said, smiling. "I found you and my little lamb struggling in the water together, and had you out in no time, both of you, with my shepherd's crook. I saw you try to save the wee lambie, and jolly plucky it was too; and I shouted to you but you did not hear, for the stream was making such a noise."

It was some days before Charlie was quite well again. He used to sit by the fire in the kitchen, and the little lamb lay in a basket at his feet. Every other minute he would call out some news about the lamb to his mother.

"Oh, mother, the lamb is trying to drink some milk!" or, "Oh, mother, the lamb is trying to play with my finger."

The kind shepherd said that as Charlie had saved the lamb's life, he should have the little creature for his very own. So the lamb was called Daisy, because she was so white, and she became so fond of Charlie that she wanted to follow him everywhere, even to school and to church, and seemed quite unhappy when he was away.—*Little Folks.*

Lame Back for Four Months.

Was Unable to Turn in Bed Without Help.

Plasters and Liniments No Good.

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THE WEEDS THAT BOTHERED DORA.

"I don't see who plants 'em, anyway?" exclaimed my little neighbor. She was such a little neighbor that she had squeezed herself through the fence where a picket was broken out.

"Do you do it?" she asked reproachfully, and I came round to her side of the bed.

"Plant the weeds? Oh, certainly not; they never need planting."

"But how do they come, then?"

"Very much like the bad thoughts and ways that come into our hearts—grow—if we don't pull them up, until all the dear lovable flowers are quite choked out."

"Have I any in my heart?"

She had quite left off tugging at those in the ground, and the big, blue eyes looked straight into mine.

"Let us see! You shall find out for yourself. The truth is a beautiful little flower, what would a falsehood be?"

"Tellin' stories—lies? Why—I suspect they's weeds—"

"Yes, indeed, and terrible weeds they are. Now, did Dora or Jack break the vase yesterday? You know you told mamma it was Jack?"

Dora hung her head.

"And bad temper is another—a real nettly one. You know how those little sharp things hurt you when you pull them up. When one is angry, they prick everybody that touches them—themselves most of all. If we don't get this weed out when it's little, by and by we grow to be a garden so full of thistles we sting everybody."

"Is kickin' the door, an' screamin', an' slappin' back, weeds—prickles?"

"Would you call them pretty flowers?"

"No, I wouldn't. I guess I's mostly all weeds!" This with a profound sigh.

"That's what I thought of this bed when I came out an hour ago; but you