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The Jolly Animals' Club
 By LILIAN LEVERIDGE

IV.
 THE BATTLE OF THE BIRDS.

"I DON'T know what to do about it," sighed a Soldier Bird to his mate as they swung upon a maple bough above the Winding River. "I'd like to join the Club, for I am jolly enough by nature, but with four hungry babies crying for food all the time, what are we to do but feed them? There seems to be no time left to think of anything great."
 "That's true," answered his wife. "We can't let them starve, that's certain. Maybe we'd better not think about the Club till they're grown up."
 "What nonsense!" screamed Mr. Catbird from across the river. "To you it ought to be as easy as picking up a worm."

"Why, what would you do if you were me?" the Soldier Bird asked. "Fight, of course."

"Fight! What should I fight for? I haven't a single enemy in the Merry Forest."

"Well, you ought to have," the Catbird answered. "What is a soldier for but to fight? Do you think that gay red coat was given you just to sport around in?"

"I never thought about it," the Soldier Bird replied.

"Well, I suppose there is an excuse for you if you don't know much," said the Catbird, "but my wife and I built our nest last year in a fir tree beside the schoolroom window, and we leafried more wonderful things than you'd ever believe. Among other things, we found out what soldiers are for. They fight—just that and nothing else. And the soldier who fights the hardest and kills the most of his enemies wins the highest honour."

"But I haven't any enemies," the Soldier Bird repeated.

"You ought to have. Now, among men there are redcoats and bluecoats that fight against each other. The Soldier Birds and the Bluebirds ought to be enemies. Then you could have a battle, and the whole lot of you join the Club afterwards. It would be dead easy."

"But who would feed the babies?" asked Mrs. Soldier Bird.

"You, of course. Mothers never fight."

Mr. Soldier Bird looked very serious. There wasn't a more peevish bird in all the Merry Forest, and he was on the most friendly

terms with the Bluebirds. "Well, I'll think about it," he said.

He did more than think, and before sunset the great battle was arranged. It was to take place an hour before sunset the next day in Elm Avenue, a wide, quiet road not far from the Winding River.

The Catbird gave plenty of advice, but refused to take any active part in the fight. The Nighthawk, however, agreed to act as umpire. The Redcoats engaged a little brown wren for their bugle-boy, and a Yellow Warbler consented to perform the same service for the Bluecoats. The Crow was given the post of army doctor, and the Partridge promised to beat the drum.

There was great excitement over this event throughout the Merry Forest, and before the time appointed nearly everybody was there to see. The battle in array—the Redcoats in the elms on one side of the Avenue and the Bluecoats on the other—made a very pretty sight, as all agreed.

At last the drum began to beat and the bugle-boys struck up their martial music. Then the two armies met in mid-air, and the feathers flew in blue and scarlet clouds.

In a few minutes a bluebird sank, faint and bleeding, to the ground. "Doctor, doctor, he's dying!" the audience cried.

Dr. Crow was soon on the spot, and he ordered that the battle should stop at once or he would not answer for the consequences. It did stop, and there was a great hush while the doctor poured water and medicine down the bird's beak and ordered him to be fanned with a basswood leaf. A Redcoat came forward at once with a fan.

Just at that moment Professor Owl swooped down upon the battlefield and asked what it all meant. He was speedily told.

"What a sadly mistaken idea!" he cried. "Is not peace and brotherly love the aim and object of the Jolly Animals' Club? I'd like to know who was the ringleader in this sad affair."

Two soldiers at once led forward Mr. Catbird.

"What was your aim in creating this disturbance?" Professor Owl asked.

"Oh," Mr. Catbird answered, with a toss of his head, "I thought it would be good fun to see them fight each other."

"Oh, indeed!" said the Professor. "It will also be good fun to see you ducked in the Winding River. Mr. Kingfisher, I will entrust this duty to you. See that he is well cooled off."

Then, before he had time to beg for mercy, Mr. Catbird was carried swiftly and dipped in the cold water until he promised to behave himself in future.

Thus ended the Battle of the Birds.

Boys and Girls
 THE TWO WORDS.

"One day a harsh word rashly said,
 Upon an evil journey sped,
 And, like a sharp and cruel dart,
 It pierced a fond and loving heart;
 It turned a friend into a foe,
 And everywhere brought pain and woe.

"A kind word followed it one day,
 Flew swiftly on its blessed way;
 It healed the wound, it soothed the pain,
 And friends of old were friends again;
 It made the hate and anger cease,
 And everywhere brought joy and peace.

"And yet the harsh word left a trace
 The kind word could not quite efface;
 And though the heart its love regained,

It bore a scar that long remained;
 Friends could forgive, but not forget,
 Or lose the sense of keen regret.

"Oh! if we could but learn to know
 How swift and sure our words can go,
 How would we weigh with utmost care

Each thought before it sought the air,

And only speak the words that move
 Like white-winged messengers of love."

—Lutheran.

COCOANUTS AND MONKEYS.

We have been thinking lately about the bitter cold which our soldiers have had to endure, but in some countries in which the war has been carried on there is no such thing as winter. A letter has come into our hands written by a soldier who has since died at Dar-es-Salaam, in East Africa. He was only nineteen when he died. One who writes from the village in which he had lived in Cambridgeshire says: "He was one of the most consistent of our village lads, a power for good wherever he was employed, full of life, but preferring home to the street when the other boys were rackets. He kept his love for church and home to the end." The following extract from his letter shows that he was not unhappy, though the difficulties of his life were great. He wrote:—

"We are camped in a cocoanut plantation for to-day. It belonged to a German once. The nuts are just getting ripe, so I can lie in bed now, mum, and shy at nuts without paying for balls. There are thousands of cocoanut palms; wherever you go, there they are. At night we are netted in like ripe currants in order to protect ourselves against mosquitoes. We need very little to wear. The heat is terrible.

"The negroes are the smartest soldiers I have seen yet—they beat our Guards. We come across some of the missionaries that you hear so much about in England. My word, they all deserve the V.C., and it is really wonderful how the Word of God is spreading over these wilds. The natives are very true to God, and a good many English people could take their example.

"Some of the country we come to has never been explored, and the bush is six feet high in a good many places. What interested one most is the wild animals; thousands of monkeys, all sorts and sizes, and the lovely birds, especially the parrots. Then the lions roaring at night made one feel a little queer. Then the giraffes—herds of them. I wonder what the little brother would think of it all. You cannot see 100 yards in front. No one in England can imagine the hardships we have to put up with in this wild country."—The King's Messengers.

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A RIDDLE THAT SOLVED ITSELF.

After a hard day's work the boys' raft was at last finished. Of course, grandfather must see it launched; and they rushed pell-mell to the house to bring him down to the creek. Grandfather admired the new raft, even as much as the boys thought it deserved, and that was a very great deal.

"But this isn't the first raft I've seen on the creek this summer," he said. The boys looked at him in astonishment.

"Why, how can that be, grandfather?" Ted ventured. "We're the only fellows that play here, you know; and we never built a raft before."

"The other raft was made of leaves," grandfather began, with a twinkle in his eye.

"Of leaves! What good would that be?" Hal interrupted.

"But it really was made of leaves," grandfather insisted; "of dried leaves and twigs, all nicely sewed together with silk. It doesn't sound exactly serviceable, I know; but it carried its owner very comfortably. He sat on his raft—"

"Sat on it, grandfather!" Ted's eyes were growing wider and wider. "Why, we have to stand on ours. If we sit down, over it goes in a minute!"

"His doesn't, though," laughed grandfather. "He sits and floats all day long, wherever the wind and water may choose to carry him. His meals are brought to him, too—all he can eat. He's a ravenous fellow, a regular wolf for hunting and devouring."

"Is it a riddle, grandfather?" Hal asked, suspiciously.

"Well, perhaps; see if you can guess it! The raft-builder is very beautifully marked, and has exceedingly strong jaws; and whenever a water insect floats too near the raft he is quickly seized in those strong jaws and swallowed before he can even try to get away."

"Is it a frog, grandfather?"

"No."

"A kingfisher?"

"No."

"Is it—oh! what is it, grandfather?"

But just at that moment a tiny floating platform of leaves and twigs came sailing slowly toward them down the creek; and on it, looking round with bright, greedy eyes, sat a large, beautifully marked water spider, eager and alert for food.

"There! there!" cried the boys.

"There he comes now—old spider wolf! It is, it is, isn't it, grandfather?"

"Yes; that's the raft-builder," said grandfather, "and he's a bloodthirsty fellow, too. See how he watches for every water insect on his way. He's ready for them every minute."

And when the odd little craft sailed out of sight round a bend, the boys' raft was successfully launched, and grandfather stood on the shore clapping his hands and cheering. But nobody thought to cheer Mr. Water Spider, who had built his raft alone.—Selected.

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