

his mother had said at the luncheon table, 'if I hadn't promised to open the discussion.'

'Oh, Johnny will not mind for once,' said Mrs. Churchill, Johnny's mother's most intimate friend, just as Harold was Johnny's.

'No, I suppose he doesn't mind for once,' echoed his mother rather doubtfully. 'He is my helper-boy; and he can build with his blocks and he can look at his picture-books and he can play with his railroad cars and, if he is tired, he can go out and stay with cook.'

Johnny looked wise and said nothing; but his eyes danced and his dimples twinkled, because he knew already what he was going to do. He had heard what his mother said when she had given her hair the parting pat before her mirror and started downstairs to receive her guests. She said:

'There, I've done every single thing this morning except dusting the library. Perhaps I shall have time to do it after the club and before papa comes home.'

Now don't you see what Johnny was going to do? Why, dust the library, of course, just as any helper-boy would wish to do for his mother. So, as soon as the ladies had each kissed him good-bye and his mother twice, and the house was still, he began.

Johnny knew where Lena kept the big feather duster. He could never remember to want it except when she was using it, though, dusting the gas fixtures or picture frames and so this was a good time to take it. Lena always used nice, soft, square cloths for most of the dusting, but he didn't know where those were. Never mind! A boy mustn't be particular when he is helping his mother; and here was papa's muffler, which looked almost like a duster and would do nicely. He remembered how Lena always rinsed out the dusters after using them and how the dirt came right out. So it couldn't hurt the muffler and it would be fun to wash it.

Then Johnny went to work. He began on the radiator and then he scrubbed the corner of the floor where the rug didn't come. The radiator or something was very dusty and the muffler looked very dingy. He did not like to stop

then to wash it so he flicked the feather brush over the piano and with infinite pains moved the chairs so that he could climb on them and reach the pictures. He didn't see the scratches he made, but he was sorry he caught his heel in the fringe of the arm-chair when he got down and tore off a strip of it. He looked at it sorrowfully, but then he knew he couldn't help it.

He was getting tired and dusty himself and it wasn't quite so much fun as it was at first. Besides, it was rather discouraging to knock a vase of flowers from the top of the low bookcase and see the water run down on the books and make a puddle on the rug. It was even worse to cut his pink forefinger with the glass when he was mopping up the water with the muffler and he felt almost as if he would like to run out in the kitchen and stay with cook.

(To be continued.)

My Squirrel Friend.

(Helen M. Richardson, in 'Zion's Herald'.)

Have you ever noticed the little cushioned thumbs between which the gray squirrel holds the kernel of the nut which he is eating? If you ever have the good fortune to tame one sufficiently, watch him while he is eating the nut which you have cracked for him.

He first seizes it in two monkey-like claws so many-jointed that he can twist them into almost any shape while extracting the kernel. When a piece of meat escapes from the shell, notice how quickly it is grasped between the two padded joints which serve the squirrel as thumbs. Between these soft cushions he holds the dislodged nutmeat, at the same time firmly clutching the shell, to make sure of any more food which it may contain.

Gray squirrels are very easily tamed, patience, kindness, and nuts being the chief requisites. As all squirrels are in the habit of punching an uncracked nut into the ground for future use, if they do not happen to be particularly hungry, I have learned that more pleasure is gained from their company by cracking the nut before presenting it to them. The temptation to stop and eat is thus

increased, and the taming process is greatly simplified.

The first gray squirrel whose acquaintance I made came to me in the form of a surprise, as good things are apt to come. I called him 'Silverskin,' his coat was such a pretty, silvery gray, the name seemed to suit him better than any other. And then his tail! The first time that I saw him, he stood beneath it like a monk saying his prayers. His forepaws met upon his breast in an attitude of supplication, and his large eyes looked appealingly into mine.

I had no idea, then, that I could tame him. He was merely a chance acquaintance, such as I am frequently making among the little wild people of the forest. I might never see him again, but I stopped to admire him and to speak a gentle word. After our first encounter, however, we were continually running across each other, and I soon found that, if I desired the companionship of my little friend, I must make it worth his while to stay with me. So I got in the habit of holding a cracked nut in a motionless hand for a bait. It was as alluring to the squirrel as a piece of cheese is to a hungry mouse. A dart—and the nut changed owners.

After a while I ventured to hold one a little beyond his reach, still keeping my hand motionless. Slowly, cautiously, with much writhing of the body and twitching of the bushy tail, the squirrel approached, put two monkey-like claws in my hand, and reached up for the nut.

He soon grew perfectly fearless, and would sit as confidently upon my knee as if it had been the limb of a tree. He always kept me in full view, however, and always faced me while eating.

Before the summer was over I could call him to me as easily as though he had been a dog; and often, when I have been asleep in my hammock, I have been awakened by a quick jerk at the rope, to encounter the large brown eyes of my little friend fastened intently upon me. He would then begin a systematic search from hands to feet for the nuts which he seldom failed to find.