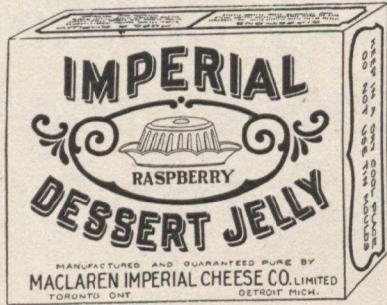


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FOR THE CHILDREN

THE STORY OF A KITTEN

NOW this story is quite true. Once upon a time there was a cat called Mr. Puff; he lived in a grand house, quite close to the Turkish Embassy. A lord and a lady and several servants lived with Mr. Puff, and he was very kind to them, letting them do in all things as they liked, and never sending them away nor keeping the house to himself. One day Mr. Puff, being out in the rain, found a poor little kitten, covered with mud and crying bitterly; so Mr. Puff took the kitten between his teeth and carried it home, and set it down on the drawing-room hearth-rug. The lord and the lady had the kitten washed and gave it food and called it Smut; and Smut went and sat down on the lord's writing-table.

When Smut grew to be a cat the lord and the lady thought a while, and spoke: "We have a dear friend," they said, "and he is catless; therefore, if Mr. Puff will agree, we will take Smut to him as a present," and Mr. Puff agreed.

So Smut was put into a bird-cage and taken to the dear friend's house.

The dear friend had a little girl with golden hair, and when she saw Smut she cried out for joy and said: "Never before did I see a dicky-bird with a furry coat, a long tail and little white teeth."

But Smut shook his head as if to say, "I am not a dicky-bird, sweet maid, but only a four-legged cat," so they opened the bird-cage door and he walked out, waving his tail.

Now when Smut grew up his gravity and dignity made all who knew his history wonder, and few could believe that he had once been a dirty kitten, covered with mud, and glad to accept the charity of Mr. Puff. And a time came when there was a great war in Turkey and terrible battles were fought, and Smut looked very anxious and went quite bald, and his coat fell off in little patches; but none could tell why. At last he died, and the little girl wept sorely, and all who had known him grieved and lamented. And when Smut had been sleeping only a little while beneath the lilac tree an accident revealed that instead of a lowly foundling, he had been of high degree, for the little vagrant Mr. Puff had found was no less a person than the Turkish Ambassador's coachman's wife's cat's kitten.—*Woman's Home Companion.*

* * *

WHAT THE CAT AND HEN DID

By ALICE RALSTON.

FOUR little children were playing in their garden one day. There were Mollie and Jamie and Betty and Teddy.

They were so busy making mud-pies that they did not see "Mrs. Tomkins," the old cat, when she came and mewed, and mewed, and put up her paw, and touched Mollie and Jamie and Betty and Teddy—first one and then the other, as much as to say, "Do come, some of you, and help me! Do come, please!"

By and by the children's mama came out of the house and saw how queerly the cat was acting, and said: "Children, Mrs. Tomkins is trying to get you to go with her and see if her babies are all right."

So the children left their play and said: "Come, Mrs. Tomkins, we will go with you now."

The old cat gave a thankful "m-i-e-o-u," and started down the walk leading to the barn. Every now and then she looked back to see if the children were really coming. When she got to the stable, she ran and

jumped up on the manger, and looked down into it, and gave a quick, sharp "m-i-e-o-u," as if to say, "What do you think of that?" And the children looked in and saw a hen sitting upon the old cat's kittens and trying to keep them all covered up! When the cat tried to go near them, the hen would peck at her and drive her away. How the children laughed!

The hen had been sitting upon some eggs in a nest near where the cat had set up housekeeping, and when the cat went out, the hen came over and took the cat's little family under her wings, just as if they had been so many chick-a-biddies. And when the cat went home again, the hen would not let her come near the kittens. Mollie took the hen off, and Mrs. Tomkins was happy.

The next day she came again, looking as though she said, "I am very sorry to trouble you, but I *must*." Then she said "M-i-e-o-u, m-i-e-o-u!" So the children left their play and went to the stable with her, and found the hen playing mother to Mrs. Tomkins' kittens again and trying to make them keep still and stay under her wings. If one of them poked its head out, she would give it a sharp peck to make it go back.

The children laughed again, and Mollie said: "Poor Mrs. Tomkins, I would look for a new house if I were you—you do have such meddlesome neighbours!" Then she took the hen off, and Mrs. Tomkins picked up one of the kittens.

The children's mama was sitting in the library reading when the old cat came in, with a kitten in her mouth. She put it softly down, went out, and soon returned with another. She kept on doing this until she had moved all her family of five kittens. Then she settled herself in a cozy corner, and looked at the lady, and purred in this way: "If you only knew how much trouble I have had with that bad old hen, you would let me and my children stay here."

The lady laughed and said: "I will see what I can do for you."

Just then the children came in and begged to have the kittens stay. So a new home was made for them in a box in the woodhouse.—*St. Nicholas.*

* * *

SERENA

By RYE JOHNSON.

SOFTLY, silently, snow surrounded Shakertown. Sabrina Sedley's sabots seeming shabby, she sent Sister Serena shopping.

Saucepans, spoons, soap, sheeting, shoes secured, Serena shyly sought some soft, silken surah.

Samuel Seaton, salesman, sensibly suggested salmon shades, sincerely solicitous silks should suit Serena, so sweet seemed she.

She saw Samuel's suggestion sound, salmon suiting seasonably Shaker-town socials, so she selected several shades.

Sabrina Sedley spoke scornfully, severely, sensoriously. She said Serena's silks, sealskin sack, sleek, shining satins seemed such selfish silliness.

Sensibly silent, Serena sought Sally Sanborn, seamstress.

Shakertown socialists sending summons soon, some scores sought Stephen Sedley's, Serena's sire's, sitting-room.

Sister Sabrina served supper, Sally slyly serving salads, seed-cakes salted. Seraphic sounded Serena's seraphine, soothing sad souls. Sweetly she sang sentimental songs, Samuel Seaton softly singing some sentences. So Samuel secured Serena, sincerely satisfied.—*Youth's Companion.*