

LITTLE FOLKS

The Dormouse.

The dormouse is a wise little creature, because it chooses sunshine, and not cellars, as do others of its kind. Except the harvest mouse, all the rest of these live underground. You know we have not very many wild animals in England, and a large number even of these burrow in the earth.

Foxes and rabbits inhabit holes, rats live in drains and dark corners, the mole works away out of sight, and ordinary mice scuttle along behind the wainscot of your room, as if you wake in the night you may sometimes hear.

But the dormouse has—at least so

may often see it as a pet in a cage, even if we have hunted in vain for it in the woods. There it will enjoy our bread and milk, though its natural food consists of nuts, acorns or fruit. The different shape of the fore and hind feet is shown in the diagram above.

When the little mother needs to construct a nursery, she scoops out a hole in the bank and lines it with moss to make it soft and comfortable. You may notice what strong feet she has for that purpose, and so well fitted too for grasping the bough when she climbs up after her food. And her claws are so nicely shaped and so adroit in gathering,

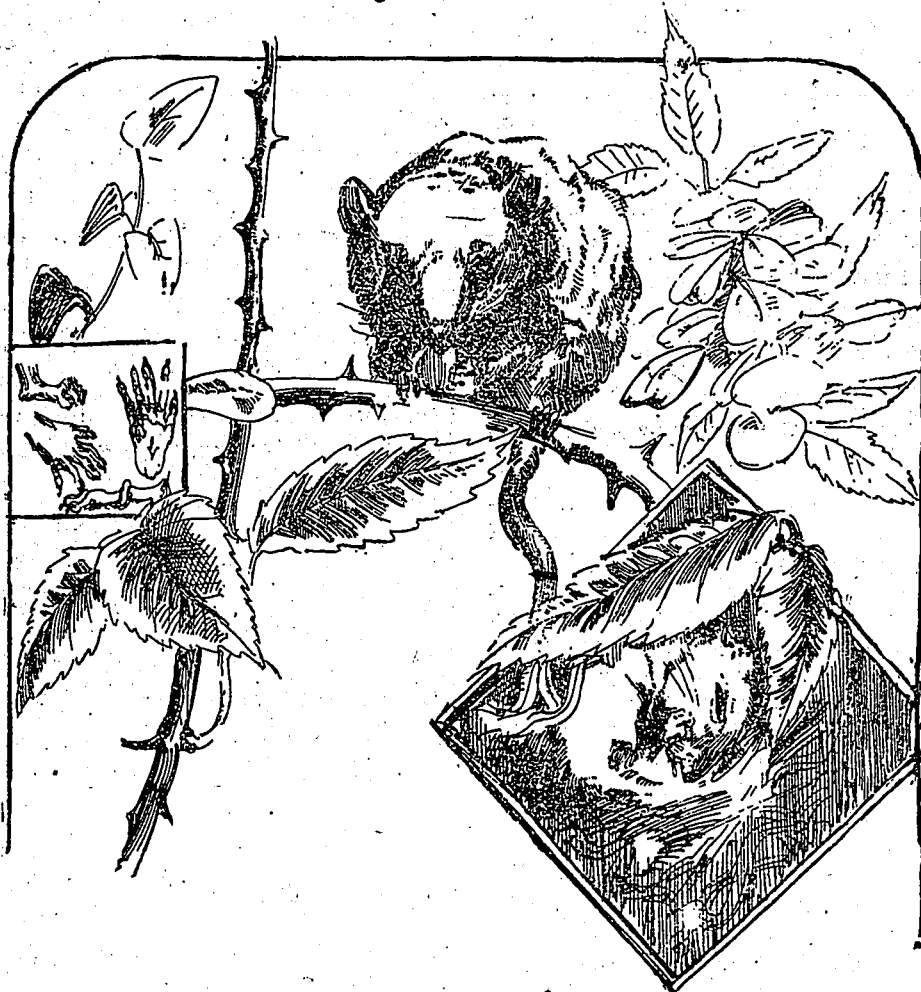
fade, but instead of being depressed by the season the dormouse is all alive. Again a home is wanted; whether the one used for a nursery can do duty afresh, history does not say; but somehow not far off a hole or a hollow must be found for a storehouse. So up and down the twigs it scampers; a nut here, an acorn there, a berry from the hedge, are one after another brought and deposited below till there is enough and to spare. Last of all the little worker creeps inside, shuts the door as it were, curls itself round and goes to sleep. The wintry wind may blow and the storm rage and the cold be bitter, but it will not matter. We do not suppose it is one unbroken nap, or what would be the good of the well-filled larder? We may believe that the occupant wakes up between whiles, nibbles a little at some dainty morsel, and then drops off again, till by-and-bye the spring sunshine darts into the cosy nook and the dormouse begins life anew.

But how did it know that winter was coming? Who told it to make ready for it so carefully? We leave you to answer the question and say—'God . . . doth teach him.' Isa. xxviii., 26.)—'Child's Companion.'

The Indian Boy.

(By the Rev. Albert Law, of Agra, N.W.P.)

May I commence my talk by saying that I am not talking to grown-ups at all this time? This is how the matter stands: Before I came out here I made a promise to a good many boys and girls over a thousand I dare say—that when I came home I would tell them something about the boys of India. Now, although mathematics is not my strong point, it is very clear that the boys and girls to whom I made that promise will be men and women by the time I come home—or will think they are, which is even more terrible. So as I have splendid opportunities for studying the Indian boy, inasmuch as I have seventy of them living in an orphanage near my house, I thought I had better tell you something about him now. I'm sorry I can't tell you anything about the girls too; but they don't come my way. I have my hands full of boys. In fact, just now, when it is holidays for them, I feel



it seems to us—better tastes. It haunts the woods and hedges, and though not uncommon, it creeps under the leaves and requires a good search for anyone to find it.

And it is a dear little beastie when it is found, and really partaking of some of the nature of the squirrel as well as of the mouse.

About the same size as the common mouse, it is rounder and more plump, while in its long tail, hairy at the end, and also in its color of reddish brown, it has some resemblance to the former. Its circular ears and its bright prominent eyes are peculiar to itself, and being of gentler temper and easily tamed, we

we might almost call them 'hands.' Sometimes a hollow tree will do instead of making a hole, and in either case the four or five blind little ones find a cosy home provided till they have grown into soft furry creatures, wide awake to face the world for themselves.

So the dormouse passes the summer days, but how about the winter? The nuts will have vanished, the berries will have been eaten, the snow will fall—must it lie down and die? No; it has been all provided for by the great and good Hand which is over the dormouse as well as over the sparrow.

Autumn draws on, leaves begin to