

© Coasting Cats! my nerves you thrill
As in your box you bounce and fly!
If Jack
and Jill
are



I think
you'll meet them
presently.
And they may feel constrained to say
That yours is quite a sudden way.

STAR TIME.

BY FRANK H. SWEET.

'Tis star time! 'tis star time
And time to go to bed;
Late eyes are sleepy eyes,
And tire the little head.

Far, far the tiny feet
Have wandered through the day,
Chasing the butterflies
And learning games to play.

Much, much, the little eyes
Discovered on the road,
Watching the men at work,
And riding on the load.

Star time! 'tis star time,
And time to go to bed;
Now I'll smooth the pillows
Beneath the sleepy head.

UNCLE TALKS.

WONDERFUL TREE OF MADAGASCAR.

There are trees on three sides of the homestead—a row of cherry-trees in the wide lane, some noble, towering maples in the rear, with a half-dozen fruit trees, and right before the door, and halfway between it and the gate, a grand old apple-tree, whose wide-spreading limbs make a favorite seat for the boys in summer, and whose sea of blossoms in spring is a marvel of beauty to all who live in the neighborhood. Its apples are the biggest, reddest and sweetest on any tree for miles around. But some of its limbs are showing signs of decay, and ere many more summers elapse the old tree must be brought under the axe.

"Dear old tree!" said the boys, when Uncle John, after inspecting it, the other day, told them of this decision. "It seems like a friend to us," added Tom.

"The young folks will miss it very much," said mamma, sadly.

"Yes," said Uncle John. "There is

no plant in the whole world so deserving of man's affection as a tree; yet there is none that exacts less care and trouble at his hands. In our climate we think less of trees than people do in some other parts of the world."

"Oh, yes," said Ellie; "I remember reading the Bible, a little while ago, in Deuteronomy 22. 19, where it says 'the tree of the field is a man's

life,' but I never could make out just what it meant."

"It means," replied uncle, "that the trees are necessary to his comfort and, in some parts of our earth, to his very existence. There are trees in some countries that seem to supply almost everything that man needs for his subsistence."

"Tell us of them, uncle, please," cried Ted, who had been an eager listener. "Are they big apple-trees like ours?"

"No, my boy; they bear something that may not be quite so toothsome, but it is much more precious than a sweet apple. Humboldt," continued Uncle John, "mentions a tree he saw in South America, and which he calls the cow-tree. It is a tree so called because it takes the place of a cow in supplying the people with milk."

"How funny to think of wooden cows that give real good, sweet milk!" cried Ellie.

"Yes," continued the traveller, "these trees grow out of the rocks. They have large, wood roots, and the leaves are dry and leathery. For several months of the year no rain falls to moisten the leaves and the branches look dry and dead; but when the trunk is pierced, a sweet and nourishing milk oozes out. The best time for milking, the natives say, is at sunrise, and at that hour they go out with bowls and calabashes to pierce the wooden cows. They make incisions in the branches, and soon have the bowls overflowing with nice, fresh milk, which some drink on the spot, while others take it home to the little ones."

"But does it taste like real milk, uncle?" asked Tom, incredulously.

"So I gather from what travellers say. The smell is pleasant and the taste agreeable."

"There is surely no other plant like it in the world," said Ted, in wondering tones.

"Wrong, my boy. There are others, but they don't give milk. There's a remarkable tree in the island of Madagascar,

called, the 'Traveller's Tree.' The branches don't grow out of the trunk, but spring out in a line, like the spokes of a wheel. Each branch grows at the end of a big, broad leaf, which spreads out like a fan. Under the branches a dew collects in the evening in a myriad of drops that form little streams which run down the lower side of the branches. At the base of the branch is a cuplike hollow, where the dew gathers, and thirsty travellers have just to poke something between the branches and hold a cup or jar under, and it is speedily filled with sweet refreshing water."

"Another illustration of how our Heavenly Father provides for his creatures in all places," remarked mamma from the sofa.

"Yes; all trees are useful in some way or other," responded uncle, "but there are some whose every leaf, branch and fibre are valuable in various ways. The coconut is one of these; its fruit yields oil, a sugary milk and solid food, while from its rind or shell are made spoons, cups, bowls, and even tables. The bark of the tree is made into twine, cloth and mats; the tender young buds are eaten, and the sap makes capital sugar. The tough, leathery leaves are used for sails for boats, for sacks, for baskets, and thatch for cottages."

"Well!" exclaimed the deeply interested group, "surely no other tree can be so useful."

"Ah, but the bamboo in China is even more so," was the smiling reply. "It grows about eighty feet in height, and has neither blossom nor fruit. Its leaves are short and slender, but many of its canes are thicker than your papa's arm. The biggest stems are used for pillars of buildings and for rafters and planks, and its leaves are woven as thatching for the roof. The fibre makes mats for the floor. In many Chinese houses the bamboo is made into bedsteads, tables and chairs, and workmen also turn it into umbrellas, hats, baskets, cups, brooms, shoe-soles, pipes, bows and arrows, and sedan-chairs. The finer fibre is spun into twine, and the shavings are used for stuffing pillows. Its leaves make a capital cloak for wet days, and the chopsticks, which you have seen Chinamen use instead of knife and fork, are also made out of its stems. But that isn't the whole: its tender shoots are boiled and eaten and the pulp is transformed into paper, and the pith into pickles and sweetmeats. Boats, floats, sails, cable, rigging, fishing-rods and fishing-baskets are all made from the same tree. Chinese farmers have it in the form of carts, wheelbarrows, ploughs, wheels and fences. In fact, I might go on for an hour telling you about this remarkable tree which is everywhere used by the Celestials. It is the most useful plant on the globe."