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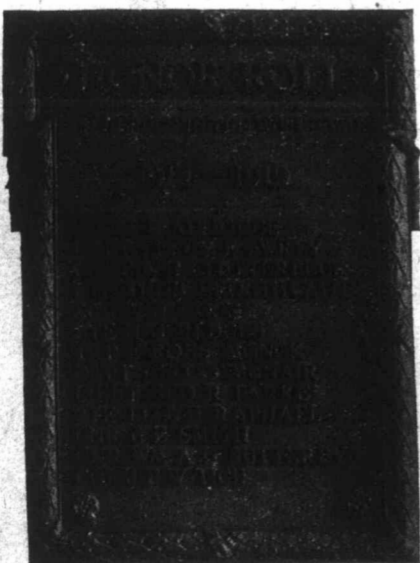
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For the Family

Birds of the Merry Forest

By LILLIAN LEVERIDGE

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CHAPTER XXI. (Continued.)

An Hour of Suspense.

All this time Jack Crow and the Bluebird had been nowhere in sight, but now Jack suddenly appeared, very quietly, on a bough close to his unfortunate comrade.

"Hello!" he called, rather as if doubtful of his welcome, "how are you getting along?"

"I don't think I want to talk to you, Jack Crow," Dimple answered a little crossly. "If you hadn't enticed me up there I wouldn't be in such a pickle now."

"I think you meant to come anyway, didn't you?" Jack asked meekly.

This was nothing but the truth, and Dimple was honest enough to own up to it. "Where's the Bluebird?" she asked.

"She was so badly scared that she flew right away," Jack explained. "I was frightened too, but I stayed where I could see you."

While Dimple and Jack had been talking there was a continuous rustle of wings in the trees around, and very soon the children were all surrounded by a regular company of their old bird friends. There were a number of new ones too, beautiful birds whose names were as yet unknown. Among them were a pair of Scarlet Tanagers, known to them also as Soldier Birds, whose brilliant red coats with black trimmings made it hard to look at anything else while they were around; also an Indigo Bird, blue as the sky, two little golden Canaries, a beautiful new bird with rose on its breast, and some of the large and interesting family of Warblers.

Every one came close up to Dimple in the tree, and didn't forget the faithful little watcher below either. Every one had a little song to sing or a word of cheer to give.

And so the time of anxious waiting passed much more quickly, and even pleasantly, than they had thought possible. Then along the pathway came, nearer and nearer, the thud of hurrying feet, and oh, joy! There was Daddy, and close behind him, Mr. West and Jimmie.

Daddy looked very pale, though drops of perspiration were standing out on his forehead. He was immensely relieved to find Dimple still alive—alive, indeed, but by no means safe!

"What's to be done?" panted Mr. West, when they had taken a swift survey of the situation. "Pretty ticklish business, isn't it?"

"Daddy," called Dimple eagerly, "please hurry and get me down. My sash is beginning to tear. I felt it a few minutes ago."

"All right, Sweetheart," Daddy called encouragingly, "Don't worry. We'll soon have you down."

But all the same, Daddy felt by no means as hopeful as he sounded. It was a ticklish business, for even a slight shaking of the bough might hurl the child down into the water; but how else was she to be reached?

There was no time to stop to consider. Daddy thought and spoke quickly. "You climb the tree Mr. West, and see what you can do. I expect she'll fall, and I'll be ready to catch her."

Immediately he pulled off his coat and swam out under the bough where Dimple hung, while Mr. West made what speed he could up the tree.

"You must be brave, Sweetheart," Daddy called up to Dimple from the water. "Mr. West is going to try to get you down, but if you fall, remember your father's arms are waiting to catch you, so don't be a bit afraid."

The suspense was terrible for everybody, but it was soon over. Before Mr. West had even touched the bough, the torn silk sash gave way, and Dimple felt falling, falling, falling.

Dimly she saw her father's face and outstretched arms below. Then came a sudden shock and a splash. She felt Daddy's arms clasped around her, and felt the cool water closing over both their heads, then she went to sleep.

It was only for a few minutes. The shock had stunned her, and Daddy had been drawn under for a few seconds, but that was all. When Dimple awoke, the joy of finding herself safe in his arms, on the solid earth once more, soon revived her.

Very few words were spoken. There would be time and breath for talking by and by. Daddy quickly removed Dimple's wet dress and wrapped her up in his coat. And then the little party set out for home. Daddy carried Dimple, Mr. West carried Boy Blue part of the way, and Jimmie carried the baskets and the two strings of fish.

"You came quicker than we thought you ever could," Dimple whispered by and by, "and if you had been five minutes later you wouldn't have found me."

(To be continued.)

ORIGIN OF "FRENCH LEAVE"

During the hearing of an action for alleged slander and false imprisonment, brought by an ex-private against his former commanding officer in the King's Bench Division, Justice McCordie explained the origin of "French leave."

It did not arise, he said, out of the former French wars, consequent upon the escape of French prisoners, but in the early part of the 19th century in the salons of France.

Certain guests, not aware of the higher acts of courtesy, were in the habit of leaving without saying good-bye to the host or hostess, and it became a practice. Unfortunately that practice was adopted in certain circles of English society about the same time, and, therefore, it was said that if a man left without saying good-bye to his host he took "French leave," following the practice in France.—London "Chronicle."

SETTLED!

A party at the Zoo stood puzzled before a bird.

"It's a heagle," said one.

"It's not; it's a howl," said another.

They appealed to a bystander.

"Both wrong," he said shortly, "it's a nawk!"

AN OLD PROVERB.

A Chinaman was much worried by a vicious-looking dog which barked at him in an angry manner. "Don't be afraid of him," said a friend. "You know the old proverb: 'A barking dog never bites.'"

"Yes," said the Chinaman, "you know proverb, I know proverb, but does dog know proverb?"