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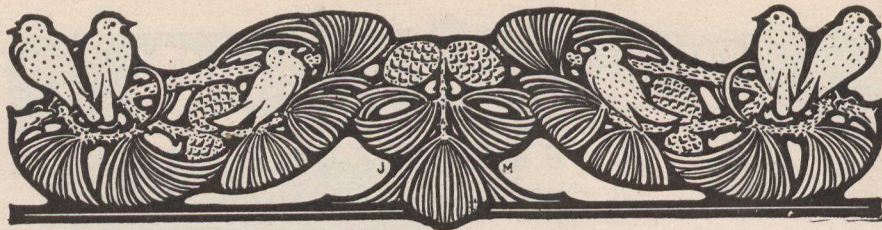
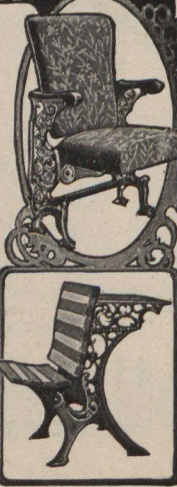
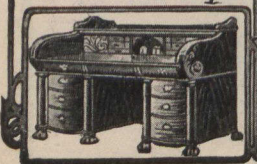
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F O R T H E C H I L D R E N

ERIC AND "THE COLONEL."

By PHILA BUTLER BOWMAN.

ERIC went slowly out into the garden. For three long, creeping hours the sunshine and the birds and the smell of the clover had been calling, calling, while he lay in bed and wished mother would come and say the words which would show him that he was once more free and forgiven. "When will my little son learn self-control?" mother had said sorrowfully as she led him upstairs and began to unfasten the shoes from a pair of little feet that had taken him again out into the forbidden street and away from home.

"What shall mother do to make him remember not to run away?"

"How would tying him up do?" came Uncle Ben's merry voice from the next room. "I'll drive a peg for him just as I have for the old rooster. He runs away, too, and gets into the next-door neighbour's garden, and makes no end of bother. But the queer thing is that all the little chicks love their mother so much that they won't run away. I'm glad, for I should hate to see the old mother hen wandering about worried and anxious, looking for them. It must be a terrible trouble."

Mother did not smile as she often did at what Uncle Ben said. There was a weary look in her face that went to Eric's heart. He hung his head in shame, and was glad when mother went out softly and left him alone "to think it over."

He was really so sorry. He had not meant to disobey; but it was so hard to keep just where he belonged, and such a little step over the forbidden boundary seemed to make him forget all about his promises.

One day it had been an organ grinder and a monkey, oh, the cutest little monkey with a little red jacket,—a dear little monkey that bowed, and held out his cap for pennies, and cuddled right down in Eric's arms!

Probably Eric walked miles that day, through the hot, dusty streets, and mother was almost sick with anxiety.

Another time it was an unbroken colt that went curveting by, escaped from the stables; and every bound of its light hoofs, and toss of its mane, and glance of its eye was an irresistible call to Eric to follow.

To-day it was a man who sold patent medicines. There was a chime of bells under his cart. His horses had red tassels on their heads, and he threw out little boxes of tiny bonbons at beguiling intervals.

Now any one can see that these were real temptations that Eric had to battle, and Eric knew this, and was thinking of it as he went slowly down into the garden and the sunshine and the smell of clover.

Suddenly he stopped, for there, within a few feet of him, was old Colonel, the rooster, tied to a stake and tugging to be freed at sight of Eric. Poor old Colonel!

Then it flashed across Eric what Uncle Ben had said: "The little chicks love their mother too much to run away from her, but the old rooster has to be tied up."

Eric loved mother so! He stood looking down at old Colonel, and then turned and ran back to mother.

"Mamma," he cried, "will you untie old Colonel, and let me have the care of him, and keep him from running away for the rest of the day? I will take a stick to drive him, and some corn to coax him back when I can, but I know if I have to keep something from running away, it will help me remember how you feel, and I do want to stay by you like the little chicks."

There was a soft light in mother's eyes as she untied old Colonel—a light which mothers know about. It is kindled in the heart. It shone all that long, hot afternoon, as she watched a little figure trudging about after a big, white rooster—coaxing, driving, feeding.

And glad indeed was Eric that chickens go early to roost.

It was a tired but happy little boy that mother folded in her arms that night.

"Eric," came Uncle Ben's voice from the door, "I have some tickets to the circus to-morrow, which I should like to use if I could find the right sort of a little boy who would like to go and see all the animals."

"For me, mamma? Does he mean me?" and Eric sat up in bed with sparkling eyes.

"Yes, dear, I am sure he means you, but go to sleep now."

The clock struck eight, as mother bent over the flushed little face to give another good-night kiss to the brave little boy who had tried. He stirred in his sleep and said, "The little chickens loved their mother."—*Kindergarten Review.*

* * *

THE other evening Marion's mamma called down to her from the nursery to come and get ready for bed. Much to her surprise and delight the little one came briskly up the stairs without any of the coaxing that is necessary usually.

"Now, Marion," said her mother, "you have been such a good little girl and came so quickly when mother called that she will read to you for a few minutes."

Marion thoroughly enjoyed the story, and when it was finished and before it could be prevented she slid from her mother's knee and ran down to the foot of the stairs.

"Now, muzzer, you call me," she instructed.

"Marion, come up stairs," complied her mother.

"All right, I'se toming," and just as fast as her chubby legs would carry her she came toddling up.

"Come get undressed for bed," said mother.

"No, muzzer, you must say, 'You been such a dood little dirl and came so kicky muzzer will read to you for a few minutes.'"

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