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FOR THE CHILDREN

UNCLE NED'S MAGIC.

By BELLE LAURENCE.

PATTER, patter, drip, drip, sang the rain on the roof. Tearfully Teddy glanced from the window.

"O dear!" he sighed.

"O dear!" echoed Frank and Betty.

"Guess daddy couldn't make a fire on the rocks to-day," said Frankie, with pictures of the intended corn roast vividly before him. This was very evident by the sudden down-pour which followed his remarks. Even sight of the lake was shut out from him.

It isn't such an easy thing to amuse two eager little boys and a little girl on a rainy day. Sailing boats in the bathtub was fast becoming tiresome. A sudden gust of wind rattled the windows, and the children did not know that somebody had opened the door and was standing right behind them, and they did not know, either, that that somebody was Uncle Ned.

The children had not seen Uncle Ned for a long time, so of course they were very glad to see him, and just at the right time, too. Somehow uncles always happen to come at just the right time, so it was not any wonder that he was besieged with kisses, and coaxed to tell a story. Thoughtfully Uncle Ned gazed at the logs in the fireplace.

"I'll tell you, chums," he said, prompted by a sudden idea, "let's have another magic trick, and this shall be called the 'Russian Mountains.' And now I'll get the things necessary."

While the children were gathering round the table, uncle returned with a small kerosene lamp, a strip of paper about four inches wide and about three feet long, a glass of water, a teaspoon, and a small plate. These he placed on the table, while from the long bookcase he selected four books, decreasing in size from a very large to a tiny book.

He lighted the lamp and held the strip of paper over the top near enough so that it soon became covered with thick, greasy lampblack. Then on the backs of the books, which he stood upright and about four inches apart, he pinned the paper, the greasy side toward him, allowing the end nearest the tiny book to rest in the plate.

"Now, then," said Uncle Ned, "we are ready," and taking a little water in the teaspoon, he let it fall drop by drop upon the paper.

"Gracious!" said Frankie. "Just see how it rolls!" and sure enough, one after another, the tiny drops rolled down the inclined plane of one book, gaining speed enough each time to mount the next, and so on into the plate.

The children each in turn dropped some water on the paper, and watched with delight the tiny drops striving to see which could gain the plate in the quickest time. It was near supper-time when they thought to look out of the window—and what a surprise greeted them! The rain had ceased, the dark, threatening clouds had gone, and the sun was shining bright and clear. The next day they could have their picnic, and a much better time because they would have Uncle Ned with them.—*Youth's Companion.*

* * *

A FINE LADY.

By Ethel Hawkes.

Johnnie and Kate and Nan at play,

Out in a field on a summer's day.

"When I'm grown up," said little Nan,

"I'll be as fine as ever I can.

I'll do my hair just so—like this!

And wear fine clothes, and be called 'Young Miss';

I'll ride in a cart, all over the town,
To show the people my fine new gown.

I'll be the prettiest that ever I can,
And I won't say 'No,' to a handsome man.

But if he's ugly I won't have him.
Or if he sneezes, or his name is Jim.

But best of all, you know!" cried she,
"Are mudpies, and Kate, and Johnnie and me.

But its getting dark, we must be spry,
Lest ma might spank us, and then we'd cry.

And pr'aps in corners we'd have to sit,
And that wouldn't be fine ladies a bit!

So all the kiddies trooped home to tea,
"We were not spanked," said they to me.

* * *

WINTER JEWELS.

A million little diamonds

Twinkled in the trees,

And all the little maidens said

"A jewel, if you please."

But while they held their hands out-stretched,

To catch the diamonds gay,

A million little sunbeams came

And stole them all away.

* * *

FEBRUARY.

The Elves' Calendar.

The Elfland sprites took fleecy clouds

or purple, blue, and pink,

And 'brodered them with sunbeams,

oh! so bright they'd make you wink;

And next some silver dew they took,

with dainty magic spoons,

And where 't was sprinkled, there it

twinkled like a million moons;

Then over all of this, some hearts

and darts and flowers were laid—

And that's the Elfland secret of how

Valentines are made.

—*St. Nicholas.*

* * *

THE SLEEPY SONG.

By JOSEPHINE DODGE DASKAM.

As soon as the fire burns red and low

And the house upstairs is still,

She sings me a queer little sleepy song

Of sheep that go over the hill.

The good little sheep run quick and

soft,

Their colours are grey and white;

They follow their leader nose to tail,

For they must be home by night.

And one slips over and one comes

next,

And one runs after behind,

The grey one's nose at the white one's

tail,

The top of the hill they find.

And when they get to the top of the

hill

They quietly slip away,

But one runs over and one comes

next;

Their colours are white and grey.

And over they go and over they go,

And over the top of the hill,

The good little sheep run thick and

fast,

And the house upstairs is still.

And one slips over and one comes

next,

The good little, grey little sheep!

I watch how the fire burns red and

low,

And she says that I fall asleep.

—*McClure's.*

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