

••• LITTLE FOLKS •••

The Ten Yellow Cradles on the Green Doorstep.

(By Ida T. Thurston, in 'Outlook'.)

It was Nansie who discovered the cradles. Big Sister had discovered Nansie, forlorn and disconsolate, sitting on the steps and casting longing glances after Jack and Jimmy.

'They said—they didn't want me a-taggin'!' Nansie sobbed, and one big salt tear rolled over her round cheek and tumbled plump into her little red mouth.

'I'm going over into Fairyland, and you can "tag" there if you want to,' said Big Sister, smiling down into the little grieved face.

Nansie snatched her pink sun-bonnet and sprang up, forgetting Jack and Jimmy and all her woes.

'Oh, may I? and where is Fairyland?' she cried.

'Over yonder, by the brook. Most people don't know that it is Fairyland—but it is,' Sister replied.

When they reached the cool, shady place down by the brook, Big Sister said:

'Now, Nansie, these are all fairy houses—these green things that people call weeds. Just you watch and see what you can discover.'

The little girl's blue eyes were big with wonder. 'Truly fairy houses?' she questioned. 'Are there fairies in them now, Sister?'

'Perhaps, in some of them. Others are vacant now—houses to rent, you know—and some are empty because the people that live in them are away.'

'Oh, Sister, look! Are those—anything?' cried Nansie, pointing a chubby forefinger at one of the fairy houses.

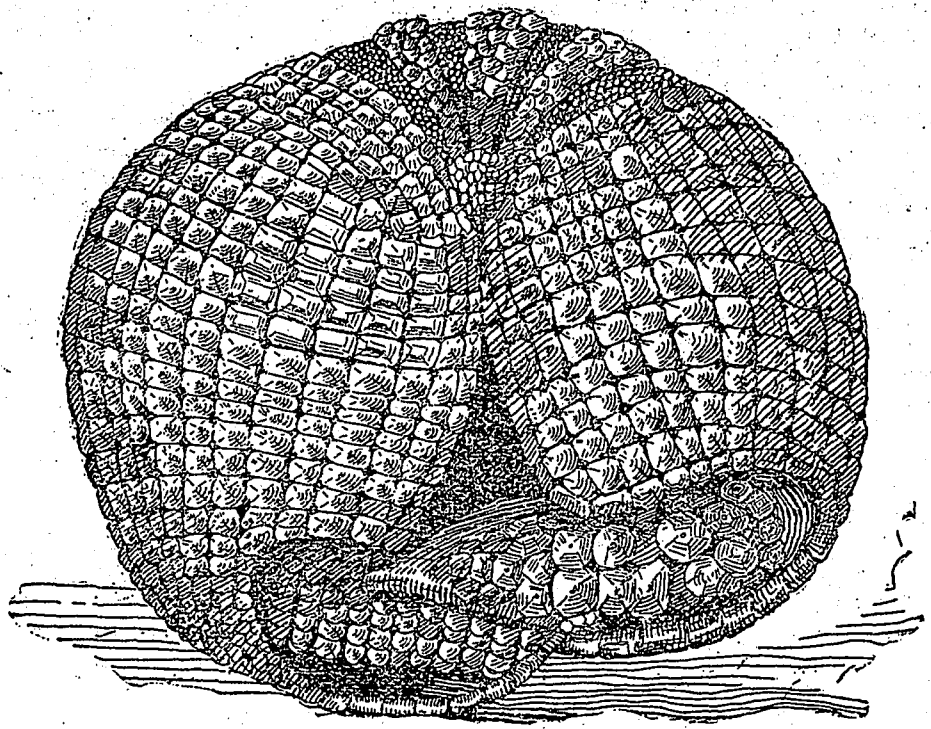
Big Sister laughed. 'You certainly have sharp eyes,' she answered. 'Yes, those are fairy cradles. The little mother has left them on that green doorstep.'

Nansie stooped and peered eagerly at the tiny cradles. Bright yellow they were, and set in two even rows.

'But—I don't see any babies in 'em,' she said, with a doubtful glance at Sister.

'The babies are there, though,' Big Sister replied, 'but they are all fast asleep; and, Nansie, I am going to carry them home.'

'But how can you—they're so



THE ARMADILLO.

I do not think that you would guess what this strange-looking thing in the picture is. Perhaps you might think that it is a shell-fish of some kind, but it is not. It is a living animal. Besides its strange look it has a strange name, for it is called an armadillo. It is covered with a kind of hard shell, which keeps it from being hurt. When it is frightened, it rolls itself up round like a ball, as you see it in the picture, so that very little of it can be seen except the horny shell. All God's works are wonderful, but I think that the armadillo is one of the most wonderful of them all.—'Our Little Dots.'

drefful little?' cried Nansie, anxiously.

'I'll have to take doorstep and all,' and with that Big Sister carefully broke off the green doorstep and walked on with it. 'There are plenty more steps left,' she added, 'and the fairies won't mind.'

As soon as they reached home she filled a flower-pot with soft earth from the garden, laid the green doorstep on top, and covered the pot with a glass finger-bowl.

Nansie, peering through the bowl, eyed the tiny yellow cradles doubtfully.

'They must be drefful still babies,' she murmured.

'They won't be still very long,' laughed Big Sister.

Nansie peeped through the glass bowl many times in the next two days. The third morning, when she went to look, she cried excitedly,

'Oh, Sister, come quick!'

Sister came. 'The babies are awake sure enough,' she said.

'But, Sister,' exclaimed Nansie, 'see—they're eating up the green doorstep—and oh, what funny black babies they are!'

Before noon the black babies had eaten every scrap of that doorstep, and Sister brought three more and put them under the bowl. Nansie watched with eager interest.

'They eat all the time, don't they?' she remarked. 'And they grow like Jack's beanstalk!'

But when she went to look at the black babies a few days later she stood and stared in bewildered surprise. There lay the last doorstep that Sister had put in the night before. There were three little bites on one end, but that was the only sign of the fat black babies.

'Oh, Sister, somebody's let 'em out,' wailed Nansie.

'No,' answered Sister, in a comforting tone, 'they're gone to sleep again.'

'But how could they, without any cradles?' questioned Nansie, doubtfully.

'Last night,' began Sister, 'they all grew very sleepy, and then they slipped down under the soft dirt and set to work and made silk nightgowns for themselves and put them on and went to sleep. Now you'll have to wait a few days