

# Young Canada Club

By DIXIE PATTON

## HURRY ALONG YOUR STORIES

The subject of the new story contest, as I told you last week, is "Interesting Things in Nature," and I want all the little boys and girls who have watched things out-of-doors to tell us about the things they have seen Nature's children doing. You may write about a plant, animal, insect or bird that you have watched carefully. Here are the other conditions of the contest:

The stories must be in The Guide office not later than June 20.

They must be written in pen and ink and on one side of the paper only.

Each boy or girl must get his or her parent or teacher to certify that the story is original and that the age is correct.

Any boy or girl under seventeen may compete for a prize even tho the winner in another competition.

All stories must be addressed (this is important) to Dixie Patton, Grain Growers' Guide, Winnipeg, Man.

Finally for the best three stories we will give as prizes three very jolly story books, the kind of books that boys and girls like to get off in a corner by themselves and read.

DIXIE PATTON.

## TREE TOADS

(By Raymond L. Ditmars in House and Garden)

Suppose we follow the seasons, and in that way get acquainted with our toads and frogs. After the winds of early March comes a day that is a real event. We feel electrified with the soft air and nature's sleeping family begins to stir. A warm, sweet night, and another of these wonderful days is ushered in. With it comes the chorus from the marshes. There is a ring of positive joy in those shrill, piping notes. We go to the edge of a pool from which protrude the dead stalks of last summer's reeds. The chorus lessens as we approach the water, until a solitary "peep" here and there gives way to silence. The observer must stand quite still for two or three minutes, and the solitary, piping notes begin once more, timidly at first, then grow in volume and number until the pool resounds with them. Yet no sign of life is to be seen; and strange it is, for one of the songsters is immediately in front of the observer—not two steps away. How many of us have been mystified by this spring call that carries a good part of a mile! Our thought is naturally that it comes from some big frog or toad-like creature that could easily be seen. Quite different is the truth. The creature of the penetrating call is the pygmy among toads. It could comfortably roost upon a dime. The reason you fail to see him comes from his wise habit of ducking to the side of the reed away from you, like a squirrel on a tree trunk. We say he, because only the males among frogs or toads do the singing; and while it may seem strange for a toad to be perching on a vertical stem, this eccentricity is explained by his structure, for he is a tree toad belonging to the genus Hyla, and popularly called Pickering's Tree Toad, in honor of a famous naturalist. His status may not be altogether clear, as the question naturally arises as to the right of a tree toad haunting the reeds of a pool. That is the breeding place, and toads and frogs breed only in the spring. Between the reptiles and the fishes they begin life under water and transform to creatures of the air. If these were space to explain it could be shown that this double method of existence shows the evolution from the hideous, almost jelly-like amphibians of millions of years ago to the comparatively rare, cold blooded life of the present. A final word about Pickering's Tree Toad should be in praise of the big voice of this little toad. In proportion to his weight he is the star noise-producer among wild life in this country.

Early spring is fickle, and the opening chorus of the pygmy tree toad, the first messenger of warm weather, may be brought to an abrupt close by savage

winds that send the "peepers" squirming back into the mud where they have passed the winter's sleep or hibernation. Again the weather breaks warm and mellow and the piping chorus comes with greater vigor. With it comes other sounds from pools in the soggy woods; these waters get chilled by marginal sheet-ice and melting snow. The new sounds form a continuous low chattering and rasping, and denote the awakening of the wood frog and the leopard frog, but of the frogs we will speak later; we must first get acquainted with the toads.

## A LONG JOURNEY

When I was nearly four years old my papa said mamma could take my baby brother and me to England to see all our relations. So we drove from the farm seven miles to Craik. We got on the cars and we went a long, long way to Montreal. Then we got on a big steamship and went down the beautiful St. Lawrence river into the Atlantic ocean to Liverpool.

Then we got a cab at the customs house and drove to the station, where we got on a train and went to Leeds where my grandma lived. She was so glad to see us. We went to the seaside and played in the sands. We had a good time visiting all summer. In September we sailed back in the same boat, the Victorian. In the Atlantic ocean we saw some icebergs. When we got to Regina we went home to the farm.

LILIAN WARNES, Age 8.  
Craik, Sask.

## A FIRE

About four years ago the train set a prairie fire when there was a strong wind blowing. It was on a Sunday afternoon. It jumped the trail and the government road and got on a field of wheat which was ready to thresh. It jumped from stook to stook and burnt about twenty stooks. A great many people came with their horses and plows. My father had only three horses, and one of them was away, so the two horses had to pull the sulky plow. The section men came too. The fire lasted all night. The horses had their supper about half past ten at night.

WINNIE WAINWRIGHT, Age 12.  
Borden, Sask.

## A JOYFUL SURPRISE

One day, when I went to school, my teacher said we could go down to the river for a picnic. All the children were glad to go. We were surprised because our teacher said we were going to have very hard lessons that day.

It was about two miles from the schoolhouse to the river. When we got there we played games and had lots of fun. Our teacher printed all of our initials on the sand bar.

Then we spread our dinners out on the sand bar and had a nice time. There were several of us there.

After dinner we ran races and played in the water. We threw stones in the water and watched them splash. Some of the little ones fell in the water and the teacher made them sit on the bank.

Then about two o'clock the teacher and some of us went to find berries. We could not find any so we came back. Then some of the boys said they knew where there were some berries, so we girls went with them.

While we were gone the teacher stayed and told stories to the others. As we were coming back we noticed a green boat coming up toward us. We were afraid there were some men in there that would do something to us. So we ran to where she was and hitched up the horse and started up the bank. We did not get in, as it was hard on the horse to pull us up the bank. When we hurried it frightened the horse and instead of going up the bank he backed down it, but we all pushed and pushed and at last we got it up the hill and then we started for home.

NEOMA HAWKINS.  
Age 13.



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