

Playing Fox.

"Foxes have holes," said Robbie Ray. It was part of the verse he had learned the Sunday before. "Papa, what do foxes have holes for?"

"To live in," said papa. "Every fox has his hole, and it is his home."

Robbie thought it over awhile, and then asked:

"Does he have any roof to it?"

Papa explained how the foxes dig into the side of a hill, and the earth above them is a roof to cover them.

"Foxes have holes," Robbie repeated again after he had gone out to play; and he thrust his little spade down into the ground, and turned up the mellow earth. "I mean to play I'm a fox, and make me a hole to live in. There isn't any hill here," looking round the long level space, enclosed by a high fence, which was the yard where he was allowed to play; "but I can make believe there is, or maybe I can cover my hole with a board roof, after I get it deep enough."

He worked a good while, till he was warm, and tired. Then he sat down and put his feet into the hole.

"It isn't deep enough yet," said he. It's pretty hard work. I have to make it big, because I am a big fox."

After resting awhile he went to work again. But the sun was high, and the day was hot, and he tired sooner than before. He concluded to go in and rest till after dinner.

In the afternoon he came out again and dug till the hole was big enough so he could sit down in it. He concluded that would do. Now for a roof. He hunted about the place, and found some bits of board and an old box. One side of the box was broken out.

Robbie dragged the box to his hole, and turned it upside down over it.

"It makes a lovely roof," he said, "and the broken places will be for the fox to go in and out, and these boards will do for a door."

He crawled in and sat down, thinking, "it's a pretty good home for a fox."

Some of the loose earth had fallen back as he scrambled through the low doorway. He scraped it together with his hands, and threw it out. Then he reached up for the bits of board and set them up for a door. Presently he heard the sound of raindrops over his head.

"Guess it's going to rain," he said. "But I don't care. I've got a good house." He sat still, and listened, smiling, as the drops came faster and louder.

Soon he heard his mother calling, "Robbie! Robbie!" He knew she was at the back door of the house, looking all about the yard, wondering where he was.

"She thinks I'm a boy," said he. "But I ain't. I'm a fox! And foxes live in holes."

He did not answer the call, and his mother shut the door, and went to the front to call "Robbie! Robbie!" in vain. And the rain came down faster and faster.

Robbie's conscience wasn't quite easy, for he knew he ought to have answered the call, but it seemed to him such a rare pleasure to sit in his hole, and listen to the rain pouring on the roof over his head, that he wouldn't think about anything else.

The rain came in great sheets that made a noise almost like thunder on the roof so near his head. He began to be alarmed. "I hope 't isn't going to be a flood?" he thought.

Then a little stream of water came trickling down the back of his neck. He turned quickly. Water was running into the hole from the outside. Before he had time to think what to do a larger stream came pouring down from the opposite side. It wasn't clean water, either; but all mixed with the soft earth he had dug out. He found himself sitting in a pool which was growing deeper every instant. The fox was in a fair way to be drowned out of his hole.

"I've got to go in the house! I have! And how am I going to get there when the rain comes down in great big floods?"

He struggled out through mud and water and ran for the back door with all his might. It was fastened and he had to pound, and call till he made his mother hear. And all the time the rain was dashing down upon him and drenching him, and doing its best to wash off the mud that had stuck to his clothes, and smeared his face and hands, and even his hair, for he had lost his hat in his hurry.

A very drenched and pitiable object to meet his mother's eyes when at last she opened the door! She seized his arm, and drew him quickly over the threshold upon a slip of oilcloth that was near the door.

"Stand still there," she said. "I can't have you dripping mud all over my clean kitchen. Oh, Robbie! how could you?"

She didn't say another word then, but hurried to fill the little bath tub with warm water. The wet clothes were stripped off, and Robbie was washed, and rubbed, and rinsed, and finally wiped with a vigor and thoroughness quite unusual.

When he was dressed in clean, dry clothes, and all traces of the mud and water removed from the kitchen floor, Robbie's mother sat down, and drew from him the whole story.

"I'm just as sorry I didn't answer you, mamma! I will next time," said he when all was told, feeling very sure that he deserved punishment.

"I will forgive you this time," said his mamma, "but don't you think it would be a good idea to tell all your little plans to me? It will save you a great deal of trouble if you do."

Robbie nodded very gravely. "Now you must say this three times to help you remember it, 'I must always come when mamma calls.'"

Robbie said it three times, and then, of his own will, he added, "And I am going to tell you, always, all my little plans."

Little Kindnesses.

To draw up the arm-chair and get the slippers for father; to watch if any little service can be rendered to mother; to help a brother; even to

leave an exciting game of ball, to show your sister how to get over a hard place in her lesson—how pleasant these little kindnesses make home!

A little boy has a hard lesson given him at school, and his teacher asks him if he thinks he can get it; for a moment the little fellow hangs down his head, but the next he looks brightly up. "I can get my sister to help me," he says.

That is right, sister; help little brother, and you are binding a tie round his heart that may save him in many an hour of dark temptation.

"Sister, I've dropped a stitch in my knitting; I tried to pick it up, but it has run down, and I can't fix it."

The little girl's face is flushed, and she watches her sister with a nervous anxiety, while she replaces the paughty stitch.

"Oh, I am so glad!" she says, as she receives it again from the hands of her sister, all nicely arranged. "You are so kind, Mary."

"Bring it to me sooner next time, and then it won't be so bad," says the gentle voice of Mary. The little one bounds away with a light heart to finish her task.

Brothers and sisters, "Love one another" is a good Christmas lesson. Learn it well, and ask God to help you to practice it all the year round.

The Prize Sheep.

Mr. Charles Hancock, the celebrated animal painter, relates the following story:—

"I was once staying with Lord Kinaird, at his seat in Scotland, when his lordship expressed a wish that I should see some of his prize sheep, which were then feeding, with some hundreds of others, on a brow of a hill about three miles from the house. So calling his shepherd he asked him to have the prize sheep fetched up as quickly as he could.

"The shepherd whistled, when a fine old sheepdog appeared before him, and, seated on his hind quarters, evidently awaited orders. What passed between the shepherd and the dog, I do not know, but the faithful creature manifestly understood his instructions. He darted off toward the sheep, at the same time giving a significant bark which called two younger sheepdogs to join him.

"Accustomed as I was to the remarkable sagacity of collie dogs, I was amazed at what now took place. On one side of the hill was a river, on the other side a dense forest. One of the younger dogs on arriving at the foot of the hill, turned to the left, while the other darted off to the right. The former stationed himself between the sheep and the river, while the latter stood between the sheep and the forest.

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DIVIDEND NO. 34

Notice is hereby given that a dividend at the rate of 7 per cent. per annum has this day been declared on the paid-up capital stock of the company for the half-year ending 30th June inst., and that the same will be payable at the office of the company, No. 7th Church street, Toronto, on and after SECOND JULY prox.

The transfer books will be closed from 16th to 30th June, instant, both days inclusive.

By order of the board.
JAMES MASON, Manager.
Toronto, June 4th, 1896.

The old dog now darted into the middle of the flock, when the sheep scampered right and left, but were kept at bay by the two watchers. The old dog speedily singled out the particular sheep required, and in a few minutes the three dogs were quietly driving them toward us."

A Mother's Love.

A gentleman had directed a wagon to be packed, intending to send it to Worthing, whither he himself was going. For some reason his journey was delayed, and he therefore directed that the wagon should be placed in a shed in the yard, packed as it was, till it should be convenient for him to send it off.

While it was in the shed, a pair of robins built their nest among some straw in it, and had hatched their young just before it was sent away. One of the old birds, instead of being frightened away by the motion of the wagon, only left the nest from time to time for the purpose of flying to the nearest hedge for food for its young; and thus alternately affording warmth and nourishment to them, it arrived at Worthing. The affection of this bird having been observed by the wagoner, he took care in unloading not to disturb the nest; and the robin and its young returned in safety to Walton Heath, being the place from whence they had set out, the distance travelled not being less than one hundred miles.

Whether it was the male or female robin which kept with the wagon I have not been able to ascertain, but most probably the latter; for what will not a mother's love and a mother's tenderness induce her to do?

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