

# LITTLE FOLKS

## Out of the Pond.

It was only a pond. Nothing very interesting, you say, nor did Sam think it was, as he strolled listlessly along beside it, and then sat down on a large stone on its brink that summer afternoon. It was rather a nice sort of pond, not green and slimy, but tolerably clear, so that he could see below the surface in the shallow part next him.

And what was it he did see? Well, he could not tell what it was, for the like of it had never come

'Oh, Ella,' he cried to his cousin, 'I say, what queer creatures you have down here! I saw a hedgehog yesterday, and now I see you've got them in the water as well as on the land, and worse still.'

'Why, Sam,' said Ella, laughing, after he had told her all, 'they were only tadpoles, and you need not have been frightened.'

But Sam was no wiser.

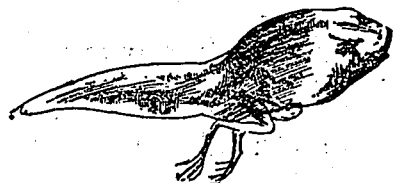
'Tadpoles?' he repeated. 'What are they?'

into the kitchen he rummaged up a large glass jar or bottle and took it down with him to the pond. With much disgust and some trou-



ble he got one of the tadpoles into it, filled it with water and then hid it in one of the bushes.

'There,' he said, 'now we shall see who is right and who is wrong.' Then he went his way, but every day came back to look and see if anything had happened. Also he thought it would be well to change the water and put in it bits of moss or grass in case the mysterious creature needed eating. Certainly,



ere long it did not look quite the same. The tail was shorter, and surely those were legs peeping forth from the other parts. So the change went on, and Sam began to feel a bit shaken in his firm belief that he was right. Till at last, at the end of about a fortnight, going one morning as usual to his bush by the pond, there was no tadpole in the bottle, but—a frog! A real live unmistakable frog, such as he had often seen before, with its spotted skin and its bright eyes, recalling no trace of the queer black legless nature of its infancy.

Sam gazed and gazed, and though he felt rather small, he was an honest, straightforward lad, and accepted the situation. So the first thing to do was to go back to make confession.

'Ella, Ella,' he cried, as with his prisoner sprawling in the bottle he stood at the farmhouse door, and Ella at once came out to see.



And like a good little maiden as she was, she did not say, 'I told you so,' nor 'You'll believe me next time,' while Sam told his tale. 'Oh, Ella, I am sorry, and it was rude in me to contradict you so flatly. You were right and I was wrong, and I hope I shall never be



across him before, he being a town-bred lad, come down for a few weeks' holiday to his cousins in the country. The water was almost black with live things wriggling about in the wildest fashion, and looking rather uncanny to his unaccustomed eyes, for they seemed to be all head and tail without a body! Sam felt quite at a loss, and getting up, he hurried back to the farmhouse to relate his experiences.

'Is that your Board School teaching,' replied Ella, 'not to know that tadpoles will all turn to frogs by-and-by?'

'I don't believe it,' answered Sam, 'and I won't. It's all a hoax, for I have seen a frog, and it's not a bit like those nasty black things.'

Ella did not argue, she only told him quietly to wait and see.

Sam was stout and firm in his belief. Nevertheless he made a little plan in his mind, and going