

ing them undisturbed,—that they watched and spared the anemones, and the violets, and bloodroots, and dog's-tooth violets, and little woolly rolls of fern that began to grow up under the trees in spring,—that they never allowed a gun to be fired to scare the birds, and watched the building of their nests with the greatest interest,—then an opinion in favor of human beings began to gain ground, and every cricket and bird and beast was loud in their praise.

"Mamma," said young Tit-bit, a frisky young squirrel, to his mother one day, "why won't you let Frisky and me go into that pretty new cottage to play?"

"My dear," said his mother, who was a very wary and careful old squirrel, "how can you think of it? The race of man are full of devices for traps and pitfalls, and who could say what might happen, if you put yourself in their power? If you had wings like the butterflies and bees, you might fly in and out again, and so gratify your curiosity; but, as matters stand, it's best for you to keep well out of their way."

"But, mother, there is such a nice, good lady lives there! I believe she is a good fairy, and she seems to love us all so; she sits in the bow-window and watches us for hours, and she scatters corn all round at the roots of the tree for us to eat."

"She is nice enough," said the old mother-squirrel, "if you keep far enough off; but I tell you, you can't be too careful."

Now this good fairy that the squirrels discoursed about was a nice little old lady that the children used to call Aunt Esther, and she was a dear lover of birds and squirrels, and all sorts of animals, and had studied their little ways till she knew just what would please them; and so she would every day throw out crumbs for the sparrows, and little bits of thread and wool and cotton to help the birds that were building their nests, and would scatter corn and nuts for the squirrels; and while she sat at her work in the bow-window she would smile to see the birds flying away with the wool, and the squirrels nibbling their nuts. After a while, the birds grew so tame that they would hop into the bow-window, and eat their crumbs off the carpet.

"There, mamma," said Tit-bit and Frisky, "only see! Jenny Wren and Cock Robin have been in at the bow-window, and it didn't hurt them, and why can't we go?"

"Well, my dears," said old Mother Squirrel, "you must do it very carefully: never forget that you haven't wings like Jenny Wren and Cock Robin."

So the next day Aunt Esther laid a train

of corn from the roots of the trees to the bow-window, and then from the bow-window to her work-basket, which stood on the floor beside her; and then she put quite a handful of corn in the work-basket, and sat down by it, and seemed intent on her sewing. Very soon, creep, creep, creep, came Tit-bit and Frisky to the window, and then into the room, just as sly and as still as could be, and Aunt Esther sat just like a statue for fear of disturbing them. They looked all around in high glee, and when they came to the basket it seemed to them a wonderful little summer-house, made on purpose for them to play in. They nosed about in it, and turned over the scissors and the needle-book, and took a nibble at her white wax, and jostled the spools, meanwhile stowing away the corn each side of their little chops, till they both of them looked as if they had the mumps.

At last Aunt Esther put out her hand to touch them, when, whisk-frisk, out they went, and up the trees, chattering and laughing before she had time even to wink.

But after this they used to come in every day, and when she put corn in her hand and held it very still they would eat out of it; and, finally, they would get into her hand, until one day she gently closed it over them, and Frisky and Tit-bit were fairly caught.

O how their hearts beat! but the good fairy only spoke gently to them, and soon unclosed her hand and let them go again. So, day after day, they grew to have more and more faith in her, till they would climb into her work-basket, sit on her shoulder, or nestle away in her lap as she sat sewing. They made also long exploring voyages all over the house, and up through all the chambers, till finally, I grieve to say, poor Frisky came to an untimely end by being drowned in the water-tank at the top of the house.

The dear good fairy passed away from the house in time, and went to a land where the flowers never fade, and the birds never die; but the squirrels still continued to make the place a favorite resort.

"In fact, my dear," said old Mother Red one winter to her mate, "what is the use of one's living in this cold, hollow tree, when these amiable people have erected this pretty cottage where there is plenty of room for us and them too? Now I have examined between the eaves, and there is a charming place where we can store our nuts, and where we can whip in and out of the garret, and have the free range of the