

the chickens. Each chicken of the fifty had a name of its own.

There were Speckle, and Tiny, and Weeny, and Tot; there were Polly, and Toppy, and Fluff; there were Blacky, and Scatter, and Buff. I can not remember all their names. Each one knew its own name, and when Grandma called, it would run to her as fast as it could.

One morning the children found Grandma in tears. A thief had come in the night and taken all her chickens. Not one of the fifty were left, and Grandma was heartbroken. The children were sorry, too, and went to school feeling very sorry for poor Grandma.

Days went by and Grandma still mourned for her lost chickens. They had not been found, nor had the thief been detected.

One morning, a week after her loss, Grandma saw the yard full of chickens again. She rubbed her glasses. Had all her lost fowls come home like the sheep of little Bo-Peep?

She hurried out to see what it meant. Every chicken had a card tied to one of its legs. Grandma read on one card: "I have come to take the place of Speckle"; on another: "I have come to take the place of Blacky"; and so on for Tiny, and Weeny, and Tot; for Polly, and Toppy, and Fluff; for Scatter and Buff, and all the rest of the fifty.

Tears came into Grandma's eyes—tears of joy. Who had done this beautiful thing? Who but the school children whom Grandma loved and who loved Grandma?

Pussy Willow is Asleep.

Now does Pussy Willow
In the hollow deep,
Rock her little kitties
Till they're all asleep.

Safe from winds and winter—
Wrapped in softest down—
Tucked up closely to their chins
In their cradle brown.

March will find them waiting,
And impatient grow,
April showers their cradles burst—
May new charms bestow.

Merry children's eyes will dance
When they see them sprout,
And we'll laugh to hear their cry—
Pussy Willow's out!"

Tommy's Surprise.

One night when Tommy was getting ready for bed, he came to mamma and asked for just one story more. Mamma drew her chair up by the grate and held Tommy close. They looked into the fire, where the big coals shone out and made the room warm and light, and Tommy was very happy, and waited as still as a mouse for the story to begin.

"A very long, long time ago," said mamma, "there was a beautiful grove of big, big trees. Their tops reached up higher than any trees you ever saw, and their branches reached out farther. Every day they drank in the sunshine and grew bigger and bigger. Everything all around them was very bright and pretty.

"But one day the wind began to blow, and the rain came down more and more, till the lakes and rivers all spread over everywhere and covered the trees all up; and it kept thundering and lightning, and the ground shook so hard that some mountains were shaken all to pieces.

"The grove of big trees had all been blown down, and a great mountain of dirt was heaped up over them. How do you suppose the trees felt? They were jammed in tight, and squeezed hard under the big mountain, and it was dark, very dark in there. And I suppose they thought, 'We can never work any more; we will never see the sunshine again!'

"And there the trees stood for years

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and years and years—oh, a great deal longer than anyone who lives upon this earth can remember. But one day, way down in the ground under the mountain, came a great crashing, tumbling, rumbling, grumbling noise, and next there was a big hole in the mountain that reached clear down to where the trees were.

"But if you could have looked in there for the trees you never could have found them, for they had all been broken up and jammed tight together and turned black and hard till they looked more like a big black rock. And when the men who made the whole saw the shining stuff, they said:

"Here it is, here it is!"
"And the black, shining stuff said: 'What's that? what's that? Oh, light! it's daylight! My! Who ever thought we'd see daylight again? Why, we've been shut in here years and years and years! We want to get out and look around!'

"But when it went to move it was very hard and stiff, not at all as it was when it was tall green trees and waved in the wind.

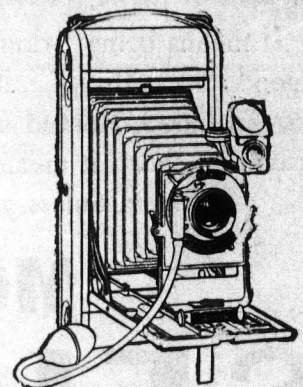
"Then the men took their big iron tools and began breaking it up into pieces. They loaded it into little carts and drew it out into the bright sunshine.

The black, shining stuff said: "See those trees growing there on the mountain! They look like bushes. When we were trees we used to reach ever so much higher." Pretty soon a man came and bought it. He brought a big load of it here on the cars for us to burn in our grate."

Then Tommy opened his eyes and said:

"Mamma, was it coal?"

And mamma said: "Yes. And when it turns red and hot it is giving back the sunshine it drank in so long, long ago, when it was tall green trees."



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