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Mistress Frog's Spinning.

Out in the yellow southern sunshine two little white children and several little black ones were making "frog-houses." This they did by putting a bare foot flat on the walk, and over the bare foot heaping white sand. The glory of the building was to be able to draw out the foot so skilfully from underneath the sand structure that a mound remained, with a good opening left as a door to the "frog-house."

Many frog-houses fell that day, but some stood, and in those carpets of flower-petals were laid, and sometimes a big, cool leaf was hung for a door.

"Dere, we done all did work for Mistis Frog, and Mistis Frog can't live in dese houses!" exclaimed Dilsey.

"Why can't she?" asked Alice.

"Oh, frogs 'bleeged to stay on de brooks, wid dere toes in de water, sense Mistis Frog done so scandalous in dem ole days," said Dilsey.

"Dilsey, tell us what 'twas Mistis Frog did in the old days?" cried Alice, eagerly.

"'Twas dis way," declared Dilsey, seating herself flat in the sand as only negroes can, her bare feet out in front of her, her toes straight up. "Mistis Frog was allus complainin'. Ef 'twarn't too hot, den 'twas too cole. Ef it rain, den she want sun. Dar come one summer time when de heat wez so great 'twas drpin' up de corn. De pools and brooks wez dryin' up so dat de animals couldn't hardly git a drink. Mistis Frog sat on de hill spinnin'."

"Spinnin'?"

"Oh co'se. Don't you see all 'dat field yonder full of toad-flax. Dem little blue flowers is toad-flax. Mistis Frog spun dat flax in dem ole days, all day long spinnin' an' singin'."

"Singin'?"

"Oh co'se. Mistis Frog sang sweeter dan any bird in de ole days, singin' an' spinnin', a-settin' on her white satin stool."

"What Dilsey?"

"You see dem white frog-stools poppin' up in de fields? Dey useter be Mistis Frog's white satin stools, whar she useter set on, spinnin' and singin'. Mistis Frog was allus complainin', but dis hot time Mistis Frog ain't sayin' nothin' 'genst de sunshine, 'caze she wanten git de pretties blue silk spun you ever see. She say she don't want it never rain no mo', 'caze rain'll wet her blue yarn!"

"After awhile, ev'rythin' dryin' up, a little cloud come floatin' by. Mistis Frog say, 'Go way, cloud! I'm wantin' mo' sun!'"

"D'rectly drop o' rain fell—blim!"

"Mistis Frog riz up an' flung out her hand. Mistis Frog walk straight in dese days, not hippety-hop like she do now. She had pretty hands, not wobbly like dey is now. She say, 'Go 'way, rain! I'm Mistis Frog. I don't want no rain.'"

"Raindrops make answer, 'Ev'rythin's perishin' fer rain.'"

"Go 'way!" Mistis-Frog say; "I don't keer. I want ter set an' sing an' spin in de sun."

"Well, all day Mistis Frog spin an' sing, an' all night in de moonlight her an' her folks dance 'Frog in de middle! An' he can't get out! He can't git out! Can't git out!"

"Ev' thing wuz beggin to her, "'O Mistis Frog, dough dis be yo' season to spin, let us have a little rain!'"

"Mistis Frog say, 'Ev' dog has its 'day, an' I has mine like I please.'"

"Mistis Frog done her blue silk; but she spinnin' now to make Mister Frog a set of blue soldier close."

"Ev' thing, bird, beast, all came to Mistis Frog again, an' say, 'Give us a drop er rain, dough 'tis in yo' season to spin! Us perishin'!'"

"Mistis Frog jes' spin on an' sing:

"Mister Frog put on de soldier close,
Went ter de well ter shoot some crows,
Powder flash, and crow flew 'way,
Mister Frog go huntin' another day!"

"Ev' thing pantin' fer water. Yit Mistis Frog say, "Ef I ain't ever been suited befo', I'm suited now. I ain't gwine ax fer nothin' but sun in my season to spin."

"Den de birds sing to her, "Ef yer don't give pity, yer can't git pity!"

"De bees hum to her, "Yer gotter gib mercy, 'fo' ye git mercy!"

"De bees growl to her, "Give, nor yer won't git! Give, nor yer won't git!"

"But Mistis Frog spin and sing, till at las' it git too dry fer her. She pant and pant. Her satin stool shrivel up under her. Her thread git so dry it whirl round the spindle and break off short and won't spin out no mo'. Her wheel spin round so fast it catch fire and burn all up. Mistis Frog ain't able ter git 'nother wheel yet! Den Mistis Frog she pant an' she pant, an' she beg fer water an' she plead fer rain, but all de clouds done pass on by! Mistis Frog, her tongue and throat git so parched dat de song flew out and never come back no mo'!"

"O water, water, all de time, an' no mo' sun!" said Mistis Frog.

"But Mistis Frog don't git dat wish. Herself and her folks, dey moved from de nighlands ter de swamp, all of 'em. She live in de wet lands yet. Mistis Frog don't spin no mo'. She holler all de time, 'Mo' rain! Mo' rain! Mo' rain!' Mistis Frog 'bleeged ter holler dat."

"Mister Frog, he croak out, 'Knee deep! Knee deep!' Mister Frog he 'bleeged ter croak dat."

"All de little frogs dey stand on de brook-edge and holler, 'Wade in! Wade in! Wade in! De little frogs 'bleeged to holler dat."

"An' dat's de reason de frogs can't live in dese houses we done built 'em," said Dilsey.—United Presbyterian.

Bluebird's Mistake.

BY MARY HOWELL WILSON.

In the sunny southland an orange hung on a branch of the mother tree. It swung back and forth, looking like a tiny ball among the green leaves.

A bluebird, who had just arrived from the North Country, flew down to see if the hard little ball was something which Mother Nature had provided for bluebird's foot.

"Nothing to eat," he chirped. "Too green and hard! What are you good for?"

"I can't guess, unless it's to bob up and down and swing back and forth on this branch," said the orange, merrily. "Where did you come from, friend bluebird?"

"All the song-birds have left the North and I came with them, of course. Snow and cold weather I cannot stand. Still, I waited as long as I could for Bettie's sake,—Bettie, the dearest little girl in this beautiful, beautiful world!" And he ended with a trill of song which nearly split his little throat.

"My mate and I rent the bird-house just outside her window," he continued. "We pay the rent in songs,—a matin song and a lullaby every day; and how Bettie ever manages to awaken without us during the winter I cannot tell." Here Mr. Bluebird shook his head disapprovingly. "She is such a sleepy child! Ah, you should hear our lullabys! Let me sing you a strain:—

"Sleep, sleep, Bettie sleep.
Twilight gathers soft and gray.
Nestlings, wrapped in slumber deep,
In their cradles swing and sway.
Deeper shadows near us creep;
Tiny stars their watch will keep,
Twilight bright till dawn the day.
Sleep, Bettie, sleep!
Sleep, Bettie, sleep!"

There were many more verses, but this was all the orange heard; for the bluebird crooned them so tenderly, so drowsily, that every orange on the tree was sound asleep long before he finished, and they were only awakened by the farewell twitter of the bluebird, as he flew off, greatly pleased with the effect of his lullaby. Back he came next day, to perch on a branch and sing—sing of the sunshine, the flowers, the sweet perfumed air of the Southland, ending with a song about the bright-eyed little girl in the North, her love for the birds and kindly ways with them.

"Shall you ever see her again?" asked the orange.

"Surely!" he cried. "When the spring comes,—

"Swift we will fly,
My mate and I,

To the little brown house in the apple-tree,
Where Bettie is waiting to welcome me!"

"If you could only see the interest she takes in our nest!" he chirped. "All sorts of bits of bright wool and other materials for nest-building she will have ready for us. Of course you never can see her," with a regretful little twitter. "The North is so far away, and you have no wings."

"True, I have no wings," said the orange, hopefully. "But I feel quite sure, if I could let go my hold on this branch, I could roll, oh, ever so fast, over and over; until I should finally reach the far North."

"Dear, dear, no!" chirped the bluebird. "Why, it is flights and flights away! You could never get there unless you had strong wings like myself. Could he, my dear?" appealing to Lady Bluebird, who had perched near him and was listening to the discussion.

"No, no, poor dear!" she cried. "How can any one be happy without wings!" and off she flew, uttering soft little notes of compassion.

The time came when the orange missed the friendly bluebirds.

"Gone to the North, I suppose," he sighed. "Well, if I could fly, I should follow. There is nothing for me to do but grow and grow round and yellow. What will come next I do not know."

The orange did this work so well that one day he was sent to the North,—the roundest, brightest orange in a large box of fruit.

"Who would have guessed that I should take a journey?" he thought. "It is almost as good as having wings."

How round and yellow he looked in the window of the fruit-store, where he found himself a few days later! "Oh, mother, may I buy that orange?" a merry voice cried, and a bright-eyed little girl pressed her face against the pane.

"Yes, do," whispered the orange, but too softly to be heard. However, Bettie ran home with her orange clasped tightly in her little brown hand.

"Now don't roll off!" she admonished him, as she placed him on the broad window-sill.

Outside a pair of bluebirds were hopping on the boughs of a tree, watching, with eager eyes, for crumbs from Bettie.

"See that orange?" chirped Mr. Bluebird. "How it reminds me of the South, and of the poor little orange who so wanted to see our Bettie!"

"So sad!" twittered Lady Bluebird.

"It was very painful, my dear," nodding his head; "but I had to tell him, poor fellow! I told him that, without wings, he could never hope to see Bettie; never reach the North. Now listen, my dear. I am going to sing you a song about him. It is called 'The Disappointed Orange.'"

This seemed to the orange so very funny that, in trying not to laugh hard enough to split his yellow sides, he rolled on the floor. There Bettie found him. I wonder if he told her all about it.—Christian Register.

What Happened to Jimsey.

BY CLARA O. LYON.

There was no place where Robbie liked better to visit than at Aunt Mary's house. In the first place, there was dear Aunt Mary, herself, who was fond of all boys and particularly fond of Robbie. In the next place, there was the cookie jar, which had a wonderful way of never being empty, no matter how often he visited it; and last of all, there were the birds. Rinkum was a parrot this always made Robbie laugh by exclaiming, in odd imitation of Aunt Mary, "Mercy, how you've grown!"

He liked Rinkum, but he liked the mocking bird, Jimsey, too, though Jimsey couldn't talk; but he would hold his head on one side and peer at Robbie with his bright eyes to make sure it was he, and then hop gaily about his cage as if glad that the boy had come again.

Now, one day something happened. Aunt Mary washed the dishes, swept the kitchen, set her bread by the stove to rise, and, telling Jimsey and Rinkum, who had been let out of their cages, to behave themselves—went upstairs, never dreaming that two such well-behaved birds would get into trouble while she was gone. But pretty soon she heard Rinkum's loud screeches, which told her something was the matter.

"Fire, fire! throw on water!" cried Polly, as she entered.

"Where are you, Rinkum, and where's Jimsey?"

"Mercy, how you've grown! Fire! fire!" screamed Rinkum from a dark corner of the room under the table, where she had retreated as if in fear. But Jimsey was not with her, and Aunt Mary grew alarmed as she saw what had escaped her notice when she went upstairs, that the side window was open several inches. "Some cat has got him or else he has flown away." She started toward the window to look out, but as she went she noticed a strange heaving of the napkin over her bread. She whisked it off, and there was poor Jimsey up to his neck in the soft sponge vainly struggling to free himself, but sinking deeper and deeper. Rinkum had watched him fly down to the edge of the pan, pick up a corner of the napkin in his bill, peck at the dough daintily to see if it were good, and then hop down into the sticky stuff, which held him fast. She did all she could by giving the alarm, and Aunt Mary soon had the bird out of his queer bath; but Jimsey's feathers had to be cut, and he was never quite so lively again, so that Robbie, when he came again, said:

"Aunt Mary, it seems to me that Jimsey's getting old; he acts like an old man. And I'm getting old, too. Do you know, I'll be six years old to-morrow!"

"Mercy, how you've grown!" said the parrot.—The Outlook.

Be Content.

Long, long ago a robin and a butterfly talked over their troubles one day.

"How much nicer it would be to live in a house, as men do!" said the robin. "There's a black cloud in the sky, and I'm sure it's going to rain. I'll have to cuddle up under the leaves, and my feathers will be damp. I fear I'll take cold and lose my voice."

"I have to hide away, too, when it rains," said the butterfly. "I would be a great pity if the water washed off my lovely powder, and a big shower might drown me. Miss Butterfly was quick-witted."