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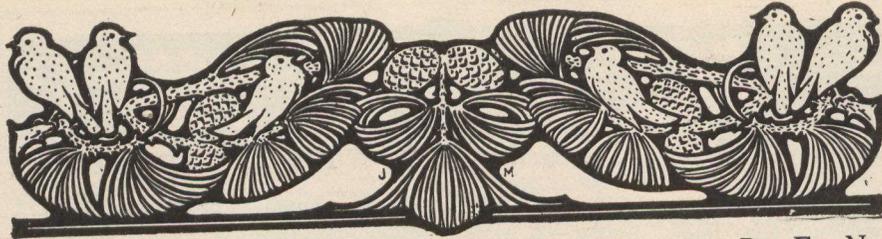
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FOR THE CHILDREN

THE TOAD'S SECRET.

BY A. F. CALDWELL.

Young Mr. Toad came hopping by, So now I'm going to ask you why Grandpa took his ebony cane, And ushered him up the narrow lane Into the garden nigh?

"Mr. Toad," said he, "I've work for you, Work that nobody else can do." No, not hoeing, that was done, The rows were weeded one by one. (Dear, wise grandpa knew!)

"Stones to pick?" Not by a toad! Grandpa had hauled out a load. Mr. Toad worked, and he worked well, All summer long—but I'll not tell The secret—his work in the garden showed!

—*Youth's Companion.*

* * *

THE FROSTED PARTY-CAKE.

BY HARRIET MENDENHALL.

SUE and Mary sat on the steps before the white hall-door with its big brass knocker. There were two steps with an iron rail to guard them, and in front of the lower step was a braided rag rug. The posts of the railing were topped by shining brass knobs. Sue's and Mary's great-grandma had the brass knobs polished every day. The two children sat sewing, as fast as their busy little fingers could go. Sue was making a dress for her doll, and Mary was hemming a sheet for her baby sister's crib. I am afraid that her mother had to sew it over again, but the wee little girl did the best she could. They were talking about a children's party that they were going to in a few days; for they had children's parties in this old Quaker town, with its brick and stuccoed houses and white doorways.

At four o'clock on the afternoon of the party day, ten little girls, ten dear, little Quaker girls in white frocks went to Lydia's house on Penn Street. Lydia's mother and Lydia's aunt met them at the white doorway, took off the ten little bonnets, and all the little girls went to the back porch to see the kittens. They drew strings on the floor and the kittens ran after and tumbled over one another; and every one laughed and the kittens purred. Then Lydia's mother took the ten little girls out into the garden and showed them the flowers. Lydia was to have a square garden for her own self and her mother had two rose-bushes for it. Lydia's aunt played games with the ten little girls, and then the party supper was ready. All the little girls sat at the big dining-table, and Lydia's mother and Lydia's aunt placed something nice on every plate. How pretty the table looked with the china and silver and the colored jelly and the cakes! There were little cakes and a great, big cake, frosted. This was kept for the last. It was on a big plate and was cut so that each little girl could pull a slice out. Lydia's aunt took the plate and said to Mary:

"Will thee have a slice of cake?"

How good it was! Mary loved frosting, but her little heart was shy, and to pull out the first slice while every one looked!

"No, I thank thee," she replied. "Will thee have a slice of cake?" asked Lydia's aunt of the next little girl.

"No, I thank thee," she answered. "Will thee have a slice?" Lydia's aunt asked of the third little girl.

"No, I thank thee." Ten little girls wanted the cake. Ten little girls replied, "No, I thank thee," because no one wanted to begin. Then little girls were shy and so disappointed.

Lydia's mother knew.

"Oh," she exclaimed gently, "thee will have a slice, Mary, won't thee?" She smiled as she slipped out the first piece and laid it on Mary's plate.

"The next little girl will have a slice, will she not?" Another smile and another piece of cake was laid on a plate.

"Sue will have a piece?"

"Harriet will have a piece?"

Every little girl had a slice of the cake. Every one liked Lydia's mother. She knew. The party went gaily on. Every one had a slice of the big party-cake, frosted.—*St. Nicholas.*

* * *

THE LITTLE OLD MAN IN THE AUTOMOBILE.

BY CORNELIA WALTER MCCLEARY.

You surely have heard of the old Woman, I know, Who lived in a Shoe, oh, so long, long ago! She had such queer notions and terrible ways— What would we all do if she lived in these days?

As all of her children were supple and young, She packed them in closely, pulled up the shoe's tongue, And then laced the shoestrings across, very tight, And her children all slumbered until it was light.

A little Old Man, who is popular here, Has a way of his own, that is almost as queer— His house is not mostly of leather;— but steel; And, instead of a Shoe, it's an Automobile.

And as for the children, there's room for each one. (They all are so happy, so brim full of fun!) What sport by the roadside to picnic each day— Pick berries and flowers—then up and away!

Some morning you'll see them—oh, such a big load, Just flying along, like the wind, on the road! You cannot mistake them, for all in the car Are singing and shouting wherever they are.

Their laughter and noise can be heard half a mile, But every one nods or responds with a smile.

I'd far rather ride with this Man— wouldn't you?

Than dwell with the "Woman who lived in a Shoe."

—*St. Nicholas.*

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