

FOR FRIDAY AFTERNOONS.

Pussy Willows.

The fairies were sleeping the long winter through;
But there came a March day, when the sky was so blue
And the sun was so warm that they lifted their heads
Then most of them wisely went back to their beds.

But the young fairies begged of the fairies more old,
"Oh please let us fly out! We don't mind the cold."
"Well put on your hoods then, awhile you may go,
But come just as soon as we call you below."

So every small fairy put on a grey hood,
And, oh, such good times as they had in the wood!
They went back, when called, to their beds and their
pillows
But they left their grey hoods hanging up on the willows.

—Selected.

The March Wind.

The bluff March wind came whirling along,
Before the peep of day,
He flew o'er the fields, and whistled a song,
As he dashed and danced on his way.
With a shout he tossed the lingering snow,
And the tiny brook set free.
He called to the sun, "Ho! Ho! Ho! Ho!"
What a merry March wind was he.

Then he dashed through the forest, and called to the trees,
"Wake up: 'tis time to arise."
He laughed at their cry, "We freeze, We freeze,
We must wait for warmer skies."
He blew the snow clouds from on high
As he sang aloud, in glee,
He whistled to all, "Good-bye, Good-bye."
Such a frolicsome wind was he.

—Selected.

The Wind.

I saw you toss the kites on high
And blow the birds about the sky;
And all around I heard you pass,
Like ladies' skirts across the grass—
O wind, a-blowing all day long!
O wind, that sings so loud a song!

I saw the different things you did,
But always you yourself you hid.
I felt you push, I heard you call,
I could not see yourself at all—
O wind, a-blowing all day long.
O wind, that sings so loud a song!

O you that are so strong and cold,
O blower, are you young or old?
Are you a beast of field and tree,
Or just a stronger child than me?
O wind, a-blowing all day long.
O wind, that sings so loud a song!

—Robert Louis Stevenson.

Why Cats Wash After Eating.

You may have noticed, little friends,
That cats don't wash their faces
Before they eat, as children do
In all good Christian places.

Well, years ago, a famous cat,
The pangs of hunger feeling,
Had chanced to catch a fine young mouse,
Who said, as he ceased squealing:

"All genteel folks their faces wash
Before they think of eating!"
And, wishing to be thought well bred,
Puss heeded his entreating.

But when she raised her paw to wash,
Chance for escape affording,
The sly young mouse said his good-bye,
Without respect to wording,

A feline council met that day,
And passed in solemn meeting,
A law forbidding any cat
To wash till after eating.

Pussy Willow.

"Oh! you pussy willow,
Pretty little thing,
Coming in the sunshine
Of the merry spring,
Tell me, tell me, pussy,
For I want to know,
Where it is you come from—
How it is you grow?"

"Now my little children,
If you look at me
And my little sisters,
I am sure you'll see
Tiny little houses,
Out of which we peep,
When we first are waking
From our winter's sleep.

"As the days grow milder,
Out we put our heads,
And we lightly move us
In our little beds;
And when warmer breezes
Of the springtime blow,
Then we little pussies
All to catkins grow."

—Selected.

Lady Moon.

How to tell her age)
O Lady Moon, your horns point toward the east
Shine, be increased;
O Lady Moon, your horns point toward the west
Wane, be at rest.

—CHRISTINA ROSSETTI.