

The World's Finest Tea

"SALADA" B72

Tea out-rivals and out-sells all others, solely through its delicious flavour and down-right all-round goodness.

the limb, out of a hole popped a very angry red squirrel exactly like a jack-in-the-box. The red squirrel is the fastest of all the tree-folk, but a nuthatch on a limb is not afraid of anything that flies, crawls or runs. He is the only one of the birds that can run up and down and around a branch forwards and backwards. The downy woodpecker always backs down a tree. The brown creeper goes up a

tree in long spirals, but has to fly down; and the black and white warbler, though it travels on the under-side of limbs, never goes head downward.

A red streak flashed down the limb on which the nuthatch was working. That was the squirrel. A fraction of a second ahead of the streak there was a wink of grey and white. That was the nuthatch. Before the squirrel could even recover his balance, there was a cheerful rat-tat-tat just behind him on the other side of the limb. As the squirrel turned the rapping sounded on the under-side of the branch. His bushy red tail quivered and then, using some squirrel-language, he dived into his hole again.

When he was hardly out of sight, the nuthatch was tapping again at the door. Once more the squirrel rushed out chattering and spluttering. Once more the nuthatch wasn't there. Then he tried chasing the bird around the limb, but there was nothing in that. The bird could turn twice as fast as the squirrel, and, moreover, didn't have to be afraid of falling—for a drop of fifty feet on a hard ground is no joke even for a red squirrel. The aggravating thing about the nuthatch was that no matter how hard the squirrel chased him he never seemed to stop for a minute tapping away at the branch and feeding even as he ran. Finally Mr. Squirrel went back and the nuthatch tapped in triumph all around the hole, although muffled chatterings from inside told what the squirrel thought of him.

When the nuthatch flew to another tree I got up and followed a path that twisted through a barren field full of grassy tussocks, passed a fringe of bitter-nut hickories and black walnut trees, and then down into the heart of the swamp. There I seated myself on a trunk of a fallen willow tree which showed up through the frozen bogs. Just over my head where a little bunch grew out from the trunk I noticed wedged a beautifully seasoned black walnut with the husk carefully stripped off. I looked around carefully and the whole willow-tree was filled with black walnuts, each one set in between two twigs or between a branch and the trunk. Beside the willow grew a small swamp-maple, and this too was filled with nuts. I counted nearly a hundred in both of the trees. I had found one of the winter storehouses of some gray squirrel.

The chipmunk stores up a quart or so of cherry-pits, wild buckwheat

seeds and other similar bric-a-brac in its nest far underground, where it sleeps most of the winter. The red squirrel has storehouses in hollow trees and rocks or under the leaves beside a rock. Once I found nearly a bushel of butternuts carefully covered with leaves in the lee of a big boulder. The gray squirrel is the only one who stores his nuts singly, and this was the largest supply of them that I had ever seen. It must have been the pantry of an unusually thrifty squirrel. Usually they bury a few nuts here and there, tuck away a score or so in different trees and let it go at that. I picked a handful of the driest of the walnuts and put them in my pocket along with the sugar berries.

By this time it was snowing hard and I was cold and hungry. I followed a little path which showed here and there between the tussocks, wandering which of the wild-folk could have made it. It led out to a slope where a black-oak tree grew against a bank. There I decided to make my fire with the tree-trunk at my back.

I dug a round circle a couple of feet in diameter in the snow, laid down a layer of dry leaves, and then built a little tepee from tiny dry black-oak twigs. Underneath this I placed a fragment of birch-bark which I cut off one of the dwarf birches which I found on the edge of the swamp. This burned like paper, and in a minute the little hut of dry twigs was crackling away with a good steady flame. I piled the dry branches over this and went off to see if I could not find a dry stone to use as a seat.

In the pasture near the swamp I found an old box cover and lifted it up, when there was a rush and a scurry and from a round, warm nest in the middle made of thistle-down, fur, feathers and tiny bits of wood fibre all matted together into a sort of felt, dashed six reddish-brown pink-pawed fieldmice. They burrowed in the snow, crept under the leaves, and in a minute were out of sight—except one who tried to climb the box-cover and whom I caught before he could scurry away over the top of it.

His fur was like plush, with the hair a warm reddish-brown at the ends and mouse-gray beneath. Underneath he was snowy white, although there, too, the fur showed mouse-gray under the surface. He had little brown claws and six little pink disks on each claw which enabled him to run like a fly, head downward. His eyes were big and brown and lustrous and he had flappy, pinky-gray velvet ears, each one of which was half the size of his funny little face and thin as gossamer. His paws were pink instead of white like his cousin the deer-mouse, and his long tail was covered with the finest of hairs.

When he found he was fairly caught he snuggled down in my hand making a queer little whimpering noise, while his nose wrinkled and quivered. I went back to the fire with the box-cover and we sat down to lunch together. On a long oak twig I toasted a couple of strips of bacon and a piece of bread, and when that was finished



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I cracked a few of Mr. Gray Squirrel's nuts and found them of fine flavour. along with the bread I had a lump of cheese, and breaking off a little flake I gave it to Mousey.

The little nose stopped quivering and he sat up like a squirrel on the back of my hand and nibbled away until the piece was all gone. Then he tried another, while I finished my meal by munching a few of the sweet hack-berries, crunching the thin-shelled spicy pits which tasted very much like raisins.

By this time it was snowing hard, and, as we had eaten our lunch, I decided it was time for us both to go home. So I carried Mousey back to his round nest, which I covered over again with the box-cover; then I followed another path back across the pastures until it joined the road home.—Philadelphia.



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