

**GOLDEN
DICKY
—
SAUNDERS**

*The Story of a
Canary and
His Friends*

*By the Author of
'Beautiful Joe'*

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GOLDEN DICKY

MARSHALL
SAUNDERS

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GOLDEN
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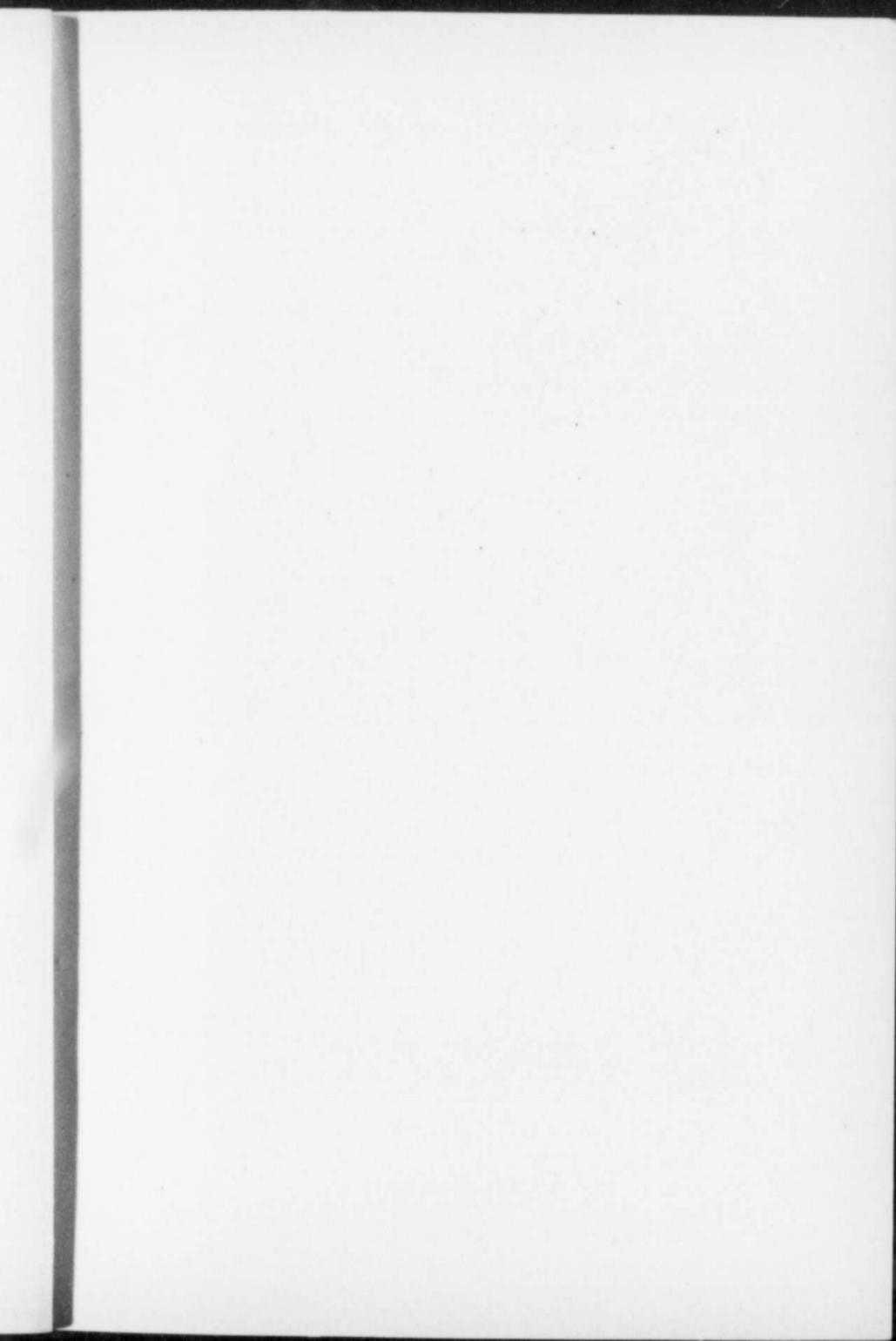


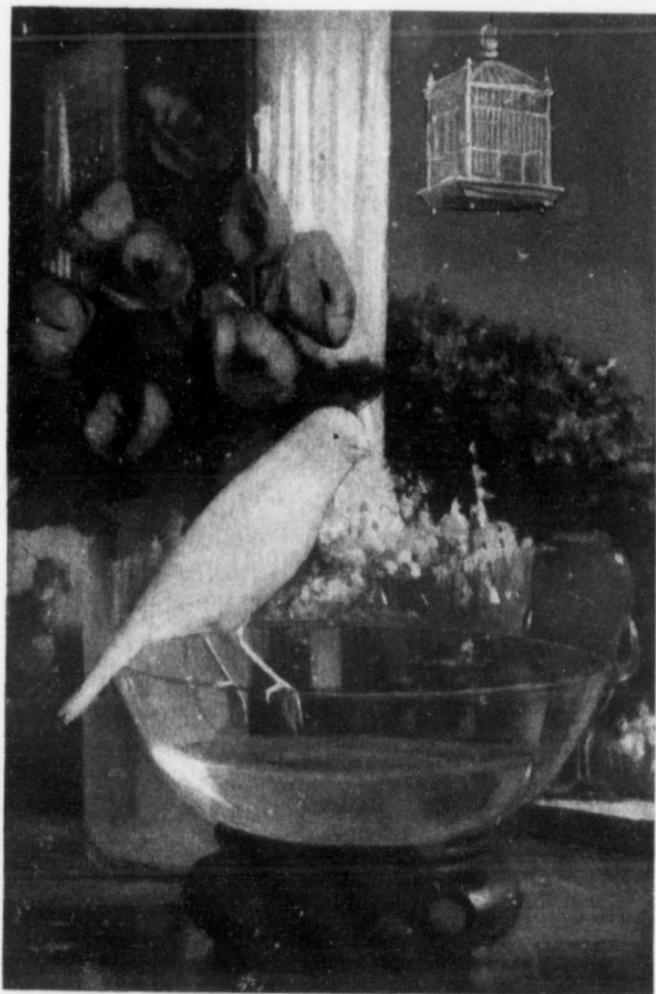
MARSHALL
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THE STORY OF A CANARY
AND HIS FRIENDS

BY

MARSHALL SAUNDERS

Author of "Beautiful Joe," etc.

WITH EIGHTY ILLUSTRATIONS IN COLOR BY GEORGE W. HOOD

*"I am my brother's keeper
and I will fight his fight;
As to speak the word for beast and bird
Till the world shall set things right."*

—ELLA WHEELER WILCOX

TORONTO

McCLELLAND & STEWART, Ltd.

PUBLISHERS

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GOLDEN DUCKS

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I dedicate this story to my fellow-members of the TORONTO HUMANE SOCIETY and especially to our President, THE RIGHT REVEREND JAMES FIELDING SWEENEY, Lord Bishop of Toronto, who at all times takes a most faithful and painstaking interest in our work for dumb animals and for children.

MARSHALL SAUNDERS

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INTRODUCTION

KNOWN the world over as the champion of the dumb animals, to which her lively imagination has given human speech, Marshall Saunders, the author of "Beautiful Joe," a book translated into many languages, has enlarged her range of humanitarian interests to take the feathered world into her protecting care. A new story of hers, entitled "Golden Dicky, the Story of a Canary and His Friends," presents a moving plea, not only in behalf of those prime favorites of the household, the canaries, but of other birds as well, even the too much despised sparrow coming in for anything but half-hearted defence. While one may feel that his imagination must take to itself powerful pinions to follow the story, particularly in the dialogues, yet at the same time he is made aware of how largely the practical enters into it. Miss Saunders has made a careful study of animal

and bird life, and introduces into her pages much interesting information of the ways and the needs of her humble protégés, and many useful hints as to their proper care, so that the story is something more than entertaining.

While Dicky-Dick's chronicles mainly concern the familiar feathered folk of our homes and their leafy environment, the author cannot forego an excursion into her old haunts, and in Billie Sundae, the fox-terrier, a capital new chapter is added to the literature of dog biography and autobiography. The squirrels also come in for a share of attention. Squirrie, the bad squirrel, supplies a proper villain to the cast of characters, with the sensible and good Chickari to redeem his race from opprobrium.

The children who read these delightful pages will surely form lasting friendships with Dicky-Dick, the cheery songster, and Chummy, the stout-hearted little sparrow, and all the robins and grackles and crows who with the dogs and squirrels and Nella, the monkey, make up the lively company embraced in these chronicles. In Mrs. Martin, the kind-hearted lover and pro-

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tector of birds, and her gentle daughter, "Our Mary," we have illustrated the kindly relations which should obtain between man and the beasts of the field and the fowl of the air, over which the Creator has given him the responsibility of dominion.

EDWARD S. CASWELL.



PRINCIPAL CHARACTERS

DICKY-DICK, *the canary.*

DIXIE, *his mother.*

NORFOLK, *his father.*

GREEN-TOP, *his brother.*

SILVER-THROAT, *his uncle.*

CHUMMY HOLE-IN-THE-WALL, *his friend the
sparrow.*

MRS. MARTIN, *who owns* DICKY-DICK.

OUR MARY, *her daughter.*

MR. MARTIN, *her husband.*

SAMMY-SAM, *her nephew.*

LUCY-LOO, *her niece.*

BILLIE SUNDAE, *her dog.*

SISTER SUSIE, *her dove.*

VOX CLAMANTI, *the robin.*

SLOW-BOY, *the pigeon.*

SUSAN, *his mate.*

SQUIRRIE, *a bad squirrel.*

CHICKARI, *a good squirrel.*

BLACK THOMAS, *the boarding-house cat.*

NELLA, *the monkey.*

FREDDIE, } *Children in the boarding-house.*
BEATRICE, }

NIGER, *the talking dog.*



GOLDEN DICKY



GOLDEN DICKY

CHAPTER I

I BEGIN THE STORY OF MY LIFE

WHEN I look in a mirror and see my tiny, bright black eyes, it seems queer to think that once upon a time, when I was a baby bird, I was more blind than a bat.

My sense of sight was the last to wake up. I could hear, smell, taste and touch, before I could see. We were three naked little canary babies in a nest, and at intervals, we all rose up, threw back our heads, opened our beaks, and our mother Dixie daintily put the lovely egg food down our tiny throats. Oh, how good it used to taste! I never had enough, and yet I did have enough, for my mother knew how much to feed me, and when I got older, I understood that most young things would stuff themselves to death, if the old ones did not watch them.

I shall never forget the first day my eyes opened. I couldn't see things properly for hours. There was a golden mist or cloud always before me. That was my mother's beautiful yellow breast, for she hovered closely over us, to keep us warm. Then I was conscious of eyes, bright black ones, like my own. My mother was looking us all over affectionately, to see that we were well-fed, warm and clean, for canary housekeepers are just like human beings. Some are careful and orderly, others are careless and neglectful.

Then my father would come and stare at us. He is a handsome Norwich canary, of a deep gold color, with a beautiful crest that hangs over his eyes, and partly obscures his sight, making him look like a little terrier dog. He used to fling up this crest and look at us from under it. Then he would say, "Very fine babies, quite plump this lot," and he would fly away for more lettuce or egg food, or crushed hemp, for we had enormous appetites, and it took a great deal of his time to help my mother keep our crops quite full and rounded out.

How we grew! Soon I was able to look in the mirror opposite our nest, and I could see

the change in us from day to day. Canaries grow up very quickly, and when we were a fortnight old, we had nice feathers and were beginning to feed ourselves. There was myself, a little brother, and a sister. I had a great deal to learn in those fourteen days, which would be like two or three years in the life of a child.

My little mother Dixie used to tell us stories as she brooded over us. Some people do not know that when a mother bird hovers over her little ones, and twitters softly to them, that she is telling them tales, just as a human mother amuses her babies.

My mother told us that we ought to be very happy little birds, for we were not in a cage where canaries are usually hatched, but in a good-sized bird-room, in a comfortable nest. This nest was a small wooden box, placed on a shelf high up on the wall, and we could stand on the edge of it and look all about the room.

My mother also told us that we must love, next to our parents, the young girl who owned this bird-room and who came in many times a day to feed and water us and to see that we were all comfortable.

I shall never forget how I felt the first day I

rose up in our nest, stepped to the edge of our box, and looked about the bird-room.

It seemed enormous to me. I gasped and fell back in the nest. Then I looked again, and this time the sight did not make me feel so weak, and I straightened things out.

It was, or is, for I often visit it yet, a good-sized attic room, with one big window looking east, and a door opening into a hall. Standing two and three deep all round the room were rows of fir trees, straight but not very tall, and looking like little soldiers. They were in big pots of earth, and my mother told me that every few months they were taken out and fresh ones were put in. Running between the trees and resting on their branches were long, slender poles and perches, for fir branches are not usually very good to sit on. A bird likes a spreading branch, not one that hugs the tree.

In the middle of the room was a tiny fountain, with rock work round it. Night and day it murmured its pretty little song, and the birds splashed and bathed and played games in the shallow basin under it. There were not big birds in the room, so we did not need a deep bathing pool.

Beyond the fountain were the trays of green sods and dishes of food and seeds. Oh, what good things we had to eat, for as we were not caged birds, we could have quite rich food. Then we took so much exercise flying to and fro that it sharpened our appetites. I shall never forget the good taste of the egg food that I fed myself, and the bread and milk, the bits of banana and orange, and pineapple and apples, and pears and grapes—the little saucers of corn meal and wheat and oatmeal porridge, and the nice, firm, dry seeds—rape, millet, canary, hemp and sometimes as a great treat a little poppy seed.

The floor was covered with gravel and old lime, and once a month a man came in and swept it all up and put down a fresh lot.

Near the fountain was one small wicker chair, and there Miss Martin, the lame girl who owned us all, used to sit by the hour and watch us.

As I sat, a weak young thing, on the edge of my nest, looking down into the room, it seemed to me that there were a great many birds flying about, and I should never be able to tell one from the other. However, I soon learned who

they all were. First of all, there was my lovely mother Dixie, an American canary, with dainty whirls of feathers on her wings, my golden colored father Norfolk, my father's sister Silkie, her roller canary mate Silver-Throat, who was a tiny, mottled bird, with an exquisite voice, and about twenty other canaries of different breeds, some Australian parakeets, African love-birds, nonpareils, and indigoes, and in the nest beside me my little sister Cayenna and my brother Green-Top, so called from his green crest. I am a plainhead.

My mother told me a great many stories about all these other birds, but I will not put them down just now.

I must tell, though, about my naming. I had a trouble just as soon as my eyes opened. My big brother Green-Top was jealous of me. He is a larger, handsomer bird than I am, but even when we were babies my parents said that his voice would not be as good as mine. Just as soon as he got the use of his wings he began to beat me. My parents naturally stood up for me, because I am smaller and weaker and plainer looking. It was really surprising that I should turn out to be such an ordinary-looking

little bird, when I have such handsome parents.

Green-Top told me that the old birds in the room said I was the exact image of my grandmother Meenie, who was a very common little bird from very common stock, that Miss Mary Martin brought into the bird-room out of pity for her.

Well, anyway, our Mary Martin was not slow in finding out that I was set upon, and one day as she stood watching us, she said to me, "Come here, you golden baby. I haven't named you yet."

She held out her hand as she spoke, and I lighted on her shoulder and got a lump of sugar for being obedient.

"I like the way you stand up to that naughty brother of yours," she said. "You are a little hero. I am going to call you Richard the Lion-Hearted and Dicky-Dick for short."

All the birds were listening to her, and when she stopped speaking you could hear all over the room the funny little canary sounds, like question marks, "Eh! What! La! La! Now what do you think of that! Such a grand name for a little plainhead bird!"

Naming a bird was a very exciting event in

the bird-room and always caused a great deal of talk.

Green-Top was furious. His name sounded quite short and of no account, compared with Richard the Lion-Hearted. To show his displeasure he dashed across the room and brushed our Mary's ears with his wings. That was a favorite trick of the birds—to brush the hair or the ears of Miss Mary, or to light on her head, and the way they did it showed the state of their feelings toward her.

"Naughty boy!" she said, shaking her head at him. "Hemp seed for every bird in the room except Green-Top," and she fed us an extra portion of this seed we liked best while he, knowing better than to come forward, sat in a corner and sulked.

She was just like a mother to us all, so good and indulgent, but she would not have any bullies in her bird home, and if a bird got too bad she gave him away.

After a while she went out of the room, and Green-Top flew at me, beat me, and was beginning to chase me most wickedly, when our father called us to have a singing lesson.

By this time we were six weeks old, and had

been driven out of our nest three weeks ago. My mother was now getting ready for a second family. Miss Mary had given her a fresh box with a new nest in it, and my mother was lining it with soft cow hair, moss, dry grass, and short lengths of soft, white string. Our Mary never gave her birds long bits of anything, for they would have caught on their claws and tripped them up.

We young ones watched her jealously. We had cried bitterly when we were put out of the nest. Our mother did not beat us, but our father did.

"Don't you understand, babies," she said, as she turned herself round and round in the nest to shape it with her breast, "that I must get ready for this second family? I could not have you hanging about your old home. You would step on the nestlings. You must go out in the room and get acquainted with some of the young birds, for a year hence you will be choosing mates of your own."

"I don't want to go out in the room, mother," I chirped bitterly. "I want to stay with you. Green-Top is so ugly to me and sets my cousins on to tease me. They crowd me at

night on the perch, they make me wait at the food dishes till they have eaten. I want to live with you. You are so pretty and so good and comfortable."

"Darling, darling," she twittered in her lovely soft tones. "Come at night and perch near me. Wait till your father puts his head under his wing."

This was very soothing, and at least I had happy nights, although my days were always more or less worried. Parents don't know what a lot of trouble their young ones have when they first leave the home nest.

To come back to our singing lesson. My father was terribly strict with us, and we just hated it, though our mother told us to get all we could out of him, for as soon as the new nestlings came he would not pay much attention to us.

"Then what will you do," she said, "for a canary that can not sing is a no-account canary?"

"I wish I were a hen-bird like Cayenna," I said sulkily. "She never has to sing."

"Hen birds never sing," said my mother. "Cayenna's beauty and the exquisite coloring

that she will have later on, for I shall make her eat plenty of pepper food, will carry her through life. You are a very plain little bird, my darling. Your voice will be your only charm. Promise me, promise me, that you will mind what your daddy says."

"I'll try, mother," I used to say every time she talked to me, but at nearly every lesson, when my father lost his temper, I forgot what I had promised her, and lost mine too. This day I was particularly sulky, and it wasn't long before I was getting a good pecking from my father Norfolk.

"I never heard such harsh and broken tones," he said angrily. "Listen to Green-Top, how he holds his song like an endless strain."

I tried again, but unfortunately I caught my uncle Silver-Throat's eye, and broke down and gurgled and laughed in my father's beak.

Didn't I catch it! He and Green-Top both fell on me, and to save my feathers I flew straight to the most sheltered fir tree in the room, where Uncle Silver-Throat sat hunched up all day long, holding against the wall that part of his body which had once been a lovely tail.

He is a little Hartz Mountain canary, with a fluffy, mottled breast, and he has the most wonderful voice in the room.

He was laughing now. "Come here, poor little birdie," he said. "There is no use trying to learn from your father; he is too impatient. He can't sing, anyway. He is an English bird, and all his race are bred for form and appearance. My race is for song. It doesn't matter how we look. Can he teach you the water-bubble, deep roll, bell, flute, warble, whistle, and the numberless trills I can? Does his voice have a range of four octaves?"

"No, indeed," I said, "but he is my father, and I would like to learn from him."

"That's right," he said heartily. "I really think you should control yourself a little more. Well, we'll leave it this way. Go back to your father, when he becomes calm, and learn all you can from him, but come to me for extra lessons. I'll teach you to sing much better than that scamp Green-Top does, for your voice is sweeter than his. He is a very disrespectful, saucy young bird. It is he that puts your father up to abusing you, I believe."

"Uncle," I said timidly, "two days ago you

had a fine tail. Now you have none. Why is it?"

He smiled. "I am quite a deep thinker, birdie, and yesterday as I sat dreaming on' this branch, I failed to notice that new, golden span-gled Lizard canary who has lately come to the bird-room. She was acting queerly about the five eggs she has just laid. Finally I did re-mark that she was breaking and eating them. It seems she had a poor home before she came here, where she was fed stale seeds. So Avis, being scantily fed and having no dainties given her, used to eat a nice fresh egg whenever she could get it. 'Well,' I said to myself, 'they are her own eggs. She has a right to eat them if she chooses,' so I didn't interfere.

"Her mate Spotty came along after a while and fell into a rage. He asked if any bird had seen her at this mischief, and I said I had.

"He asked why I hadn't stopped her, and I said it was none of my business.

"He said it was, that all the birds in the room, even the parakeets and the love-birds who are pretty selfish, had made up their minds to stop this business of egg-breaking; then they all fell on me and picked out my tail feathers to

remind me to interfere when I saw another bird doing anything wrong."

"Do you feel badly about it, uncle?" I asked.

"My tail is pretty sore, but my mind is tranquil. I did wrong, but I have been punished for it, and my feathers will grow. Why worry about it? I am sorry for Spotty. He expected to have a nice lot of young ones in thirteen days, and now he will have to wait for weeks."

"Why would Avis eat her eggs, when she has plenty of lime and crushed egg shell and all sorts of food here?" I asked.

"Habit, my birdie. She had the naughty trick and could not get over it. If I had only shrieked at her, it would have frightened her and kept her from murdering all her future nestlings, as Spotty says. But there is your cayenne pepper food coming. Go and eat some, so that your feathers will be reddish gold. It is a good throat tonic, too."

Our Mary was just coming in with a saucer of mixed egg food, grated sweet bread, granulated sugar and cayenne pepper sprinkled on the top of it. She also had a deep dish of something purple.

"Blueberries, birds," she said, as she put it down. "Nice canned blueberries, almost as fresh as if they had just come off the bushes."

Nearly every bird in the room uttered a satisfied note, then they all flew to her feet where she set the dishes.

I was not hungry, and ate little. When she opened the door a few minutes later to go out, I flew to her and lighted on her arm.

My father was taking a nap, and I knew by the wicked look in Green-Top's eye that he would begin bullying me as soon as she left the room.

"Take me out," I chirped, "take me out," for I knew that she often took good steady little birds out into her own part of the house.

She understood me. "But, Dicky-Dick," she said, "you are so young. I fear you might fly away."

"I'll be good. I'll be good," I sang in my unsteady young voice, and, relenting, she put out a finger, urged me gently to her shoulder where she usually carried her birds, that being the safest foothold, and walked out into the hall.

My mother saw me going and called out a

warning. "Be careful, Dicky-Dick. You will see strange sights. Don't lose your head. Keep close to our Mary."

"I'll be careful, careful," I called back, but my heart was going pit-a-pat when the bird-room door closed behind me, and I went out into the strange new world of the hall.

CHAPTER II

A TRIP DOWNSTAIRS

OH, what a different air the hall had—very quiet and peaceful, no twittering of birds and never-stopping flying and fluttering, and chattering and singing, and with the murmur of the fountain going on, even in our sleep! There was no gravel on this floor, just a soft-looking thing the color of grass, that I found out afterward was called a carpet.

Our Mary hopped cheerfully down the stairs. She was quite a young girl, and had had a fall when a baby, that had made her very lame. Her parents gave her the bird-room to amuse her, so my mother had told me, for she could not go much on the street.

On the floor below the attic were some wide cheerful rooms with sunny windows. These were all called bedrooms, and her parents and two little cousins slept in them. There was nobody in them on this morning of my first visit to the big world outside the bird-room, and we

went down another long staircase. Here was a wider hall than the others, and several rooms as large as two or three bird-rooms put together.

Our Mary took me in between long curtains to a very beautiful place, with many things to sit on and a covering for the floor just as soft as our grass sods. She was quite out of breath, and dropping down on a little chair, put up a finger for me to step on it from her shoulder, and sat smiling at me.

"What big eyes, birdie!" she said. "What are you frightened of?"

"Of everything," I peeped; "of this big world, and the huge things in it."

She laughed heartily. "Oh, Dicky-Dick, our modest house overcomes you. I wish you could see some of the mansions up the street."

"Oh, this is large enough for me, large enough, large enough," I was just replying, when I got a terrible fright.

A big monster, ever so much higher than our Mary and dressed differently, was just coming into the room.

I gave a cry of alarm, and mounted, mounted in the air till I reached something with branch-

ing arms that came down from the ceiling. I found out afterward that light came from this brass thing. I sat on it, and looking down with my head thrust forward and my frightened feathers packed closely to my body, I called out, "Mary, Mary, I'm scary, scary!" which was a call I had learned from the older birds.

Mary was kissing the monster, and then she sat down close beside him and held on to one of his black arms.

"Dicky, Dicky," she sang back to me, "this is my daddy, don't be scary. Why, I thought he had been in the bird-room since you were hatched. Come down, honey."

Of course if he was her father, he would not hurt me, so I flew back to her shoulder, but what a queer-looking, enormous father! I was glad my parent did not look like that.

He was very loving with her, though, and, stroking her hair, he said, "Don't tire yourself too much with your birds, Mary."

"They rest me, father," she said, shaking her brown head at him, "and this new baby amuses me very much. He is so inquiring and clever and such a little victim, for his bigger brother beats the life out of him."

"The canary world is like the human world," said Mary's father, "sleep, eat, fight, play, over and over again—will your young pet let me stroke him?"

"I think so," she said, "now that he knows who you are."

"Why, certainly, certainly," I twittered. "Everybody's kind but brother."

The man laid a big finger, that seemed to me as heavy as a banana, on my golden head, and stroked me till I bent under the caress.

Fortunately some other person came in the room and he turned his head.

This was our Mary's mother, Mrs. Martin. I knew her well, for she often came into the bird-room. She was a very large, cheerful lady, not very handsome, nor remarkable in any way, and yet different from most women, so the old birds said. I had heard them talking about her, and they said she is one that understands birds and beasts, and it is on account of her understanding that our Mary loves us. They said she is a very wonderful woman, and that there is power in her eye—power over human beings and animals, and more wisdom even

than our Mary has, for she is old, and her daughter is young.

"The young can not know everything," the old birds often sang; "let them listen to the old ones and be guided by them."

When Mrs. Martin came in, her quick brown eyes swept over the room, taking in her daughter, her husband, and even little me perched on our Mary's finger.

"Thank fortune, I'm not late for lunch," she said, sinking into a chair, "and thank fortune, we have a guest. Excuse me for being late, birdie," she said in a most natural way, and treating me with as much courtesy as if I had been as big as the picture of the eagle on our bird-room wall.

That's what the birds said about her, that she believes even a canary has a position in the world, and has rights. She just hates to have any creature imposed on or ill-used.

"Come here, dearie," she said, holding out her plump hand toward me, "and kiss me."

I flew to her at once, and, putting up my tiny bill, touched her red, full lips. Such a big lady she was, and yet she reminded me of my little golden mother.

"Now we will go in to the table," she said, "and little guest will sit on my right hand. Anna, bring the fern dish."

Anna was a fair-haired girl who waited on the Martins and sometimes helped our Mary in the bird-room, so I knew her quite well. I had heard of the fern dish from bird guests of the Martins, and I watched her with great interest as she set it on the huge white table, that looked so queer to me that first day.

In the middle of the low, round dish of ferns was a little platform and on the platform was a perch. The bird guest sat on the perch and ate the food placed before him. He was not expected to run over the Martins' table and help himself.

"Dearie, you will not care for soup," said Mrs. Martin, when Anna placed a big thing like one of our bathing dishes before her.

I had never seen human beings eating, and as I sat on my perch in the fern dish I could not help smiling. They did not put their mouths down to their food, they brought the food up to their mouths by means of their arms, which are like our wings. Their legs they kept under the table.

The room in which they had their huge dishes of food and their enormous table was a wide and pleasant place with a little glass house off it, in which green and pleasant plants and flowers grew. I loved the air of this place, so peaceful and quiet, with the nice smell of food and no bad brother to bother me.

"Feed me, feed me," I chirped, for I was getting hungry now.

"Wait, my angel pet," said Mrs. Martin; "wait for the next course."

Later on I described what came next to my mother, and she said it was the leg of a soft, woolly young creature that played on the meadows, and she wondered that good people like the Martins would eat it.

"No meat for birdie," said Mrs. Martin, "but a scrap of carrot and lettuce and potato and a bit of that nice graham bread."

"Thank you, thank you," I chirped to her, "and now a drink."

Down among the ferns I had discovered a little egg cup which Mrs. Martin now filled with water for me. I was excited and thirsty and drank freely.

When the meat and vegetables were carried

out by Anna, fruit and a pudding came on. I had a little of the pudding which was made of bread and jam and milk; then Mrs. Martin gave me a grape to peck.

"And now, baby," she said, "you have had enough. Can't you warble a little for us?"

I did my best, but my song did not amount to much. All this time Mr. Martin and dear Mary had been looking at me very kindly, and when I finished they both clapped their hands.

At the sound of their applause, there was a great clatter outside in the hall, and a leaping and bounding and a noise, and a queer animal not as big as these human beings, but as large as twenty canaries, came running into the room.

I had never seen anything like this, and giving one shriek of fright, I sprang from the fern dish and flew high, high up in the air to the very top of the room. Fluttering wildly round the walls, I found no support for my claws; then I heard a calm voice saying, "Come down, come down, dearie, the animal is a dog, a very good dog. She won't hurt you."

Panting violently, I dropped halfway down to a picture hung on the wall and sat there, staring at the table.

The animal was on Mr. Martin's knee. He had pushed his chair from the table, and sat with his arm round it. Such a queer-looking thing, and yet not vicious. A kind of a wide forehead and staring eyes, and a good deal of beak, which I found out later was called a muzzle.

I was ashamed of myself, and flew right back to the fern dish. Young as I was, I knew these kind people would not let anything harm me.

"Excuse me, excuse me," I gasped. "I was scary, scary again."

"That is Billie, our dog," said Mrs. Martin; "she is good to birds. Mary, have you never had Billie in to see your pets?"

"No," said her daughter. "You know she has not been here very long."

"I would like her to be friends with them," said Mrs. Martin. "Please take her in soon, but put her out on the front steps now." Then she turned to me. "You are going to have another fright, I fear. By certain signs and tokens, I think my two adopted children are coming home for lunch."

CHAPTER III

SAMMY-SAM AND LUCY-LOO

I WAS very glad I had been warned, for there was a terrible noise out in the street that I afterward learned was caused by young creatures called children, shouting and calling to each other. Then the front door slammed and there was quiet.

Presently two very calm young beings—for Mrs. Martin would allow no shouting in her dining-room—came in, a boy and a girl.

"Lucy-Loo and Sammy-Sam," said Mrs. Martin, with a merry twinkle in her eye, for she was a great joker, "here is a new baby bird come downstairs for the first time."

The boy was a straight, well set-up young thing, eight years old, I heard afterward. The girl was a year younger, and she had light hair and big, staring eyes—very bright, intelligent eyes.

Our Mary was much older than her young cousins, and she was pretty strict with them about her birds, for they were never allowed to come into her bird-room.

The boy sat down at the table, and to my surprise said as he stared at me, "Not much of a bird, that—haven't you got anything better looking to show off?"

He was taking his soup quite sulkily.

His little sister was pouting. "I think Cousin Mary is very mean," she said to her aunt. "She might let us go in her old bird-room. We wouldn't hurt anything."

Our Mary said nothing, but Mrs. Martin spoke. "You remember, Lucy, that one day when Mary was out, a certain little girl and a certain little boy took a troop of young friends into the bird-room, and some baby birds died of fright, and some old ones got out, and were restored to their home with difficulty."

Our Mary raised her head. "I have forgiven them, mother, and some day soon I am going to let them see my birds, but they must promise never to go into the bird-room without me."

The boy and girl both spoke up eagerly.

"We promise. Will you take us in to-day?"

"No, not to-day," said our Mary. "To-morrow."

Their young faces fell, and they went on taking their soup.

"Canaries are very gentle, timid creatures," said Mrs. Martin. "You know, it is possible to kill them, without in the least intending to do so. This one we have down here to-day seems an exception. He gets frightened, but soon overcomes it. I think he is going to be an explorer."

"It is his unpleasant life in the bird-room that makes him wish to come out," said our Mary. "His little brother teases him most shamefully."

"Just the way Sammy-Sam teases me," said Lucy poutingly.

"I don't tease you," said Sammy. "You are a cry-baby."

"I'm not a cry-baby," she said.

Mrs. Martin interposed in her cheerful way. "Would you rather take your lunch, my darlings, or go out in the hall and continue your discussion?"

"Lunch first," said the boy promptly, "but I'll argue the head off Lucy afterward."

"Take an arm or a leg," said his aunt. "The head is such an important member to lose."

I thought this a good time for a little song, so in a broken way I told of my troubles with Green-Top, and how he beat me and pulled out my feathers.

The boy and girl were delighted. "Sure he's some bird," said Sammy, and Lucy cried out, "Little sweet thing—I love you."

After lunch Mr. Martin said he would take our Mary for a drive. The children hurried back to school, and Mrs. Martin said she would go and lie down, for she was tired. "Come with me, little boy," she said to me, "or would you rather go to the bird-room?"

I flew to the ribbon shoulder knot on her dress. I admired her very much and wished to stay with her.

"Mary," she said delightedly, "I love to have this little Dicky with me. I wish you would bring one of your small cages downstairs. Put seeds and water in it and hang it on the wall of the sitting-room. Leave the door open, so he

can go in and out. Of course he must spend some time each day with the old birds to perfect his song, but I would like him to have the run of the house. I think I see in him an unusual sympathy and understanding of human beings."

"He is a pet," said our Mary. "I will be glad to have him downstairs a good deal."

So it came about that I had a little home of my own in the room of one of the best friends of birds in the city. Our Mary was darling, but she was young. Her mother had known trouble, and she had known great joy, and she could look deep into the hearts of men and beasts and birds. I had a very happy time with her, and got to know many interesting animals and other birds. At the same time I was free to go into the bird-room whenever I wished to do so, but I found after I had become accustomed to human beings that many of the birds there seemed narrow and very taken up with their own nests, not seeing much into, nor caring much about, the great bird world outside our little room.

Therefore, to help canaries and to help

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friends of canaries to understand them, I am giving this little account of my life—an insignificant little life, perhaps, and yet an important little life, for even a canary is a link in the great chain of life that binds the world together.

CHAPTER IV

A SAD TIME FOR A CANARY FAMILY

TIME went by, and autumn came and then winter. I had been hatched in the early summer, and by winter time it seemed to me that I was a very old bird and knew a great deal.

I had become quite a member of the Martin family, and sometimes I did not go in the bird-room for days together.

My sleeping place was a cage in the family sitting-room upstairs. The door was never closed, and I flew in and out at will. Oh, how interested I was in the world of the house! I used to fly from room to room and sometimes I even went in the kitchen and watched Hester doing the cooking. She had a little shelf near a window filled with plants, and I always lighted there, for she did not like me to fly about and get on her ironing board or pastry table. I became so interested in the family that I thought

I would never get tired of exploring the house, but when winter came I found myself staring out in the street. I wanted to get out and see what the great out-of-doors was like.

Early in the winter we had much excitement in the bird-room. A very happy time called Christmas was coming. Everybody gave presents, and Mr. Martin's gift to his daughter was money to build a fine large flying place on the roof for her birds. We would not be able to use it until spring, but he said the work had better be done in the winter because it was easier to get carpenters than it would be later on, and there were some poor men he wished to employ during the cold weather.

What chirping and chattering and gossip there were among the birds! There was no nesting going on now, and not much to talk about. Soon two men came, and from the big window we birds watched them putting up a good-sized framework out on the roof and nailing netting to it. What a fine large place we should have right out in the sunshine.

There were no fir trees put out there on account of fire. Mr. Martin said sparks from chimneys might start a blaze, but the men made

things like trees of metal, with nice spreading branches. A part of this flying cage was covered over—and up under the roof, where no rain could wet them, the men put tiny nesting boxes.

“Why, we shall be just like wild birds,” said my mother joyfully, “with nests outside in the fresh air. What lovely, strong young ones we shall have! It has been a trifle hot in the bird-room in summer.”

My poor little mother had felt the heat terribly through the latter part of the summer, but that had not prevented her from doing her duty by her second family of young ones. They were very interesting little fledglings—three male birds, and three hen-birds, and strange to say my naughty brother Green-Top was as kind to them as he had been unkind to me.

It is no easy matter to feed six hearty young canaries, and it was the prettiest sight in the world to see him fly to the dish of egg food, stuff his beak and hurry to the nestlings with it. He was a great help to my parents. He was the only young canary in the bird-room that helped his parents feed new babies, and the old birds gave him great credit for it.

He would not let me go near the nest. I had politely offered to help him, but he told me in an angry way that I was a rover and despised my home, and if I did not get out, he would pick at my eyes and blind me for life.

"Don't mind him, darling, darling," sang my dear mother, who never forgot me. Norfolk, my father, paid no attention to me now. A steely look came into his eyes whenever I went near him, and one day he sang coldly at me, "Who are you, who are you?" though he knew quite well I was his son.

Green-Top was his favorite now. My brother just loved our father and perched near him at night, and was so attentive to him that the old birds said, "That young one will never mate. He loves his parents too well. He will always live with them."

I never dared sing in the bird-room now, for if I did Green-Top always pulled my tail or looked down my throat. These are great tricks with canaries, to take the conceit out of a bird they think vain. Often when in the gladness of my heart at getting back into the bird-room I would burst into song, Green-Top would steal behind me and tweak my tail severely, and

if he was busy about something, he would wink at one of my cousins to do it for him.

A terrible trouble, a most unspeakable and dreadful trouble, came upon us as a family and poisoned our happiness that winter. My beautiful mother Dixie, who had been allowed to have too many nests and raise too many nestlings in her short life, sickened and died. I shall never forget seeing her fail from day to day. First she had asthma and sat gasping for breath, with her beak wide open. Our Mary did everything for her. She gave her iron tonic and different medicines, but nothing did any good. Day by day her poor little body looked like a puff-ball, and her quick, short gasps for breath were most painful to hear. Her voice failed, and she had to take castor oil and paregoric and glycerine and had rock-candy in her drinking water.

"It is no use," said our Mary one day. "My dear Dixie, you will have to go, but I think there is a little bird heaven somewhere where you will be happy, and will not suffer any more, and some day all your little family will go to it, and fly about gaily with you ever after."

My little mother opened her eyes, her very beautiful eyes, though all the rest of her body was drooping and disfigured now. They opened so wide that I thought perhaps she was going to get better. Many times since I have seen that strange look in the eyes of a dying bird—a look of great astonishment, as if they had suddenly caught sight of something they had not seen before. Then the lovely eyes closed, her tiny head fell over, and our Mary said softly, "Her little bird spirit has flown away."

She held her out in the palm of her hand for all the birds to see, then she took her away, and though it was winter and deep snow was on the ground, she had the gardener dig a little grave and she buried her in a tin box, quite deep in the ground, where no roaming cats nor dogs would get her.

We watched her from the window, all of us except my father Norfolk. He sang all the rest of the day at the top of his voice, almost a screaming song. He sang because he thought his heart was breaking, but in a few weeks he was flying about with Avis, the canary who ate

her eggs. Her mate Spotty had died, and our Mary was pleased to have her take up with Norfolk, for he was a steady bird and always at home, not like poor Spotty, who used to be mostly at the opposite end of the bird-room from his home, gossiping and chattering with canaries when he should have been attending to his mate.

My mother's death saddened me terribly, and for a long time I spent a large part of every day in the bird-room with my young brothers and sisters, all of whom had nice names. The hen-birds were Pretty Girl, Beauty, and Cantala, and the males were Pretty Boy, Redgold, and Cresto. Such little dear things they were, all gentle and good, no fighters among them.

At first Green-Top let me help him father them. Then when he got over his grief he began to beat me again, and I lost feathers.

When I speak of beating, I must not be taken too seriously. When canaries fight, they fly up into the air and down again, fluttering wings, crying out, and making dashes at each other—a great fuss and flurry, but not much harm done. The hen-birds fight this way a good deal in

nesting time, then their mates come and help them, and the whole bird-room is in a commotion.

A more serious way of fighting is chasing. One bird takes a dislike to another bird and pursues him unmercifully, striking him about the head till his beak is sore and bleeding. That is the way Green-Top served me, and soon I made up my mind that I was not needed in the bird-room and I got into the habit of spending about all my time downstairs, only coming up once in a while to see how all the birds were, and find out if they were getting anything to eat that I did not have.

Everybody was so good to me. Hester put little titbits on my shelf in the kitchen, Mrs. Martin was always handing dainties to me, and even Mr. Martin would bring home a fine apple or some grapes or an orange for me to peck at.

The children were the best of all. Not a bit of candy or cake did they get but what a bit was saved for me, and many a greasy or sticky little morsel that I just pretended to eat was laid before me.

It was curious about those children. They

were rather naughty with human beings, but ever since their cousin Mary allowed them to go in the bird-room, once a day with her, they had become nicer to birds and animals.

CHAPTER V.

MY NEW FRIEND, CHUMMY HOLE-IN-THE-WALL

AS I have said before, a strange longing to be out of doors came over me as winter passed away and spring approached. I never wearied of sitting on the window ledges and watching the plucky little English sparrows who sometimes came to the bird-room window and talked over the news of the day with us.

Most of the canaries were very haughty with them, and looked down on them as inferior birds. So the sparrows rarely approached us, unless they had important news to communicate, when eagerness to hear what they had to say made the canaries forget to snub them.

That clever woman, Mrs. Martin, knew that I wished to get out in the street, and one day when there was a sudden thaw after very cold weather, she said to me, as I sat on her bedroom window sill, "I believe my little boy would like a fly out of doors."

"Dear Missie, Missie, Missie," I sang, "how sweet you are to me, how sweet!"

"Fly away, then," she said, throwing up the window. "I don't think the air is cold enough to hurt you."

"Thank you, thank you," I sang, as I flew by her and out into the fresh air.

How can I ever describe my feelings on my first flight into the great big out-of-doors. I had, in my callow innocence, thought the Martin house very large and grand. Why, this big, out-door house had a ceiling so far away that only a very strong bird could ever fly to the top of it.

I felt breathless and confused, and flying straight to a big tree in front of the window, flattened myself against a dark limb, and crouched there half frightened, half enchanted with myself.

Suddenly a sharp little voice twittered, "Oho! little golden bird, and who are you?"

I knew that a street sparrow's eyes are everywhere, so I was not surprised on looking up to see a male bird, with quite a pretty black throat patch, sitting on a limb above me.

"I am a canary," I said.

"I know that," he replied, rather impatiently, "but how is it that you are so strong of wing? You fly like a wild bird."

"I have not always been in the bird-room," I said; "I have flown all over the house and exercise has strengthened my wings."

"Oh, you are the little youngster I have noticed looking from between the window curtains. How is it that you were allowed to leave the bird-room?"

"The canaries call me Dicky-Dick the Rover. At an early age I found the bird-room small," I said, not wishing to tell him about my troubles with my brother.

"How old are you?" he asked.

"Nearly a year."

"What is your name?"

"Richard the Lion-Hearted," I said, thinking to impress him by its length, "but my mistress says that is too heavy a name for such a tiny bird, so she shortens it to Dicky-Dick and sometimes Dicky-Duck."

"The Lion-Hearted," repeated the sparrow. "That name doesn't suit you. You seem to be a very gentle bird."

"I am gentle till I am roused," I said meek-

ly; "then I am a fair fighter. Now, will you tell me what your name is?"

"Chummy Hole-in-the-Wall."

This beat my name, and I said, "That's a double, double surname."

"Yes," he said proudly. "It's a good name, given to me by all the sparrows of the neighborhood."

"And may I ask how old you are?"

"Six years."

"You must be very wise," I said. "I feel as if I knew a great deal, and I am not one year yet."

"I know everything about this neighborhood," he said grandly. "If you wish the life history or habits of any bird here, I can inform you of them."

"I shall be sure to come to you for information," I said. Then I asked anxiously, "What are the birds like in this street?"

"Pretty decent, on the whole. There were some bad sparrows and two ugly old pigeons, but we had a midwinter drive, and chased them all down in St. John's ward, where the common birds live. You know we sparrows have our own quarters all over this city."

"Have you?" I said. "Like big bird-rooms?"

"Yes, my little sir, we in this district near the gray old university are known as the Varsity sparrows. We are bounded on the north by Bloor Street, on the south by College Street, on the east by Yonge Street, and on the west by Spadina Avenue, and this is the worst street of all for food."

"I have heard that this has been a very hard winter for all birds," I said.

"It has been perfectly terrible. It snowed, and it snowed, and it snowed. Every scrap of food was under a white blanket. If it hadn't been for covers left off trash cans, and a few kind people who threw out crumbs, the sparrows would all have died."

"The snow is going now," I said, with a smile.

He laughed a queer, hard little sparrow laugh, and looked up and down the street. The high rounded snow banks were no longer white and beautiful, but grimy and soot-laden, and they were weeping rivers of dusky tears. The icy sidewalks were so slippery with standing water that ladies and children went into the

street, but it was not much better there, and often they lost their rubbers, which went sailing down the streams like little black boats.

However, up in the blue heaven, the sun was shining, and there was warmth in it, for this was February and spring would soon be with us.

I looked up and down the street. It seemed very quaint to me, and I stretched out my neck to find out whether I could see the end of it. I could not. It went away up, up toward a hill with trees on it, and, as I found out later, away down south to a big lake where the wharves are, and the ships and the railroads, and the noise and the traffic, and also a lovely island that I had heard the Martins say was a fine place for a summer outing.

The sparrow was watching me, and at last he said, "How do you like it out here?"

"Very much," I said. "It is so big and wonderful, and there are so many houses standing away back from the street. I thought there were no houses in the world but just the Martins', and those I could see from their windows."

He smiled at me, but said nothing, and I went on, "And the trees are so enormous and

so friendly. I love to see them reaching their gaunt arms across the street to shake hands. Our fir trees in the bird-room will seem very small to me now."

He shook his little dull-colored head. "Alas! the neighborhood is not what it used to be. A few years ago all these were private houses. Now boarding houses and lodging houses and even shops are creeping up from town."

I didn't know much about this, but I said timidly, "Isn't that better for you sparrows? Aren't there more scraps?"

"No, not so many. When the rich people lived here, we knew what we had to depend on. Either they would feed us, or they would not. Several kind-hearted ladies used to have their servants throw out food for neighborhood birds at a certain hour every day, and your Mrs. Martin has always kept a little dish full of water on her lawn beside the feeding-table. I suppose you have seen that from your bird-room window."

"Oh, yes," I said. "We canaries used to sit on the window sill on cold mornings and watch Mr. Martin wading through the snow with the

nice warm food that his wife was sending out for the birds."

"These boarding-house and lodging-house people come and go," the sparrow went on. "Some feed us, and some don't. Usually we are stuffed in summer, and starved in winter."

"I have heard Mrs. Martin say," I observed, "that wild birds should be assisted over bad seasons and fed whenever their natural supply gives out."

"Sparrows don't need food in summer," said Chummy, "because then we expect to do our duty to human beings by eating all the insects we can, and the bad weed seeds."

I said nothing. I thought I had not known my new friend long enough to find fault with him, but I wanted very much to ask him if he really thought English sparrows did do their duty by human beings.

"Would you like to see my little house?" he asked.

"Very much," I replied, and I followed him as he flew to another tree. We were now further up the street where we could look back at our red brick house which is a double one, and quite wide. Now we were in front of one that

stood a little way from its neighbors. It was tall and narrow, and in the middle of its high north wall was a small hole where a brick had fallen out.

Chummy pointed to it proudly. "There's not a snigger sparrow bedroom in the city than that," he said, "for right behind the open place is a hole in the brick work next the furnace chimney. No matter how cold and hungry I am when I go to bed, I'm kept warm till breakfast time, when I can look for scraps. Many a feeble old sparrow and many a weak one has died in the bitter cold this winter. They went to bed with empty crops and never woke up. We've had twelve weeks of frost, instead of our usual six, and this is only the fifth day of thawing weather that we've had all winter."

"Everything seems topsy-turvy this winter," I said. "Human beings are short of coal and food, and they're worried and anxious. I am very sorry for them.

"But times will improve, Chummy. The old birds say that black hours come, but no darkness can keep the sun from breaking through. He is the king of the world."

Chummy raised his little dark head up to the

sunlight. "I'm not complaining, Dicky. I wish every little bird in the world had such a snug home as mine."

"How did the hole come in the wall?" I asked.

"Some workmen had a scaffold up there to repair the top of the chimney. When they took it down, they knocked a brick out."

"Is it large enough for you in nesting time?"

"Oh, yes; don't you want to come and see it? You're not afraid?"

"Oh, no," I said warmly. "I know whenever I get a good look into a bird's eye whether I can trust him or not."

"Come along, then," said Chummy, deeply gratified, and I flew beside him to his little house.

CHAPTER VI

CHUMMY TELLS THE STORY OF A NAUGHTY SQUIRREL

OH, how snug!" I exclaimed. "You have a little hall and a bedroom, and how clean it is! The old birds say they like to see a bird tidy his nest from one year to another. Do you keep the same mate?"

"I do," he replied. "I always have Jennie, but as you probably know, sparrows don't pair till spring. In the winter the birds are in flocks. Jennie is spending these hard months with her parents downtown near the station because the food supply is better there. I often go to see her, and I expect her back soon to begin house-keeping. We like to get ahead of the others in nesting, for there are evil birds who try every year to drive us from our desirable home."

"Everything born has to fight," I said cheerfully.

"I don't know much about canaries," said Chummy. "All that I have seen were very exclusive and haughty, and looked down on us street birds."

"Some of my family are that way," I sighed, "but I have been much with human beings and my little head has more wisdom in it."

"I like you," Chummy began to say heartily; then he stopped short, cried out, and said, "Duck your head quick and come inside!"

I scuttled from his wide open hallway into his little bedroom, wondering what had happened. A shower of nutshells had just been dropped past our beaks. "Who's doing that?" I asked.

"Squirrie—he hates me because he can't get a foothold to explore this house."

"And who is Squirrie?" I asked.

"The worst little rascal of a squirrel that you ever saw. He respects nobody, and what do you think is his favorite song?—not that he can sing. His voice is like a crow's."

"I can't imagine what kind of songs a squirrel would sing," I said.

"I'll run over it for you," said Chummy, "though I haven't a very good voice myself."

“I care for nobody, no not I,
And nobody cares for me.
I live in the middle of Pleasant Street
And happy will I be!”

Now what do you think of that for a selfish song in these hard times?”

I laughed heartily. “Perhaps you take Squirrie too seriously. I’d like to see the little rogue. Does he live in this house of yours?”

“Yes, right up over us under the roof. He gnawed a hole through from the outside this summer, and stored an enormous quantity of nuts that he stole from good Mrs. Lacey at the corner grocery on the next street. He has an enormous place to scamper about in if he wishes to stretch his legs. He says in the corner of it he has a delightfully warm little bed-place, lined with tiny soft bits of wool and fur torn from ladies’ dresses, for he has the run of most of the bedrooms in the neighborhood. Have you seen the two old maids that live in the big attic of this house?”

“Yes, my mistress calls them the bachelor girls,” I said politely.

“Girls,” he said scornfully; “they’re more like old women. Well, anyway, they’re afraid

of mice and rats, and when Squirrie wakes up and scampers across the boards to his pantry to get a nut, and rolls it about, and gnaws it, and nibbles it, they nearly have a fit, and run to the landlady and hurry her up the three flights of stairs.

"She listens and pants, and says, 'It must be a rat, it's too noisy for a mouse.' Then she goes down cellar and gets a rat-trap and props its big jaws open with a bit of cheese and sets it in a corner of the room.

"Squirrie watches them through a tiny hole in the trapdoor in the ceiling that he made to spy on them, and he nearly dies laughing, for he loves to tease people, and he hisses at them in a low voice, 'The trap isn't made yet that will catch me. I hope you'll nip your own old toes in it.' "

"What very disrespectful talk," I exclaimed.

"Oh, he doesn't care for anybody, and the other night his dreadful wish came true, and he was so delighted that he most lost his breath and had squirrel apoplexy."

"How did it happen?" I asked.

The sparrow ran his little tongue out over his beak, for he dearly loves to talk, and went on,

"You see, the bachelor ladies were moving their furniture about to make their room look prettier, and they forgot the trap, and Miss Maggie did catch her toe in it, and there was such a yelling and screaming that it woke me out of a sound sleep.

"The lodgers all came running upstairs with fire extinguishers, and flat irons, and pokers, and one man had a revolver. I thought the house was on fire, and I flew out of my little hole in the wall to this tree. I came here, and from a high limb I could look right in the attic window. The lodgers were all bursting into the room and poor Miss Maggie, in curl papers and pink pajamas, was shrieking and dancing on one foot, and holding up the other with the trap on the toe of her bedroom slipper.

"Out on the roof, Squirrie was bending down to look at her. He was lying on his wicked little stomach, and he laughed so hard that at last he had to roll over in the snow on the roof to get cool. He looked terrible, and we all hoped he was going to pass away in the night, but the next morning as we sat round on the tree talking about him, and trying to think of some good thing he had done, he poked his head out of the

hole which is his front door, and made the most ugly faces at us that you can imagine. He is certainly a dreadful creature, and I shall be sorry for the housekeepers about here when the spring comes."

I smiled at Chummy's earnestness and settled down more comfortably with my breast against the bricks. The day was so pleasant that I thought I would stay out a little longer. I knew by the look in his little, bright eye that the sparrow liked talking to me. We were in a patch of sunlight that crept in his front door, and after the long cold winter the nice warm feeling on our feathers was very comforting.

"How does Squirrie trouble the housekeepers?" I asked.

"Well, to begin with, he bothers them because he has no home duties. He is an ugly, odd, old bachelor, and never gets a mate in the spring, because no self-respecting young squirrel will take up with such a scamp."

"Poor creature!" I said. "It is enough to make any one ugly to live alone."

Chummy went on: "Squirrie has been two years only in this neighborhood. He never stays long anywhere, for his bad deeds make

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enemies for him, and he is driven away. When he first came here he lived in Snug Hollow, that big hole in the half-dead elm at the corner. Just opposite the tree is a lodging-house. You can see it from here, that one with the upper verandas. It is kept by a soldier's widow, and she is rather poor. She could not afford to put in window screens, and Squirrie had a royal time with one of her lodgers, a young student up in the third story. He was very odd, and would eat no meat. He lived on nuts, cheese, fruit, eggs, and bread—just the things Squirrie likes. So he made up his mind to board with the student. The young man was a fresh-air fiend, and never closed his windows. This just suited Squirrie, so whenever this young Dolliver went over to the University, Squirrie would spring from a tree branch to the roof, and was down on the veranda and into the room in a trice. He rarely ate anything on the spot. He carried everything away to his hole in the tree, so the student thought that the maid who did his room must be stealing his things.

“He questioned her, but she said she knew nothing about his food. Then he locked the chest of drawers where he kept his supplies.

Squirrie climbed up the back, enlarged a knot-hole and went in that way. The student thought the girl must have a key. So he went to the landlady. She dismissed the maid and got another, but the student's things went faster than ever.

"The next thing was that the student lost his temper and told the soldier's widow that she would do well to feed her maid better, and she told him that if he didn't like her house he could get out.

"However, she sent this second girl away and got another. It was the same old story—nuts, fruit, cheese, bread still vanished. Then the student got in a worse temper, and turned all the clothes out of his trunk and made that his pantry, and carried the key in his pocket.

"Now he lost nothing, for Squirrie, clever as he was, could not get in a locked trunk. He was up a tree, indeed, but he was clever enough to find a way down. The soldier's widow was his next victim, and he would watch the windows and see where she was, and often when her back was turned he would dart in the house, seize some bit of food, and run away with it.

"'Now,' said the soldier's widow, 'this last

girl is dishonest, too. She can't get into the student's trunk, and she has turned against me.' So she sent her away, though the girl cried and said she was well brought up, and would not steal a pin.

"By this time the house had such a bad name among maids that the soldier's widow could not get another, and she had too much work to do and became thin and miserable, and still the stealing went on, till at last she said, 'I must be a thief myself, and don't know it.'

"However, any one who does wrong is always paid up for it, and Squirrie was soon caught. By this time he was so fat he could scarcely run, and he had enough nuts and hard biscuits laid up to last him for two winters. To keep down his flesh, he began to tease the dog in the lodging-house. Not in the daytime, for he did not wish to be seen. He used to chatter, chatter to Rover as he lay on the porch in the warm summer evenings, and tease him by sitting up on his hind legs and daring him to play chase. There was no cat in the house to head Squirrie off, so he would run round and round the yard and sometimes in the front door, and out the back, with old Rover loping after

him, his tongue hanging out of his mouth, and his face quite silly.

"The dog has gone crazy,' said the soldier's widow one evening, as she saw Rover running about the yard and sometimes down to the old barn behind the house and back again. 'He will have to be poisoned.'

"Rover was nearly crazy. He left the mischievous squirrel and ran to his good mistress, and put his paws on her knees, but she did not understand and pushed him away.

"I felt terribly and wondered whether I could not do something to help."

"How did you know all this?" I interrupted. "You would be in bed dark evenings."

"Why surely you know," said Chummy, "that all birds of the day tell their news to the birds of the night—to owls, to bats, and even to some insects. Then, in turn, we get the news of the night. I had a very smart young screech-owl watching Squirrie for me."

"Yes, yes," I said hurriedly. "We cage birds are more handicapped than you wild ones. I know, though, about the bird exchange. I've heard the old birds say that they have even had to depend on cockroaches sometimes for items

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of news, when they couldn't get about themselves."

"Well," continued Chummy, "I made up my mind something had to be done to enlighten the soldier's widow, so the next morning I just hovered round and gave up all thought of breakfast for myself, though of course I rose extra early, and fed the young ones before my mate got up.

"I watched the soldier's widow when she took the bottle of milk from the refrigerator and put it on the pantry shelf. I watched her when she poured some in a little pitcher and put it on the dining-room table. I still kept my eye on her when she went to the back door to speak to the vegetable man, but after that I watched Squirrie.

"The little beast was darting into the dining-room. He went straight for the milk pitcher and holding on the edge with his paws, he ran his head away down into it, to get a good long drink.

"I lighted on the window sill and gave a loud squawk. The soldier's widow turned round, looked past me, and saw Squirrie with his head in the milk pitcher. She gave a loud and joyful squeal, dropped the cabbage she was holding

and ran in the room, just in time to see Squirrie with a very milky face darting out the other door to the front of the house.

"Oh, how happy she was! It had all come over her in a flash what a goose she had been not to have guessed it was a squirrel that was defrauding her. She ran up to the student's room to tell him the good news, and he went to the window and shook his fist at Squirrie and called him the red plague."

"What did Squirrie say?" I asked.

"Squirrie said, 'I don't care,' and instead of hiding from them, as he had always done before, he came boldly out on a branch, and licked his milky paws. Then he moved six doors down the street to a house where two maiden ladies lived. They have gone away now, but they kept a small tea-room and sold cake and candy. Squirrie went creeping round them, and they thought it was cute to have a little pet, so they used to put nuts for him on their windows."

"Didn't they know what mischief he had done at the corner?" I asked.

"No—you young things don't know how it is in a city. No one knows or cares who lives

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near by. In the nice, kind country you know everyone for miles round. Well, Squirrie got so familiar with these ladies that he used to sleep in the house and tease the family cat. He didn't do much mischief at first. He knew he was in a good place, but one day just before Easter, Satan entered into him, and he played the poor ladies a very scurvy trick.

"They had been getting their baskets all ready for Easter sales, and had them in rows on a big table—such cute-looking little Japanese baskets, they were, all red and yellow and filled with layers of nuts and candy.

"This day both ladies went downtown to buy more things for more baskets, and Squirrie got into the room and began playing with those that were finished. I saw him through the window, but what could I do? When I chirped to him that he was a bad beast to spoil the work of the two ladies who had been so good to him, he chattered his teeth and made a face at me.

"Now, if he had just played with one or two baskets, it would not have mattered so much, but he is like Silly Bob in cherry time."

"Who is Silly Bob?" I asked.

"A robin who is weak in his head. Instead of eating a few cherries, he runs all over a tree, and gives each cherry a dab in the cheek—ruins them all and makes the gardeners furious with him. Squirrie ran up and down the rows of tempting-looking baskets, so afraid was he that he could not get all his mischief in before the ladies came back. He bit a few straws on the top of each one, then he attacked the sides and then the bottom. Then he tore the covers off and threw the candy and nuts on the floor."

"What! Out of every one?" I asked, in a shocked voice.

"Every one, I tell you. Oh, they were a sight! Every basket was ruined. The nuts he carried off to his hole in the tree."

"And what did the poor ladies say when they came back?" I asked.

"You should have seen their faces. They had paid fifty cents apiece for the baskets, and you know how expensive nuts and candies and raisins are. Then they got angry and hired a carpenter to come and nail up Squirrie's hole in the tree, taking good care to see that he was out of it first. If he went near the house, they threw things at him."

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"And what did Squirrie do?"

"He said he was tired of city life and needed country air, and he went up on North Hill, and stayed till the ladies moved away, then he came back to their neighborhood and played another trick almost as bad, on a nice old grandfather."

CHAPTER VII

MORE ABOUT SQUIRRIE

WHY, Squirrie is the mischief-maker of the neighborhood," I said.

"He is indeed, and I would not advise you to cultivate him. He would be sure to get you into trouble."

"What did he do to the grandfather?" I asked.

"Caused him to commit sin by beating an innocent dog," said Chummy solemnly.

"Who was the dog?" I asked.

"Pluto was his name, but we all called him Cross-Patch, because he had a snarly temper. He was a good dog, though, for he tried so hard to overcome his faults. He had been a thief, but Grandfather had reasoned with him, and whipped him, till at last he was a perfectly honest dog—but he got a bad beating that Christmas."

"Who was Grandfather?" I asked.

"Grandfather was a nice foreign man who lived in a little house round the corner. He had made some money in selling old clothes, and he was bringing up his daughter's children. At Christmas time he had saved enough money to buy a nice tree for his grandchildren. He stayed up late Christmas eve to trim the tree, and Cross-Patch watched him. The blinds were up and another red squirrel called Chic-kari, who was a tremendous climber, told me that he watched the old man too, and it was pretty to see him hanging little bags of candy and candles and strings of popcorn on the branches.

"When he got through, he said, 'Now, doggie, don't you touch anything, and when the children strip the tree in the morning, you shall have your share of good things.'

"Cross-Patch wagged his tail. He had had a good supper, and was not hungry, and then he was a reformed dog.

"Unfortunately the old man, in trotting to and fro from the kitchen to the dining-room, where the tree was, forgot to bring Cross-Patch out, and he had to sleep in the room with the

tree. Of course he touched nothing, but didn't that scamp of a squirrel get in through some hole or corner."

"What were those squirrels doing out on a winter night?" I asked.

"Red squirrels don't sleep like logs through the winter, as some squirrels do," said Chummy. "Chickari was prowling because his supplies had run low. Squirrie was out for mischief. He has a long head and always lays up enough and more than enough. Perhaps he felt the Christmas stir in the air. Anyway, he got into this old rickety cottage and ran up and down the Christmas tree, as if he were crazy, but he scarcely touched anything at the top. Just to tease Cross-Patch he nibbled and bit and tore at everything on the lower limbs."

"Why didn't Cross-Patch chase him?" I said indignantly.

"He did, but what can a dog do with a lively squirrel? Besides Cross-Patch could not see very well, although there was a moon shining in the room. He is getting old. However, he became so angry that at last he made a splendid leap in the air, and caught the tip end of Squirrie's tail which is like a fine bushy flag.

He got a mouthful of hair, and the tail did not look so fine afterward.

"Just when the noise was at its worst, Grandfather woke up and came in. Of course, Squirrie hid, and there stood Cross-Patch trembling in every limp, his sorry eyes going to the torn candy bags and popcorn strewed over the floor.

"'So—you are a backslider,' said the old man. 'Well, you have robbed my children, and I shall have to beat you.' He was a patient old man, but now he was angry, and Cross-Patch was getting some good whacks and stripes from a rope end, when he began to choke over the squirrel fur in his mouth.

"The old man stopped beating, stared at him, and took the little bunch of fur that Cross-Patch spat out, and examined it. Then he dropped his rope and went to the tree.

"His face fell, and he looked sad. 'Punish first, and examine afterward,' he said. 'How many persons do that with children. Why did I not observe that a dog could not have so spoiled this little tree without knocking it over? It is that pest of a squirrel who has been here. I might have known. Dog, I beg your pardon,' and he shook hands quite solemnly with

Cross-Patch who took on the air of a suffering martyr."

"And what did Squirrie do?" I asked. "Was his heart touched?"

"Not a bit of it. He went home chuckling, but what do you think he found?"

"I don't know much about squirrel ways," I said.

"I do," said Chummy, "and they are fine-spirited little creatures, except the few that like to suck birds' eggs and kill young. All the sparrows liked Chickari, and after that night he was a perfect hero among us. He knew Squirrie pretty well, and was sure he would remain to gloat over his mischief, so he whipped off to his cupboard—"

"Whose cupboard?" I asked. "His own, or Squirrie's?"

"Squirrie's—you know the little scamp's old home in the tree called Snug Hollow had been boarded up, and the only place in the neighborhood he had been able to get was a poor refuge up on a roof. Well, Chickari knew where it was, and he had dashed off to it, and carried away nearly all of Squirrie's nice winter hoard before he got back. Wasn't Squirrie furious!

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He danced with rage on the moonlit roof when he got home. So a sparrow who slept up there told us. The noise woke him up, and he could plainly see Squirrie scampering, leaping, chattering—nose now up, now down, his four legs digging the snow, his tail wig-wagging! Oh, he was in a rage! He had to go south for the rest of the winter, but he came back in the spring, more wicked than ever, for it was in the following June that he became a murderer.”

“A murderer!” I said in a horrified tone.

“Yes—I will tell you about it, if you are not tired of my chirping.”

“No, no—I just love to hear you,” I said warmly.

CHAPTER VIII

CHUMMY'S OPINIONS

THAT year Jennie and I had a lovely lot of young ones, quite early in June," said Chummy. "One day we were out getting brown-tail moths, for I assure you we sparrows do eat lots of insect pests. We were just hurrying back to our hole in the wall with our beaks full, when a friendly warbler who was flying by said, 'Wee-chee chee, chee, hurry, hurry, Squirrie is coming out of your hole licking red paws.'

"We dropped our loads and flew madly through the air."

"Why, I thought you said he could not get up that sheer wall," I remarked, looking at it as it stretched above and below us, for we had moved back to Chummy's front doorway.

"So I did, but a workman had come to do something to the chimney, and had left a ladder standing against the wall."

"You don't mean to say Squirrie had killed your young ones?"

"Every one; there they lay in the nest, their dear little throats bitten."

"What did you do?" I asked.

"My mate Jennie was nearly crazy, and so was I. I called up some of my sparrow friends, Jim and Dandy and Johnny White-Tail and Black Gorget, and Squirrie got the most awful pecking a squirrel ever had. We chased him all over the housetops and on to the trees. He leaped from one branch to another, and we took nips out of him till he was red, too, and very sore. You see, he had no Snug Hollow to run to."

"If he had been a good squirrel," I said, "those ladies would not have had his home boarded up."

"Just so. Squirrie was beginning to find out that a bad squirrel always gets punished by some bird or beast. Well, at last the little wretch found his breath giving out, and he chattered, 'Mer-mer-mercy!' We all gathered round him, as he lay panting on a limb flat on his stomach to get cool. We bound him over to keep the peace, telling him that if he ever

killed another sparrow, he would be driven out of the neighborhood."

"I wonder if you should not have driven him away then, in the interests of other little birds?"

"But there are so many bird murderers," said the sparrow patiently. "Boys stone us and shoot us, cats hunt us. Black Thomas, the cat in the boarding-house, boasts that he catches fifty birds a year, foreigners kill us, especially Italians who will shoot even a chickadee to put in their soup. It seems to me that everybody is down on birds, and they are hardest of all on sparrows."

"Chummy," I said, "I have known you only this afternoon, but I feel as if I had been acquainted with you for as long a time as if you had been brought up in the bird-room with me, and now I am going to ask you a very personal question. Don't sparrows do some very wrong things?"

He smiled. "Oh, I see you have heard that anti-sparrow talk. I am not touchy about it. You can discuss it with me."

"You seem a sensible bird," I said. "Come now, tell me what you think you do that is wrong."

He hung his little, dark head, and pretended to pick a feather from his black bib. "We are regular John Bull, Anglo-Saxon stock," he said, "and we love to push on and settle in new countries. We were brought to the United States and Canada about fifty years ago to kill the canker worm. Some gentlemen near Toronto raised a subscription to bring us here. We spread all over this continent. We had to fight for our existence, and all the weak ones died. The strong ones became stronger, then we multiplied too much. Men should have watched us."

"Good," I said, "you believe that human beings come first and all birds should be subject to them."

"Certainly," he replied, "that is the first article in a sparrow's creed, and there is no bird in the world that sticks to man as closely as the sparrow does. Why, we even sleep round men's houses, tucked away in the most uncomfortable holes and corners. We really love human beings though they rarely pet us."

"Our Mary pets sparrows," I said stoutly; "so does her mother."

"They are exceptions," said Chummy, "few

persons are as kind-hearted as the Martins. I just wish all human beings would do as well by us as they have done by you canaries. They keep you in order, and let you increase or decrease just as is necessary, but they have let sparrows run wild, and it is as hard for us as for them. There is a great hue and cry against sparrows now, and men and women going along the street look up at us and say, 'You little nuisances,' and I chirp back, 'It is your own fault.' "

"What could they do to you?" I asked. "You don't want to be shot."

"No, indeed," said Chummy, "nor poisoned. Our eggs should be destroyed for a few years; then there would not be so many of us."

"But that is very hard on the mothers," I said. "They cry so when an egg is broken."

"My Jennie would cry," said Chummy, "but she would understand, and she would not make so many nests. She knows that food and nests make all the trouble in the world. That's what the seagulls tell us about the great war human beings had over the sea. They say it was all about food and homes that wicked people wanted to take away from good ones."

A sudden thought dawned upon me. "Is that the reason why you sparrows are so cruel to the birds who come into the city from the country?"

"Yes, it's a question of food shortage. There isn't enough to go round. If there were, it would be equal rights. I don't hate wild birds. I have many friends among them, and I never drive them away if there is enough for their little ones and mine, but if there is only a sufficient supply for little sparrowkins, I fear I am a bad, hard, father bird."

"Do you ever kill them?" I asked fearfully.

"Never," he said decidedly. "I take their nests, and sometimes when they are very obstinate, I beat them."

"I don't know what to think," I said in a puzzled voice. "You seem a sensible bird, yet I don't like the thought of your beating dear little wild birds."

He swelled his little self all up till his feathers stood out round him like a balloon. Then he said with a burst of eloquence, "How can you understand, you caged bird, with your table always set? Imagine yourself in the street, no friends, no food, a cold wind blowing,

four or five hungry nestlings with their tiny beaks open and nothing to put in them; your poor little mate hovering over them trying to keep them warm so they will be less hungry. Wouldn't you steal or beat to satisfy those cries?"

"Oh, I don't know, I don't know!" I said. "I never was in such a position. I am only a young bird. There has always been enough good food for us all in the bird-room. I don't think I could hurt another bird to save my own young ones, but I don't know."

"Of course you don't know," said Chummy bluntly. "You never do know what you'll do till you run up against some dreadful trouble; but I tell you, Dicky, I've made up my mind never to beat another wild bird. I'll move away first."

"That's right, Chummy," I said. "Those words have a nice sound."

"The bird question is a queer question," said Chummy. "I've heard old, old sparrows talk about it. They said that birds and beasts when left to themselves keep what is called the balance of nature, but when man comes in, he begins to make gardens and orchards, and plants

strange things and shoots wolves and foxes and bears and deer and birds, and brings into the country odd foreign insects—”

“Why, Chummy,” I said, “how can he do that?”

“They come on grain and plants he gets from lands over the sea. Now, if he shoots the birds, they can't eat the insects, so his grain suffers.”

“Well,” I said, “I understand that, but I don't understand why he should not shoot wild beasts like wolves and foxes.”

“I don't say that he shouldn't, I merely say he does it, and suffers for it, because those animals kill little animals like mice and hares and squirrels which get into his crop. I'm trying to explain to you, Dicky, that man is great and wonderful, but very upsetting. Now, he is talking of wiping out sparrows and I say, ‘Don't wipe out any creatures. Keep them down.’”

“Now I understand,” I said, “and I suppose you would say, ‘Don't even put an end to cats, for they do some good.’”

“Certainly—I do hate them. I wish Black Thomas, the boarding-house cat, would drop

dead this minute, but, Dicky, there's no use in denying that a cat is the best rat-trap in the world. Down town where my Jennie's parents live in the roof of the old station, they had lots of rats, and the station hands started to poison them. A little darling boy traveling with his mother fished a piece of rat biscuit out of a hole in the corner when his mother's back was turned, ate it, and nearly died. The station master was in a fury, and made the men gather up all the rat biscuit which kills the animals in a very cruel way, and go out and buy some nice, wise cats. Jennie says another bad thing happened which the station master didn't know. A lady traveling with a little pet dog, one of those Mexican Chihuahua dogs, so small that they stand on your hand, had it run from her and get into a hole in the flooring. She was days looking for it, and one of the men found it in a cruel rat-trap, one that catches the poor beast by the paw. The little dog was dead. Its tiny velvet foot was all broken, and the lady cried herself ill."

"Chummy," I said, "this is all very sad. I'm going to change the subject with your permis-

sion, and tell you that I'm glad I met you and I like to hear you talk."

"I like you too," he said with feeling, "and I think we shall become great cronies."

"You express yourself so nicely," I said, "not at all in a common way."

He drew his little self up proudly. "We Varsity sparrows are supposed to be the brainiest in the city. We listen to the students' talk and especially to the professors and learn to express ourselves properly. Hardly a sparrow in this neighborhood uses slang, but you just ought to hear the birds down in St. John's ward. Their vulgar expressions are most reprehensible, and they all talk with their beaks shut tight. They sound like human beings who talk through their noses. You'll see some of them some day. They come up here, but we drive them away pretty quickly."

"That reminds me," I said, "am I safe to fly in and out of the house here, and to go about this street a bit? I have told you that I am accustomed to much liberty, and I should like to learn something about this big, wonderful out-of-doors."

"I'll answer for the sparrows," he said, "I'll pass the word round that no one is to molest you, and I'll tell Slow-Boy the pigeon to warn all his set. The crows won't bother you, for they rarely come here, and when they do, it is very early in the morning before a bird of your luxurious habits would be up."

"If one should challenge me, what should I say?" I asked anxiously. "I suppose you have a password."

"Yes, say 'Varsity'; that will protect you."

"What about the robins and the small wild birds that nest in city gardens?" I asked. "They have mostly frightened eyes, but they can fight. I have heard this from the old birds."

"The robins won't be here for a while yet," said Chummy, "and when they come, I'll speak to their head bird, Vox Clamanti."

"Thank you a thousand times," I exclaimed. "I'm just crazy to travel all about this neighborhood. It's grand to have a powerful friend. I shall sing a nice little song about you to Mrs. Martin to-night."

Chummy did not reply. He was looking at the red sun which was just beginning to hide

behind the huge white milk bottle up in the sky, which is an advertisement on the top of an enormous dairy building on the street next to ours.

"If you'll excuse me," he said, "I'll have to go look for something to eat before it gets dark. I see the neighbors are putting out their trash cans."

CHAPTER IX

A BIRD'S AFTERNOON TEA

ILL give you something," I said, "if you'll come into my house with me."

He gave me a long, searching look, then he said, "I'll trust you, but how shall I get in, and if I get in, what about that meek looking dog who is nevertheless a dog?"

"Oh, Billie Sundae would not hurt any guest of mine," I said, "and the window is always open a crack in the afternoon to air the sitting room, because no one sits there till evening."

"Is Mrs. Martin not at home?" he asked.

I glanced at the big yellow boarding-house set away back from the street next Chummy's house and said, "At half past four she is going in there to have tea with a friend."

"What do you offer me for afternoon tea?" asked Chummy.

I was rather taken aback, for this question

did not seem a very polite one to me. However, I reflected that he had had a street upbringing, and could not be expected to observe fine points of etiquette, such as not asking your host what he is going to set before you.

"Your question is very businesslike," I said gaily, but with a thought of giving him just a gentle dig, "and I may say that there will be first of all a few crumbs of sponge cake."

"That's nice," he said, clacking his horny beak with satisfaction.

"Then a nice little nibble of fresh, rosy-faced apple."

"Fine!" he exclaimed. "It's very hard for sparrows to get fresh fruit this weather."

"Then I have a small bit of hard boiled egg left from breakfast," I said.

"Egg!" he almost screamed, "and they at a dollar a dozen."

I was slightly surprised that he mentioned the price of eggs. However, I went on, "The Martins always have the best of food, even if they have to save on clothes. Don't you see how shabby Mrs. Martin and our Mary look?"

"The flowers in Mrs. Martin's hat are pretty," said the sparrow, "but they look as if

they had been rained on. Now what comes after the egg?"

I was just a little put out at this question, and I said, "A nice drink of cold water."

"Of course I can always get that outside," he said.

"When everything is frozen?"

"There's always Lake Ontario," he said, "that doesn't freeze over."

I was afraid he would think I was impolite, and no matter how abrupt he was with me, I as entertainer should be courteous to him. So I said, "The greatest treat comes last. I've noticed you from the window several times, and I have been sorry to see your worried look, and I felt we should become acquainted, so I saved you a nice lot of hemp seed."

"You saved seeds for me," he exclaimed.

"Certainly, why not?"

"Why, I never had anyone do that for me before," he said, "except my parents."

"I do it to please myself," I said. "If I could tell you how I love to see all birds safe and happy and with their crops sticking out."

"Your talk has a good sound," he said gravely. "I wish Squirrie could hear you."

He says, 'Birds, if my tummy is full and comfy, I don't care if yours is shrunk all to wrinkles.' "

"Ha! ha! ha!" cried a wicked little voice, and I nearly fell head foremost out of the hole in the wall. As Chummy and I talked, we had gradually edged forward to his front door, and looking up we saw that impudent red squirrel hanging over the roof edge, listening to us.

Chummy was so angry, that he made a wild dart up to the roof, and gave a savage peck at Squirrie's eyes. Of no use, the little rogue had scampered in again.

Chummy and I flew to the top of the front porch, and sat breathing hard and fast.

Mrs. Martin opened the door of our house and came out. I gazed down at the beloved brown figure and uttered a glad, "Peep!"

She whistled back to me, "Dear O! Cheer O!" then looking up, she said "Eh! making friends. Tell your sparrow bird that I bought some rice for him to-day, and I think he will like it better than the bread crumbs I have been putting out on the food table lately."

The grateful Chummy leaned forward, gave his tail a joyous flirt, and said "T-check! chook! chook!"

"I'll throw some right here for him in the morning," said Missie, and she pointed to the hard-packed snow under the library window. "There's such a crowd round the food table."

Chummy gave a loud, joyful call. He was sure of a good tea to-night and a fine breakfast in the morning, and what more could a sparrow ask than two meals in advance?

"If she had feathers, she would be a very beautiful bird," he said, as we watched her going toward the boarding-house, "and that is more than you can say of some of the women that go up and down this street."

"What a sad looking boarding-house that is," I said as we watched her going toward it. "Those black streaks up and down its yellow walls look as if it had been crying."

Chummy was staring through the big drawing-room window that had fine yellow silk curtains.

"Just look at those women in there," he said, "they have a nice fire, a white table and a maid bringing in hot muffins and cake and lovely thin slices of bread and butter to say nothing of the big silver tea-pot and the cream jug, and a

whole bowl of sugar. I wish I had some of it, and they sit and stuff themselves, and never throw us any of it, and when summer comes they wouldn't have a rose if we didn't pick the plant lice off their bushes."

"Come, come," I said, "you are too hard on those nice ladies who are all working for the soldiers, and must have good food to sustain them. I am sure they don't realize what birds do for them. If they did, they would not wear us on their hats."

"Human beings would all die if it weren't for us birds," said the sparrow. "Poisons and sprays are all very fine to kill insect pests, but there's nothing like the bill of a bird."

"Mrs. Martin says that farmers are beginning to find that out," I replied, "and are making wise laws to protect birds. Women don't understand, except a few like our Mary and her mother."

The sparrow sighed. "I suppose you have heard that half the wild birds are dying this winter. The crows say that little brown and gray and blue bodies are scattered all over the snow."

"Even though the ground is snowy," I said, "couldn't they still get the larvae of insects on the branches?"

"The branches are ice glazed. The other day when the city people were saying how beautiful and how like fairyland everything looked here, the birds were staring in dismay at their food supply all locked up."

"The farmers should have put out grain for them," I said.

"They do in some places, but birds will never be properly looked after till the Government does it. They are servants to the public, and the public ought to protect them—but I am forgetting my afternoon tea. Shall we go in?"

"Yes, yes," I said hastily, and I flew before him to the window.

Chummy stayed on the sill while I spoke to Billie who was lying on the hearthrug before the fire.

"Allow me to introduce my friend Chummy Hole-In-The-Wall," I said. "He is going to make the neighborhood safe for me," I added pointedly, for Billie dislikes strangers.

She wagged her tail slightly, very slightly,

and lay down again, as if to say, "Have any friend in you like, but don't bore me."

Chummy is a very sensible bird. He did not fuss and fidget about coming into a house, and say that he was afraid something might hurt him. He merely said, "This is a very unusual thing for a sparrow to do, and a number of my friends outside are wondering why I came in. However, I am very hungry and I trust you. But of course you understand, you will be held responsible for my safety."

I smiled. I knew what he meant. A number of bright-eyed sparrows had been watching me as I talked to him. If anything happened to him in this room, Green-Top's beatings would be nothing compared to the one they would give me.

"You are as safe here as in your hole in the wall," I said earnestly. "Now do come into my cage. You can't reach the things very well from the outside."

He went right in, and it did me good to see him eat. After he had stuffed himself, he said, "If I could tell you how sweet these seeds taste, and how delicious it is to get a bit of gravel. There isn't an inch of ground visible in this

whole city. Snow feet deep—never was anything like it before. Nearly every sparrow has indigestion from sloppy, wet, or frozen food, and no gravel to grind it.”

“Be thankful you are not a European bird,” I said. “They have had perfectly dreadful times of suffering over there.”

“Have you heard the story about the little British canary that was killed during the war by one of its own guns?” asked Chummy.

“No,” I said, “I haven’t.”

“Well,” he replied, “you know when the Allies mined under the enemy’s line, they carried canaries in cages with them so that if there was any fire damp in the big holes they made, they could tell by the canaries’ actions. Well, one little war bird flew away from his task. He evidently was an idle bird, and did not wish to work. He perched on a small bush in the middle of No Man’s Land and began to sing, ‘I won’t work, I won’t work. I want to play.’”

“The Allied soldiers were in a terrible fright. If their enemies saw the canary, they would know they were mining, and would send shells at them and kill them all. So the Allied men signaled to their infantry to fire on the bird.

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They did so, but he was so small a target that they could not strike him, and he hopped from twig to twig unhurt. Finally they had to call on the artillery, and a big trench gun sent a shell that blew birdie and his bush into the air."

"What a pity!" I said sadly. "If he had done his duty and stayed with the workers, he might be yet alive. I can tell you a cat war story, if you like."

"What is it?" asked Chummy.

"The tale of a cat and her kittens. One day the Allied soldiers saw a cat come across No Man's Land. She walked as evenly as Black Thomas does when he is taking an airing on this quiet street. No one fired at her, and she crossed the first line of trenches, the support behind them, and went back to the officers' dug-outs. She inspected all of them, then she returned across this dangerous land to the enemy's lines. The trenches were pretty close together, and the men all roared with amusement, for on this trip she had a tiny kitten in her mouth.

"She carried it back to the best-looking dug-out, and laid it on an officer's coat. Then she went back and got a second kitten, and then a

third. The soldiers cheered her, and no one thought of harming her. Mrs. Martin's nephew wrote her this nice story, and he said that the mother cat and her three kittens were the idols of the soldiers and always wore pink ribbons on their necks. They called them Ginger, Shrapnel, and Surprise Party."

"What a good story," said the sparrow thickly.

His beak was full of sponge cake, and, seeing it, I said warmly, "Oh, Chummy dear, if I could only feed all the poor hungry birds as I am feeding you, how happy should I be!"

CHAPTER X

ANOTHER CALL FROM CHUMMY

AFTER this first day of our meeting, Chummy called on me very often. In fact, he would fly in whenever he saw the window open, for he knew Billie was an honest dog and would not chase him.

The lovely thaw did not last long, and we had some more very cold weather. I did not go out-of-doors very often, and was quite glad to get the outside news from my sparrow friend.

Billie grumbled a little bit about him. "That fellow is throwing dust in your eyes," she said to me one day during the last of February.

I smiled at her. "And do you think that I think that Chummy comes here merely for the pleasure of looking into my bright eyes?"

Billie began to mumble something under her breath about greedy birds, and emptying my seed dish.

"Dear Billie," I went on, "don't plunge that little white muzzle of yours too deeply into bird affairs. You would find them as strangely mixed as are dog matters. When you fawn on Mrs. Martin as she comes from town, is the fawning pure love or just a little bit of hope that in her muff is hidden some dainty for Billie?"

"I love Mrs. Martin," said Billie stubbornly. "You know I do. I would live with her if she fed me on crusts."

"Of course you would," I said soothingly, "but do you know, it seems to me a strange thing that you, a dog bred in poverty and having to toil painfully in looking for your food, should be harder on another toiler than I am, I a bird that was bred in the lap of luxury."

Billie looked rather sheepish, and I said, "You have a kind heart, and I wish you would not be so stiff with the sparrow. Won't you do something to amuse him some time when he comes?"

"Yes, I will," she said. "I think perhaps I have not been very polite to him. Indeed, I do know how hard it is for birds and beasts to get a living out of this cold world."

"Hush," I said; "here he comes," and sure enough there was Chummy sitting on the window sill, twitching his tail, and saying, "How are you, Dicky-Dick? It's a bitterly cold day—sharpens one's appetite like a knife."

I flew to meet him and said, "Come right over to my cage and help yourself to seeds. Missie filled my dish before she went out."

Chummy looked pleased, but he said, "I hope your Missie doesn't mind feeding me as well as you."

"Oh, no, she doesn't care," I said, "even though bird seed is dear now. She has a heart as big as a cabbage and she is sorry for all suffering things. She says she has been hungry once or twice in her own life, and she knows the dreadful feeling of an empty stomach."

"Well, I'll eat to her health," said Chummy, and he stepped right into my cage and poked his dusky beak into a tiny dish of bread and milk.

"What's the news of the neighborhood?" I asked.

"Squirrie came out for five minutes this morning," he said, "just to let us know he wasn't dead. He ate a few nuts and threw the shells down at Black Thomas."

"I know Thomas," I said; "jet black, white spot on breast, yellow eyes, fierce, proud temper."

"He's a case," said Chummy, "and he vows he'll have Squirrie's life yet."

"Anything else happened?" I asked.

"Oh, yes—two strange pigeons, dusky brown, have been in the neighborhood all the morning, looking for a nesting place, and Susan and Slow-Boy have worn themselves out driving them away."

Billie rarely opened her mouth when Chummy called. She lay dozing, or pretending to doze, by the fire; but to-day she spoke up and said, "Who are Susan and Slow-Boy?"

I waited politely for Chummy to speak, but his beak was too full, so I answered for him.

"They are the two oldest neighborhood pigeons, and they live in the old barn back of our yard. They are very particular about any pigeon that settles near here; still, if the strangers are agreeable they might let them have that ledge outside the barn."

"They're not agreeable," said Chummy. "Their feathers are in miserable condition. They haven't taken good care of them, and

Slow-Boy says he knows by the look of them they have vermin."

"Lice!" exclaimed Billie suddenly. "That is dreadful. Some of the Italians where I used to live had pigeons that scratched themselves all the time. It was sad to hear them at night. They could not sleep. They would all rise up together on their perches and shake themselves."

Chummy took a drink from my water dish in which was a rusty nail to give me a little iron for my blood, then he said, "We're clean birds in this neighborhood. Varsity birds hate lice, so I think Slow-Boy and Susan were quite right to drive these strangers away—what do you think, Dicky-Dick?"

I sighed quite heavily, for such a small bird as I am. Then I said, "It is true, though it oughtn't to be, that clean birds instead of taking dirty birds in hand and trying to do them good, usually drive them away. It seems the easiest way."

Chummy was wiping his beak hard on one of my perches. "Your Missie certainly knows where to buy her seeds. These are remarkably fresh and crisp."

"She always goes to wholesale houses," I said, "and watches the man to see that he takes the seeds out of a bag or big box. Some women buy their seeds in packages which perhaps have been standing on the grocer's shelf for months."

"You look a well-nourished bird," said Chummy. "My Jennie is very particular with our young ones, and we have the finest-looking ones in the neighborhood. If she is giving a brown-tail moth larva, for example, she hammers it well before she puts it in the baby beaks. Some sparrows are so careless, and thrust food to their young ones that is only partly prepared."

I said nothing, for I had not yet seen any of Chummy's young ones, and he came out of the cage and, settling down on the top of it, began to clean his feathers and pick little bits of dead flesh off his skin.

"Billie," I said, "it's early in the afternoon and you've had your first nap; can't you amuse our caller by telling him about your early life? He said the other day he'd like to hear it."

Billie rose and stretched herself. She knew that I knew she would like to do something for

Chummy because she had spoken harshly about him.

Chummy spoke up, "I like you, Billie, for I notice you never chase birds as some of the neighborhood dogs do."

Billie hung her head. "I know too well what it feels like to be chased," she said.

"You can't see us up here on the wall very well, Billie," I said. "You would have to stretch your neck to look up at us. Suppose we fly down, Chummy."

"All right," he said agreeably, so we flew to a pot of hyacinths on the table and crouched down with our feet on the nice warm earth and our breasts against the rim of the pot.

Billie jumped up in a big chair by the table to be near us, and began, "First of all, you mustn't interrupt. It puts me out."

"All right," said the sparrow, "but what a spoiled dog you are! I don't know another one in the neighborhood that is allowed to sit in any chair he or she chooses."

Billie hung her head again, and I gave the sparrow a nudge. "Do be quiet. She's sensitive on that subject."

"It's on account of my early training," said

Billie at last. "There was nothing sacred to the poor people I was with. A bed or a chair was no better than the floor and I can't get over that feeling. I have been whipped and whipped and reasoned with, but it's of no use. I can't remember."

"It's just like birds," said the sparrow cheerfully. "What's bred in the bone comes out in the flesh. If I indulge a youngster and let him take the best place in the nest, I can't get him out of it when he's older."

"Begin, Billie," I said, "we're waiting, and, Chummy, don't interrupt again. It's quite a long story, and the afternoon is going, and Missie will soon be home."

CHAPTER XI

BILLIE SUNDAE BEGINS THE STORY OF HER LIFE

WELL," said Billie, "my name used to be Tina when I was a puppy, and the first thing I can remember is a kick that landed me in the middle of the floor.

"I must have had many kicks before, and I had many after, but I remember that one because I was too small and short-legged to climb back into bed. I had to spend the night on the floor, and as it was winter the occurrence was stamped on my puppy brain.

"I slept with some Italian children who belonged to a man called Antonio and his wife, Angelina. They lived in a tiny house in the Bronx neighborhood in New York. They were rather kind people in their way, except when they flew in a rage. Then the woman would chase me with her broom and the man would kick me. I am rather a stupid little dog, and

timid too, and I used to get in their way.

"The children mauled me, but I liked them, for whenever they tumbled down to sleep anywhere, whether it was on the floor or on their queer, rickety bed heaped high with old clothes and torn blankets, I was allowed to snuggle up to them and keep warm.

"Antonio, the father of the family, used to get his living by digging drains in the new roads they were making about New York, and when he came home at night, he would feel my sides, and if I seemed very hollow, he would say to his wife, 'A bit of bread for the creature,' and if I seemed fat, he would say, 'She needs nothing. Give the food to the little ones.'

"You can imagine that this treatment made me get my own living. I had to spend a great deal of time every day in running from one back yard to another, to see if I could pick up scraps from the old boxes and barrels in which the Italians in the neighborhood used to put their rubbish, for they did not have nice shiny trash cans, like rich people.

"Other dogs got their living in the same way I did, and as I am no fighter, I had to work pretty hard to get enough to eat.

"The way I managed was to rise very early in the morning, before the other dogs were let loose. Nearly all the poor people in the neighborhood had gardens or milk farms, or chickens, or pigeons, and they kept dogs to frighten thieves away. These poor animals were chained all night long to miserable kennels and they made a great noise barking and howling, but the more noise they made, the better pleased were their owners.

"When I heard them on cold winter nights, I used to cuddle down all the closer in bed beside the children, and thank my lucky stars that I was not fastened outside.

"My Italians tried to keep chickens, but they always died. The woman was too ignorant to know that if you wish to have healthy, wholesome fowls, that will lay well, you must feed them good food and keep them clean. I used to bark at her when she stood looking at her sick chickens, but she did not understand my language. 'Woman,' I was trying to say, 'pretend that your chickens are children. Your little ones are fat and healthy because you feed them well, keep them out of doors, and have them fairly clean.'

"As time went on my Italians became poorer. Antonio was out of work for a time, and lounged about the house and became very sulky. Sometimes he would go to a near-by café for a drink, and I usually followed him, for some of the men when they saw me skulking about and looking hungry, would be sure to throw me bits of cheese or salt fish, or ends of sandwiches with salty stuff inside that made me run to the Bronx River to get a drink.

"One unhappy day, when I had had enough to eat and was crouching close to the hot-water pipes in a corner, a rough-looking man who acted very sleepy and was talking very queerly asked Antonio how much he would take for me.

"He said one dollar.

" 'She's only a cur,' said the other man. 'I'll give you fifty cents.'

"To my great dismay, my master held out his hand for the money, a rope was tied round my neck, and I was led away in an opposite direction from my home.

"In vain I pulled back and squealed. The man only laughed and dragged me along more quickly.

"He could not walk very straight, but after a while we arrived in front of a nice, neat-looking house, and a kind-faced woman opened the door for us.

"She was a dressmaker, and she had the sleeve of a woman's dress in her hand. She gave me a quick, pleasant look, but she became very sad when she saw the mud on her husband's clothes where he had splashed through puddles of dirty water.

"It seems she had long wanted a dog to bear her company while her husband was away from home. So she was very pleased to see me, and threw an old coat in a corner of the kitchen for me to lie on, and gave me a beef bone to gnaw.

"I was delighted to get a good meal, and a quiet bed, for as I told you the children used to kick me a good deal in their sleep. However, I was not happy in this new place.

"I was surprised at myself. This was a much nicer house than the Italian's, but I didn't care for that. I wanted my own home.

"There was a sleek, gray cat with dark eyes in the house, and the next day I had a talk with her.

"'You are uneasy,' she said, 'because this

isn't your very own home. Dogs are very faithful. You miss the children and that man and his wife, though by the look of you they were not very good to you.'

"Of course I had not said anything to this cat against my family. I knew they were not perfect, but something told me it would not be right to discuss my own family with strangers.

" 'Your coat is very grimy and dirty,' she said. 'You look as if you had not been washed for a long time. Have you?'

"I hesitated, for to tell the truth I remembered no washings except the ones my poor little spotted mother had given me with her tongue when I was a puppy. Only the rain and the snow had cleansed me since then. At last I said, 'Water was scarce with us. It had to be carried from a pump.'

" 'Missis is very clean,' she said; 'she will likely give you a bath first thing.'

"Missis did wash me that very day. First she spread a lot of newspapers on the kitchen floor. Then she set a tub on them and filled it half full of warm water. I was ordered to step into the tub, which I did very gingerly, and

then the dressmaker sopped me all over with a cloth covered with carbolic acid soapsuds.

"I must confess that although I liked the idea of being clean and getting rid of some of my fleas, the bath was a sad ordeal. I thought I should scream when the dressmaker wrapped an end of the towel round her finger and poked it inside my ears. Persons should be very careful how they wash dogs' ears. However, she was pretty gentle, and I merely groaned and did not howl or yell, as I wished to do. Finally she poured lukewarm rinsing water over me, and my bath was done. She wrapped me in a blanket and put me under the kitchen stove. I felt terribly for a while. My wet hair was torture to me, but presently I began to get warm, my hair dried, and I became quite happy.

"Was it possible that I, a little neglected dog, was lying clean and dry under a nice hot stove, and with a comfortable feeling inside me, and not my usual ache for good food?

"I licked one of my paws sticking out from under the blanket, a paw that looked so strangely white and clean, and I said to myself, 'I must always stay with this good woman.'

"Alas! the very next day such a sick, dread-

ful feeling came over me, that I told the cat I must run away.

“‘You are a simpleton,’ she said crossly. ‘You don’t know when you are well off. Could anything be nicer than this quiet house—the master gone all day and so stupid and staggering when he comes home that he gives no trouble?’

“‘I said’ nothing, and she went on, ‘And mistress sewing so quietly and giving us regular meals. Then if you wish to take a walk we have a nice back yard with a fence all round it, and no other yard near us and if you wish to go further than that, we have that fine large field where they dump the ashes from the next town. I tell you, the place is ideal.’

“‘I know all that,’ I said, ‘but I wasn’t brought up here, and I want the neighbors’ dogs and the children, and I’ve never been used to cat society.’

“‘You listen to a word of advice from me,’ she said, ‘and don’t take too much stock in people or animals. They move away, but nice, quiet yards and dump heaps go on forever.’

“‘I’m sorry,’ I said, ‘but I’ve got to run for it. I’m just wild inside.’

"Well, make sure of one good meal before you leave,' she said scornfully. 'Mistress is cooking liver and bacon and liver is very good for dogs.'

"Thank you for all your kindness to me,' I said. 'I suppose you think I am a very stupid dog.'

"I've not done much for you,' she said. 'I don't mind showing a few favors to a friend, if it doesn't put me out.'

"I stared at her. I had several times obliged her by barking at strange cats and this had cost me quite an effort, for I was dreadfully afraid they would turn and spit at me, or scratch my eyes out. However, I said nothing. You can't reason with cats. They're very pig-headed.

"Presently she asked me how I felt about cheating our good, kind mistress out of fifty cents, 'for that is what you told me master paid for you,' she said.

"I feel badly about that,' I replied. 'Indeed, I may say that it grieves me.'

"I'll tell you where you can get fifty cents,' she said cunningly.

"Where?' I asked eagerly.

"Why, last night when master went out to

the road to get a paper, he fumbled in his pocket for a penny and brought out a handful of change. One piece dropped on the ground. I can show you where it lies.'

" 'Why didn't you pick it up?' I asked.

" 'Why bother with money, when it's no good to you?' she said. 'It's dirty stuff, anyway, and covered with germs.'

" 'I'm not afraid of it,' I said joyfully, and I ran and got the fifty-cent piece and laid it at mistress' feet. She took it and looked at me, then she patted me and hugged me, a thing she had not done before.

" 'Doggie, you are a comfort to me,' she said. 'I hope you will stay with me always.'

"I stood on my hind legs. I pawed the air and squealed. I tried to tell her that I would like to stay, but that I could not resist the thing inside me that was pulling like a string toward my old home.

"I ran away that night—ran sadly and with shame. I was about two miles from my old home, and it was no trouble at all for me to find it.

"When I got there, I scratched at the door

and the Italian woman opened it and gave a squeal when she saw me. The children had not gone to sleep, and I gave a leap past her and into the bed with them.

"Oh, how glad they were to see me! I jumped and squealed and licked them, and they petted me and hugged me, and the mother stood over us laughing to see her children well pleased.

"Wasn't I delighted that I had come home! I settled down among them for a good night's sleep, and I thought, 'Now we are going to be happy ever after'—but dogs never know what is going to happen to them.

"Just when I was having a lovely dream about my friend the cat, in which she was changed into a nice, sensible dog, I felt a fierce grip on my neck, and, giving a scream, I jumped up.

"The Italian man stood over me, his face as black as a thundercloud. He had got work by this time—work outside, for Italians hate to be employed inside a building. He was a train hand now and he got good wages, but he was not willing to keep me.

"One hand dragged me out of bed, and the other shook a fist at me. 'You, you animal,' he said, 'I'm going to take you away. If you come back, I shoot,' and he took hold of the old gun standing in a corner of the room and shook it at me. 'You saw me shoot a cat one day,' he went on. 'Well, I kill you if you come back. Hear that?' Then he kicked me out of doors.

"I did not run away. I sat on a heap of ashes at a little distance, staring at the house. There I remained all night. I was confused and unhappy and stupid. I did not know what to do. I knew I could never live with the children again, but something just chained me to the spot.

"I sat there all the next morning. The children were afraid to play with me, for their father was sleeping inside the house, but they threw me some crusts. I was very thirsty, but I did not dare to go near the house, and something kept me from losing sight of it, so I did not run to the river to get a drink.

"At dusk the man came out of the house and, catching sight of me, he yelled for me to go to him. I went inch by inch, and crawling on my stomach. He took a string out of his pocket,

tied it round my neck, and set off walking toward the railway.

"I gave one last look over my shoulder at the cottage, and the children. They were crying, poor little souls, and their mother had her arms round them.

"The man made me trot pretty fast after him. He did not know and would not have cared if he had known that my thirst was getting more and more painful, and that I was almost choked to death with fear. For we were approaching the railway tracks and all my life long I had been frightened to death of noises, especially train noises.

"Suddenly a suspicion struck me that he might be going to throw me under the wheels of a train. Half mad with fear, I gave a violent leap away from him, dragging the cord from his hand, and then I ran, ran like a creature bereft of its senses, for my flying feet took me right toward the trains, instead of away from them.

"I was aware of a rush and a roar, and then something gave me a pound on the back, then a blow on my head. I rolled over and over, and for a time I knew nothing.

"When I recovered, the Italian was bending over me, his face quite frightened and sympathetic.

"'Poor dog!' he said; then when I tried to get up, he lifted me and put me under his arm. I found he was climbing on a train.

"Another man was grinning at him. 'We gave your dog a fine clip as we came in,' he said. 'He got a roll and a turnover fast enough.'

"The Italian said nothing. He was not a bad man. He was just thoughtless. I knew he was sorry for me and his children, but times were hard and the price of food was high, and he thought they could not afford to keep me. He knew the children often gave me bits of their bread, and he knew, too, that sometimes when the hunger rat was gnawing too sharply I would even steal.

"I found out that he was a fireman on a freight train which had a big engine, not like the neat electric ones on the passenger trains.

"He put me down on some lumps of coal, and I sat and stared stupidly at him.

"Presently the train started, and, though I was still terrified, I found it was not as bad to be on the thing as to watch it going by.

"I had only a short trip on it. In about five minutes we stopped at a station, and to my immense surprise he picked me up, threw his coat over me, and sprang to the platform.

"I felt myself jammed against something hard, then the coat was pulled off me, and I was alone. He had deserted me.

"I looked about me. I was on a high platform, railway tracks on both sides of me; and beyond me were other platforms and more railway tracks. This was the One Hundred and Eightieth Railway Station in the Bronx, I found out afterward. The Italian had put me close to the door of a waiting-room, and you may be sure that I was in no haste to leave my shelter. It was just a tiny corner, but I flattened myself in it, for even if I had wished to leave it, my limbs were too tired and sore to carry me.

"Trains came dashing by every few minutes, first on one side, then on the other. It seemed to me that I would go crazy with the noise and confusion, and I was sure that each train would strike me. That was very stupid in me. There were the tracks, why should the trains leave them? But my head was still dizzy from the blow I had received, and my dog mind was be-

wildered. I was crazy for the time. Then back of all fright and body pain was the dreadful ache of homesickness. I had no place to go. No one can tell the terror of a lost dog, especially when that dog is timid. I had been torn from my home—a poor home, but still a dear one to me, and I was out in a world of confusion and fright and hurry. If I stepped from my corner, some of those rushing people might hurl me to the railway track in front of one of the cruel-looking engines, which would grind me to pieces. Oh, if some one would only come to my aid, and I stared and stared at the nice faces whirling by. My eyes felt as big as the engine headlights. Why could not some one read my story in them?

“It is astonishing how few people can tell when a dog is lost. They don't even know when it is unhappy. Yet dogs have expression in their faces. So many kind men and women gave me a glance. Some even said, ‘Good doggie.’ One nice old lady in glasses remarked, ‘The emblem of faithfulness is a dog. See that one sitting there, waiting for his master's return.’

“Unthinking old lady! My master would

never return, and where, oh, where was I to get some water, for by this time my tongue was so dry that it felt swollen and my throat was as parched as a brick.

"Hour after hour I sat there, and the dreadful railway rush of New York went on. You know nothing about that rush here in this comparatively quiet city of Toronto. The station hands and ticket sellers were all downstairs, for I was on the elevated part of the station. Finally two young men stopped in front of me, and one of them said, 'What a dismayed-looking dog! I wonder if we could do anything for it?'

"'Come on,' said the other. 'Here's the White Plains train.'

"The first young man went away, looking over his shoulder. He wasn't interested enough to stay.

CHAPTER XII

JUST ONE THING AFTER ANOTHER

THE painful hours went by, and I heard nine, ten, and eleven o'clock strike, and at last twelve. There weren't so many passengers now. I was to be left here all night. A chilly breeze sprang up, my limbs began to get cold and shaky, and it seemed to me that I must just lie down and die.

"Then something seemed to come over me. I would not give up yet, and I braced up and flattened myself more tightly against the corner, in order to get as far as possible from the dreadful trains that came roaring and bellowing at me like bull monsters. They should not get me yet, and I propped myself up on my trembling legs. Oh, why could I not cry or squeal or beg, or do tricks to attract the attention of some of the passers-by? Alas! I was not that kind of a dog. I have always been timid and retiring.

ONE AFTER ANOTHER 121

A dog that forages for himself does not learn to attract the attention of the public.

"At a quarter past twelve, when one poor tired-out paw was just crumpling under me, another subway train from New York rumbled in, and the passengers ran up the steps to catch the Boston and Westchester train whose track was nearest me.

"The last two passengers to come up were ladies. A number of men were ahead of them, and they passed me by, but the ladies stood and looked at me.

"They were laughing and talking about going to hear a man preach called Billy Sunday, and getting on a wrong train that took them to the Bronx Park where the animals are in the Zoological Garden.

"Suddenly one of the ladies said quickly, 'Lost dog!' and stooping down, she stared in my face.

" 'How do you know?' said the other.

" 'By the look in her eyes,' the first one went on. 'She's dirty, neglected, and probably hungry; likely has been deserted. We have ten minutes before our train leaves. I'll run down and speak to the man in the ticket office.'

"This dear lady, who was Mrs. Martin, has told to her friends so many times the story of her experiences that I know just what happened. She went first to the office by the gate she had come through, and asked the man sitting there if he knew anything about the lost dog on the platform above.

"He said he did not, but probably some one had dropped it there from a train.

" 'Could it have come in from the street?' Mrs. Martin asked.

" 'It might,' he said, 'but it would have a long passage to come through, and would have to pass in this narrow gate. I guess it's deserted,' he said. 'No dogs ever climb up there.'

" 'Would you take care of it for the night?' asked Mrs. Martin. 'Perhaps to-morrow some one might come to look for it.'

"He looked bored, and said he would not.

" 'Do you suppose there is any one about the station that would take charge of it?' she went on.

" 'No,' he said; he knew there wasn't.

" 'Then will you give me a piece of string?' she asked.

ONE AFTER ANOTHER 123

"He gave her a bit of twine and she hurried upstairs to me. Bending over me, she tied her handkerchief round my neck—that little handkerchief would not go round my fat neck now—then she fastened the twine to it.

"A few minutes later the train came roaring in, and she pulled on the twine, but I would not budge. How could I go near that horrible monster?

" 'Nothing to do but carry you,' she said, and she lifted me up and took me on the train and sat me down on her lap, and the black patch on my back where the wheels of the train struck me made a grease spot on her coat.

"Now one is not allowed to carry dogs on these trains unless they are in the baggage car, but it was late in the evening and not many persons were traveling, and my new friend did not say a word to the conductor, and he did not say a word to her.

"We passed several stations, then we reached the pretty town of New Rochelle. The two ladies got out of the train and now I was willing to follow, for we were leaving the terrible railway behind us. I ran down the station steps beside my new friend, and when we

got in the street and I felt real grass under my feet, I felt like barking with joy. But my dry mouth would not open, and I just sagged along, a happy feeling inside me, for I knew I should have a drink of water as soon as we reached the lady's home.

"The lady who was with my new friend was younger and had rosy cheeks and dark eyes. 'What are you going to do with your lost animal?' she said.

" 'I think I will put her in the garage for the night,' said Mrs. Martin.

" 'Don't do that. The creature will be lonely. Bring her in the house.'

" 'Well, it's your hotel,' said Mrs. Martin. 'If you're willing to have her, I will bring her in.'

" 'Put her in my bathroom. I'll take care of her,' said Miss Rosy Cheeks, whose name I found out later was Miss Patricia MacGill.

" 'No, thank you—you have enough to do without having a dog added to your cares,' said my friend. 'I'll take care of the burden thrust upon us through going to hear Billy Sunday.'

"Miss MacGill, who was very fond of a joke, began to laugh, and looking down at me, said,

'Welcome to New Rochelle, Billy Sunday.'

"We were walking all this time along streets lighted and with nice shops each side. I just lifted my weary head occasionally to glance at them; then suddenly the street was not so bright and, looking up, I saw that the shops were behind us, and we were in a region of pretty homes and gardens. I had a confused impression of being in a very grand neighborhood. It was nothing extraordinary, but I had been brought up in a very poor way, and up to that time the biggest house I had seen was the café and the railway stations. Soon we came to a corner where there were three houses joined together by broad verandas.

"There my two nice ladies turned in, went up a stone walk, crossed a veranda, and entered a big front door.

"'Do you wish anything for the dog?' asked Miss MacGill.

"'No, thank you,' said Mrs. Martin. 'I know the kitchen and pantry are shut up, and the boys in bed, so I will do with what I have in my room.'

"I was nearly dropping in my tracks by this time. While the two friends said good night I

stood still and tried to steady myself. Everything inside the house was going round and round, and everything was red. In a few seconds things cleared, and then I saw I was in a hall brightly lighted, and with a red stair carpet. Poor little ignorant dog—I did not know that hotel keepers in New York State are obliged to keep their halls lighted all night, in case of fire.

“Mrs. Martin was pretty clever. She looked down at me as I stood with my feet braced far apart, then she bent over me, took my dirty little body in her arms and toiled up the stairs with me, for she was pretty tired herself.

“I closed my eyes. She was not a person that needed watching. Then I felt myself let down gently, a button snapped to turn on the light, and there I was in the middle of what seemed to me a great big lovely nest, that smelt of flowers.

“Later on I heard even grand ladies who came to call on Mrs. Martin say it was a pretty room, so imagine what it was like to me, a little dog from the dumps!

“It was all pink and white and soft looking, but I did not take in all the furnishings that

night. I smelt water and I staggered toward the table where was a big glass jug of ice water.

"Mrs. Martin filled a glass and put it down on the floor. I drank it, and she filled another. I drank that, and then she said, 'Moderation in all things, doggie. Wait a few minutes before you have any more.'

"I flopped down on a soft fur rug and put my nose on my paws.

"'Poor little victim!' she said. 'I will make up your bed.'

"Opening a drawer, she took out a big soft shawl. 'It came from Canada,' she said. 'It belonged to my aunt, who liked dogs.'

"I did not know then what she meant by Canada, but I was glad to hear her aunt liked dogs, and when she went to a closet and arranged the shawl in a corner of it, I staggered after her and dropped on it.

"There were some dresses hanging over me, and I felt as if I were in an arbor like the one at the back of the café, where the men used to sit in summer over their drinks, with green leaves all round them.

"'Happy, eh?' she said in an amused voice, as she stood looking down at me. 'Now for

something for the inner dog,' and she went to a little table where there were shiny-looking dishes. She snapped another button, and presently I heard the hissing of hot water. Then she went to one of her windows, opened it, and took in a bottle.

"In a few minutes I had set before me what I never had had before, namely, a bowl of delicious bread and cream.

"I wagged my tail and agitated my muzzle. The very smell of this warm food put new life into me. Then I half raised myself on my bed, put my head in the bowl, and just gobbled.

"Talk about manners! When I look back, I wonder that Mrs. Martin was not disgusted with my greediness. But she is a very sensible woman, and she merely smiled, and, taking the bowl from me as I was trying to lick it nice and clean for her, she pushed me back on my soft shawl, with a gentle, 'Pleasant dreams, doggie.'

CHAPTER XIII

MRS. MARTIN ADOPTS BILLIE

THERE was no need for me to watch that night. I knew that the kind person in the brass bed would not let anything hurt me, but I never had such troubled dreams in my life. I was running over vast dump heaps, and everywhere I went a terrible monster pursued me, with two enormous red eyes. I tried to hide in the ashes, and behind heaps of tin cans, but it came round every corner and leaped over every obstacle, and several times I had nightmare and cried out in my anguish.

"Mrs. Martin spoke to me very quietly, and then I sank down on my bed again. Not until I heard the rattle of milk cans as the dairyman came up the back entrance to the hotel did I sink into a really refreshing sleep.

"When I woke up it was high noon, and Mrs. Martin sat by a window sewing. I was

ashamed of myself, and lay trembling in every limb, for I quite well remembered the nightmare.

"She threw down her work and looked at me. 'Poor little creature, how you must have been hunted! Come here and tell me your life history.'

"I shambled out of the closet, walking with my legs half doubled under me, as if I were a very old dog.

"'Stand up, Billy Sunday,' she said. 'I am not going to hurt you. Now tell me, where did you come from?'

I stood up beside her, looking this way and that way, my ears laid back. I fancy I appeared a perfect simpleton. Suddenly I caught sight of another poor, dirty, whipped-looking cur across the room, and I gave a frightened 'Bow-wow,' and ran back to my closet.

"She was laughing heartily. 'Poor doggie, did you never see a cheval glass before? Come here and look at yourself.'

"With every hair bristling, I walked stiff-legged out of the closet, all ready to snarl at my rival. I went close up to the glass, touched

it with my muzzle, then I looked behind it. Where was the dog?

"'Goosie,' said Mrs. Martin, 'it's yourself! Evidently they had no mirrors where you came from. Listen to this,' and she set something going on a table in the corner of the room.

"It was a man, laughing hideously, I thought. He did not stop for about five minutes. What kind of a lady was this that had things that looked and sounded like human beings and animals, but were only pieces of wood?

"'Oh, how funny your face is, doggie,' she said: 'Now hear this,' and she went to the wall and took up a queer thing, like a horn.

"'Do you wish some scraps for the dog?'

"I pricked up my ears. It was a faint and squeaky voice, but still quite distinct. I was a very, very much astonished dog, and seeing it, she put down this curious thing and said, 'Dog, I think you have come out of a poor family.'

"I said nothing. I still felt weak and bewildered, and she said, 'Come out to the fresh air,' and, taking up a hat and coat, she went out of the room and down the red staircase to the veranda.

“‘Stay here till I come back,’ she said, and I walked down to the lawn and ate some of the freshest, nicest grass blades I had ever tasted.

“Presently she returned with my breakfast, and such a breakfast! Toast crusts—nice buttered toast crusts, and little bits of bacon.

“‘Just scraps from plates,’ she said, as she put the dish down on the lawn, ‘but very good.’

“I soon disposed of this breakfast. Then she went up to the birds’ bath on a stand and lifted down a nice, shallow green dish for me to have a drink.

“‘And now,’ she said, when I stood gazing adoringly up at her and wagging my tail gratefully, ‘hey ho! for the veterinary’s.’

“I did not know what she meant, but by this time I was ready to follow her anywhere, and I trotted after her down to the sidewalk, where stood one of the fast automobiles that we saw dashing by our cottage in the Bronx, but that never stopped anywhere near us.

“‘Come in,’ she said, and held open the door.

“I was terrified and drew back. It was not so bad as a train, but I just hated to go near it.

“‘Now, doggie,’ she said, ‘can’t you trust me?’

“I could not move, and she had to lift me up and put me on the seat. Then she put her arm round me, and little by little I began to lose my fright. How we hurried through the streets, but it was not nearly so bad as the train, for here it was open and pleasant, and I could look about me as we flew along.

“The thing we were in was called a taxi, and now I am not at all afraid of one, and Mrs. Martin jokes me and says she has seen me on the corner of the street waving my paw for the taxi men to stop and take me in when I feel lazy.

“‘A dog in very humble circumstances,’ she said, ‘for even the poor drive in automobiles now.’

“When we arrived at the veterinary’s I jumped out and followed her. I was struck dumb with surprise. Mrs. Martin had explained to me that the man who lived here earned his living by doctoring dogs and horses. The house was a very fine one, much larger than the café, and it had a lovely neat garden and not a trash can or ugly box in sight.

"We went past the house to a stable, and there we found a nice-looking man, and a colored servant boy.

" 'Good morning, doctor,' said Mrs. Martin. 'I have brought you another cur. Please tell me whether she is sound in wind and limb. Otherwise, we will——' She nodded her head toward a closet, and I trembled like a leaf. I knew what she meant. If I were not a healthy dog they would kill me.

"How would they do it? and I lay down on the floor and panted. I knew death would mean an end of my troubles, but I had seen dogs killed, and cats and chickens, and it was not till a long time after that I found out that one can kill without torturing.

"The doctor poked my ribs, examined my teeth and rubbed back my hair. Then he said, 'A healthy dog, three-quarters smooth-haired fox-terrier; age, about three years; a few fleas, coat harsh and uncared for, skin not too dirty, has been washed recently—been struck by motor car or railway train, judging by black plaster on rump.'

" 'Will you let your boy wash her again?' asked Mrs. Martin.

“‘Certainly,’ said the doctor. ‘Jim, take the dog into the bathroom.’

“A bathroom for dogs! I nearly fainted as I thought of the pump the Italians went to. But was this right for me to have a bathroom, and the poor human beings to have none? My education, or lack of it, had early taught me that a dog is much lower in the scale of beings than men and women. In fact, we Bronx dogs were not taught to think half enough of ourselves.

“For the second time in my life, and within one week, I, three-year-old dog, was given a bath, and this time it was almost a pleasure, for though the colored boy had great, heavy hands like sledge hammers, he had been taught to use them carefully.

“While he was passing his soapy hands carefully over me, a number of dogs in near-by stalls screamed and jumped and barked jealously.

“‘You boardah dogs hush up,’ he said, ‘or Jim will lick de stuffin’ outen you.’

“They yelled all the louder at this, and I saw he was very indulgent with them.

“I was put in a hot box to dry, and then Mrs. Martin gave Jim a quarter and the doctor fifty

cents, and we sauntered out to the street.

"Oh, how perfectly delicious the air felt on my clean skin! I tried to gambol a little, but did not make much of a success of it, as I was still stiff from my blow of yesterday from the car wheels.

"We went back to the hotel by way of the main street, and that day I enjoyed looking at the people and into the shop windows. Dogs like a gay, pretty little town, much better than a big city. When I went to New York for a few days and had to wear a muzzle I thought I should die, but that is another story.

"To my unutterable delight, Mrs. Martin went into a harness shop and asked to look at collars.

" 'What color?' asked the man.

" 'The Lord has made her yellow and white,' said Mrs. Martin, 'suffrage colors. Give me a yellow and white one, please.'

"How often in the Bronx had I admired proud, rich dogs trotting by our cottage with handsome collars on and things dangling from them! True, mine was very uncomfortable, but what did that matter? I was 'dressed to kill,' as Angelina used to say when her friends

got new blue or green dresses. Oh, if she and the children could only see me now!

"I held my head up, walked high and pricked my ears as we went down the street, being often gratified by remarks from passing ladies and children, 'What a stylish dog! What a pretty creature! What a clean little fox-terrier!'

"When we got back to the hotel the ladies sitting knitting on the veranda called out, 'Why, Mrs. Martin—where did you get that dog?'

"She smiled and told them about the night before, and one dear old lady, when she finished said, 'I believe my grandchildren would like to have it.'

"My ears went down like a spaniel's, and I pressed myself against Mrs. Martin's dress. I had suffered much from the hands of children that I loved. How could I let myself be mauled by children that I did not love?

"Mrs. Martin heard me moaning, and gave me a sympathetic look, but said nothing.

"How I tried to please her the next few days! I ate nicely and not greedily, and if she went out of the room I left my choicest big beef bone to follow her. If we were out walking I kept closely at her heels and did not speak to a single

dog we met. If she put me in her room and said she was going to see her sick sister, I wagged my tail and tried to look cheerful.

"The day after she found me I had discovered that Mrs. Martin was far away from her own home and she had come to New Rochelle to be with her younger sister who lived there and had been quite ill.

"In my anxiety to please her I grew quite sad faced, as I saw in the cheval glass. I wished her to be my new owner, for I had given up all thought of returning the few miles to the Bronx, as I knew Antonio would keep his word and shoot me.

"Mrs. Martin said nothing at first to reassure me, but sometimes she took me on her lap and rocked me. That did not look like giving me away, and one day I ventured to whimper and laid a paw on her arm.

"'It's all right, Billy,'" she said; 'I understand. You are not to leave me.'

"I jumped off her lap and ran round and round the room very soberly and quietly, and trying to avoid the furniture, but still running.

"She laughed gaily, 'And some people say that dogs don't know what we say to them.

Now remember, Billy, you're to be my own true dog, and not run away nor do naughty things, and I'll give you a home as long as you live. Do you promise?

"'Oh, yes, yes, yes!' I barked loudly and joyfully, raising myself from the floor on my forelegs each time I opened my mouth.

"'And bear in your dog mind,' she said, 'that I will talk to you a good deal and I expect you to talk to me. If I do not understand your language at first, you must be patient with me.'

"I went right down on the floor before her. I felt so humble. To think of this big, stout, grand lady saying that she would try to understand what a poor little cur dog was trying to tell her! I have never forgotten that remark of my beloved new mistress, and I do wish there were more people in the world who would try to understand dog language.

"'Now come for a walk,' she said. 'I must do something that will seal this bargain, for the town authorities are very particular about dogs, and I may have to stay a long time yet.'

"I just tore down the staircase and into the street. We went right to the little red brick

city hall and Mrs. Martin inquired for the license room. She paid a man a dollar and got a little tag which she fastened to my collar, and if you go to the New Rochelle town hall to-day you will see in a big book, 'Billy Sunday, fox-terrier, 1917, N. R. D. T. L. 442.'

"My paws were just dancing when we came out, and when we got back to the hotel and met the dear old lady who wished to get me for her grandchildren I did the newest dog-trot all round her.

" 'The children are coming for that dog to-day,' she said.

" 'The veterinary has a nice one for them,' replied my new mistress. 'I am going to keep Billy.'

"The old lady looked astonished. 'But she is such a trouble to you.'

" 'Oh, no,' said Mrs. Martin cheerfully. 'I have nothing to do here but go to the hospital once a day to see my sister. It is good for me to have a dog to exercise.'

"The old lady looked down at me and exclaimed, 'I believe that creature understands what you are saying.'

" 'Oh, Mrs. James,' said my dear new mis-

tress, 'if you only knew! Dogs and cats and birds and all animals have a language of their own. They are crying out to us, begging us to listen to them, to sympathize, but we are blind and deaf. We do not try to understand.'

" 'Well, there's one thing I understand,' said Mrs. James bluntly, 'you are calling that dog Billy Sunday when she ought to be Ma Sunday.'

"Mrs. Martin dearly loved a joke, and she burst out laughing. 'I sent word to the famous preacher that I had named a dog for him, and I don't think he approved, for I received no message, so I am going to change her name to Billie Sundae.'

" 'Which will be much sweeter,' said the old lady, 'though I am not one to run down a preacher. I suppose eventually you will take your sweet dog to Canada, and make her sing *God Save the King*.'

" 'Not if she wishes to sing *The Star-Spangled Banner*,' said Mrs. Martin. 'We Canadians have always been good friends with you Americans, and since we have fought side by side for the freedom of the world I feel as if we were brothers and sisters.'

"The old lady nodded her head a great many times and said, 'Quite right, quite right'—and now, you two birds, I am tired and want to go to sleep," and suddenly stopping her tale, Billie dropped down on the hearth rug and put her nose on her paws.

"Won't you tell us about the sudden death of Mrs. Martin's sister and your trip here with her and the two children, Sammy-Sam and Lucy-Loo?" I asked.

"Some other day," she said sleepily.

"I'd love Chummy to hear that, and also about Fort Slocum and the lovely American soldier boys."

She did not reply, and Chummy spoke up, "Thank you, Billie. I've enjoyed hearing about your adventures. Lost dogs and lost birds have a very sad time of it, and now I must be going. It will soon be dark. Thank you for a pleasant time, Dicky-Dick," and flying out the window, he went to his hole in the wall.

CHAPTER XIV

BILLIE AND I HAVE ONE OF OUR TALKS

MRS. MARTIN has a great deal of work to do for soldiers. The dear woman never gets tired of going to hospitals, and the day after Billie had told Chummy and me the story of her life our Missie left home quite early.

I felt lonely, so I called to Billie who was curled up on the sofa, "You are certainly the sleepest dog I ever saw."

Billie blinked at me. "I am the most tired dog that ever lived. It seems to me I will never make up the sleep I lost during the first part of my life, when the children's feet were always making earthquakes under me in the bed. Then you must remember that Mrs. Martin gives me lovely long walks."

"And you take lovely long ones yourself," I said suspiciously. "I believe you have been foraging in back yards this very day."

Billie gave a heavy sigh. "A neglected pup makes a disobedient dog, Dicky-Dick."

"And our Mary gave you a heaping plate of food for your lunch, Billie," I went on. "You're like that Tommy boy at the corner. He only minds his mother half the time, and Chummy says it's because he had his own way too much when he was a little fellow."

"I know I'm forbidden to eat in the neighbors' yards," said Billie, "but what can I do? My paws just ache—they carry me where I don't want to go."

"But why don't you come home when you're called? I was up on the roof the other day, and heard Mrs. Martin whistling for you, and you stayed stuffing yourself by a trash can. Why didn't you mind her?"

"I don't know," she said.

"You heard her, didn't you?"

"Oh, yes, quite plainly. I never was deaf."

"It's a mystery," I said. "I see how you can be a little bad, but I don't see how you can be so very bad. You knew Mrs. Martin would give you some good taps when you got back—and you pretend to be so fond of her."

"I just love her," said Billie warmly. "She may beat me all day if she likes."

"She doesn't like," I said, "and you know it. She hates to give pain."

Billie curled her lip in a dog smile. "You don't understand, Dicky-Dick. You were brought up in a proper way, and it's no trouble for you to mind, and then, anyway, it's easier for a bird to be good than a dog."

"Easier!" I exclaimed. "Don't I want to disobey? I'm crazy to go next door and see that little canary, Daisy, in her tiny cage, but our Mary and Mrs. Martin warned me about the treacherous cat in the house."

"So you have troubles," said Billie.

"Yes, I have—and mine are worse than yours—it's dreadful to be lonely."

"Lonely, in a nice, lively house like this; with plenty of animals and human beings about you, and that fine bird-room upstairs to visit! Dicky-Dick, you are ungrateful."

"You don't understand about the bird-room," I said. "I've got weaned away from it. I can't live there steadily. The birds are suspicious of me, and will not let any of the young

ones play with me. I really have no bird society."

"You have Chummy."

"A street sparrow—he is good as far as he goes, but he only opens up one side of my nature. I am a highly cultured bird, whose family has been civilized for three hundred and fifty years."

"I didn't know your family was as old as that," said Billie.

"Indeed it is—we are descended from the wild birds of the Canary Islands and Madeira, but canaries are like Jews, they have spread all over the world and have become parts of many nations. I am not boasting, Billie. I am merely stating a fact."

"Well," said Billie, going back to what I had first said, "I never dreamed you were lonely. Why don't you sing a little song about it to our Mary, or her mother, and they will get you another bird from downtown to play with."

"I want Daisy, and didn't I sit for an hour this morning with my throat puffed out, singing about her to our good Missie as she sat sewing?"

"And what did she say?"

"Yes, Dicky-Dick—I know all about your little lonely cage, and the spring coming, and how you would like to have a playmate; and if you'll wait till I get my next month's allowance I'll try to buy Daisy for you, for I think she's neglected in that lodging house."

"Then what are you squealing about now?" asked Billie.

"Nothing—I just want you to know that birds have troubles and things to put up with, as well as dogs."

"Everybody has troubles," said Billie. "There's something the matter with good Mr. Martin. He sighs when his wife is not in the room, and his eyes are troubled—Dicky-Dick, I'm going to sleep again."

"Oh, no, Billie," I said; "keep awake and talk to me. Wouldn't you like to hear a story about a canary that belonged to a friend of our Mary? It could talk and said quite well, 'Baby! Baby!'"

Billie became wide awake. "Nonsense!" she said sharply. "Canaries can't talk."

"Billie dear," I said gently, for I was afraid of rousing her temper, which is pretty quick

sometimes, "you have lived in a very quiet way, and you have traveled only from New York to Toronto. How can you know everything about canaries?"

"I used to know one in the café," said Billie sharply, "a little green fellow with a top-knot. He died after a while. The smoke from the men's pipes killed him."

"And did you know another one?"

"Yes, the grocer at the Four Corners had a yellow one, but he never talked. I mean real talk that human beings could understand. Of course, we animals have our own language that people don't know at all. In fact, we can talk right before them, and they don't know it."

"Then you have known two canaries only in your life," I said, "and yet you lay down rules about them. Do you know that there are Scotch Fancy canaries with flat snakelike heads and half circle bodies, and big English canaries, notably the Manchester Coppy?"

"What's that?" asked Billie. "It sounds like a policeman."

"Well, the Coppy is a policeman among canaries, for he has an enormous body, often eight inches long. His coloring is lovely, and

his head most imposing. Cobby comes from crest, or copping, our Mary says. Then there are the Belgian canaries, all sharp angles. They are very sensitive birds, and their owners do not handle them, but touch them with little sticks when they wish them to step from one cage to another."

"You're of English descent, aren't you?" asked Billie.

"Of mixed English and American blood. English people breed their birds for looks and coloring."

Billie began to snicker.

I was going to be annoyed with her, then I thought, "What's the use?" So I said quite pleasantly, "I know I'm not English in that way. I am more like a German canary. Germans don't care how a bird looks if he sings well."

"Is there a French canary?" inquired Billie.

"Oh, yes, a very pretty little bird with whorls of feathers on its breast and sides—now, Billie, I haven't time to tell you all the other kinds of canaries. I will go back to what I was going to say. My father, who has seen hundreds of canaries, for he was a show bird before our Mary got him, says that if trainers will have

patience with young birds they can teach them to say certain things. Why, right in your own United States was a canary who talked."

"Where?" asked Billie.

"In Boston. A lady had a canary that she petted very much. He used to light on her head when she was knitting and pull her hair."

"Why did he do that foolish thing?" asked Billie.

"He wished her to play with him. She would shake her knitting needle at him and say, 'Fly high, Toby, fly high.'

"To her surprise, the bird one day repeated her words. 'Fly high, Toby, fly high.' She at once began to train other young birds, and made quite a good living at teaching short sentences to them, but it took a great deal of patience. So you see, if human beings spent more time in teaching us, we'd be more clever."

Billie looked dreadfully. "Don't speak about training birds and animals too much, Dicky-Dick. It makes me shudder. If you knew what horrible things are done to animals who appear in public."

"I do know," I said. "I've heard shocking

tales from Chummy, told him by downtown pigeons."

"Once," said Billie, "I met a strange dog looking for food on the dumps. You never saw such a scarecrow, and he was frightened of his own shadow. He told me he had run away from The Talented Terrier Traveling Troupe. He said his life had been simply awful. A big man used to stand over him with a whip, and make him mount ladders and hang by his paws and do idiotic things that no self-respecting dog should be required to do."

"Billie," I said, "I do know about these things, and the whole subject is so affecting to me that I often have nightmare over it. I dare not tell you the horrible things they sometimes do to the little performing birds you see on the stage. Starvation is one of the least dreadful ways of making them do their tricks."

"Why do human beings who are often so sensible allow this wickedness?" asked Billie wistfully.

"Oh, I don't know, I don't know," I said. "It breaks my heart to think of little gentle birds and nice dogs and cats and monkeys and other creatures being hurried from city to city

in little stuffy traveling boxes, and whipped on to a stage, and made to bow and act silly to please great theaters full of people who applaud and praise, and don't know what they're doing. If they did know, if the great big kind-hearted public knew what those smooth-looking men in the long-tailed coats do to their animals behind the scenes, they would get up in a body and walk out whenever an animal act is put on the stage."

"That's the best way to put these fellows out of business," said Billie warmly. "Let no one patronize their shows. Then they would have to earn their living in some honest way—but there is Chummy at the window. I wonder what's happened."

We both looked at the little fellow as he stood by the open window.

"News! News!" said Chummy, flapping his little dusky wings. "New arrivals in the neighborhood—a boy and a girl and their parents in the yellow boarding-house."

"Some canaries are afraid of strange children," I said, "because they come so close and poke their fingers at them, but I can always get away from them."

"I like children," said Chummy, "for if they

have food, they nearly always throw some to me."

"There are very few children in this neighborhood," I said.

"Yes, because there are so few private houses. Come on out and see them, Dicky."

"If you will excuse me," I said to Billie. "I will talk to you some other time on this subject of performing animals."

Billie grumbled something between her teeth. Now that I was called away, she wanted me to stay.

"You come out, too, dear Billie," I said. "If you do not, I will stay with you."

Billie got up and sauntered out of the room and downstairs to the sidewalk where she sat down in the sun, on a black snow-bank, which had become that color in the long thaw we were having.

CHAPTER XV

THE CHILDREN NEXT DOOR

CHUMMY and I flew up into our favorite elm tree, sat on our feet to keep them warm, and stared at the boarding house. A taxi was standing before the front door, and two children were running up and down the graveled drive, running as if they were glad to be able to stretch their young legs.

"Their parents went in the house," said Chummy. "They are choosing rooms. I can see them going from window to window. I wonder whether these children will throw me some of the seed cakes they are eating."

"How little they know that our sharp eyes are on them," I said.

Chummy clacked his beak together in a bird laugh. "I often think that as I sit here and listen to what persons say as they go up and down the street. If I could tell you the secrets

I know! I know a very bad story about that black-haired woman in the red house."

"I don't want to hear it, Chummy," I said. "I dislike gossipy stories."

"You're a funny bird," he said, with a side-long glance from his queer, tired, yet very shiny eyes.

Suddenly I had a mischievous impulse to sing. "Spring is coming, coming," I sang, all up and down the scale, then I broke into my latest song that a very early white-throated sparrow was teaching me—"I—love—dear—Canada—Canada—Canada."

The children were so astonished that they rushed over to the tree and stared up at me.

"Is it a sparrow?" asked the little boy, who was straight and slim and handsome.

The girl, who was big and bouncing and had golden hair and blue eyes, burst into a merry laugh. "Oh, Freddie, whoever heard of a sparrow singing! It's a wild canary. How I wish we could catch it! I'm going to see if there's a cage anywhere in the boarding house," and she ran away.

Her brother came quietly under the tree. "Pretty bird," he said quietly, "come down and

have some of my cake," and he threw quite a large piece on the ground.

"Fly down, Chummy," I said, "and get it. What a joke that the little girl thinks I am a wild bird!"

"Lots of grown people make her mistake," said Chummy. "They speak about seeing wild canaries, when we haven't such a thing in Canada. They mean yellow summer warblers or goldfinches. Well, I'm going down for the cake."

The boy stood very still and watched him eat it, so I knew he was a good child.

Presently his little sister came hurrying out of the house with a battered old cage in one hand and something clasped tightly in the other.

"Cook gave me something that she said would be sure to catch the little fellow," she called out to her brother, "if I can only get near enough to put it on his tail."

"What is it?" asked the little boy.

"Nice fine white salt. She says the least pinch on his tail will make him as tame as a cat. Stand back, Freddie, till I put the cage on the low branch of this tree. I have some crumbs in it."

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It was amusing to see the two little creatures stand away back in the drive waiting for me to go in the cage.

Chummy was nearly killing himself laughing. "Naughty cook to spring that old joke on these innocents!"

"Would you dare me to go in, and let them put salt on my tail?" I asked.

Chummy was very much taken aback. "You never would, would you?"

"Why not? I never saw a cage yet that could keep me between its bars. I am so slim that I can slip between anything, and you know what a swift flier I am."

"Go on, then," said Chummy. "I dare you; but take care you don't get trapped."

I made two or three scalloping flights about the children's heads, as they stood open-mouthed staring at me, then I darted in the open door and pretended to eat the bread crumbs—things I dislike very much.

The little girl screamed with delight and loud enough to frighten the flock of wild geese we had just seen passing overhead on their way north. Then she ran to the branch, took the cage off, and sticking her chubby young hand in

the door, eagerly sprinkled a generous handful of moist salt on my tail.

I kept my head down, so none of it would go in my beak, and cast a glance up at Chummy, who was sitting on his branch, rocking with laughter. Some of the neighborhood sparrows were with him now, staring their eyes out at me, and up on the roof Slow-Boy, the pompous old pigeon, was bending over the edge to look at me, with the most amusing expression I had ever seen on the face of a bird.

I felt full of fun, and pretended to be quite happy in my new home. Hopping up on the perch, I gazed at the little girl with twinkling eyes.

Children are very sharp little creatures. She plunged her own blue eyes deep into mine and said what an older person would never have thought of saying, "Freddie, this bird looks as if he were laughing at me."

Her brother gave me a long stare; then he said, with a puzzled face, "Sure—he's laughing. What makes him laugh?"

"He's planning to fly away," she said, with amazing promptness. "Let's take him in the house."

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This did not suit my plans at all. I had no desire for a further acquaintance with Black Thomas, so I promptly flew between the bars of the cage, and, lighting on a near-by shrub, favored the children with one of my best songs.

They were delighted, and old Thomas, who had been watching the whole performance from some hole or corner, came out on the front doorstep, and said, "Meow! Meow!" a great many times.

Of course the children did not understand him, but I did. He was saying to me, "You think you're pretty smart, don't you, to fool the children in my house? Hold on, I'll get you some day."

At this, Billie who had been fussing about on her snowbank in great anxiety, came forward. "If you ever touch that little bird, or even frighten him, Black Thomas, I'll choke you to death."

Thomas made a terrible face and began to spit at her, and I called out, "Serves you right, you old murderer! We'll both attend your funeral. What is that behind you?"

He looked over his shoulder, then he ran away. It was the dead body of Johnny White-

Tail, one of Chummy's sparrow friends. He had been ailing for some time, and probably Thomas had sprung on him while he sat moping and killed him.

Chummy gave a cry of dismay and flew to the steps. This attracted the children's attention and, seeing the dead bird, they exclaimed, "Oh, poor birdie, poor birdie—let's bury him!"

"I'll go in the house and get some grave clothes out of my trunk," said the little girl whose name was Beatrice.

"And I'll be the parson and go borrow a book," said the boy.

Just at this moment, Sammy-Sam and Lucy-Loo came down the street with their school bags in hand.

Their bright eyes soon caught sight of the newcomers, and it was amusing to see them getting acquainted.

They walked round each other and stared at each other, and finally spoke and soon the strangers were exhibiting the dead sparrow, and said they were going to have a funeral.

"Why, that's Albino," said Sammy-Sam.

I must explain that the children did not know

our names for each other. We could not tell them that the white-tailed bird was called Johnny by us.

"And we've fed him all winter at the birds' table in the yard," said Lucy-Loo. "Auntie will be sorry that he is dead."

"You needn't trouble burying him," said Sammy-Sam to the strangers. "He's our bird. We'll dig his grave."

Young Beatrice rudely snatched the sparrow's dead body from Sammy-Sam. "He's ours," she said; "we found him. I'm going to dress him in some of my best dolly's clothes, and bury him with words and music."

Sammy-Sam and Lucy-Loo looked pretty cross, but they said nothing. They had had weeks of training from their good aunt, who had told them over and over again that children must have good hearts and good manners, or they will never get on in the world.

While Beatrice ran in the house Freddie pointed up to the elm where I was now sitting beside Chummy. "We caught that wild canary up in the tree. We had him in a cage, but he flew away."

Our own children stared up at us, and ex-

claimed together in tones of dismay, "You caught our Dicky-Dick."

"Yes, in that cage," and he pointed to the old thing.

Sammy-Sam's face was furious and, throwing down his bag, he began to pull at his smart little overcoat. He was a great fighter, and had whipped all the boys his size in the neighborhood.

Lucy-Loo twitched his sleeve, "He never caught Dicky-Dick. He's a liar."

This soothed Sammy-Sam, and he picked up his bag.

"I think we'll go home, and not wait for the funeral," he said, "but I tell you, you just let our birds alone. If any boy hurts birds on this street, I'll fight him. Now there!" and he strutted away, like a little peacock with Lucy-Loo trotting after him and casting backward glances over her shoulder.

Freddie looked puzzled. He had been misunderstood. However, his face brightened when his sister came out with some little lace and muslin rags in her hand, a small black book and a wreath of artificial flowers.

She seemed to be the manager, and said to

her brother in a masterful way, "I just thought I'd bring everything. Now help me dress the bird—no, you go dig the grave—we must hurry, for it's 'most our tea time. Go to the back door for a shovel."

Freddie did as he was bidden and, finding the frozen earth too hard for his small coal shovel, he dug a good-sized grave in a big snow bank on the lawn.

"Now take the book," said his sister, "and read the service. I can't, 'cause I'm a girl."

"She'd run the city if she could," said Chummy in my ear. "She's a terror, is that one."

The boy with many corrections from his sister mumbled something, then she said, "For hymn we'll have, 'Keep the Home Fires Burning.'"

Freddie looked shocked. "That's for soldiers," he said, "not for funerals."

"We'll have 'Keep the Home Fires Burning,' " she repeated.

"We'll have 'Down in the Deep Black Ground,' " he insisted.

Suddenly she lost her temper, slapped him in the face, threw the flowers at him, and ran into the house.

"Good!" said Chummy. "There's some stuff in the boy, after all."

He went on with the service all by himself, sang a dreadful little song, so mournful and horrible that all Johnny's sparrow relatives who had by this time assembled just quailed under it, then gently laid Johnny in the hole in the snow bank, covered him up, put a shingle at the head of his little grave and the artificial roses on the top, and went in the house.

"Well," said Chummy, "she didn't get her own way that time."

"Hold on," I said, "here she comes. I notice that little girls usually beat the boys in the long run."

There she was, the little funny creature, sneaking out of the house by the back door. She crept to the grave, seized the shovel that Freddie had forgotten to return, dug up poor Johnny, tore her doll clothes off him, threw his poor little body on the snow, and ran into the house.

"Well, I vow," said Chummy. "I wish she could be punished."

"Hold on," I said, "look at our children coming. They've been watching all the time."

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Sammy-Sam and Lucy-Loo were galloping out of our yard like two young ponies. They snatched up Johnny's body and rushed to their aunt with it. I hurriedly said good-bye to Chummy, and flew in the window.

Mrs. Martin heard the whole story. It was perfectly sweet to see her face, as she listened to the children. Then she got a little tin box, wrapped Johnny in a nice piece of white cloth, and told the children that the cover would be soldered on and the furnace man would dig a nice little grave in the corner of the garden which she kept as a graveyard for her pets.

"You will become friends with the children in the boarding house, my dear ones," she said, "and tell them what you know about birds, for they evidently have not had much to do with them."

CHAPTER XVI

STORIES ABOUT THE OLD BARN

TO-DAY, after lunch, Mrs. Martin gave Billie a walk round the square, then she brought her in the house and said, "I am going to a knitting party where dogs would not be welcomed. I will come home at five and give you another walk."

Billie wagged her tail in her funny, slow way and gave Mrs. Martin one of her sweetly affectionate glances, as if to say, "It's all right. I know if it were your party you'd let me go."

Mrs. Martin pulled an armchair to the window and put a cushion on it. "Jump up there, Billie," she said, "and amuse yourself by looking outside." Then giving her a pat, and throwing me a kiss, for she knows pets are apt to be jealous of each other, she went away.

I flew to the arm of Billie's chair and sat dressing my feathers in the sunshine.

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Presently Billie said discontentedly, "There's nothing to see out of this window but yards and that old barn."

"That old barn is full of stories," I said, "and very interesting."

"What makes it interesting?"

"In the first place, many birds nest there, and in the second, many animals have been housed in it."

"I never see anything going on in it," she said.

I smiled. "You are not a keen observer, Billie, except along dog lines. Look out now and you will see Susan going in with a little soft hay in her bill for the bottom of her nest."

"Who is Susan?" asked Billie.

"Don't you remember that Chummy told you about Susan, mate to Slow-Boy, both street pigeons? They are taking care of two eggs. He sits all day, and she sits all night."

"I know male pigeons help their mates," said Billie. "I used to see them doing that in New York."

"He will come off at five and have his evening to himself. If Susan isn't on time, just to the dot, he calls loudly, and gives her a great

pecking. She is very patient with him usually, but the other day I saw her turn on him and give him a great blow with her wing. Pigeons fight that way, you know."

"I've seen them," said Billie. "They scrape and bow to each other, then step up and give a good whack."

"Would you like to hear a story about a fire in the barn?" I asked.

"If you please. I feel very dull this afternoon, and would like something to amuse me. I think I ate too much tripe for my lunch. When our Mary's back was turned I stole a nice little lump from the dish."

"What a pity it is you are such a greedy dog, Billie!" I said.

"Yes, it is a pity," she replied, with hanging head, "but believe me, Dicky, I can't help it. I had to steal so much in my early life that I can't keep from it now—please go on with your story."

"Well, Susan and Slow-Boy are of course mated for life, for pigeons rarely change partners. They are very happy together, and only quarrel enough to keep things from getting stu-

pid. You know, don't you, that pigeons lay all the year round, if they can get food?"

"Oh, yes, Dicky, I know that. I should think they would get tired 'of raising families, but the Bronx pigeons only hold up in moulting time."

"Now this Red-Boy I am going to tell you about," I went on, "was one of their July pigeons of two years ago. Chummy told me the story, for of course I wasn't here then. He says Red-Boy was a nice enough bird, but he took for a mate a very flighty half-breed fantail, called Tiptoe, from her mincing walk. You probably know, Billie, that when thoroughbred pigeons get mixed with street pigeons they lose all their fancy lines, and go right back to common ancestor blue rock dove traits."

"Yes, I know," said Billie; "but if they keep any fancy ways, or feathers, they are very proud of them."

"Exactly," I said, "so you can imagine how Tiptoe diddled about, putting on airs, before poor Susan, who is very plain-looking and has lost every trace of blue blood, except the half homer stripes on her solid old back. Now,

when the time came for Red-Boy and Tiptoe to make a nest, Red-Boy wanted to build near his father and mother.

"Slow-Boy fought him and tried to get rid of him. He is a model father when his squabs come and when they turn to squeakers, but when they are grown up he naturally supposes that they will go out into the world and let him be free to bring up other young ones."

"I suppose his mother had spoiled him," said Billie. "Hen pigeons are often weak in the head."

"Yes, Chummy says of all Susan's young, Red-Boy was the favorite. She stood by him, and finally old Slow-Boy gave in, and Red-Boy and Tiptoe chose a ledge right above the parents' nest. They even stole straws, when Slow-Boy wasn't looking, and Chummy says he heard that Susan was foolish enough to give them some of the choicest ones she brought in. It wasn't a tidy nest when it was finished—not a bit like the careful one the old birds made, with nice fine bits of straw arranged inside for little squab feet to cling to."

"Don't pigeons line their nests with wool and fine cotton, like you canaries?" asked Billie.

"My dear friend," I replied, "do reflect an instant. Squabs are not like canaries. They have big feet and they want something to clutch when they raise themselves in the nest for the mother to pump milk down their necks."

Billie stared at me. "Pigeons and milk, Dicky-Dick! Are you telling the truth?"

"Indeed I am," I said earnestly. "When the squabs hatch out, a kind of milk is formed in the mother's crop and softens the food which she pumps down into their little crops. They could not digest whole grain. They are too young and feeble. As they get older, the milk becomes thicker, and finally the parents feed them whole seeds."

"Well, well," said Billie, "I didn't know that. They are something like human babies."

"Very like them—but to get back to Red-Boy and Tiptoe and their nest-building. They thought they were doing a very smart thing when they found a card of old-fashioned sulphur matches. Some of the matches were broken off and silly Tiptoe took them to the nest and arranged them crosswise, among the straws.

"Susan saw her and said, 'Throw out those things; they are dangerous.'

“‘Why are they dangerous?’ asked Tiptoe.

“‘I don’t know,’ said poor old Susan; ‘but I just don’t like the smell of them.’

“Tiptoe appealed to Red-Boy, and naturally he stood up for his mate.

“Old Susan went lumbering off to her nest with a worried face. She could do nothing, and hoped for the best. Time went by, and two eggs were laid and hatched out. Tiptoe was a very restless mother, and was always flying off her nest to stretch her wings, and for that reason it was good for her to be near her mother-in-law, for Susan often checked her. If it had been cold weather the young ones would have suffered from being left uncovered so much, but fortunately it was midsummer. One frightfully hot day, when the sun was pouring on the nest through that broken window high up in the peak of the barn—”

“Where?” asked Billie, stretching out her neck.

“Right up there, this side of the maple tree.”

“Yes, I see,” said Billie, and she lay down again on her cushion.

“This hot sun shining through the glass set

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fire to the matches, and wasn't there a quick blaze! Some robins who nested outside the barn gave the alarm by crying out shrilly and swooping wildly about the yard. The landlady of the house where Chummy lives heard the noise, looked out, then rushed to the telephone. We are close to a fire station, and in just a few minutes an engine came dashing down the street and put the fire out. It was only a little blaze, but it was a very sad one. Tiptoe, as I said before, was a silly mother, but still she was a mother, and when she saw her frightened little ones rising up in their nest and clacking their tiny beaks at the blaze she flew right into the flame and hovered over them."

"Of course she died," said Billie.

"Oh, yes. She must have breathed flame and choked in an instant.

"The next day, Chummy says, he saw poor Red-Boy poking about the barn floor looking at a little dry burnt thing. His heart was broken, and he flew away and no one here ever saw him any more."

"Young birds should mind what old birds say," remarked Billie.

"But they never do," I exclaimed. "You've got to let the young things find out for themselves."

"What about Susan and Slow-Boy?" asked Billie. "You said their nest was near by."

"Yes, they had one squab in it—a very big, fat squab. It was frightened and fell from the nest down on an old table on the barn floor.

"Chummy says it was pitiful to see old Slow-Boy looking at it, as if to say, 'Why did I lose my baby?'

"Our Mary took a snapshot of him for her bird album, and also one of a robin who lost her young ones. She had a nest high up in the barn, over the pigeons. Her name is Twitchtail, and she is very bad-tempered, but she can't hold a candle to her mate, Vox Clamanti. Chummy said he made a tremendous fuss when he came home, his beak full of worms for his beloved nestlings. He began to scream and shake his wings when he caught sight of the crowd around the barn. Something told him his young ones were gone. They had been washed out of their nest by the heavy stream of water from the hose and were lying on the ground, quite dead. He and Twitchtail blamed

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the landlady, the firemen, the crowd, the pigeons, and everybody on the street. They loved their young ones, and were bringing them up very well."

"Tell me some more about the barn," said Billie. "I noticed a man leading a horse from it just now."

"Chummy says it used to be a disgrace to the neighborhood," I said angrily, "and he didn't see why the nice people about here didn't go and inspect the old rickety building. It was bad for human beings, for there was an unwholesome odor about it. It was full of holes, and last winter a poor pony kept there almost died of the cold. His owner was a simple old creature who needed some one to tell him how to take care of animals. He had a cow there too, but she died. He bought a poor quality of hay and did not give the pony enough water to drink, so he was having a terribly hard time when something beautiful happened to him."

I stopped a minute, for Billie was heaving a long, heavy dog sigh. "I know something about unhappy horses and cows," she said. "There are plenty of them in New York. Of course, human beings should take care of us

animals, because it is right to do so, but I don't see why selfish people don't see that it pays to take care of their creatures. Why, horses are worth a lot of money."

"I know that," I said, "but some persons are so unthinking that the strong arm of the law has to beat wisdom into them."

"What was the beautiful thing that happened to the pony?"

"Well, I must tell you his life history. When he was young, he was very, very small, and was named Tiny Tim. His first master was a rich man who made such a pet of him that Tim was treated more like a dog than a pony. He used to go in his master's home and walk up and down stairs, and when a servant came to put him out he would hide under the cloth on a big table."

"He must have been very small to do that."

"Yes, he says he was about as big as a Great Dane. He never walked in the street like the horses. He always went on the sidewalk. But when he grew older and larger he had to live with the horses and carry the children on his back. When he was tiny they used to play with

him, and he says he would butt them, as if he were a little goat, and knock them over.

"Time went by, and the rich man lost his money and Tiny Tim had to be sold. He passed from one poor owner to another, till at last he became the property of this old man who collected junk. Chummy says all the sparrows knew that pony and pitied him, for they saw that he had known better days. He always went along with his head hanging down. He was ashamed and unhappy, and he scarcely had strength to drag around the shaky old cart that he was harnessed to. Tiny Tim of course did not like this poor place he was kept in, but the junk man could not afford a better one. Tim had only an armful of damp bedding, and Chummy says it was pitiful to see him standing with his little head down, the water from the leaky roof dripping on him, mud oozing from between the planks under his hoofs, and his lip curling over the messy hay before him.

"One morning early this winter Chummy says the rats who live in the barn spread the news that Tiny Tim had been adopted. It seems that very late the night before, when Tim

was sagging back to the old barn, for the junk man's wife had insisted on going for a drive after working hours, he—that is, Tim—fell right over here in the street. Now you may have noticed that there is a military hospital near us.”

“Oh, yes,” said Billie, “Mrs. Martin walks me by there every day, and that's where the one-armed soldier lives who owns the sad-faced Belgian pup that he rescued from starvation when he was fighting abroad. Our Mary photographed me with him the other day.”

“Well, Chummy says those soldier boys are the jolliest in the city. They have all been wounded, and a good many are one-legged and going on crutches, waiting for their stumps to heal so they can get artificial limbs. Some of them had had permission to go over to the University, and they were returning to the hospital when they saw the poor pony down between the shafts. They hobbled up, unharnessed him, told the junk man that they were Albertans and used to horses, and that his pony was starving. They collected twenty-five dollars among themselves, bought the pony and the cart, put the pony in it, and the men with two legs and one

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arm managed to haul Tiny Tim over to the hospital, while the one-legged men hopped alongside on their crutches.

“When they got him over they didn’t know what to do with him. The hospital was very quiet and still, for every one had gone to bed. They sneaked Tiny round to the back entrance and got him off the cart, and led him into a bathroom. Then they got blankets off the beds for bedding, gave him some bread and milk and cereal foods they found in the pantry, and left him till morning. Of course they all slept late, and the first person to go in the bathroom the next morning was a nurse. She shrieked wildly when she saw this pitiful black pony with his big hungry eyes and the bathroom which was a sight, for the food had brought back some of Tiny Tim’s old-time spirit, and he had knocked things about.

“The other nurses ran and doctors and soldiers came, and they just yelled with laughter. Anyway, the pony was adopted by the hospital—”

Billie interrupted me, “You don’t mean to say this story is about the soldiers’ mascot in the yard over at the hospital?”

"The same," I said. "Tiny is now as fat as a pig, and as happy as a king. The soldiers love him, and he often goes for walks down Spadina Avenue with them. You know everybody loves soldiers, for they have been so brave in protecting their country, and they are allowed many privileges. He is too small for them to ride, and of course he is old now, but isn't it nice that he is happy and not in that horrid old stable?"

"That is a lovely story," said Billie. "I wish soldiers would go to New York and rescue some of the poor horses there. Now, tell me what became of the junk man?"

"Oh, the story got into the papers and the Martins felt dreadfully to think they had not discovered the condition the pony was in. They spoke to some of their rich friends and formed a company, and they are building model boarding stables for poor men's horses, away downtown. They have good lighting and ventilation, and fine roomy stalls, and running water, and fly screens, and on top of the stables is a big roof garden for neighborhood children to play in. It is a very crowded district and the children will love this garden, and Chummy

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says they will be sure to eat lunches up there and it will be fine for birds too."

"But the junk man," said Billie. "Your talk flies all over the place, Dicky-Dick."

I could not help laughing at her funny, impatient expression. Then I said, "The Martins got him a young, strong horse, and told him how to take care of it. It is not a charity, Billie—the stables, I mean. By taking a good many horses, the company can make money out of it."

"Are there any horses in the old barn now?" asked Billie.

"Not for any length of time. It is to be torn down and a garage put up there."

"Just as well," said Billie, "but what are you staring at, Dicky-Dick?"

"At Squirrie," I said. "He just came off the roof and went into the old barn. I hope he is not after young birds. Billie, I think I'll go have a talk with him. I've been longing to get him alone for some time."

"Better let him alone," said Billie warningly. "He wouldn't mind you."

"I'm going to try," I said, "and if you will excuse me, I'll leave you for a little while."

Billie shook her head, but I was determined, and, flying into the sitting room, for we were in Mrs. Martin's bedroom, I went out through the open window and flew behind our house to the old barn.

CHAPTER XVII

I LOSE MY TAIL

PERCHING on the roof of the barn, I called softly, "Squirrie, Squirrie, where are you?"

For a long time he would not speak, then I heard him mocking me, "Here I am, baby, baby," and he unexpectedly put his head out of a hole right behind me.

I turned round, and he made one of his dreadful faces at me.

"Squirrie," I said gently, for I was determined not to lose patience with him, "come out, I want to talk to you."

"And what have you to say that is worth listening to?" he asked teasingly, and sticking his head a little further out of the hole.

"I want to tell you how sorry I am for you," I went on, "and to ask you if I can help you to try to be a better squirrel. The birds are getting pretty angry with you, and I fear they may

run you out of the neighborhood if you don't improve."

At this bit of news he came right out, his eyes twinkling dangerously.

"What are they planning to do?" he asked.

"Oh, nothing definite. They're just talking of what they'll do if you tease their young ones this year, as you did last year. You remember they got very angry with you before the nesting season was over."

He began to hum his favorite song—"I care for nobody; no, not I—"

"Squirrie," I said pleadingly, "if you only knew how much pleasanter it is to be good and have everybody love you."

"Just like you—little sneaking soft-face!" he said.

I was quite shocked. "I am not a sneak," I said, "and why do you call me soft-face—I, a hard-billed bird?"

"You're such a little drooling darling," he said disdainfully, "making up to all the birds in the neighborhood, and pretending to be such an angel. You're a little weasel, that's what you are."

"A weasel," I exclaimed in horror, "a bad

animal that sucks birds' blood. Squirrie, you're crazy!"

"I'm not crazy," he said, coming quite out of the hole and sitting up on his hind legs and shaking his forepaws threateningly at me. "I see through you, Mr. Snake-in-the-grass."

I was silent for a minute under this torrent of abuse and overwhelmed at his audacity in calling me, a tiny bird, by the names of bad animals—not that snakes are all bad, nor are weasels, but he used the bad part of them to describe me.

"Well," I said at last, "you are taking my call in a wrong spirit."

"Don't I see through you!" he said fiercely. "Don't I hear you talking me over with that imp Chummy! I'll make him suffer for his bad talk about me. I'll have his young ones' blood this summer."

"Do you think Chummy sent me to you?" I asked, in a shocked voice.

"No, I don't," he said roughly. "I think you came on your own sly account, you model bird trying to convert poor Squirrie and make him a smooth-faced hypocrite like yourself."

"What do you mean by hypocrite?" I said

furiously. "I am an honest bird. I am really sorry for you, and you know it. I would like to help you to be a better squirrel, but how can I help you, if you won't let me?"

"You help me!" he said contemptuously. "Now what could you do, you snippy wisp of feathers and bone?"

I made a great effort to keep from losing my temper. "I could be your friend," I said. "I could talk over your mistakes with you and advise you as to future conduct. It is a great thing to have a friend, Squirrie, one who really loves you."

He became quite solemn and quiet in his manner. "Do I understand that you are prepared to love me?" he said.

"I am," I said firmly. "I will be your friend and stand by you, if you will promise to try to be a better squirrel."

"And give up Chummy?" he asked.

"Why should I give up Chummy?" I said. "He is a good, kind-hearted bird. I think he would become your friend too, if you reformed."

"I hate Chummy," he said.

"But don't you understand, Squirrie," I said

quickly, "that if you become a good little animal, instead of hating everybody, you will love everybody, and you will feel so much more comfortable. It's dreadful to be so mad inside all the time. It eats up your strength, and your kind-heartedness."

I thought Squirrie was impressed, for he was silent for a long time and kept his head down. Then he began to laugh, quite quietly, but at last so violently that he shook all over.

I stared at him, not knowing what to make of him.

"You little tame yellow brat," he said at last, "do you think I want to get like you? You have no fun in life."

"What is fun?" I asked quietly.

His eyes shone like two stars. "Making things squirm," he said.

"But squirming means suffering," I replied.

He patted his little stomach with his paws. "What does it matter who suffers, if my skin is whole?"

"But your mind, Squirrie," I said impatiently. "Even squirrels have something inside that isn't all flesh. If I make another bird angry I feel nasty inside."

"Squirrel minds don't count," he said airily, "my mother told me so. She said only bodies count."

"That's what the matter is with you," I exclaimed. "You are hard-hearted and care only for yourself. If you get your own way, all the other little squirrels in the world can be cold and miserable and unhappy."

"And all the little birdies too," he said, mimicking me, "especially little Dicky-Dick birdies; and now for your impudence to me I'm going to take such a bite out of your tail that you'll remember till moulting time the saucy offer you made to Mr. Squirrie to change his whole plan of life at your suggestion."

I tried to fly, but I seemed paralyzed. He was staring fixedly right into my eyes, and suddenly he made a leap over my head, caught my tail in his mouth, and tore out every feather.

I thought he was going to kill me, and I screamed wildly, "Chummy, Chummy, help me! Help me!"

Dear old Chummy, whom I had seen down on the ground, examining the scrapings from my cage that Mrs. Martin always threw out the

window to him, heard me and flew swiftly up. He gave his battle cry and in an instant the air was thick with sparrows, who were all about the roofs examining nesting sites.

However, by this time Squirrie was gone. I had one last glimpse of him as he looked over his shoulder, before he scampered along the ridge pole of the barn to a near-by tree and from it to our house top, then along the roofs to his own house and into his little fortress. Across his mouth was the bunch of my tail feathers. He would probably line his nest with them. I could not move, and sat trembling and crouching on the ridgepole.

"Tell me, tell me what has happened?" said Chummy. "Oh, Dicky-Dick, your tail is gone—what a dreadful thing! You, there, stop laughing," and he made a dash at a giddy young sparrow of last season, called Tommy, who was nearly killing himself giggling over my funny appearance.

"It was Squirrie," I said in a gasping way. "I was trying to do him good, and he bit off my tail."

"Why didn't you consult me?" said Chummy

gravely. "That animal has heard enough sermons to convert a whole street full of squirrels. They just roll off him like gravel from the roof."

"I thought I might influence him," I said, "if I got him alone and talked kindly to him, but I didn't do him a bit of good, and I have lost my pretty tail."

Chummy shook his head sadly. "It is too bad, Dicky-Dick. I wouldn't have had this happen for a pound of hemp seed."

"I never am pretty," I said miserably, "even with all my feathers; but my tail was passable. I shall be a fright now, and Missie was just going to get a mate for me. A proud little hen bird will despise me. Oh, why didn't I stay at home!"

"Never mind, Dicky-Dick," said Chummy consolingly. "You meant well, but it is always a dangerous thing to meddle with old offenders. Punishment is the only thing that counts with them, and I'll see that Squirrie gets it."

"Don't do anything on my account," I said quickly. "I forgive him."

"So do I," said Chummy grimly. "I for-

give him so heartily that I am going to make an earnest effort to reform him myself."

"What are you going to do?" I asked anxiously.

He smiled his funny little sparrow smile. "Wait and see—I will just tell you this much: I am going to pass him on to a higher court than ours."

I did not know what he meant, but I listened eagerly as he said to some of the older sparrows who, seeing that he was looking after me, were leaving the roof and going back to their various occupations, "Friends, I am going up to North Hill. Just keep an eye on the grackles, will you? They are showing a liking for the trees in this neighborhood, and we don't want them too near. If they bother you, call for help from Susan and Slow-Boy and drive them away. Don't go too near them, just swarm at them and squawk loudly. They hate fussing from other birds, though they do enough of it themselves, gracious knows."

Then he turned to me. "Shall I fly beside you, down to your window, Dicky-Dick? You had better go in and have a rest."

"If you please, Chummy," I said weakly. "I don't know when anything has upset me like this."

"You have lost some blood," he said. "Those little feathers of yours must have been deeply rooted."

He flew beside me quite kindly, till I got to my window. On arriving there, I begged him to come inside and have a little lunch before setting out on his long fly up to North Hill.

He was delighted to do this, especially as we found in my cage a good-sized piece of corn bread that Hester had just baked and Mrs. Martin had put in for me.

In his joy at finding it Chummy confided to me that the object of his journey was to find old King Crow and talk over Squirrie's case with him.

"And who is King Crow?" I asked.

"He rules over all the crows in this middle part of Toronto, and in the North. He is very wise and has a great deal of influence. We sparrows hate the grackles, but like the crows, who often are of great assistance to us."

"Chummy," I said, "I feel badly at bringing this on Squirrie."

"You are sincere in wishing Squirrie well, are you not?"

"Oh, yes, from the bottom of my heart I wish him to become a good squirrel."

"And you didn't succeed in making an impression on him. Now, why not hand him over to some one who has influence over him?"

"Very well," I said sadly. "I suppose I had no business to interfere, but I meant well."

Chummy smiled. "I have often heard that before. You see, Dicky-Dick, if all the kind birds and animals in this neighborhood who have tried to help Squirrie reform could not do it, how could you, a little weak stranger, coming in, hope to succeed?"

"That's true," I said. "Well, Chummy, I hope you will have a successful fly. You have a wise little head on your small sparrow shoulders."

Chummy was poising himself on the window ledge by this time, preparatory to leaving me.

"There is a man in an airplane," he said, looking up in the sky. "I'll have a race with him to North Hill."

I watched them starting out—the great whirring machine, and the tiny silent sparrow.

Chummy was ahead when I went back to my cage to have a rest. I wondered very much what Chummy would do, and impatiently awaited his return.

CHAPTER XVIII

NELLA, THE MONKEY

WHILE I sat dozing in my cage a yelp from Billie wakened me, and I flew to the window where she stood on her chair barking at something in the street.

Mrs. Martin stood out on the sidewalk showing something under her coat to the lodging house landlady.

"Missie has something alive there," said Billie; "I know it. She is bringing it in."

"Well," I said a little crossly, "why make such a fuss and wake me out of what was going to be a nice nap?"

Billie was trembling in every limb. "It's something strange, Dicky-Dick. I can't tell you how I feel."

"Probably it's a new dog," I said. "Some one is always giving Missie one."

"It's no dog," said Billie; "it's no dog. Oh,

I feel so queer! Something peculiar is going to happen."

I stared at her curiously. Billie is a very sensitive creature. Then I listened for Missie to come in.

Presently the door opened. "Well, my pets," said Mrs. Martin heartily, "what do you think your Missie has brought you now?"

Billie looked terribly, but she ran to her dear mistress and fawned on her, casting meanwhile very nervous looks at the bulge in her coat.

"A present for you, Billie," said Mrs. Martin, "a dear companion. I hope you will like her," and opening her coat, she set on the floor an apparently nice little monkey.

Billie gave a gasp and the monkey a squeal. They knew each other. Even Mrs. Martin saw this. "Why, Billie!" she exclaimed. Then she watched the monkey running up to Billie, putting her arms round her, jabbering and acting like a child that has found its mother.

Billie did not like it, I saw, but she stood firm. "Where have you known each other?" said Mrs. Martin. Then with a touching and almost comical earnestness, she said, "Oh, why can I for once not understand all that my pets

are saying? Billie, you are telling Dicky-Dick something, I know by the way he puts his little head on one side, but, Dicky, whatever have you done with your tail? Mary, oh, Mary, come here!"

Our dear Mary came hopping to the room.

"Look at our Dicky-Dick," said her mother. "Our little pet has lost his tail. What can this mean?"

Our Mary was puzzled. "No cat could get at him," she said; "he is too smart to be caught. It must have been another bird."

"Oh, why can't we understand?" said Mrs. Martin intensely, and she stared hard at Billie. "Tell me, my dog, how did our Dicky lose his tail."

Billie, put on her mettle, ran to the window, looked out at the trees and barked wildly.

Our Mary spoke quickly. "That is the way Billie acts when she chases the red squirrel in the Tyrells' lodging house. He is the only creature in the neighborhood that she chases, so she knows as well as we do that he is very naughty."

"Billie," said Mrs. Martin earnestly, "did the red squirrel pull Dicky-Dick's tail out?"

"Bow, wow, wow!" barked Billie, raising her forelegs from the ground as she spoke. "Oh, bow, wow, wow!"

Mrs. Martin looked very much disturbed. "Then that seals his doom. I have heard that he has done a great deal of damage to the wood-work in Mrs. Tyrell's house. We will take measures to have him disposed of, if she is willing. Now, to come back to the monkey—by the way, where is she?"

"Unraveling your sock, under the table," said our Mary, with a laugh, and, sure enough, there sat Mrs. Monkey with a heap of wool on the floor beside her.

Mrs. Martin swooped down on her. "Would you have believed it! Three hours' work undone in three minutes! I should have watched her. Now, to come back to Billie—my dog, you have not known any monkeys since you came to me. You must have been acquainted with this one before I got you. Perhaps you belonged to some Italians in the Bronx neighborhood, and one of them owned a little monkey."

I could not help interposing an excited little song here, for that was just what Billie was

telling me and what the monkey was jabbering about. Angelina and Antonio, who owned Billie, had an uncle Tomaso who was an organ-grinder. He used to visit them and bring his monkey, and the little creature became acquainted with Billie.

"And now let me tell you, Billie, my share in this," said Mrs. Martin. "A week ago I was going along College Street where an organ-grinder was droning out 'Spring, Gentle Spring,' and his monkey was collecting cents, when an automobile skidded and struck the poor man. He was taken to the General Hospital near by, and I took the monkey to the Humane Society on McCaul Street. I have visited the man since and taken him delicacies, and last night he died. He had no friends here, and as a token of gratitude he gave me his monkey. I have brought it to you, Billie, for a playmate, but it is only a trial trip, and if you and monkey don't get on, I will take her to the Riverdale Zoo."

Billie's eyes grew dull; she shook her head nervously, and tried not to groan. Nella, the monkey, was squeezing her so tightly round the waist that she was nearly frantic. "Sister, sis-

ter," the monkey was saying, "Nella is glad to see you. She has been so lonely."

"Billie, Billie," I sang, "be kind, be kind; monkeys have rights, monkeys have rights."

"She has no right to squeeze the life out of me and tickle me," squealed Billie. "I never liked her. She is queer. I like dogs and birds."

"Be good, be good," I sang encouragingly.

"And you be careful," said Billie irritably. "She would kill you in an instant if she got her paws on you. You don't know monkeys. They're not civilized like dogs."

Fresh from my adventure with the squirrel, I felt a bit cautious. "What shall I do, Billie?" I sang. "What shall I do, do, do?"

"Fly upstairs to the bird-room," said Billie, who, in the midst of all her nervousness, was taking thought for me, "and stay there till Nella goes. She is very mischievous. You'll see that Missie can't keep her."

"Could I stay here if I kept in my cage?" I asked.

"No, no!" barked Billie impatiently. "You just ought to see her climb. She would swarm up those picture frames and leap to your cage,

and have her fingers on your throat in no time. Fly upstairs, I tell you. Fly quickly, before Mrs. Martin goes out of the room."

"I fly, I fly," I sang, and when Mrs. Martin opened the door to go and get some fruit for Mrs. Monkey I dashed upstairs and sat on the electrolier in the upper hall till our Mary came along and opened the bird-room door for me.

Such a chattering and gabbling arose among the canaries on my entrance! "Why, look at Dicky-Dick! Where's your tail, Dicky? Surely he has had a bad fight with some bird, or was it an accident? Tell us, Dicky; tell us, tell, tell."

Even the parakeets and the gentle indigo birds and nonpareils called out to me, "Speak, speak quick! Who hurt you?"

Not since I left the bird-room and took up my quarters downstairs had I been so glad to get back to it. Many of these birds were my relatives. They might tease me, and there might be jealousies between us, but they were my own kind, and they would never, never treat me as a squirrel would, or a monkey. So I told them the whole story.

They all put their heads on one side and lis-

tened, and it was amusing to hear what they said when I had finished my tale of woe. This was the substance of it, "Better stay home, better stay home; the world is bad, is bad to birds, bad, bad, bad."

"But the bird-room life seems narrow to me," I said. "You don't know how narrow it is till you get out of it."

Green-Top had been looking at me quite kindly till I said this, when he called out, "He's making fun of us, making fun, fun, fun."

Norfolk, my father, began to bristle up at this, so did my cousins and my young brothers, Pretty-Boy and Cresto and Redgold. They seemed to take my remarks more to heart than the birds that weren't related to me.

My uncle Silver-Throat, however, slipped up to me and whispered, "You talk too much. Hold your tongue," and fortunately just at this moment our Mary, who had been filling seed dishes, created a sensation that turned their thoughts from me.

"Birdies," she said, "western New York is sending us a lovely warm breeze over old Lake Ontario. I think we can celebrate this warm

day by opening the screen into our new flying cage."

What an excitement that made! The birds all twittered and chattered, and flew round her, as she went to the big window and, unhooking the wire screen, allowed us to go out to the sun-flooded roof.

Despite my tailless condition, I was the first out and got a good rap from my father for it, for as the oldest inhabitant of the bird-room, he should have taken precedence of every one.

My uncle, who followed me, was laughing. "You are a gentle bird, Dicky-Dick, but you will have trouble as long as you live. All birds of your class do."

"What is my class?" I asked.

"Explorers, adventurers, rovers, birds who will not stay at home and rest in the parental nest. They flutter their wings and fly, and a hawk is always hovering in the sky."

"I have lots of fun," I said.

"No doubt, but take care that you do not lose your life."

"Excuse me, dear uncle," I said, "there is my

friend, Chummy Hole-in-the-Wall, he has important news for me."

"Don't you think, as you are away from your family so much, that it would be polite to stay with them a little while, and let those outsiders alone?"

"I will come back to them," I said; "I must see Chummy now, I must, I must," and, singing vivaciously, I flew to a corner where Chummy was perched on the wire netting, looking down at us.

"What news, what news?" I sang.

"Great news," he chirped; "but what a fine place this is for the birds! Almost as good as having the whole street. It is lovely to see them out."

"You would not like it," I said, "nor would I; but they do."

"Like it," he said, with a shudder, "I should go wild if I were confined like this; but to canaries it must seem enormous. See how excitedly they are flying about."

"Tell me about Great King Crow," I said.

Chummy smiled. "I found him sitting on a big pine tree. He had been holding court, but

it was over. Down below him on the ground was a dead young crow."

"Had he killed it?" I asked, in a shocked voice.

"Oh, no, but he had ordered it killed."

"What had it done?"

"Would not do sentry go."

"What is that?"

"While crows are feeding, one of their number is always supposed to watch from the top of a high tree and warn if danger approaches. This young crowling was greedy and always wanted to eat. They warned him, but he would not obey; then they killed him."

"And what did the Great King say about Squirrie?"

"He will see the head of Squirrie's clan tomorrow morning—the Big Red Squirrel—and they will decide what to do."

"Why did you not go to see the Big Red Squirrel yourself?" I asked.

"I was afraid to. I fear squirrels as a class, though there are many single ones that I like—Chickari, for example, who never hurt a sparrow in his life."

CHAPTER XIX

SQUIRRIE'S PUNISHMENT

THE next morning the Big Red Squirrel sent down two squirrel policemen, and you may be sure every English sparrow on the street, and the robins, grackles, and wild sparrows were all on tiptoe.

I heard Chummy's call for me, "T-check, t-chack, Dicky O! T-check, t-chack, Dicky O!" and I flew out of the bird-room with all speed, out to our favorite elm tree. There were the two squirrel policemen, old sober fellows, climbing on the roof of the lodging house and going straight to Squirrie's front door hole which a dozen young sparrows were eager to show them.

"Oh, Chummy," I said, standing with my tailless back against the tree trunk, "they won't kill him, will they?"

"I don't know," he said gravely. "I can't

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tell what they were told to do, but I guess that they are going to drive him up to North Hill and let him plead his own case before the Big Red Squirrel."

I shuddered. This was very painful to me, and I wished I had said nothing about my adventure.

"I know what is passing in your canary mind," said Chummy, "and, Dicky-Dick, do not be troubled. Squirrie had to be dealt with. Your affair only hurried things a little—see, here he comes. They have had a tussle with him. There is blood on one ear."

Suddenly we heard voices below us on the sidewalk. "Oh the darling little squirrie babies, taking a walk in the sunshine!" and, looking down, we saw Sammy-Sam and his sister Lucy-Loo standing with their fresh young faces turned up to us.

Chummy, who was very fond of children, said softly, "Bless their little hearts, how they misunderstand birds and beasts! Those two serious old squirrels taking a scamp off, perhaps to bite him to death, they think is a bit of fun."

"What dreadful faces he is making!" I said.

Squirrie, seeing all the birds assembled to stare at him, was in such a fury that he looked as if he would like to kill us all. Every few minutes he halted and tried to run back to his hole.

Whenever he did this, the two old ones closed in on him, and urged him on. They went leaping from branch to branch, till we lost sight of them up the old elm-shaded street.

No one went near Squirrie's hole. The old policemen squirrels had left word that no bird was to enter it. The Big Red Squirrel had heard that it was an excellent home for a squirrel and he was going to send down another one of the clan, and, sure enough, late in the afternoon, didn't the beloved Chickari with a brand-new mate come loping down the street.

The birds all gathered round him, to hear news of Squirrie. "Was he dead?"

"No," he said, he had been let out on parole. He was to keep near the Big Red Squirrel's own private wood on a gentleman's estate, and if he did one single bad thing he was to be killed.

"How did he look when he was brought up before the squirrel court?" asked Chummy.

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"Very saucy at first," said Chickari, "and made faces, but—"

"Well, what happened?" asked Chummy.

"I don't like to tell you," said Chickari, looking about at the young sparrows listening with their beaks open.

"Go on," said Chummy sternly. "These are rebellious times. It won't hurt these young fellows to learn how bad birds and beasts are dealt with."

"The policemen laid his shoulder open with their teeth," said Chickari unwillingly, "but a little blood-letting is cooling, and it stopped his mischief and made him beg humbly for pardon."

"Well," said Chummy, speaking for us all, "we hope he may become a better squirrel, but we also hope that his squirrelship, the judge of all the clan, will never send that bad creature down here again."

"He'll never come here while I live," said Chickari gayly, "for I told the Big Red Squirrel that I just loved this neighborhood and would bring up my young ones so carefully that if they dared to suck a bird's egg or kill a young one I'd bite their ears off."

Chickari's face as he said this was so ferocious, and at the same time so comical, that we all burst out laughing at him.

Our laughter was checked by pitiful squeals from our house, four doors down, and we all stared that way.

Our Billie was running down the sidewalk with something dark and hairy on her back. Like a yellow and white streak she raced in by the boarding house, which was set back from the street, and dashed into a little shrubbery behind it.

I flew after her as well as I could in my tailless condition. Some persons do not know that even the loss of one feather makes a difference in a bird's flight.

The shrubs had scratched the monkey off and, jabbering excitedly at Billie, she stood threatening her, till seeing Black Thomas coming, she ran nimbly down the street to our house.

Black Thomas was mewing angrily at Billie, "And what are you doing in my yard—haven't you one of your own?"

"Oh, let me alone, cat," said Billie wearily. "I'm only resting a bit. I'm dead tired."

Black Thomas snarled a trifle; then, seeing

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her friend the cook at the back door, he went to her.

"Too much monkey, eh, Billie?" I said.

She just burst into dog talk. "I'm nearly crazy, Dicky-Dick. I don't know what I'll do. Every minute that thing persecutes me. She sleeps in my box with me and kicks me to death. She is always creeping up to me and putting her arm round me, and it tickles me—and I'm tired of giving her rides. I'm not a pony. I'm a dog. I hate any one to love me so hard. I wish she'd hate me."

"She's cold, Billie, and she is lonely."

"She's got a little coat. Mrs. Martin made her one. She won't keep it on. She tries to put it on me."

By this time I was sitting on a low branch just above Billie's head. "Be patient, dear dog friend. In amusing the monkey, you are helping our Missie."

"And she's so bad," said Billie, "she's stolen all the cake for to-night's knitting party. She got into the sideboard after lunch and Missie doesn't know it, and I caught her yesterday in the basement fussing with the box that the electric light man goes to. I don't believe any of

the lights will go on to-night. The front door bell hasn't rung all day, and no one knows but me that it's the monkey that put it out of order."

"It's too bad," I said, "and beside all this wickedness on her part, she's keeping me a prisoner in the bird-room. I managed to fly out this morning when our Mary had the door open, but I don't know when I'll get back. I just had to come out to get news of Squirrie."

Billie, while listening to me, was staring gloomily about the shrubbery. Suddenly she got up and nosed something lying on the ground. "What's this, Dicky-Dick?" she asked.

"Betsy, a rag doll belonging to Beatrice."

"I wonder if it would be any harm to take it?" she said wistfully.

"I don't think so. I saw Beatrice throw it there the other day, and she said she was tired of playing with it."

"I might take it for the monkey," said Billie, with such a funny face that I burst out laughing at her.

With a roll of her eyes at me, she seized it in her mouth and went trotting home with it.

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I flew along with her. I had to get back into the bird-room, for I did not dare to stay downstairs while that bad monkey was about.

Now, as we reached the house a very strange thing happened. It seems that Mrs. Martin had not understood my going back to the bird-room. She thought that I might be seeking a little playmate there, being disappointed that she had not got me one.

Wishing to keep me downstairs, she had hurriedly gone next door and bought the little lonely canary Daisy from the lodging house lady.

There she was, our dear Missie, walking along with the cage in her hand, and at first, forgetting about the monkey, I was overjoyed.

I flew right to her. "Daisy! Daisy!" I cried in delight, as I stared down at the pretty little creature inside the cage who was tremblingly looking up at me. She knew me, but she was frightened of the street and the noises.

"Why, Dicky, you are talking!" exclaimed Mrs. Martin. "Say that again, my pretty one."

"Oh, Daisy! Daisy!" I sang. "Daisy! Daisy! Daisy—y—y!"

Billie dropped her doll and stared at me. Now she believed that canaries can talk. Presently she barked warningly. Nella was running out of the house.

"Take care, take care," she called; "Nella will hurt your Daisy."

I was in despair. I clung to the top of the cage as Mrs. Martin carried it in the house and gave my fright cry, "Mary, Mary, I'm scary, scary," and our Mary at once came hurrying downstairs.

"Mother," she said, "there's something the matter with Dicky-Dick. I wonder whether he got a shock when the squirrel pulled his tail out?"

Mrs. Martin had put Daisy's cage on a table in the library which was close to the front door, and they gazed first at me as I sat crying on the top of it, and then at Billie, who was laying her doll at Nella's feet.

Nella took it up, looked it over, then gave it a toss in the corner.

Billie gazed despairingly at her. Nella would rather play with dogs than dolls.

"There's something the matter with Billie, too," said Mrs. Martin. "I suppose of course

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it's the monkey. Billie, dear, you don't like Nella."

"Oh, no, no, no!" barked Billie. "I don't like her. I hate her."

"I thought so," said Mrs. Martin. "Now talk to me some more about her. She teases you, doesn't she?"

"Oh, wow, wow, wow!" sobbed Billie; "she worries my life out of me."

Mrs. Martin turned to me, "And you, Dicky-Dick, friend of Billie, you don't like Nella."

"I'm scary, scary," I sang, "and Daisy is scary, scary."

"I don't know much about monkeys," said Mrs. Martin, "but this one seemed very gentle and kind to me, and her owner said she was used to birds and dogs. Come here, Nella."

The monkey jumped on her lap and began fingering the buttons on her dress.

"Let me hear your side of the story," said Mrs. Martin. "Do you like this dog and bird?"

Nella began a long story, jabbered out in such a funny way. Billie and I understood it, but Mrs. Martin got only an inkling of it. Nella told of her life in a forest, when she was

a baby monkey, and how cruel men snatched her away from her parents, and she would now like some monkey society. She did not care much for dogs, but had to play with Billie because there was no animal of her own kind to amuse her.

When she finished, Mrs. Martin and our Mary looked at each other. They had got the drift of it.

"Down at Riverdale," said Mrs. Martin, "is a fine monkey house, with little healthy animals just like yourself. They have a good time playing in big rooms which are well warmed, then they run out a small door to a yard and romp in the snow. When they get cold, they hurry inside, and sprawl flat on the radiators. I will send you there, and I think you will be happier with your own kind."

Nella's face beamed, then she did such a pretty thing. Blinking her queer yellowish eyes affectionately at Mrs. Martin, she threw her two skinny arms round her arm and hugged it. She was very happy to go to the monkey house.

"Mary, please telephone for a taxi," said

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Missie, while Billie and I exchanged a look of deep content.

Then Daisy was taken up into a vacant room in the attic, and I was shut in a big cage with her until the monkey went away. After that, Mrs. Martin said we should both go downstairs.

CHAPTER XX

SISTER SUSIE

AS time went by, Sammy-Sam and Lucy-Loo became great friends with the children in the boarding house. Sometimes they quarreled, but always they made up, and we birds all noticed that the strange children were becoming almost as good to us as our own dear children were.

One day when it was warm and pleasant Sammy-Sam sat out on the doorstep trying to learn his spelling lesson for the next morning.

He didn't look very pleasant about it, and he was not helped by having his arm round a neighbor's dog who looked exactly like Billie and who had come to call on her.

Billie was out, and Sammy-Sam was amusing Patsy when Freddie came running out of the boarding house.

"Listen, Sammy," he said, "to some poetry

I've been making about the sparrow who lives in the hole in the wall."

Sammy-Sam, glad of an excuse to throw down his book, said, "Go ahead."

Freddie began to read very proudly,

"There was a little bird that lived in a hole
Not much bigger than an ordinary bowl,
And when it was tired of sitting on its nest
It would flutter, flutter out and have a little rest.
Now I must end my pretty little song,
You can't be bored, for it isn't very long."

"Fine!" said Sammy-Sam, clapping his hands, while I glanced at Chummy, who was sitting listening to it with a very happy sparrow face.

"Good boy," said Chummy, in a bird whisper. Then he said briskly, "But I have no time to listen to soft words, for I must help Jennie with the nest-building."

Jennie came along at this minute, such a pretty, dusky, smart little sparrow and very businesslike. She gave Chummy a reproachful glance, as she flew by with her beak full of tiny lengths of white soft twine that she had found outside the flying cage on our roof. She thought we were wasting time.

"And I will go and help with my nest in the big new cage on the sitting-room wall," I said. "Daisy is turning out to be a fine nest builder. I can't coax her away from it."

The windows were all open to the lovely warm air, so I could make a bee-line for my nest. Oh, what a comfort little Daisy was, and is, to me! She is the sweetest, most companionable, gentle little canary I ever saw, and she never makes fun of me as the bird-room canaries do. She thinks whatever I do is just perfect, and she never grumbles if I go to have a little fly outside and am late coming home.

"How are you getting on, dearie, dearie?" I sang, as I found her working away at a heap of nest lining that Mrs. Martin had given us.

"Nicely, nicely," she said, in her funny, husky little voice. She has been allowed to hang near a cold window in winter, and it has hurt her throat. In summer, she was nearly baked by being kept all the time in the sun, and I tell her she must be a very tough little canary, or she would have been dead before this.

"If you would just whistle a pretty little tune to me, Dicky-Dick," she said, "while I work, and not interfere; I know just how these tiny,

soft bits of cotton go. I must throw out that red stuff; I don't like bright colors for any nest of mine."

"Mrs. Martin never put that in," I said. "It must have been the children. You might put it in the middle of the nest where no strange bird would see it."

"And suppose it is hot, and I sweat," she said, "and get the young ones all damp?"

"I don't think you will perspire, Daisy," I said. "You are such a cool little bird. I will sing you 'By a Nice Stream of Water a Canary Bird Sat.'"

"Thank you," she said, and I, perching on the top of the cage, was beginning one of my best strains, with fine long notes in it, when I heard a well-known footstep in the hall.

It was Mr. Martin coming home in the middle of the morning. What could be the matter with him?

His wife came hurrying out of the bedroom. "Henry, are you ill?"

"No," he said wearily, passing his hand over his forehead, "but I saw this in the street, and bought it for you," and he handed her a cardboard box.

Missie opened it, and in the box sat a dear little ring-dove, of a pale, dull, creamy color, and with a black half ring round the nape of the neck.

"Oh, Henry," she said, "where did you get it?"

"From a man in the street. He had two to sell and one was dying. I took it into a drug store and had it put out of its misery and brought this one home to you."

"You gentle thing!" said Missie, and, lifting the little creature out of the box, she set hemp seed and water before it.

The dove ate and drank greedily, then finding a place in the sun on the table, flew to it and began cleaning her feathers.

"She is used to strangers," said Mr. Martin. "She has no fear of us."

"Henry, you were glad of an excuse to come home," said Mrs. Martin. "You are tired."

"A trifle," he said.

"Have you been losing money?" asked his wife.

"A trifle," he said again, and this time he smiled.

"These hard times, I suppose," she said, "and worry."

He nodded.

"Mary!" she called. "Mary, come here, dear."

Our Mary came out of her mother's bedroom with a handful of letters in her hand.

"Tell your father our little secret," said her mother. "This is a time he wants cheering."

"I'm earning money," said our Mary sweetly and with such a happy face.

Mr. Martin's face lighted up. He was very, very fond of his only child, but we all knew that he was sorry she could not do things that other girls did. "You do not need to do that, child," he said.

"Out of my birds," she said with a gay laugh, "those birds that you so kindly provide for, but which I know are a great expense to you in these hard times."

"Oh, do hurry and tell him, child," said Mrs. Martin, who was often, in spite of her age and size, just like a girl herself. "Henry, she is earning forty dollars a week by her bird study articles. You know that many people are try-

ing to understand the hidden life of birds and beasts, and Mary is on the track of some wonderful discoveries."

"Aided a good deal by her mother," said Mary. "It is really a partnership affair, my father, but I want you to know, because I have thought that perhaps you thought and perhaps our friends thought I ought to give up my birds since times are bearing so heavily on us."

"But," said Mrs. Martin triumphantly, "instead of being a burden, the child is earning money, and she is also doing something patriotic in starting a new breed of canary."

"Indeed," said Mr. Martin, "and what is that breed?"

"The Canadian canary, father," said our Mary; "you know there has been a canary for nearly every nation, including the American, but no distinctive Canadian bird, so by cross-breeding I am trying to start one."

"Good! Splendid!" cried Mr. Martin, deeply gratified. "I should like to have my young daughter's name linked with some original work."

"'Martin's Canadian Canary' is already beginning to be known," said Mrs. Martin. "It

is not a bird to be kept in tiny cages. It is for aviaries or large cages, and it is trained to fly freely in and out of its home. Canaries in the past have not had enough liberty—but, my dearest husband, have you put the new bird in your pocket?”

The dove had vanished—that is, to human eyes, and Daisy and I laughed, not in our sleeves but in our wings, for a while, before we enlightened them.

Dovey was tired and had stepped into one of the numerous knitting bags with which the house was adorned, for Mrs. Martin, so active and running all over the house, kept a bag with knitting in it in each room.

The bag seemed like a nest to dovey, and she had gone to sleep.

The Martins looked all over the room for her, and in the bedroom, but did not find her till I perched on the bag and began to sing.

How they laughed! “I’m going to call this dove Sister Susie,” said Mrs. Martin, “for I see she is going to do good work for soldiers.”

“Well,” said Mr. Martin, “I must go back to town. I feel like a different man. Somehow

or other, this news about Mary has cheered me immensely."

"Forty dollars a week, forty a week," said Mrs. Martin, "and we wish no more money for the bird-room."

"It isn't the money altogether," said Mr. Martin.

"Oh, I know, I know," said Mrs. Martin, with a playful tap on his arm. "I understand you, Henry, and that is the best thing in the world—to be understood and sympathized with. Don't work too hard and come home early, and we will do some digging in our garden."

CHAPTER XXI

MORE ABOUT SISTER SUSIE

HE kissed her and our Mary and hurried away. We turned our attention to Sister Susie, who, refreshed by her nap, was cooing and bowing very prettily to Mrs. Martin.

Such tricks as she played later on, on our good Missie! One day, when Mrs. Martin was presiding at a Red Cross meeting and begging ladies to give more money for wounded soldiers, she was first amazed, then overcome with laughter, to hear "Coo, oo-ooo—" coming from the knitting bag that she had brought in and put on the table before her.

Sister Susie thought all knitting bags were nests, and went into them and often laid eggs there. Mrs. Martin was trying to get a mate for her, but had not yet succeeded, so Daisy and I had her eggs boiled, and found them very good eating.

Sister Susie collected lots of money for the soldiers. When she cooed, that day at the meeting, Mrs. Martin lifted her out and put her beside the money box. She bowed and murmured so gently and coaxingly beside it that she charmed the money right out of the ladies' pockets. That gave Missie the idea of taking her to the meetings, and finally she had a little box made in the shape of a dove, and Susie would stand beside it, and peck it, and coo, and ladies would fill it with money.

"Does Susie think it is a dove?" Billie asked me one day.

"Oh, no, she knows what it is; but doves like fun, as well as other birds, and it amuses her to beat it. One day she played a fine trick on Missie. She stepped in a knitting bag and went to sleep and Missie put it on her arm and went downtown. She noticed that the girl in a department store, who waited on her, looked queerly at her bag, and bye and bye she asked Missie if she was not afraid her pet would fly away.

"Mrs. Martin looked round, and there was Sister Susie with her head sticking out of the hole in her Red Cross bag.

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"She took her out and set her on the palm of her hand. 'You won't leave me, will you, Susie?' she said. 'You want to stay with me, don't you?'"

"You see, she always had to ask questions that Susie could say 'Yes' to, for the bird did not know how to say 'No.'

"'Coo-ooo, oo,' said Susie, a great many times and bowing very low and very politely.

"The girl was so delighted that she squealed with laughter, and other girls came to see what was amusing her. Mrs. Martin went on talking and Susie cooed so sweetly that there was soon a crowd round them.

"Missie asked her if she liked the store, and if she thought the people who came shopping could not afford to do a little more for Red Cross work.

"Susie was charmed to receive so much attention and the enthusiasm of the shoppers was so great that a manager came out of an office to see what the excitement was about. He asked if Missie would sell her bird for him to put in a cage to please the shoppers.

"Missie wheeled round to a woman who was

carrying a baby and asked her if she would sell it.

“‘Not for a thousand dollars,’ she said. ‘My baby loves me.’

“‘And my bird loves me,’ said Mrs. Martin, ‘and I would not sell her for a thousand dollars, though I thank you, Mr. Manager, for your offer.’

“‘What theater do you exhibit her in?’ asked one of the women.

“That gave Missie a chance to tell them that she was not a bird-trainer. She was just a friend to birds and allowed them to develop along their own lines.

“The woman said that her husband had once been in the business and had exhibited trained dogs and horses, but she had made him give it up, when she discovered that his animals were all dull and dispirited, and that he educated them by means of sharp nails between his fingers that he pressed into them when he was pretending to stroke them.

“‘I caught him one day pulling out the teeth of a pony,’ she said, ‘because the pony bit him, and I tell you I gave him a tongue-lashing—and I threw out a can of paint that he used to

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cover the sores on his animals' backs. "Let the public see the sores, me man," I said, "and it's good-bye to me if you don't give up every one of those poor creatures. If I'd known you were in such a dirty business I'd never have married you." So he said he'd keep me, being as I was the choicest and trickiest animal he had, and the best kicker, and I bet you I soon sent that lot of animals flying to good homes in the country, and I got him a position as policeman, going to His Worship the Mayor me own self an' tellin' a straight story to him that I said is the father of the city.'

"Susie liked this woman and made a great many direct bows to her which pleased her very much.

"'God bless the little angel-faced creetur,' she said. 'She reminds me of me own mother in glory—well, good-bye to ye, me lady, an' good luck to the bird. I must hurry home an' make a toothsome dish for me old man's dinner, for it's bound to please him, I am, since he gave up his beasts to please me.'

"When she left, the floor-walker gently urged the other women to pass on and let Mrs. Martin finish her shopping, so she put Sister Susie

in the bag she so loved to travel in and went on with her purchases."

"Some animals have a dreadful time when they travel," said Billie. "When Missie brought me from New York I heard some cattle talking on the train. One handsome black and white mother cow was saying, 'My blood runs like poison in my veins, for I have been three days without food or water. If human beings wanted to kill me, why did they not do it away back in Chicago, where I was taken from my baby calf? I pity the human being that eats me! Another bad, black cow said, 'My tongue is dry and I have lost so much blood by getting bruised and torn in this crowded cattle car that I hope the persons who eat me will die.'"

"If human beings could listen to animals talking," I said, "they would get some hints."

"Mrs. Martin understands," said Billie. "She told me that when our train was standing in the station in Albany the waiter in the dining car brought her two mutton chops. Just as she was going to eat them she looked out the car window, and there out on the platform in a

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crate were two sheep. Fancy, Dicky-Dick—two sheep from a western plain in a case half boarded up in a rushing railway station. Mrs. Martin says they looked at her with their suffering eyes. They never stirred—just showed their agony by their glances, and she pushed away her plate and said to the waiter, 'Oh, take it away.' ”

“Dear Missie,” said Billie affectionately, “she hates to see anything suffer. She saw a poor old horse fall down here in the street today, and she went out and gave the owner money enough to take him to the Rest Home for horses.”

“What is that?” I said curiously. “I have not heard about it.”

“I heard the milkman’s horse talking to the grocer’s horse about it two days ago,” said Billie. “It has just been started, and it is a big farm outside the city. The milkman’s horse said to the other horse, ‘You ought to go out there, Tom. Your hoofs are in bad shape, and that moist land down by the creek on the Rest Farm would set you up again finely. Then you could lie down in the shade of the tall trees,

and if you were not able to go out at all they would put you in one of the nice clean barns."

"Will they take tired dogs and birds out there?" I asked.

"They will take anything," replied Billie. "Back of the brick farm house is a long, low building which is a dog's boarding house. Any one going away in summer can put a pet animal there and know that it will have a good time roaming over the farm with the men."

"Cats have a dreadful time," I said, "when their owners go away and leave them."

Billie began to laugh, and I said in surprise, "My friend, have you turned heartless about cats?"

"No, no," said Billie, "but just listen to what Sammy-Sam is saying, as he walks up and down here under the trees."

I looked at our handsome little lad, as he paced to and fro, a book by a well-known animal lover in his hand. Missie, before she went out this afternoon, had promised him a quarter if he would learn a nice poem for her before she came home, and this is what he chose, and it fitted in so well with what I had been saying that it had made Billie laugh:

"THE WAIL OF THE CAT"

"My master's off to seek the wood,
My lady's on the ocean,
The cook and butler fled last night,
But where, I've not a notion.
The tutor and the boys have skipped,
I don't know where to find them:
But tell me, do they never think
Of the cat they've left behind them?"

"I haven't any place to sleep,
I haven't any dinner.
The milkman never comes my way;
I'm growing daily thinner.
The butcher and the baker pass,
There's no one to remind them:
O tell me, do they never think
Of the cat they've left behind them?"

"The dog next door has hidden bones,
They're buried in the 'arey';
The parrot's boarding at the zoo,
And so is the canary.
The neighbors scatter, free from care,
There's nothing here to bind them:
I wonder if they never think
Of the cat they've left behind them?"

CHAPTER XXII

A TALKING DOG

OUR Mary, on account of her lameness, has a little bedroom downstairs, just back of the dining room. Her mother does not worry about her being down there alone, for Billie always sleeps beside her bed in a box, and if any strange step is heard in the hall, or outside the open window, she gives her queer half bark, half scream, and rouses the family.

Our Mary used to have a young dog of her own to sleep beside her, a mongrel spaniel, but to her great grief some one stole the dog a year ago, and she has never known what became of it.

One day when I was talking to Billie about sleeping downstairs she told me that she would far rather be upstairs with Mrs. Martin, but at the same time she is very glad to do something to oblige our Mary, whom everybody loves.

"If any stranger dares to come near her room at night," said Billie, "I'll scream my head off. I hate night prowlers. They're after no good. The Italians always locked up at nine o'clock and said that any one not in bed then was a thief."

"But, Billie," I said, "that is rather severe. Many nice persons are out after nine."

"Well, I'll bark at them," she said stubbornly, "and if they're honest it won't hurt them, and if they're rogues they'll be caught."

Poor Billie—on the night our Mary had her adventure with what she thought was a prowler she was in a dogs' hospital. They had been having lobster à la Newburg at the boarding house, and the remains in the trash can were too attractive for Billie, and she had to go away to be dosed. How she reproached herself afterward, and vowed she would never go near a trash can again!

It had been a very dark afternoon, and was a very black night. A thunderstorm was brooding over the city, and our Mary, though not at all nervous, for she is a very brave girl, had said to please her mother that she would sleep upstairs.

"I will undress down in my own room, though," she said, "then put on my dressing-gown and come up."

About ten o'clock she was just going to turn out the electric light when she heard something moving softly on the veranda outside her window. Turning out the light, she picked up a good-sized bell she kept on the table at the head of her bed and approached the window.

"Are you a tramp?" she said cautiously.

There was a kind of groan in reply to this, but no one spoke.

"I want you to go away," she said sternly, "or I shall ring this bell and my father will come down and turn you away pretty quickly. Do you hear?"

The thing groaned again, and she heard a beseeching murmur, "Jus' a crumb—jus' a crumb."

"A crumb!" she said indignantly. "I suppose you have been drinking too much. Go away, you scamp."

The thing gave a kind of flop and she saw two red eyes gleaming at her. Dropping the bell, she fled from the room, calling wildly, "Daddy! Daddy!"

Mr. Martin, who was just undressing, came leaping down the stairs like a boy. "What is it—where is it?" he cried.

"Out on the veranda—right in the corner by the table. Oh, Daddy, it has such a dreadful voice!"

Mr. Martin snatched a big walking stick from the hat-stand in the hall and rushed into the bedroom. There was nothing there, so he jumped through the window to the veranda. Nothing there, either, but at this moment there was such a heavy peal of thunder that he sprang in again and locked the window behind him.

"We are going to have a deluge," he said. "The tramp must have taken himself off. I see nothing of him."

"He couldn't have got into the house, could he?" said Mrs. Martin, who by this time had appeared and had her arm round Mary.

"No, no—Mary stood in the hall till I came. He could not have passed her, and he is not in the room."

He looked about him as he spoke. The room was in perfect order except the bed, which was tumbled and tossed.

Our Mary suddenly gave a scream. "The

bed—I never touched it! He is in it—there's a lump there. Father, take care."

"Go to the hall," said Mr. Martin, "you two—leave me to deal with him."

Mrs. Martin drew back her arm from Mary and pushed her out into the hall, then she went to stand by her husband. She would not leave him alone.

I heard every detail of this adventure a few minutes later, in the sitting room, and I was quite thrilled at this part where Mrs. Martin stood pushing her child out into the hall with one hand and extending the other to her husband.

He was afraid she would get hurt and, hurrying to her, was about to urge her to go upstairs when more thunder and lightning came.

The crashing and flashing were so dreadful that they made Daisy nestle anxiously against me in our cage. We had been awake for some time, listening to the unusual and strange sounds below.

All at once we heard Mr. Martin cry out, "Mary—run—he's coming!"

Every light in the house had gone out. The lightning had struck the power house down-

town, but we could hear our Mary tearing upstairs faster than she had ever come before. The lameness was not in her feet, which were quite well shaped and pretty, but in her hips. The doctor said afterward that the sudden fright was bad for her nerves but an excellent thing for her hips, for her lameness has been ever so much better since. Well, Daisy and I heard her rushing upstairs, darting into the sitting room and flinging herself on a sofa there.

She knew just where everything was, though the room was pitch dark. "Oh, mother," she cried, "oh, father—what a coward I am! Why didn't I stay?"

Then we heard her mother's clear voice, "Mary, Mary, my child—are you all right?"

"Yes, yes, Mummy dear," she cried; "but, oh, do come up! Where is Daddy?"

"Down in the cellar after the tramp. He flew by us to the kitchen. Hester had forgotten and left the cellar door open. Shut and lock the door of the room you are in. I will be right up."

Our poor Mary did as she was bid, and as we heard afterward, Mrs. Martin followed her husband to the cellar. As the tramp had not

shown fight, they were not afraid of him, and they said afterward they knew he must be a slight, frail creature, perhaps only a boy, for he dashed by so quickly and smoothly, and bent over as if he were on all fours.

Well, by the time they got a lantern and went down into their big, old-fashioned cellar, Mr. Tramp was nowhere to be seen. There is a great deal of stuff in our cellar. I went down there one day on our Mary's shoulder. There are trunks and boxes, and plants and barrels, and old furniture, and shelves of china, and a storeroom and coal rooms, and a furnace room, and a lot of other things—a very paradise of hiding places.

No lights would go on yet, so the two Martins poked about with their lantern, passing several times a heap of bearskin rugs that the furnace man had thrown in a corner to shake in the morning.

"Could he be there?" said Mrs. Martin, at last.

"There's no other place," said Mr. Martin, and he prodded the rugs with his stick. "Come out, you—we won't hurt you."

They heard a touching groan, then "Jus' a

crumb—jus' a crumb," in a voice that Mrs. Martin said afterward was hoarse and broken like that of an old man who has been drinking too much all his life.

"Get up, you beggar," said Mr. Martin, for he was pretty tired and excited by this time. "If you don't come out, you'll get a walloping."

At this and his persistent prodding there crawled from under the rugs, not a battered old man nor a slender boy, but a good-sized mongrel spaniel dog.

Mrs. Martin says that she and her husband literally staggered against the wall. Dog-lovers as they were, they had never heard of such a thing as a dog talking.

Then, when they got over their surprise there was such a shouting. By this time, Hester and Anna were aroused and were running round the top of the house calling out to know what was the matter.

Our Mary unlocked the sitting room door and cried out to them to come down to her, and then Mr. and Mrs. Martin appeared leading between them this big black spaniel.

He was terribly cowed and frightened, but when they held up the lantern and he saw our

Mary, he gave a leap at her and buried his head in her lap.

"Why, it's my Niger," she screamed, "my darling Niger that was stolen when he was a puppy! Oh, oh, Niger, Niger!"

I never saw anything more affecting. Our Mary was so unstrung that she cried, and her parents stood looking at her with glistening eyes.

"And he's been in good hands," she said at last, when she got calm. "See how glossy his hair is, mother dear, and he smells of some exquisite perfume. My darling doggie, where have you been?"

I touched Daisy with my beak. All this would have been hard on Billie if she had been here, for she is of a very jealous nature.

Niger was fagged out. He lay panting and rolling his bright eyes from one to another of the little group. He had evidently run far to get home.

"This is one of the most interesting dog cases I have ever heard of," said Mrs. Martin. "Just examine that collar under his black curls, and see if there is a name on it."

Mr. Martin held the lantern up so our Mary could see. "The collar is very handsome," she said, "studded with some red stones—'Mrs. Ringworth, Hillcrest,' is on it."

"Good gracious!" exclaimed Mrs. Martin. "Third Cousin Annie!"

Everybody laughed at her comical tone. "Now we'll have some fun getting the dog away from her," said Mrs. Martin. "Annie never was known to give up anything that ever belonged to her."

"And the amazing thing about his talking would appeal to her," said Mr. Martin gloomily; "she does love to be singular."

"Why, I remember having her tell me about this dog," our Missie went on. "Just a year ago I met her downtown and she told me she had just bought a young dog from a man in the street and she had become so fond of him that she was going to take him to California with her—and I told her we had just had a puppy stolen from us. Fancy Niger being both dogs," and she began to laugh so heartily that her husband and daughter and the maids joined her, and Niger, feeling that he ought to do some-

thing, rumbled out, "Jus' a crumb, jus' a crumb—crumb—crumb!"

"Bless him, he's hungry," said Mr. Martin, and he turned to his wife. "Couldn't Hester make us some of her nice coffee—I declare I'm thirsty and hungry myself, after all that prancing about our dusty cellar."

Mrs. Martin pretended to be vexed, and drew herself up proudly. "My cellar is as clean as any housekeeper's in this neighborhood."

"Yes, yes, my dear," laughed Mr. Martin; "I wasn't censuring. Where there is a furnace there is dust. But the coffee—"

Hester and Anna had already disappeared, and soon they came back with the coffee and some lovely fresh doughnuts and bread and butter. Daisy and I had just a tiny scrap of doughnut, but Niger ate half a dozen.

"Mother," said Mary, "I want to go down and sleep in my little bed with Niger in his box beside me, as he used to do. It will seem like old times."

"Very well, my child," said our Missie, and she went downstairs herself, tucked her daughter in bed, and hovered over her like a great

bird, for Niger, who at once became friends with us, told us all about it in the morning.

“Would, oh, would Third Cousin Annie leave Niger with us?” was the question, and “What, oh, what would Billie say to him when she came home?”

CHAPTER XXIII

THIRD COUSIN ANNIE

THIRD COUSIN ANNIE was a very grand person, and very rich, and her limousine drew up before our door in the middle of the next morning.

She flew into the house and greeted Niger most effusively, and Mrs. Martin and our Mary quite calmly.

Niger wagged his tail at her, then looked out the window.

"My darling dog," she cried, "companion of my travels, how I have missed you!"

Niger looked up at Daisy and me and at Sister Susie, who was sitting on the top of our cage, and winked.

"Do you know, Cousin Annie," said our Missie, "that this is the dog that was stolen from us?"

"Not possible," she said.

"Yes, and he ran back last night and got into Mary's bed. First, he was afraid of her—he thought she was scolding him for leaving her; he is very sensitive, you know—then, when she left the room, he got in her bed."

"Only fancy!" exclaimed Third Cousin Annie—"I'm so sorry to take him from you."

"But you're not going to take him," said our Missie firmly.

"But he's my dog. I gave the man ten dollars for him."

"And we, prior to that, gave another man five dollars for him, because Mary had taken a fancy to him."

"I'm sorry," said Mrs. Ringworth, getting up, "but he's my dog, and I'm going to have him. Come home, Blackie!"

I was sitting beside Daisy, who had laid three beautiful eggs, and I trembled nervously, for I hate to see human beings upset. I had never before seen Mrs. Martin angry, and I was sorry to see the red spots in her cheeks. Our Mary said nothing, but just sat patting the dog.

"Of course he is a fool of a dog," said Mrs. Ringworth, "and can do nothing but roll over

and act silly, but I have got used to him and like him."

"Has he never talked to you?" asked our Missie.

"Talked to me—what do you mean?"

"Has he never asked you for a crumb?" said Missie coldly.

Mrs. Ringworth stared at her, as if she thought she were crazy.

"A crumb—how foolish!—but I remember that you Martins are always reading things into dogs. Of course he can't talk."

"Niger," said Mrs. Martin, "can't you say, 'Jus' a crumb?'"

"Tra, la, la, la, la," I sang, "don't you do it, Niger," and Sister Susie cooed, "No—no—no—ooo."

He winked again and said, "Bow, wow, wow," quite roughly.

Mrs. Ringworth got up and burst into a forced laugh. "You are certainly very short-sighted, cousin, to try to add to the value of a thing you wish to retain. Come on, Blackie."

"Don't you do it, doggie, doggie, doggie," I sang, and Daisy peeped, "Stay, stay dog, stay here."

Niger looked out the window and yawned as if he were bored.

"Dog," said Mrs. Ringworth angrily and stamping her foot, "come with me; I command you!"

He got up and, sauntering over to the corner, picked up some crumbs that had fallen from our cage.

"Ungrateful cur," said Mrs. Ringworth, "after all I have done for you—but you've got to go with me. You're my property. I wish I had a string."

Mrs. Martin and Mary sat like two stuffed birds, and did not move even their eyes.

Their cousin pulled a handsome silk scarf off her neck and tied it to the dog's collar. Then she started to pull him—Niger perfectly good natured but bracing his feet.

Suddenly she turned in a passion to our Missie. "Why don't you prevent me? He's your dog, you say."

"I shall not use force, cousin," said Mrs. Martin. "If I thought you were going to be unkind to him, I would, but I know you would never illtreat an animal."

Her tone was quite amiable, though cold, and

her cousin looked as if she did not know what to do. Then she started again, pulling and hauling Niger over the carpet. By the time she reached the hall she was quite out of breath, and meeting Mr. Martin who was coming home early to lunch, she was confounded to hear him burst into a roar of laughter.

Quickly recovering himself, he said, "A thousand pardons, Mrs. Ringworth, but the sight was so—so overcoming. Allow me to pull that dog for you."

"Your wife wants to keep it," said Mrs. Ringworth defiantly.

"Naturally," he said with great good humor. "He's our dog."

"But I bought him," said Mrs. Ringworth persistently.

"And you love the creature," said Mr. Martin, with a merry twinkle in his eye.

"I adore him," said the lady fervently.

"And wish him to be happy," went on Mr. Martin.

"Y—y—yes," she said rather unwillingly, for she began to see the door of the trap he was leading her into.

"Then suppose we leave it to the dog," said Mr. Martin. "We are quite willing to abide by his own choice," and gently taking the scarf from her hands, he slipped it through the dog's collar, and Niger stood free.

"Now, allow me to escort you to your car," said Mr. Martin, "or, better still, go alone, for I would confuse the dog. You call him, and we will say nothing, and see which he prefers."

Third Cousin Annie was nearly choking with wrath, but she was helpless. Looking beyond her, I could see Chummy's amused face, as he sat staring in the hall window. He was greatly interested in all that concerned the Martin family.

"Come here, Blackie, Blackie!" said Mrs. Ringworth, backing toward the staircase.

Niger never budged, but when she kept on he turned his back on her and went to lay his head on our Mary's lap.

Mrs. Ringworth was so furious that she could not speak, and she turned and went quickly down the staircase to her car.

Mr. Martin ran after her and presently came back laughing. "She is all right now. I told

her I could get her a thoroughbred Airedale that a friend of mine wishes to give away, and what do you think she said?"

"One never knows what Third Cousin Annie will say," replied Missie.

Mr. Martin smiled. "She said, 'I am glad to get a thoroughbred; I am tired of curs.'"

I stared at Niger. He didn't care—he was wagging his tail.

"Who is going for Billie?" said our Mary suddenly. "The veterinary has just telephoned that she is ready to come home."

"I will," said Mrs. Martin. "Mary dear, sit with your father while he has his lunch. Come on, Niger, and have a walk."

"Oh! jus' a crumb," growled Niger, "jus' a crumb, jus' a crumb, crumb, crumb!"

They all burst out laughing. "You sly-boots," said Mrs. Martin, "we will stop in the kitchen and pick up a crumb as we go out."

Niger told us afterward, that while he was in California, he had throat trouble, and Mrs. Ringworth had kindly spent a lot of money in having his throat doctored. But, he said, he had a lump there, until the night he ran back to his dear Mary, when in his emotion, something

seemed to break and he was growling out a strange sound he had never made before.

The children on the street nearly went crazy over his accomplishment, and Sammy-Sam used to lead him up and down, making him say "Jus' a crumb," till his throat was sore. He says it hurts him to say it, and he only does it in moments of deep feeling, or to please a friend.

CHAPTER XXIV

BLACK THOMAS CATCHES A BURGLAR

THERE was a great commotion in this neighborhood on the first of April, for then the robins came back.

I never heard such a clatter of talk from any bird as came from Vox Clamanti, the head robin. Instead of contenting himself with saying, "Cheer up cheerily, cheer up cheerily," as the other robins did, he just screamed a great amount of information about where he had spent the winter and what he had been doing, and how the colored people down South had tried to catch him, to make pie, but he was too smart for them.

Finally he got into a quarrel about the Great War. "Of course, you know, birds," he said fussily, "that robins are the most important birds in the world, and the war was all about them. The bad robins in many nations per-

secuted my brothers, the English robins, and would not let them into their countries. Then of course the Englishmen, who love their robins, took up arms and began to fight the bad nations who were persecuting us."

Chummy laughed when he said this, but he was too sensible to argue with him. Black Gorget, Chummy's next best friend after me, was not so wise, and he said, "I suppose you forget that English robins are not any relation to your family."

Vox Clamanti looked thoughtful, then he said, "Well, if not brothers, then cousins. My cousins, the English robins—"

"They're not even cousins," said Bronze-Wing, the head grackle, "and the war is not about robins, but grackles."

Vox Clamanti said very rudely, "You are lying," and then the grackle gave a rough call in his squawky voice, and pulled out one of Vox Clamanti's tail feathers.

One would have thought the grackle had tried to murder him. Such a screeching and yelling ensued that every bird in the neighborhood came to see what the noise was about.

"What's the matter with that robin?" I asked

Chummy, as we sat side by side in our usual meeting place, a branch on the old elm opposite his tall brick house.

"He was very much spoiled by a university professor," said Chummy. "This old man, finding Vox Clamanti a weak and half dead young one, on the campus one day, brought him up by hand and named him Vox Clamanti which means something screechy. He praised the young robin too much, and told him he was the smartest bird in the city, and it made Vox put on airs. When the old professor died, and Vox flew outside, the robins never could down him, and they had to make him their head bird to keep him quiet, but he really has not as much brains as some of the other robins. See now, that fuss is all over, and he is looking about for a nesting site, before his mate Twitchtail comes. That tree that they had for a home last summer has been cut down."

I made no reply, and for some time Chummy and I sat quietly looking down at the street below.

"We've had some nice times on this tree, Chummy, haven't we?" I said.

"Indeed we have," he replied, "and how much we have seen from here."

"Have you heard anything more from Squirrie?" I asked.

He began to chuckle. "Yes, Chickari told me the latest news this morning."

"What is it?" I asked eagerly.

"For a time Squirrie was pretty bad. The only way they could make him behave was to keep watching him. Then the Big Red Squirrel had an idea come in his head. He has a horrid old sister too ugly to mate with anyone. He keeps her up north. He sent for her and gave Squirrie to her. She is very strong and bad-tempered, and she soon cuffed the two policemen squirrels and sent them away. Squirrie hated her at first and begged the Big Red Squirrel to kill him and put him out of his misery, but now Chickari says she is leading him round like a little gentle baby squirrel. He is frightened to death of her, and never dares to rebel. She works him hard and has him even now laying up stores for winter. She says, 'If you don't behave I'll take you further north, where the wind will cut you in two.'"

I laughed heartily. "What a joke on Squir-

rie;" then I said, "Hush, Chummy—what is this little girl saying about our dear Martins?"

We both looked down to the sidewalk where a young girl was trotting along beside her mother.

"Mummy," she said pointing to the Martins' house, "in there lives a woman who raises birds from the dead."

The mother laughed and Chummy said, "Isn't that a joke? Your Missie is getting famous."

"They send for her from all over the city," I said, "for her or for our Mary to go and doctor sick birds. A lady up in that big apartment house telephoned yesterday for Missie to come quickly, for her canary was having dreadful fits. Missie went and looking at the bird said, 'Cut his claws, Mrs. Jones. They are so long that they trip him up and make him fall down on the floor of his cage.'"

Chummy was not listening to me. His eyes were fixed on Black Thomas who was gazing upward, his face as soulful as if he had been doing something to be proud of.

"He's probably been catching an extra number of birds," I said gloomily.

"No, that isn't a bird look," said Chummy. "T-check, t-chack, Thomas, what is the matter with you?"

Thomas strolled to our tree and stretching himself in the sunlight, said proudly, "I caught a burglar last night."

"Ha! ha!" shouted Vox Clamanti who had been listening, "Thomas has reformed. He's going to catch men instead of mice and birds."

All the birds came flying up, Black Gorget and ever so many other sparrows with Sister Susie who had just flown out for an airing. Slow-Boy and Susan, Bronze-Wing, and even Chickari, the good squirrel, and his little mate came running along the branches overhead.

Thomas rolled his eyes at them as they assembled, and when they had calmed down, he began his tale.

"Last night," he said, "when dinner was over, cook and the maids cleaned up in the kitchen and dining-room and went upstairs to their rooms. There was no one in the back of the house but me. I alone saw a strange man come along the lane by the garden, get over the fence, and come up to one of the dining-room windows which had been left open to air the

room. I, all by myself, watched him creep in and hide himself behind the big sideboard in the corner. I said nothing to him, and he said nothing to me, for he did not see me. I had been sleeping beside the radiator, for the night was chilly. At ten o'clock cook came downstairs to lock up. She opened the dining-room door, came in, and put the window down and locked it. I followed her out, and ran to my dear mistress' room.

"She was in bed, but I mewed and fussed till she got up, and said, 'What is the matter with Thomas?'

"I threw my whole hunting soul in my eyes, and turned my head from one side to another, like this—" and he moved his black head about, the way he does when he is stealing through the shrubbery looking for young birds.

"By my wings," said Chummy in my ear, "Thomas is becoming quite a fancy speaker."

Thomas was going on with his story: "I cried lustily and led her toward the dining room, but when she started to go there I got in front of her and acted in a frightened way.

"She understood me. She is a very clever

woman, much cleverer even than your Mrs. Martin, Dicky-Dick."

"She is not," I chirped angrily.

"Hush up," said Chummy, giving me a gentle peck. "Let him finish his tale. Don't you see how wound up he is?"

"My mistress sent cook upstairs," said old Thomas, going on, and keeping an eye on Chummy and me, for he knew we were inclined to make fun of him. "She asked two of the gentlemen to come down. They did so, and now I quite joyfully led the procession to the dining-room, and, on arriving there, I sprang toward the sideboard.

"The burglar ran to the window and smashed through it, but the gentlemen caught him, even as I catch a mouse, and they telephoned for the patrol wagon, and he is now in jail and they will probably hang him."

"Oh, no, Thomas," said Chummy protestingly, "you go too fast. He will likely get only a prison term."

The other birds burst out laughing, but Chickari said, "Good boy, Thomas—you are a public benefactor to catch a burglar! What is

your mistress going to do to reward you?"

"I am to have a silver collar," said Thomas soberly, "which I know I shall hate. Cats should never have collars. They prevent us from going into out-of-the-way places."

"Birds' nests, for example," said Bronze-Wing, in his rough voice. "Have you heard the latest thing about cats, Thomas—I mean the latest plan to keep them from catching birds?"

"No, I haven't," said Thomas shortly.

CHAPTER XXV

THE CHILDREN'S RED CROSS ENTERTAINMENT

WELL," said Bronze-Wing, "you catch pussy and cut the nails of his forefeet.

It doesn't hurt a bit, and when pussy's claws are trimmed he can not climb trees nor hold little birds down while he tears them limb from limb."

"No one shall trim my claws," said Thomas stoutly.

"Wait and see," said Bronze-Wing. "There may be a law to that effect."

"Oh, look, birds," called Black Gorget suddenly, "here come our darlings all dressed up."

Sammy-Sam and Lucy-Loo and Freddie and Beatrice had got to be such dear children that all the birds and the animals in the neighborhood loved them. Just now they were coming down the sidewalk in very amusing costumes. They were going to have a Red Cross enter-

tainment on the big lawn of the boarding house. The day was so fine that the ladies were sitting out in front and the children thought it a good chance to make some money, for, like their elders, they were doing everything in their power to help the work for wounded soldiers.

Sammy-Sam was dressed to represent a dog, Freddie was a pony, Lucy-Loo was a bird, and Beatrice was a cat.

The two boys were going along on all fours. Sammy-Sam had on an old curly black woolen coat of his aunt's, strapped well round his little body, so as to leave his arms and legs free to run on. Freddie wore a ponyskin coat of his mother's.

Beatrice had on a gray costume that she had worn at a children's party when she represented a cat, and Lucy-Loo was dressed in bright blue, and had a very perky little tail.

Beatrice, who usually took command of their play, marshaled them all in a row at the back of the lawn, then she stepped forward, adjusted the cat head mask she wore, which was always slipping on one side, so that the eye holes came over one ear.

"Ladies and gentlemen," she began, in her

clear young voice, "no, I mean just ladies, you are always so kind about helping us with your money that when we saw you sitting out here we thought we would give our new entertainment. This is really truly brand new. We made up the verses ourselves. I did most of them, 'cause the boys aren't much good at poetry. Costumes are new, too, 'cept mine. I will begin with my 'Song of a Cat.' "

Then she made a pretty little bow, gave her long tail a throw, and began :

"THOMAS, THE NOBLE CAT" —

"One night, not very long ago,
Dear Thomas wandered to and fro.
He saw a man come in his house,
Creeping as quiet as any mouse.

"Said Thomas cat unto himself,
'This man is after wicked pelf;
Mayhap he'll creep right up the stair,
And steal the jewels of ladies fair.'

"He hied him to his mistress dear,
He told to her his fearful fear.
She called some bold men from upstairs,
And Tom was cured of all his cares.

"They chased that burglar man as he
Smashed through the window mightily;
Policemen came; they seized him well,
And now he droops within a cell!"

The ladies were delighted with her tale of Black Thomas, and when she finished they clapped their hands and bowed and smiled, and we birds chirped and whistled to each other, and sat with our heads on one side, looking very knowing, for we had been among the first to hear of this story.

To the great amusement but not to the surprise of the ladies, Beatrice promptly took up a collection in a knitting bag that could have held a thousand dollars.

When she retired to the back of the lawn, Sammy-Sam came tumbling forward on hands and feet and, starting to bow politely, lost his dog mask, which Beatrice quickly clapped on again.

"Bow, wow, ladies," he said,

"I am a little doggie dog.

There's only one person in the world for me,
And that's my master or mistress, whichever it happens to be.

For her or for him I'll lay down my life;
Who says I am not a soldier dog? Bow, wow!"

We birds did not think his poetry as good as Beatrice's, but the ladies greeted him with just as much applause, and he took up a collection in Beatrice's bag, first pouring out its contents on the grass, so that he could compare his receipts with hers.

"Bow, wow, too many coppers, ladies!" he barked. "Silver, please, for me," and he started round the half circle, the bag in his mouth, hopping from one to another, and then retiring to the background where he and the lamb counted the money and wagged their heads as if well pleased with what they had got.

Beatrice stepped to the edge of the lawn. "Ladies," she said, "the next number on our programme is 'The Song of a Birdie,' written and recited by Miss Lucy-Loo Claxton."

Amid much hand-clapping, Lucy-Loo stepped shyly forward. She was dressed all in blue, and she tried to give her perky little tail a flirt, but was too nervous to do more than shake it feebly, causing both boys to break into a roar of laughter, which Beatrice promptly checked. Then Lucy-Loo began—

"Dear Friends,

I am a little birdie,

And I don't know what kind of a bird I am.

I am just a bird.

I have a pretty head and bright eyes to see you.

I have a pair of wings that I like for myself.

For I love to fly up toward the blue sky;

Please don't take my wings and put them in your
hat.

And in summer don't let little boys shoot me.

"Yours truly,

"A LITTLE BIRD."

The ladies were so warm in praising her that she quite lost her little bird head and announced that her collection would be neither coppers nor silver, but paper money.

Her hearers were convulsed with laughter, and gave her what she asked for, though I noticed that they had to do some borrowing from each other, not having foreseen an appeal for money on their own veranda, though Red Cross workers are everywhere now.

Freddie came last with his ditty about the pony. He looked very smooth and very innocent with his good young eyes shining out of a headpiece of black hairy skin, which made him perspire quite freely.

He rose on his little hoofs and recited very earnestly:

"Pony, pony is my name,
Pony is my nature.
Do not whip me up the hill,
Do not hurry me down the road.
Give me food and water plenty,
Brush me well and give me a good bed.
Don't jerk my tender mouth when you drive me.
Don't beat me when you're angry.
Love me a little if you can,
For I—love—you."

CHAPTER XXVI

THE BEGINNING OF MY FAMILY CARES

WHEN he said, "I—love—you," he rose still higher on his hoofs, blew the ladies a kiss with one of his forefeet, and spoke in such a tender kind of a voice that they just shrieked with laughter. Then he lost his head more than Sammy-Sam had, and, gamboling on the green, announced that he wished not money but souvenirs.

After a while he controlled himself and went soberly from one to another and had pinned on his pony coat neckties, a bangle, a ring or two, some purses and one lady put round one of his forefeet a handsome string of beads which she took from her own neck.

The children bowed, kissed their hands, then trooped down the street to tell our Mary, who had helped them dress, of the success of their entertainment

Chummy gazed affectionately after them.

"Good children," he said. "We sparrows love them."

"Let's fly down to our house and hear what they say," I proposed to him.

"Hurrah!" said Chummy. "Of course I'll go to see the most beautiful birds on the street—the Martins'."

Deeply pleased, I gave him an affectionate tap with my bill, and we flew to the upper veranda railing, where Mrs. Martin was just bringing out Billie and Niger to the sunshine.

She had been bathing them, and she handed our Mary a towel, and asked her to finish drying their ears, for her back was most broken from bending over the dogs' bath tub.

"Oh, Mary! Mary!" called the children, and they all burst on the veranda and exhibited their collections.

"Look at Billy," I whispered to Chummy.

She was pressing close to Niger and was licking his sides dry before she touched her own.

"And we were afraid she would be jealous of Niger," said Chummy. "She is a pretty good dog, after all."

"We are all good," I said happily, and,

strange to say, just at that moment Missie turned to Chummy.

"Sparrow bird," she said, for she did not know my name of Chummy for him, "sparrow bird, I am perfectly delighted at the attitude of your family toward the wild birds that are coming back. I expect you to eat very little food at my table in the garden this summer, but join with the wild birds in killing many tussock moths—will you?" she added smilingly.

Chummy understood her, and he tried so hard to tell her how grateful he was to her for all her kindness to him and his family that he actually croaked out a hoarse little song in which one could plainly distinguish some of my notes.

Even the children noticed it, and he got a good round of applause, as if he had been singing at a concert.

Mrs. Martin was looking at him so kindly, just as if she were his mother. "Sparrow," she said softly, "I think you try to be a good bird, and that is all we human beings can do—just to be good and kind," and she looked away toward the big lake and sighed.

Our Mary was still talking to the children,

while she rubbed the dogs' ears, and Mrs. Martin turned again to Chummy.

"And, sparrow boy, don't feel unhappy if I take all the eggs but one out of your nest each time your little mate lays this summer. There are too many sparrows in this neighborhood."

"T-check, t-chack, dear lady," said Chummy, scraping and bowing, "whatever you do is right. We birds know you understand us, and love us, and even if you take our young we will not complain. You never call us rats of the air, or winged vermin, and I assure you we will be kinder than ever after this to the little wild birds."

"Come here, sparrow bird," said Mrs. Martin gently, holding out her hand to him.

"Go on, Chummy," I said, giving him a push with my bill.

He had never lighted on her hand before, but he did so now, and stood there looking very proud of himself.

"Sparrow," said Mrs. Martin earnestly, "how I wish that I could tell you just how I feel when I look at a bird. There is such a warm feeling round my heart—I know that inside your little feathered bodies are troubles very

like our own. You have such anxieties, such struggles, to protect yourselves from enemies. You are so patient, so unresentful, so devoted—even to laying down your lives for your young. You are little martyrs of the air.”

Chummy put his head on one side and said, “T-check, t-chack,” very modestly.

“Mary,” said Mrs. Martin to her daughter, “a covenant between us and this little bird, whose fall to the ground our Heavenly Father deigns to notice. We will love, protect, and try to understand them better—we will even thin their ranks if necessary, but we will never persecute.”

Our Mary turned round. The western sun shone on her pretty young face, and on the bright faces of the children beside her.

“Agreed,” she said sweetly. “The Martins for the sparrows.”

At that moment Anna came up to the veranda with a tray of tea and bread and butter. On her shoulder was Sister Susie, coming out to get a taste of the butter that she is just crazy about, for pigeons and doves love salt things.

“Here is something to seal our sparrow bar-

gain," said our Mary, holding out a scrap of bread to Chummy.

He fluttered to her, took it nicely, ate half, and saved the other half for Jennie, who was sitting on her nest on three eggs which would shortly be reduced to one.

"Chummy," I said, as he came back to the railing where I sat. "This is a pretty happy family, isn't it?"

"Very," he said thickly, on account of the bread in his beak.

"And a pretty happy street," I went on. "All the birds and animals are living nicely together."

"Yes, yes," he muttered.

"And Nella the monkey is frisking in the Zoo, and Squirrie is as contented as he ever could be, and perhaps a time is coming when the birds and animals all over the world will be as happy as we are on this pleasant street. What do you think about it?"

Chummy laid down his bread on the railing and covered it with his claw, lest I or Sister Susie might eat it in a moment of absent-mindedness.

"What do I think?" he repeated slowly. "I think that birds and animals will never be perfectly happy till all human beings are happy. We are all mixed up together, Dicky-Dick, and I have heard that if all the birds in the world were to die, human beings would die too."

"How is that?" I asked.

"Because insects would devour all the plants and vegetables if there were no birds to check them. Then human beings would starve to death."

"Well, if that is so, Chummy," I said, "why don't men and women take better care of birds, and not let them be killed so much?"

"Give me time to think that over," said Chummy. "I will answer it some other day. Just now I must take this bread to Jennie," and he flew away.

That was some days ago, and Chummy has not answered my question yet. I can not wait for him to do so, for I must close my story. Summer days will soon be upon us, and the first duty of a canary to the world is to raise families and not concern himself too much with the affairs of other creatures.

Then something wonderful happened yes-

terday—a little egg hatched out in our nest. The whole world for me is swallowed up in that tiny beak. Shall I ever get tired of looking in it? Shall I ever beat my own little first baby bird, and say coldly, "Who are you?" as my father Norfolk said to me?

"Yes, you will," chirps my faithful Daisy; "but don't worry about that. It is the way of birds, and it makes us independent. Feed him and love him while you can, and be good to everybody, everybody, everybody," and as I close my story she is chirping me a funny, jerky little song to cheer me up, for she says Chummy is trying to make a hard-working, worrying sparrow out of me, instead of a gay, cheerful little canary.

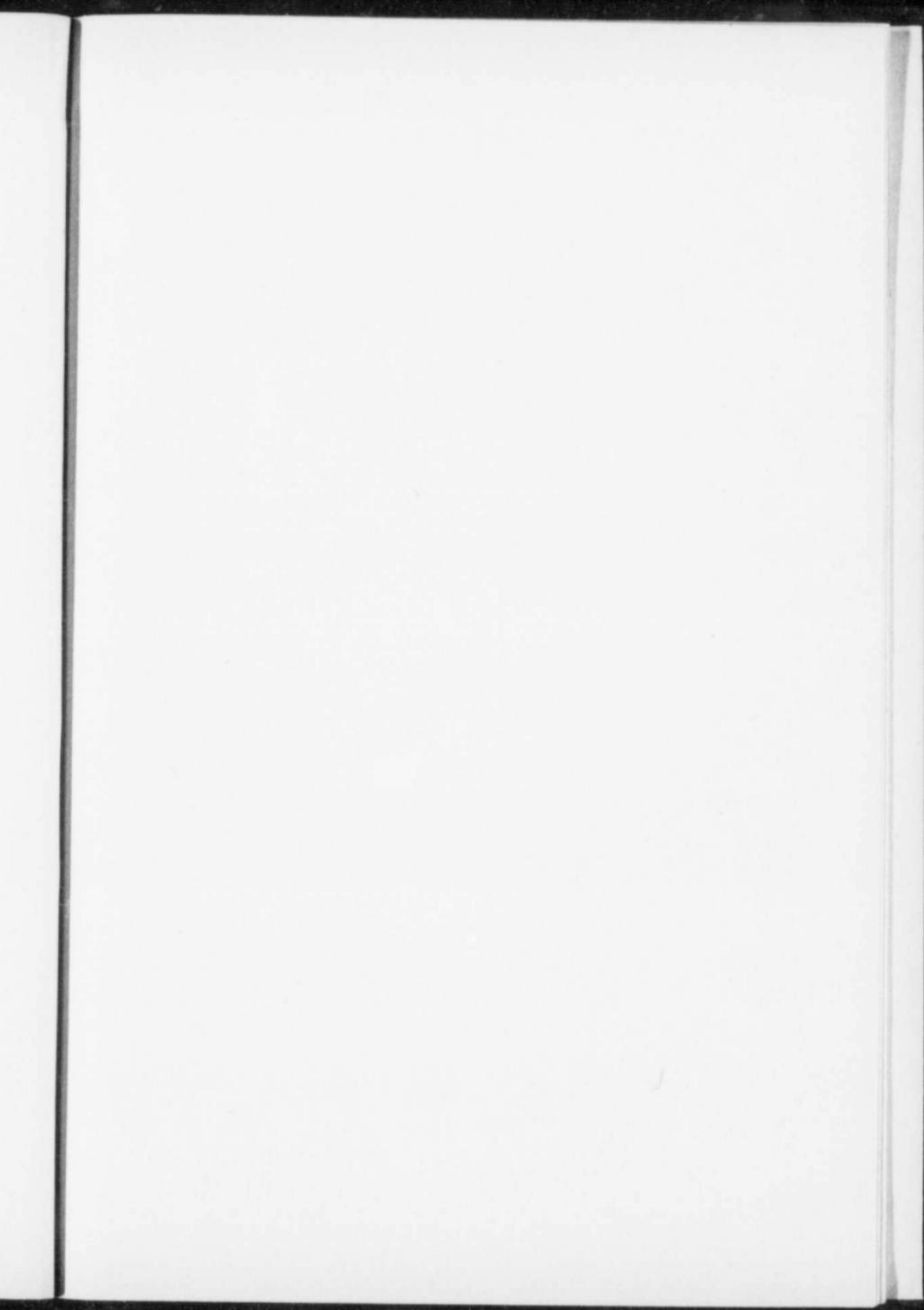
"What is that I hear outside?" she said suddenly. "I don't see why birds sing so loudly when there are young ones in the nest."

I listened an instant, then I exclaimed, "It's Vox Clamanti, and he is caroling, 'Better times for birds, better times for birds, robins 'specially, robins 'specially!'"

"So he has got hold of it too," said Daisy crossly; "he had better go help poor Twitchtail look for worms—and you, Dicky-Dick, fly

quickly to the table and get some fresh egg food for your own baby. Our Mary is just bringing some in—" and as I did not just fly on the instant, she began to chirp in quick notes, "Feed your baby, feed your baby, baby, baby!—that's what you're here for, here for, here for!"

THE END



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By GRACE McLEOD ROGERS

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