

# Zip the Coon

## 1931

### Floyd Bralliar

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THE snow was melting rapidly, for the warm south wind had been blowing for almost twenty-four hours. Already the bare ground was appearing in spots. That morning the first wild geese had come honking from the Southland; and a robin that had braved the cold and stayed all winter in the deep thickets along Skunk River, where there was plenty of food even in the snowiest weather, had come out into the open timber and sung his merriest song for several minutes, and this very moment he was hopping over the bare ground looking for bits of green grass or a possible worm that might have awakened from its winter sleep.

Ringtail, the coon who had lived all winter in the hollow of a large hickory tree on the banks of the river, roused herself from an all day's snooze, peeped out of her hole and looked and listened. Yes, it was still warm warmer, in fact, than when she had gone to bed that morning. She could hear the water rushing in every rivulet and stream, and a, soft balmy feeling was in the air. It was going to be a great night to hunt.

She was glad of this, for the winter had been unusually long and cold, and the snow had lain so deep that it was hard even for a coon to get enough to eat. In fact, she had not had enough to eat. Many times she had gone hungry for two or three days at a time, and she was lean and starved from the experience. She had dined well the night before, but this had served only to whet her appetite. She would start early, and visit the place where Wymore's branch flows into the river. She had fished there many a time in the past and had always found food there. Perhaps the ice might be thawed enough for her to catch some crawfish. How she would like a good meal of crawfish, for of all the many foods a coon eats there is nothing it likes better than crawfish.

Raccoons seldom leave their nests to hunt in the daylight. The experience of many generations has taught them that, they are much safer at night. But on such an evening as I have described they sometimes venture out an hour or two before dark.

Ringtail carefully climbed out of her nest hole and down the tree, stopping every few feet to listen and to sniff the air to learn if there might be an enemy lurking near. Satisfied that all was well, she jumped to the ground and ran rapidly to the river's edge. Surely enough, in places

the water was over the ice, which was beginning to break up and loosen from the bank. She sniffed about here and there and reached her hand under such rocks as were not still covered by the ice, but all she found was a snail or two.

Coons like snails well enough, and she ate them with keen relish, but they are not to be relied on for a meal when a coon is hungry ; so she soon stopped searching here and headed directly up the river toward the mouth of the creek. Though the ice was covered with water in many places it had not broken up enough to be dangerous, and was smoother going than the land. Besides, the water would carry away the tell-tale scent of her feet, and who knew but a hunter might be out that night with his hounds. No hunter would venture on the ice at such a time, and if the dogs were heavy enough they would find it difficult to follow her here. Yes, she would travel on the river even though by doing so she would lose a chance of capturing a stray bird roosting on the ground.

Soon she was fishing at the mouth of Wymore's branch, and surely enough she found crawfish in abundance. She had eaten all she could hold when she heard a hound coming near and scampered up a large linden tree. It proved to be hollow, and the hole was more roomy than her home. The hound was not on her trail, but she feared to leave the hole while he was near. As it was almost day she lay down to wait and soon was fast asleep. The hollow made a comfortable bed, and it was near plenty of food.. Why not stay there and make it her home? It would be such a roomy home for the family she expected soon. It belonged to no one; why should she not stay in it? She had no furniture to move or rent to pay. To her, moving was the simplest thing in the world. How could she know that my father had decided to cut that particular tree that spring?

Soon Ringtail had a family of five little coons, such hungry little fellows that it seemed they were never satisfied. But her new home proved to be in a land of plenty. Not only were there crawfish by the thousands in the ponds near by, but there were frogs everywhere, big frogs and little frogs, and frogs half way between. And she discovered a henhouse near by whose owner neither kept a dog nor shut the door at night. What more could a coon desire?

But things were going too easy. Such good fortune could not last forever. Father came with his axe and dog and began chopping on the tree, and in less than an hour it fell with a crash and broke in two just where the hole opened into her home.

The baby coons were stunned and frightened, so they crowded as far back into their hollow as possible and lay quiet, but Ringtail thought it was time for her to act. She rushed from her hole and attacked the dog without hesitation. She had fought dogs before and had never failed to whip them. She hoped she could drive away this one, but he was an old coon dog and killed her almost immediately.

Father knew there must be young in the hollow, or Ringtail would have tried to escape instead of fighting, so he reached into the nest and pulled out the babies one by one. The first one bit him and he dropped it almost into the dog's mouth. The others scratched and fought with tooth and claw and so suffered the same fate, - all but one.

He lay quiet when he was pulled from the hole, and licked father's hand. Father was pleased with this and decided to keep him for a pet. He named him Zip.

At first Zip was afraid of everyone and would not eat, but this did not last long. He was young, and young animals as well as children have appetites that will not be denied for long. By the next morning Zip was ready to eat, and he was not particular what. He was given bread and milk, the dish that can be safely fed to almost any animal or bird ; and though his nose had to be stuck into it before he would touch it, when he got the taste by licking his mouth to get it clean, he ate it greedily. Soon he would eat almost anything. There are few animals that have so wide

a range of food as a wild raccoon, and I am sure Zip was soon eating many things a wild coon never tasted. But he never lost his taste for milk.

Of course, if hungry, he would eat almost any kind of meat given him, but not until he had washed it thoroughly. As soon as this was found out, he was given a pan of water so placed that he could get to it readily, and he never failed to take any meat that was given him to his pan and wash it thoroughly before tasting it. When he had scrubbed and washed it till all the blood was out he would eat it readily. But, he preferred crawfish to anything except peanuts and candy.

Sometimes father would take him to the creek fishing. Zip always went directly to the rocks that lay in the water and began feeling under them with his hands. He would turn his face upward and wrinkle up his nose in a most comical way. He never seemed to so much as glance at the water, but if a crawfish should dart from under a rock he was almost sure to get it before it could swim a foot, yet everyone who knows crawfish knows there are few things that can swim faster.

We are so accustomed to locate things with our eyes that it seems very queer to us that an animal having perfectly good eyes should locate anything by feeling alone. Zip was expert at getting the meat out of the crawfish shell, so he seldom ate much of the shell, but if very hungry he would eat everything but the big front pinchers and the tail fins. Wild coons are usually very hungry, so this is all they leave. Often as I go up and down creeks I see the big pinchers and the tail fins of a crawfish lying on a rock. At such times I always look for coon tracks, and I usually find them. They can be recognized by the fact that they look so much like baby tracks. In fact a coon can use his front feet very much as we use our hands, his fingers being very agile, and his hind feet bear a real resemblance to a human foot.

Zip liked peanuts and candy, and soon learned that his human friends often had these or other "goodies" in their pockets. He soon formed the habit of climbing up the legs of any man who came near him after having been away for a few hours, and feeling in, all his pockets for "goodies." And he would scratch and bite viciously if anyone refused to submit to this search. This was all well enough and amusing as long as Zip confined his activities to home folks, but he soon began to hold up every strange man who came into the house or even into the yard, and search him. After he had bitten one man and mussed and torn another's clothes it ceased to be fun to have him hold people up and search them, but it cost Zip several whippings and father several scratches and bites in return to break him of this habit.

Zip liked ripe fruits especially muskmelons. In fact, most of the wildlings who eat fruit at all are fond of muskmelons. I do not blame them in the least, for I am very fond of them myself. But Zip was entirely too good a judge of quality and too particular what he ate. He refused poor quality melons, and always preferred to go to the patch and select his own. There were plenty for all, but no one wanted Zip to have all the best ones; and this is what he always got if he went to the patch at all, for, no man could judge the quality of an untasted melon so well as he.

Of all vegetables he liked roasting ears best, and here again he was judge of quality. If allowed his own way, he would always go to the sweet corn field. In fact, if sweet corn could be had, he soon refused to eat field corn at all. Of course he wished to select his own roasting ears, and he wished them to be very tender and full of milk, but the grains must be large enough to have food in them. He could husk his corn as well as anyone, and always did so, then ate the corn off the cob. He never cared for cooked corn. In fact, he preferred to climb the stalk to the ear, and he would eat it there; but should the stalk break over with his weight, he would eat it from the ground. When there were plenty of roasting ears and muskmelons, Zip cared little for meat, though he never refused crawfish, and he always relished milk.

As he grew older this liking for milk became a nuisance, for he would insist on his share of milk even when it was scarce. Finally he learned there was something better than milk, but this did not particularly help matters.

Our milk was strained into gallon crocks, and kept in a milk house in a box of cold water. The folks were very proud of their cows, because they gave such rich milk. But suddenly the milk began to get poorer and poorer. Sometimes there would be a fair amount of cream on it, but often there would be almost none.

There was much discussion as to why the cows should fail so much in the quality of their milk. Feed was a little short and it was thought possibly this had something to do with it. But when the cows were given a hot bran mash twice every day, as well as plenty of corn, and they showed a good increase in the amount of milk given yet it was still poor, the mystery was greater than ever.

Then, too, Zip lost his appetite, yet kept fat and sleek. This was another mystery. At last some one went to the milk house unexpectedly and found Zip there. He had managed to make a hole near the roof through which he could come and go at will. He was found sitting by a crock of milk, carefully skimming it with his hand and eating the cream. He could skim a crock of milk so neatly and so cleanly that he left no mark to tell the tale.

Whether he had watched mother skim the milk and so was imitating her we never knew. He had plenty of chance to do this. He might have hit on the idea himself. Certain it is that he never inherited this from his ancestors. Be this as it may, the milk house was immediately nailed up coon tight, and there was no more trouble from the cows giving poor milk.

Zip never liked either dogs or cats. He learned to tolerate the family dog and the house-cat, but he made friends with neither. The dog had no use for the coon, so the dislike was mutual. He never could understand why any one would wish to have a coon around, much less allow it so many privileges. It took considerable training to get him to leave it alone, especially when it would get into things the dog recognized as belonging wholly to his master; but he finally learned not to interfere, no matter what the coon did.

But it was never safe to feed them too close together, for it took all the grace the dog had to allow the coon to eat something he would have liked for himself, and only loyalty to his master made him do so.

Zip never fought the family dog, but took out his hatred of the family dog on any strange dog that might happen to come on the place. He never failed to attack a strange dog on sight, and as coons are great fighters, and as few farmers' dogs had ever had any experience fighting coons, he had little trouble in driving them off the place.

Doubtless this was due in part to the fact that the visiting dog knew he was trespassing. Besides, Zip had never suffered for lack of food, so was larger and stronger than most coons. I often wondered if his hatred of dogs might date from the day one had killed his mother and brothers and sisters.

To the family dog, this habit of Zip's driving all strange dogs off the place was his one redeeming feature. The dog would have been delighted to do this job himself, but he had been strictly forbidden to fight any dog that came on the place except at night. After night he himself did exactly what Zip did in the daytime, and he could not help sometimes showing satisfaction when Zip drove a particularly obnoxious dog off the place.

Zip never did the family cat any real harm, or if he did we never knew it; but she was afraid of him, and nothing seemed to please him better than to saunter over to where she was, in order to see her spit and run. He would usually follow her around till she left the house in

disgust.

But he loved the calves, colts, and lambs, and would often grab them around the neck and hug them while they ran all over the lot with him. They never seemed in the least afraid of him, but I hardly think they particularly enjoyed playing with him.

My friend, Robert Sparks Walker, the naturalist, tells me of a pet coon he owned that chose his friends by whether they had claws or hoofs. Any animal with hoofs was a friend, and he was ready to make up to it at once, but anything with claws was an enemy. One day, when Mr. Walker was experimenting to learn how universal this trait was, he brought a cat to his coon. At once the coon grabbed its foot in his hands and examined it for claws. The cat was a good-natured pet belonging to a neighbor, and did not particularly resent his action. In an instant the coon had discovered the claws, and bit two of them off before the combined efforts of Mr. Walker and poor Tabby herself could rescue her.

Like most of the more intelligent creatures of the great out of doors, Zip loved pretty things. True, his ideals of beauty were not always ours, - but surely every one has a right to his own ideals. At any rate he was a great art collector. He had his private museum, which he guarded with care and, after his first experience, never meant to have seen by human eyes.

In this museum he placed such things as glass, thimbles, hairpins, spools of thread, scissors, and other articles too numerous to mention. He never failed to collect such things wherever he found them. He seemed always on the watch for an opportunity to pull hairpins from some woman's hair and make off with them as fast as he could go. Best of all he loved nickel, silver, or glass, perhaps because they were shiny.

Interesting as it was, this collecting habit soon became a nuisance, for he usually collected the things the family valued.

The first time any of the family visited Zip's museum he was pleased, and plainly showed he was proud of it, but this did not last long. In it were several spoons, a thimble, and several articles of value. Of course, his visitor appropriated them at once. As they were Zip's choicest specimens, it is not surprising that he resented what to him was simple robbery.

He moved his museum at once; and after that, it was difficult to find when something of value was missing and it was necessary to find it. In fact some things were never located, for Zip finally established several museums and at least one of these was never found.

Zip was particularly fond of sweets of any kind, and there was a barrel of sorghum molasses with a faucet in it in the shed back of the kitchen. He was usually tagging someone around to see what he could find, and one day discovered this molasses. Often a few drops were spilled on the floor when someone drew molasses, and he liked to lick these up, but that did not satisfy him. He always begged for more, and was forever trying to get into this shed. Once he succeeded, and when found was sitting under the faucet, which he had managed to turn. The molasses had run out all over the floor, but he was catching as much of the stream in his mouth as he could swallow. He was smeared with molasses from head to foot, but he was blissfully happy. Fortunately it was cold, and only four or five gallons had run out; but for once he had had all he could eat. For this, and various other pranks, he was chained to a box in which his bed was placed.

He resented this restraint, and rapidly grew ill-tempered and cross. Nor was this all. Now that he could not go where he pleased and find what he wished to eat, he began to kill chickens.

At first if a chicken came in reach of his chain he simply killed it and ate what he wished, leaving the remainder. This would never do, so he was shown the partly eaten carcass of his latest kill and was then whipped. The next day he killed a chicken, and after eating what he

wished buried the remainder. When this was discovered, he hid the next one under his box. But no amount of punishment could break him of killing chickens it only made him the more sly about hiding the evidence.

Finally he managed to slip his chain and get loose. While he did not leave the place, he would not allow himself to be caught; and he would not come into the house, at least if anyone was around who could shut him up. An attempt to starve him into coming indoors for food merely resulted in his killing more chickens.

Finally he was caught and chained to his box again. Again he got away, and this time he seldom allowed the family even to see him, though he lived about the house for weeks and lived well. But he was fast becoming a nuisance.

Soon word began to come from the neighbors that he was visiting their hen roosts. This was doubtless true in some cases, but it is doubtless equally true that he soon got the credit for all the misdeeds done for miles around, most of which he knew nothing about. It is always easier to get a bad name than to live it down once it is received, and there are always plenty of people ready to blame their troubles on someone else, especially if he has a bad name. If Zip had eaten all the chickens whose disappearance was blamed to him, he would have had to be as big as a bear.

But be this as it may, no one in the family could longer vouch for his good behavior. A neighbor shot him, not because he was in his chicken roost, or in fact on his farm, but this man had a farm and a chicken roost and Zip might come there sometime if he were not killed. Anyway he was only a coon, and coons ought to be shot on general principles. Besides, a coonskin could always be sold on the market.

We were all sorry to learn of his unfortunate end, but we could not afford to have trouble with a neighbor, so never said anything to him about it. A brighter, more interesting, or wiser pet it would be hard to find. Herein lay his trouble. He could never understand why his masters should have more rights than he. Had he come from a long line of servant ancestors like Drum the dog, he might have had a servant's viewpoint and have accepted a servant's pittance. But his ancestors were free. The whole country was theirs. They went and came when they pleased, and what they could not take by force they got by strategy. He loved his masters and his home. No coon ever had better food, a more comfortable bed, or less worry, and he was thankful for this; but one generation could not teach him he could not have everything he wished, if he could find a way to get it.

He was a dear little fellow, whose only fault was that he often desired the same things as his human neighbors, and that, like them, he got them if he could. This cost him his life. Possibly he would have lived longer and been happier in harder life of a wildling. Who can tell?

## ***The Raccoon***

(*Procyon rotor*)

THE raccoon, or as he is more commonly called, the ringtailed coon, resembles the bears in that he places the entire hind foot on the ground when walking instead of just the toes, as do most other animals. It is because of this that his tracks bear a similarity to those of a baby. Animals that walk in this way are called "plantigrades." When running, the coon touches only his toes to, the ground, and so makes an entirely different track. It is important to know this if we wish to track coons.

Like bears, the coon feeds on a wide variety of fruits and vegetables as well as shellfish,

crawfish, and various kinds of flesh..

Our raccoon is found throughout the eastern part of the United States and Canada, ranging westward to Montana and Arizona and southward to Panama. He is found only in America.

He is valued for his fur, and for this reason is hunted and trapped everywhere. Coon hunting has long been a favorite sport. Coons are great fighters, and it takes a good dog to kill one. But in spite of having been hunted and trapped for generations, they are still about as abundant as they ever were, due to their large families and native cunning.

They vary somewhat in color, and there is great difference in the quality of their fur in different localities. Naturally the best skins come from the more northern regions, for fur is nature's way of protecting a creature from the cold. Scant fur would not keep an animal warm in the north, while thick, heavy fur would be a burden to an animal that lived in the south.

Coons live mostly in trees and sleep much of the day, rolled into balls with their heads between their hind legs. They are exceedingly active at night, and it is then that they are usually hunted. They hunt in the water as well as on land, sometimes even going into the ocean after oysters. They prefer to fight their enemies in the water, where they have a decided advantage over the dog or the wolf. If they cannot get into the water when pursued, they quickly take refuge in a tree.

## **Toots the Fox Terrier**

Toots was not my dog. I wish to make that plain at the start. He belonged to my wife's father and mother; but I knew him well, and he was such an intelligent dog that his story is well worth telling.

Toots was a fox terrier. Fox terriers are small, spotted dogs, with smooth coats of short, straight hair. Toots was white and black in color. Originally fox terriers were evidently selected for small house dogs, and were trained to catch rats and mice. Possibly they were selected and bred for small size, that they might follow rats and other small animals into their hiding places, and so be able to catch many that a big dog could never get. No one knows for sure just how long this breed of dogs has been in existence. Probably not very long in its present form, but pictures found on some of the ruins of ancient Egypt show dogs that look very much like our present-day fox terriers.

Father Boynton got Toots near Spirit Lake, Iowa, when he was merely a little fat puppy, so small he could easily be carried in his new master's overcoat pocket. He carried the little fellow home, a distance of fifty miles or more, cuddled up in a piece of warm cloth in a small grape basket such as one can see full of Concord grapes, any fall, on any fruit market.

Most puppies, when taken away from their home and mother to a strange place to live with strangers, get very homesick and cry and whine a great deal, especially of a night. And I can sympathize with them, for one time when I was a small boy I went away from home to stay a few days, and none of my folks were with me. It was not so bad in the daytime, but the nights were terrible; so a poor little puppy must feel utterly lonesome and homesick, especially in the long, dark hours when everyone is asleep, and everything is strange, and the puppy does not know what has become of his mother or brothers and sisters. But if Toots felt lonesome or homesick, he never showed it.

He never cried but one night, and that was when he had been given an old coat for a bed. The night was cold and he crept into one of the sleeves to get warm and could not get out. He cried till Burril, one of the boys, got up and helped him out of his difficulty. As soon as he was free, he lay down contentedly and went back to sleep, but he never crept into a coat sleeve again.

Mother Boynton began to train Toots from the first, and in less than a week he was learning to do tricks. Here are some of Mrs. Boynton's rules for training dogs

Begin when the puppy is small, the younger the better, after it is weaned. Learn what food it likes best and always keep some of it on hand. Always keep the dog just a little hungry. Decide what trick you wish to teach it to do, and teach that and nothing else until it is well learned. Show the dog a bit of its favorite food and tell it what you wish it to do and help it too do it. When it does what you ask, always give it the bit of food. Never scold or whip the dog, but never let it go till it does as it is told. To let it go without obedience may mean that it will never become well trained. In this respect there is not so much difference between a dog and a child.

The first trick Toots learned was to roll over when told to do so. This is usually an easy trick to teach any dog that can be taught to do tricks at all. All dogs cannot be taught such things, for all dogs do not possess sufficient intelligence to understand stand what is desired of them. Some breeds of dogs are more intelligent than others, and all dogs of the same breed are not equal in intelligence. Small dogs learn such tricks as rolling over more easily than do large dogs, even though the large dog may be as intelligent as the small one, because it is physically easier for the little dog to do the trick.

It was easy to teach Toots to sit up and speak, when told to do so before he could have a bit of food. Of course, this was done by requiring him to do it. Most dogs learn this readily, for they naturally bark if they want something, and they try to reach things by standing on their hind feet. What one needs to do is to restrain their barking to one short yap and the standing on the hind legs to sitting upright. An intelligent dog can be taught this in a short time. Toots learned each pretty well in a single lesson.

The Boyntons had a small son named Clifford. He and Toots romped and played together by the hour, but neither was old enough always to use good judgment or be careful in his play. Sometimes one would hurt the other. So one day Mother Boynton made a rule that if either hurt the other the offender must sit up on a chair as punishment till told he could get down. Things ran along pretty well for several days. Clifford had to sit up on, a chair several times, but thus far Toots had escaped. Then one day, as they were romping on the floor,

Toots bit Clifford too hard, and Mother Boynton set him up in a chair and kept him there for some time. In a day or two, the men were digging potatoes, and Toots and Clifford were playing about in the potato patch. In some way Toots bit Clifford, and quick as a flash he jumped up on a sack of potatoes and sat there as shamed faced as could be till told he might get down.

He soon came to regard the Boynton house and yard as a sacred place, and took it upon himself to guard it against all intruders. A small herd of cattle were driven past the house regularly every morning and evening: Sometimes the cows, attracted by the fresh grass, would get into the yard. Toots resented this, and soon learned to know when to expect the cattle. He would go out into the front yard and sit down near the road before the cattle came near, and would sit there perfectly quiet till they passed, but should one start toward the yard he dashed after it at once. The cows soon learned to make no attempt to get into that yard, and the neighbor boy who drove the cattle really appreciated the dog's help.

In fact it was no uncommon thing for Toots to take over a job without being told to do so. One day Mother Boynton was sitting in her favorite chair tating. Toots was lying near,

seemingly paying not the least attention to what was going on. Mrs. Boynton made some unusual move and her ball of thread fell off her lap and rolled across the floor. Instantly Toots jumped up, got the ball, and carried it to her without her having said a word.

And Toots was a good watchdog. His mistress used to set her newly baked pies and puddings on the cellar door in the back yard to cool, and leave him to watch them. And watch them he did. Not only did he keep chickens and similar things away; he would fight the largest man or dog to a standstill to protect his pies. One day Mrs. Bralliar and our two-year-old son were visiting at her mother's home. As usual, freshly baked pies were put out for Toots to watch. The baby was playing in the yard and spied the pies. Baby-like, he made for them at once. His grandmother, as grandmothers have a fashion of doing, was watching the baby through the window and saw him start, but waited to see what the dog would do.

Usually so resourceful, Toots was at his wits' end. He seemed to realize the baby was not responsible and must not be hurt. He ran in front of it, but the baby merely waddled over him and went on. He got hold of the baby's clothes and tried to hold him back but only got a lick with a stick for his trouble. Do what he might the baby kept on toward the pies. Finally the dog's face took on the most worried look imaginable, and he got in front of the baby again. Again he was brushed aside. When the baby finally got so near that Toots realized it would surely get the pies, he raced into the house barking, got his mistress by the hand, and led her to the rescue.

For a time Toots was a nuisance during family worship, so he was made to sit up in a chair during this time. He soon learned this, but added to it a program of his own. When the family would kneel in prayer he would get down from his chair, put his paws up on the front of the seat and put his head between his feet, imitating as nearly as he could what he saw the family do.

He was taught to play "sleepy dog." When asked if he were a sleepy dog, he would rub his eyes with his paws, open his mouth, and yawn in the most distressed way imaginable.

Like most dogs that have been taught to eat it, he was inordinately fond of candy, yet the children might leave candy lying indiscriminately around where he could see and reach it, and he would never bother it. It did not belong to him.

In time he was taught to go to the store and buy his own candy. All that was necessary was to put a piece of money in something he could carry, give it to him, and tell him he might go and buy some candy. Away he would go in high glee, but when the merchant gave him his bag of candy he always brought it home without touching it. He would deliver it to his mistress and wait anxiously for her to dole it out to him.

Perhaps this buying things at the store suggested to his mistress the idea of teaching him the next trick he learned. She would put something that he especially liked on the floor and tell him, "That costs money." Toots would eye it longingly till some one told him, "It's paid for," when he would gobble it in a hurry.

Naturally such a dog would make friends, especially as he was friendly to everyone. The neighbors soon learned to know him and often called him to their houses for a play. One day one of the neighbors had visitors and, seeing Toots, thought to entertain his guests by having him perform for them. So he called "Toots, come here." As usual Toots did not like to leave home, but finally, yielding to the importunity of his neighbor, whom he liked, he went and was taken into the house.

Now Mr. Comfelt, for that was the neighbor's name, wanted him to perform, but he would not do a single trick. Finally Mr. Comfelt said, "Toots, if you will perform for me, I will give you some bread." Toots pricked up his ears at once, and went through every one of his stunts as they were called, much to the delight of his audience. When he was through he stood about

expectantly, but Mr. Comfelt did not give him his bread but busied himself talking with his visitors. Finally some one opened the outside door. Evidently Toots saw his opportunity and did not mean to be tricked out of his pay. He sprang on a chair, grabbed a half loaf of bread off the table and ran home with it. He never ate plain bread, so it could not have been because he was hungry. He merely wanted his rights.

But his triumph was short. Mr. Comfelt owned a dog of his own. He was not trained, but he was several times as big as Toots, and he too felt he had a duty to perform in guarding his master's property. He saw Toots running away with the bread, and followed. Toots had just put the bread down on his own porch and was turning away when the big dog dashed around the corner, grabbed the loaf of bread, and carried it back to his master.

Toots liked to play hide and seek with the family. This is the way it was played. Some one would hide a piece of chewing gum, candy, or some other thing the dog liked very much to eat. He was then allowed to come into the room and told, "There is something laid up for you." Immediately he would start the hunt and in a surprisingly short time he would find and eat the prize. He never failed to locate the prize, though it might be hidden four or five feet from the floor and though he was given no idea what was hidden or which one of the family had hidden it. I have never been able to decide how he was able to do this.

Like most dogs, Toots liked very much to go along whenever his master left home with the team, and usually he was allowed to do so. But this did not always give him unmixed joy. His master often drove past a house where lived a large dog that never allowed a strange dog to pass without picking a fight if possible. The first time they passed this house, this dog ran out and began bullying Toots. Toots realized the stranger was far too big for him to fight, so he tried in every way to conciliate the bully, but only got himself bitten for his trouble. His master called to him to get under the wagon, which he did, while his master jumped off and with a club drove the big dog yelping away. After that when they came that way Toots fairly strutted past this place, but he always kept close beside - the wagon on the side where his master rode.

One morning his master was starting away with the wagon, and as usual Toots was on hand to go. Mr. Boynton said as he might have said to a child, "Toots, you can't go today. You must stay at home and take care of mother." That was enough. The disappointed dog turned around and went back to the house, and he scarcely allowed his mistress out of his sight all day long.

Another day, when they had gone almost a quarter of a mile from home, his master saw one of his calves which was straying away. "Toots," he said, "you must drive that calf back home before you can come with me. The dog's tail dropped and he showed dejection in every muscle. "I will wait for you," continued Mr. Boynton. Up went the dog's ears and tail, and away he went after the calf. He drove it home with a rush and was back again in a jiffy.

One day Toots went visiting with his master, something like eighty miles from home. He was so busy playing with the children he did not notice when Mr. Boynton started home, and Mr. Boynton had been so busy talking that he forgot about the dog. About a half hour afterward, the gentleman whom Mr. Boynton had been visiting noticed the dog playing with the children. He called him and said, "Toots, don't you know your master has gone home?"

A look of distress came over him, but without a moment's hesitation he darted out of the yard and was gone. This was late in the afternoon. At home everyone was much distressed when the master arrived alone. Toots had never been far from home before, and had never been even a short distance in the direction of this friend's home. But the next morning he was lying on the door step, looking very tired, but exceedingly glad to be home again.

Finally the Boyntons moved to California and left the dog with a friend. After a year the

family decided to send for him. So Elder Wolfe, Mr. Boynton's son-in-law, got a box of the proper size, put a rug in it for a bed, put the dog in the box, carried him to the express office, and started him on his journey from Sioux Rapids, Iowa, to San Fernando, California.

When he arrived, the express agent telephoned, the family and Clifford went to get the dog. When he asked the agent for, him, he was told he would need a muzzle and a cage, that the dog's box had been broken en route, and that he had fought everyone in sight when they had attempted to get the pieces. All he had left was his chain and his bed, and no one could get near these. Clifford paid the charges and went for the dog. As soon as Toots saw him, he was wild with joy, and could not get to him soon enough. He was no longer a savage dog defending his own property, but a lonesome, heartsore little doggie who had at last found his long-lost friends.

Some of my readers will say, "I would like to own a dog, if I could get one that was smart like Toots, or Frank, the collie, you tell, us about in 'Elo the Eagle.' But how can I get such a dog?"

In the first place, select a puppy from one of the more intelligent breeds, and from individual parents that are intelligent. Then pick the brightest-looking puppy in the litter. A puppy that looks and acts stupid is seldom 'intelligent. An especially intelligent dog will show it in his bright, alert look and in his sprightly actions.

After such a dog is secure, make a pal of him and train him, but do not bully him. Many an intelligent dog has had his spirit broken by cruel, tyrannical treatment, just as many a bright boy's future has been ruined by a tyrannical father. Neither can be allowed to do, as they please. Both must be trained, but tyranny is not training.

## ***The Dog***

(Canis familiaris)

Dogs have been domesticated from the very earliest dawn of history. There has always been much discussion as to whether they originated from taming and breeding wolves, jackals, and similar animals. Some have thought that dogs all originated from some common ancestor, while others believe they have come from several. As a matter of fact the wild species are about as apt to be domestic dogs run wild as the domestic dog is to have come from the wild species.

As long ago as 3500 B.C., pictures of dogs were placed on the old monuments and other buildings of the Egyptians. They look very much like some of our modern breeds. From that time till now dogs have been man's friends in most of the world. Even some of the American Indians had their dogs when they were discovered by the Europeans.

Dogs are divided into the following classes. 1. Wild and half-wild dogs. 2. Domestic dogs that hunt by sight. 3. Domestic dogs that hunt by nose and kill their prey when located. 4. Dogs that hunt by nose but do not kill their prey. 5. Herding dogs. 6. Watch dogs. 7. Crossed breeds, retrievers, etc. There are usually many species under each class.

The fox terrier was originally a dog bred to hunt foxes and drive them out of their holes, but not to kill them. They have become valuable in the extermination of rodents and other small pests. While the breed originated in England, pictures show dogs that resemble them in shape and color that must have been in existence hundreds of years before they were definitely originated as fox terriers.

Many of the big breeds of dogs tend to have a fifth toe, especially on the hind feet. Some think this is a throw-back to some five-toed ancestor.

Other dogs tend to have the toes united with a web. Some believe this to be proof that there were web-footed dogs at some time in the past. But at most these are mere suppositions.

There are already several hundred recognized breeds of dogs, and new ones are being produced every few years. Of course, this is done by crossing breeds already in existence; and carefully selecting them to definite size and color for a few generations till the breed becomes fixed.

## **Bobby the Wildcat**

MAYLAND is a little village on the highest part of the Cumberland Plateau in Tennessee. The Cumberlands differ from most other mountains in that what we think of as the mountains are merely the connecting link between a comparatively low valley and a flat tableland several miles wide and some fifteen or sixteen hundred feet higher. Mayland is on this tableland. It is hard to realize when at Mayland that one is on the mountains, for there are no mountains or even hills in sight.

Near the village is a lake with some seven miles of shore line, and just below this lake the little creek that carries away the overflow begins to descend and soon flows through a gulch with shelving rocks on its sides.

There is a summer camp for girls, Camp Nakanawa, on the banks of this lake, and I have had the privilege of spending the past six summers as nature counselor at this camp. The first summer I spent at camp I became acquainted with Bobby and her family, and I have known her more or less intimately ever since.

I first became aware of Bobby's existence in this way. The girls like to make rolls of their blankets, take plenty of food, and hike off into the woods and spend the night. At such times they build a huge bonfire and sit around it, either telling or listening to stories till late at night, when they roll up in their blankets and sleep on the ground about the fire. Breakfast is cooked, over the campfire and the party returns to camp in time for dinner. When the weather is good, such parties go out once or twice every week. Of course several counselors always go with such parties, and as I had the nature work, it usually fell to my lot to be one of these.

One night Mrs. Bralliar and I were in charge of a party of thirty or more small girls from ten to twelve years old. The weather had been a bit unsettled, and there was a possibility of rain before morning. So we went by boat to the lower end of the lake, and carried our packs down the little creek to where the rocks overhung sufficiently to keep even so large a party as this dry, even in the most driving rain.

We started our fire, and every one began gathering dead wood for the night. Many hands make quick work, so it was not long till enough wood was gathered, and everyone was lying about the roaring fire, looking up at the stars and listening to stories.

Some of the little girls had never spent a night in the woods before and were nervous, especially when some night bird screamed nearby or some helpless animal shrieked in pain and terror when caught by some one of the many hunters that live by eating their fellows creatures of the forests.

But the insects hummed drowsily on all sides, and the creek gurgled a lullaby as it slipped away through the darkness a few yards away. Small bodies grow tired and small eyes; grow heavy under such conditions. Before eleven o'clock the cry, "where am I to sleep?" became insistent.

A few clouds still hung in the west; and I at first thought it would be well for every one to

sleep under the overhanging rocks. One little girl crawled under farther than the rest and announced she had found a hole running under the rocks and that she knew something lived in it, for she could see the tracks where it had gone in and out. Did I suppose she had best sleep so close to this hole? And what did I suppose lived in it?

I told her that undoubtedly a woodchuck or some equally harmless animal lived there, but that I would see what I could learn. So I took my flashlight and examined the entrance to the hole and was astonished to find the tracks had been made by a "bobcat," and that this bobcat surely had kittens in that hole for their tracks were also to be seen in the dust in front of it.

It was too late to move camp, and to tell the children what I had discovered would have frightened them so much no one would have slept. I knew the bobcats were undoubtedly much more frightened because we were so near than even my children would have been had they known what I knew.

Half-wild hogs had undoubtedly slept under this ledge the winter before; so the ground under the rocks was very dusty, and this gave me an inspiration. I told the children there might be fleas in this dust, and that even if there were not fleas the dust would get into their blankets and it would be hard to get it out again. I advised every one to sleep outside between the fire and creek.

I was pretty sure it would not rain before morning; and even though it should, there would be plenty of time to get under the rocks when it came. Besides it is much nicer to be able to sleep where one can look up and see the stars shining. Every one acted on the suggestion, and I built a better fire than usual, putting on plenty of big wood so it would burn brightly all night. Then I lay down nearest the hole, and we all went to sleep. Before going to sleep, I carefully smoothed the dust in front of the hole, so I could tell in the morning if anything had gone in or out during the night, but nothing did so. Till this day I have never told any of the camp girls how near they slept to a wildcat's lair.

It was some time before I heard or saw anything more of those cats. Then one day the night watch asked me to go with him around behind the kitchen to examine some strange tracks about the garbage can. They were Bobby's tracks. There was no doubt of it, for they surely were cat tracks and they were much too big to have been made by house cats.

The night watch knew what they were, but he wished to learn if I would know. He was a pretty good woodsman himself, and often tried to find something I would not know. He said Bobby had been coming to this garbage barrel for several nights, and that she was not only eating what she wished herself but was carrying food into the woods to her kittens, which she always left just around the point of the lake a few rods away. He cautioned me to keep still about this lest it frighten the girls. Bobby would not hurt anyone in the least unless they wounded her or caught either her or her kittens. We both knew there is no way of telling what a bunch of girls may try to do, and we did not wish to take any chances.

It was only a few days till the moon was full, making the night almost as light as day. That night, as soon as the girls were all in bed and asleep, Bobby came down the path that leads around the point of the lake back of the kitchen, her kittens following not far behind. Several times she stopped and snarled and scolded at them, plainly telling them they could go no farther. Every time she did this, they would stop and slink back a little; but when she started on, they followed again.

I do not know whether their mother had not been carrying them all the food they wished, whether they were especially hungry that night, or whether they had just reached the age when they felt it safe to be disobedient. I only know that the extra noise and snarling caught the ear of the big German police dog belonging to the director of the camp; He came on the run, barking

lustily, and rushed directly at the kittens. The mother cat was on him in an instant; and in less time than I can write it, he was running for his bed on the wigwam porch, howling instead of barking. But for all the commotion, no one was awakened; or if they were, they thought it was, "only that dog barking again.

Did Bobby and her family run away into the woods when the dog left them? Far from it. They all marched Indian file up the path leading back to their home. After that they came almost every night, and so far as anyone saw Bobby never raised any more objection to her kittens accompanying her, and the camp dog never offered any more objection to their coming on the premises. One experience was enough for him. No one had asked him to drive this whirlwind of teeth and claws out of the camp, and evidently he decided not to do so as long as he was not asked. He did not even bark at them, possibly fearing someone might notice them if he did so, and ask him to drive them away.

Bobby was a bobcat; the common wildcat of the Southern mountains. They are called bobcats because their tails are no more than blunt stumps two or three inches long. They look as though their tails had been cut short when they were kittens. Our Southern bobcats are a reddish gray in color but are marked with dark spots and stripes. They are tall for cats, and seldom weigh over eighteen or twenty pounds.

In spite of the march of civilization, bobcats are still found over practically all of the United States where there is sufficient timber or brush for them to hide in. They are timid, and do not like to live in thickly settled districts; yet only a few weeks ago I saw one crossing the Dixie Highway about eleven o'clock at night less than a mile from the city of Murfreesboro, Tennessee. I got so close to him and the light from my automobile blinded him so much that we missed running over him only by a few feet. Without doubt these animals live in many parts of our country, undiscovered. Within the past year, I have seen three crossing well traveled highways by night.

Things ran on as usual throughout this camp season, Bobby and her family feeding nightly at the garbage can. This must have been a real blessing to quails and other birds that live on the ground. For once they could have a little peace and safety, while their families were growing large and strong enough to take care of themselves. The wildcat family preferred to feed from the table of their traditional enemy, man, to hunting for a living.

One evening, just at dark, some of the girls came to me considerably excited. They said some woman was either crazy or lost on the other side of the lake, where a point of land runs in toward the camp. I went with them, down to the dock where we could hear plainly, and listened. We did not have long to wait. Soon a shrill, weird, wailing scream came over the water. They wished me to take a boat and go with them to hunt the poor woman at once, and became almost indignant at my delay in starting.

Finally, I told them they were listening to the wailing of a wildcat. They were reluctant to believe it till finally, after screaming two or three more times, it yowled enough like a cat so that they were satisfied. I am glad to say none of them were frightened, and several of them proposed our going to hunt it, dark as it was. But I told them it would be a fruitless chase. The cat would slink away in the darkness, and there was not the least chance of our being able to see it. We had no dog and only dogs can trail animals in the dark.

I stayed at camp a few days after the girls left, and of course there was now no garbage can at which Bobby and her family might feed. I soon began occasionally to find feathers on my strolls through the woods, sad proof of the fate of some bird that had been surprised by these cats.

When winter came, Uncle Alvin Phillips and the other local trappers got out their traps

and began the serious business of matching wits with the wildings. I suppose it is legitimate, and even desirable, for some one to do this, else the "varmints would increase too rapidly", but my sympathies have always been with the poor creatures who get trapped and who must wait in fear and agony for hours, or even days, for the trapper to come and put an end to their sufferings.

Uncle Alvin had been finding the tracks of this family for some time. He knew where they lived and set about to catch them. Wildcats do not have a keen sense of smell, and they are not very cunning. Only those who through some fortunate combination of circumstances live to be old enough to learn wisdom by experience are hard to trap.

Uncle Alvin caught two of the kittens that winter, but not the old cat. The next summer she raised her kittens under the same ledge of overhanging rocks; but this time she hunted down the creek. If she came into the camp for food, I never knew it. But I did find abundant evidence that she was still alive and doing business by catching sleeping birds.

Since that time the camp garbage has been kept in a closed house and removed every evening about sunset, so any prowling animal would find no food were it to visit the camp at night. But last summer Bobby was seen in the woods on the shore of the lake only a few rods from camp. Her large size and apparent age made her identity pretty certain, for even in the mountain country wildcats are not plentiful. Once in a while I hear some of her family snarl in the darkness near a campfire, and I occasionally hear their wail; but this is usually in the fall after camp closes.

There are several fox hounds kept in the little town of Mayland, and they are taken on a hunt every few nights; but either they will not trail a wildcat or Bobby manages to outwit them. Only a few weeks ago she was very much alive, and I trust she may live neighbor to the camp for years to come.

### ***The Bobcat*** (Lynx rufus)

THE bobcat is so named from its stubby tail, not over three inches long. It is more widely known as the wildcat and as such has a great reputation as a fighter. But it never attacks man' unless wounded or cornered so it can see no other way of escape. Then its extremely quick motions, combined' with its sharp teeth and its strong, sharp claws, make it a formidable foe indeed.

It ranges throughout most of North America, south of Canada, except where there is not enough woods or brush in which to hide its home. It is taller and longer-legged in proportion to its weight than most of the cat family. It varies somewhat in color and size in different parts of the country.

The larger, northern form is often called the catamount, and is credited with the ability to kill deer. It is said sometimes to be destructive to lambs and young pigs. But the ordinary bobcat feeds largely on rabbits,' birds, and other small animals it finds on the ground. Like our domestic cat it is a great mouser and, undoubtedly, does considerable good in keeping those pests under control. Aside from catching a few chickens, it does man little or no harm.

It has little or no ability to follow a trail, so hunts by sight and sound. It is expert at climbing trees, but seldom does so unless to escape an enemy. Like most of the cat family it is afraid of a dog, and will always run from one unless it is necessary to fight to protect its young. But when it must fight, very few dogs can kill it.

In color it is a yellowish or brownish gray, spotted, with the, black spots on the head and flanks often becoming short stripes. The short ears are tipped with black tassels and the tail is banded and tipped with black.

A fair average length from the end of the nose to the end of the tail is twenty-eight inches, and twenty pounds is a fair average weight. They rear from three to five kittens at a time. The mother hides her nest from her mate and carefully guards her kittens till they are of considerable age; for if the father or any other male should find them he would promptly kill them, probably eating their heads. In this they are like the house cat, the panther, or mountain lion, and many others of the cat family.

The bobcat resembles his northern cousin the Canadian lynx in many ways, but is only about two thirds as large,

## **Bunny Longears**

LITTLE Bunny Longears and his four brothers and sisters were born one day early in May in the brier patch at the foot of the hill in plain sight of Mr. Man's house. Mother Bunny had chosen the brier patch for her home because it was a brier patch. She had learned that the thicker the briars the less likely dogs, men, and most of her other enemies were to come near. Even Mr. Hawk and Mr. Owl, much as they like to dine on freshly killed rabbit, hesitate to swoop down into a brier patch in an attempt to catch anything. The briars tear their feathers too badly.

Mother Bunny had lived in that neighborhood for some time; and just because it was necessary in, order to save her life, she had kept watch every day and every night of where Mr. Man, his dog, and even his cat, went most often. In this way she also learned the places they avoided. This brier patch was more carefully avoided by all of them than any other place in the neighborhood. She chose it for this reason, and also because it was so near the house that even Mr. Fox and Mr. Weasel seldom came there. She soon knew every corner of this brier patch, and every time she was chased by a dog she ran directly to it. It was such a tangle of blackberry briars, scrubby thorn bushes, and saw-brier vines that it is no wonder a dog seldom followed her more than a few feet into it.

She had made paths through it in every direction –paths where the briars were high enough not to scratch her, but low enough to catch most of her enemies. She knew just how to lead her pursuers into the sharpest briars and the worst thorns without getting a scratch herself.

There was much broom sedge and other grass growing through this brier patch - and as the cows seldom got hungry enough to graze there, much of the grass of previous years had died and fallen in tangles. Under one of these tangles of dead grass and briars, Mother Bunny had built a home on a well-drained spot, and lined it with the softest grass she could find mixed with fur pulled from her own body. It was a very snug, "comfy" home, so well built that it was always warm, and so well covered with dead grass that it was always dry inside, even after a heavy rain.

She was very proud of her new home, for it was the first time she had ever built one just where she thought a home should be located. Here she could lie down and go to sleep so thoroughly well hidden that she could not be seen ten feet away, and the briars extended so far on every side that no enemy was likely to even get near enough to smell her. She felt so safe here that she sometimes even dared to close her eyes when she slept, for even if she were found, her home was surrounded on all sides by a circle of the sharpest briars through which nothing could come without making enough noise to waken her. This way of sleeping with her eyes shut was very unusual, for rabbits generally sleep, or at least appear to sleep, with their eyes wide open, their ears stuck forward to catch every sound, and their legs set to jump at an instant's warning; and this is necessary, for every hawk, owl, fox, coyote, or other animal that eats meat is ready to pounce on a rabbit at sight.

There was a clover field bordering the brier patch on one side and Mr. Man's garden bordered it on the other, and Mr. Man grew plenty of peas and cabbage in his garden. Nothing could have been finer; for if there is anything in the world a rabbit likes to eat better than fresh, tender clover leaves it is cabbage or green pea tops.

Mrs. Bunny was a timid little widow. She was timid because, ever since she could remember, she had been compelled to watch every moment of her life lest something catch and kill her, and having been born where there was little food she had been compelled to worry lest she should not get enough to eat. She was a widow because her former-home had been in the open woods, where one must travel unprotected in search of food, and one day a great hawk had swooped down and carried off her mate right before her eyes as they were returning from gathering their breakfast. It was then she had left her home and fled.

Finally she found this brier patch: Never had she felt so safe before, for now she had a home that was protected and there was enough of the very most delicious food to feed a hundred rabbits almost at her very door. Here she should be able to raise her family without danger and without too much work.

She was very proud of her little family, and stayed with them day and night till they were a week old, only leaving them for a few moments now and then to run over and eat a few tender clover leaves.

By that time they had grown wonderfully. Even the runt of the family would weigh more than twice as much as when he was born, and they all had their eyes open and were clamoring to get out and see what the great world about them was like. She, knew it was not safe for them to do this, but what could she do? She was getting thin and must spend more time hunting food. She must leave them alone a great deal, and she could not help feeling anxious about what might happen while she was away.

The young of all animals love to run and play as soon as they are able to do so; and it is well that they do, for this takes them out into the sunshine, and sunshine makes them grow strong. Even human children should play in the sunshine every day, if they are to grow up to be strong and healthy men and women. It was especially important that Bunny Longears and his brothers and sisters should grow strong and active, for who knew how soon they might have to run for their lives.

So their mother allowed them to play in the sunshine when she was home and knew there was no enemy in sight, and what merry times they did have, playing "leap frog" or chasing each other up and down the paths, playing tag. Soon they knew the paths in their brier patch almost as well as did their mother, and she was very proud of this. How strong they were getting, and how they could make their little legs fly! She would sit up on her haunches and watch them play, with her eyes and ears strained to catch every sight or sound, and her funny nose working and wabbling all the time, searching for the smell of an enemy.

Should she hear, see, or smell anything unusual she would thump the ground with her powerful hind leg, and all of the little bunnies would come scampering home as fast as they could run and would jump into bed and lie as quiet as mice. She had taught them to do this, which was easy for her to do because they had partly inherited it from a long line of ancestors whose mothers had also believed their children were safer when home in bed.

But when she left her children and went for a meal in the garden or the clover field, she never felt quite sure what might happen, especially after she returned one evening and found only Bunny Longears in the nest. All the others were out playing, and she had to thump the ground hard with her strong hind leg several times before they began to return. They all came back but one.

He had run near the clover patch, and it had looked so good to him that he had hopped out of the briars and was soon having his first meal of clover leaves eaten directly from the plant. How good they tasted! He could have all he wished for there was a whole field full, so he ate as fast as he could nibble and forgot to look and listen. His mother would never have dared to take more than a bite or two without looking about and listening. But then he was only a baby rabbit, and had not learned the dangers of the cruel world outside his brier patch. Experience might have taught him wisdom, if only things had gone well. But things did not go well. A hungry hawk was sailing over the field looking for a good supper. It saw the little fellow, and before he knew it was near, it had him in its talons and was tearing at his head with its beak. One squeal of pain and terror and all was over, and the hawk had its supper.

Wild mothers love their children as well as we do ours, else they would not be willing to risk their own lives to protect them; but when one of them loses a child she does not waste time mourning, especially if she has other children needing her care. So Bunny's mother did not neglect her remaining children to mourn the one that was gone. She simply watched the more anxiously that a similar fate should not overtake those that were left.

I cannot say whether Bunny's remaining brothers and sisters knew what had happened or not. I am not even sure his mother knew. But I do know the others did not profit by the lesson. One by one they ventured to leave home and go out alone to see what they could find, and one by one they failed to return. They were not willing to wait for their mother to take them out and teach them what to do.

In every wildling's family there are one or more children that are wiser than the rest. They seem instinctively to know better than to go alone into danger till they have gained enough experience to take care of themselves. The others are soon destroyed by their enemies. Perhaps it is just as well, for if all of the young of such animals as rabbits were wise enough to live, it would not be long till they would be so abundant they would destroy all our crops.

This is how Bunny had learned to know and to fear dogs. One day his sister had run out on the lawn too near Mr. Man's house. Mr. Man's dog saw her and gave chase. She ran as fast as her little legs could go but that was not fast enough. The dog caught her just before she reached the brierpatch, Bunny saw it all, and ever afterward he would fear dogs. Better still, they had come so near his delicate nostrils that he had caught the odor of the terrible monster, and he would never again smell that odor without a shudder of fear.

Not long after this a cat slipped into the brier patch and caught one of his brothers within a few feet of him. Now he knew one must be always on the alert even in the brier patch. Cats were not so large and terrifying as dogs, but they were even more to be dreaded, for the briars hindered them but little more than they did Bunny himself.

Before Bunny was three weeks old he had no brothers or sisters left. Now his mother gave him her whole attention and did everything possible to teach him the things he needed to know.

Bunny had learned his lessons well. He knew how to slip into the clover patch or into the garden after night fall, - and he did this often, for he was very fond of peas and clover, - but he also knew he must look and listen before leaving the bushes, and that he must hurry as fast as possible till he was hidden again. He knew he must stop after every bite or two to look and listen, and he knew that when danger came he should sit perfectly still till he was sure he was seen, and then if necessary run to the brier patch as fast as possible.

But he felt safe in his own bed. He had minded his mother and had been careful when he left his bed, and he had always run to it as straight as he could go when he thought he was in danger.

Then, suddenly, his great danger came. He was asleep in his bed in the middle of the day. His mother was away, and he knew he must be doubly careful, for there was no one to look after him; but he was sleepy, and surely he was safe here. He would doze just a little while. , So he closed his eyes and was soon fast asleep.

Suddenly he was wide awake without knowing just why. Then the grass over his bed moved ever so little and he saw a sleek, shiny head reared over him and two beady eyes looking straight into his. He had never seen anything like this before, and he was terribly frightened. Yet he lay perfectly still, for he was not sure he was seen.

In fact he had not been seen, but a great black snake more than five feet long had scented the odor of rabbit and was slowly tracing out where it came from. The ugly head waved back and forth and the long forked tongue licked out above his head as the terrible monster tried to locate the odor that was now so strong. Bunny did not move a hair's breadth. He scarcely dared breathe, but his muscles grew tense and he knew he was ready to jump any instant.

The ugly head was reared higher and waved again. Then the snake quickly drew back its head to strike, and Bunny knew he was seen. In less time than I can tell it, he gave a great leap and was running down the path with all his might. And he was none too soon, for the snake's head grazed him as he sprang from the nest.

It took the snake an instant to recover and start in pursuit, and this gave Bunny a little start. Down the path they sped, Bunny running for his life, and the snake following determined to have his dinner.

They passed the paths that led into, the thickest briers. Bunny had no time to turn into them. Besides, what was the use of leading an enemy into the briers if that enemy could glide through them more easily than he could himself. Poor Bunny was only a foot or two ahead when he sprang out of the briers onto Mr. Man's lawn. There sat Mr. Man a few rods away telling a story to some children, but Bunny did not see them. Neither did the snake see them. They were too intent on their race for life.

On they came till the children cried out, but Bunny did not hear them. Neither did the snake. Mr. Man said, "Keep still and see what happens." Just then the snake caught Bunny, and started to wrap its ugly, cold body around him and to squeeze him. Poor Bunny! What could he do! In terror he screamed, "Mamma, Mamma," as loud as he could cry; and then he could cry no more, for the dreadful snake was squeezing the breath out of him.

Mother had been sunning herself only a few feet away, and did not know what was happening. She forgot her fears of Mr. Man and came as fast as she could run. She saw poor Bunny and the snake and knew what was happening.

Like a vixen she sprang on the snake, sank her teeth in its neck, and began tearing its body with the sharp claws on her strong hind feet. How fast she did scratch, and how the scales flew off its body!

This was something the snake had not counted on. Instead of leisurely strangling its prey, it was being terribly torn and hurt. It could not stand this much longer. So it uncoiled from Bunny and tried to wrap around his mother. If it could do this, it would be safe. It could soon crush the life out of her.

Bunny was free and he started across the lawn as fast as he could go, coming straight toward Mr. Man, but he did not know that. He was too frightened to see him.

Whether his mother saw Mr. Man and was frightened, or whether, now that her darling child was free, her fear returned and she could no longer fight the snake, Mr. Man could not tell, but she left the snake and ran into the brier patch.

One would suppose the snake would have left also, but it did not. It must have been very hungry, for again it darted after Bunny Longears as fast as it could go, and poor Bunny could not run as fast as before. He had been hurt too badly.

The snake caught him again, much nearer Mr. Man and the children than before. Again Bunny shrieked, "Mamma, Mamma," and again she came as fast as she could run. She tore at the snake again with claws and teeth and soon her baby was free and had fled to his home in the brier patch.

Mother rabbit did not leave the snake so soon this time, but in a moment or two she also ran away. The snake did not attempt to follow. It did not seem able. Mr. Man and the children ran to where it was and found it torn and bleeding. Whether it would have died from its wounds no one can tell, for the children had seen enough. They demanded that Mr. Man kill it, which he did.

Was Bunny badly hurt? Evidently he was more scared than hurt, for soon he was seen in the clover patch eating clover. He lived to become a wise rabbit and knew how to take care of himself and how to avoid danger. The last I knew he was still living in the brier patch and was sure he had just the best and safest home in the country.

## ***The Cottontail Rabbit***

(*Lepus floridanus*)

RABBITS and hares are native to much of the world. The domesticated species known under various names such as Belgian Hare, Welsh Giants, etc., are merely selections from the wild hares of Europe.

Our most common American rabbit, *Lepus floridanus*, is usually known as the "cottontail." It multiplies very rapidly indeed, bearing at least three litters every season and there are often seven in a litter. Though timid creatures, rabbits are cunning; and it is well they are, for every meat-eating animal and bird feeds on them.

When introduced into Australia a few years ago, where there are few carnivorous animals or birds, they increased by millions, and became a serious pest.

Rabbits are fond of leguminous plants and many of our vegetables, so may do damage to our gardens. They often girdle valuable shrubs and young fruit trees. This is usually done in winter when other food is scarce.

On the western plains live our largest species, the jack rabbit. One of them often weighs more than twenty pounds. There are few animals that can run as fast as a jack rabbit.

In our high mountains, where the snow lies deep much of the year, we find the snowshoe rabbit, so named because the hairs on its feet grow long and stiff in winter, serving as a sort of snowshoe. Such rabbits make very large tracks.

The arctic rabbits are white in winter, so they cannot be seen as they scurry over the snow of their native home.

Our common rabbits are subject to a very fatal disease often known as the "seven years plague," as it is popularly believed to become epidemic every seven years. This disease kills rabbits by the millions. It is contagious to man, and is then popularly known as "rabbit fever." The disease is often fatal. It may be contracted by merely skinning a sick rabbit. Many rabbits have the disease, though apparently well; hence the danger of eating them.

Our cottontail rabbit, and in fact most of our rabbits, are in reality hares. True rabbits

burrow in the ground and live in their burrows when not feeding or playing. Hares nest above ground, do not dig burrows, and only enter such places when pursued by some enemy.

## The Hated Race Returns

Graycoat, the last of the hated race of coyotes, left my old home neighborhood after his mate had been killed, he did not die of a broken heart; neither did he starve. True, his faithful mate was dead, and equally true, he could no longer stay in the country he had loved so long, for single-handed he could not hope to outwit the relentless hunters and their bloodthirsty hounds but life still looked sweet to him.

He had listened anxiously to the progress of the race that ended so disastrously for his mate, and realized things were not going as they should, He had faithfully done his part by cutting across the fields to the usual meeting places to relieve her, and take his turn in leading; the race so she might rest, but every time she had turned the wrong way before reaching the appointed place, and he was not even near when she made her last stand. He had been surprised when the baying of the hounds ceased and was troubled at the sound of gunshots; but he was safe, and surely his mate must be also. He would go home and wait her return. There was plenty, of time for this before dark. Then, as the shadows would begin to gather, they would raid some farmer's hen roost and collect their pay for the hard day's chase.

So he loped leisurely across the fields to Graham's brush, carefully keeping along the side of a hill or in the valley along some stream so his outline might not show against the skyline till he reached home. Arriving there he lay down to wait on a hillside overlooking the creek. He was tired and sleepy, but it was never safe to sleep unless his mate was near to give warning of approaching danger, so he merely lay down with his head between his paws and waited, his nose, his eyes, and his ears all alert to catch the slightest danger signal.

Evening came and found him still there. The sun set, and darkness gathered; and still he lay and gazed, but his mate did not return. As soon as the shadows were deep enough to offer safety, he stepped out to the edge of the brush, sat down, and pointing his nose toward the moon, gave forth a long series of sharp cries, yap-yap-ya-yaya, till the woods and fields rang with the gathering cry of the coyote. He stepped back into the brush and waited and listened, but he heard no answering cry, and no mate appeared. He repeated his call at intervals of fifteen or twenty minutes for an hour or more. As our house was not more than a half-mile away, we could hear him clearly; and finally father remarked, "That wolf is calling for his mate. He does not know she has been killed." Just how long he kept up this calling I do not know, for farmers go to bed early in the summer time, and farm boys are soon asleep.

But the neighbors said that for hours that night they heard most piteous crying near the spot where his mate had been killed. Early the next morning someone told Jim Mills what occurred, and he took his hounds to the spot to see if Graycoat had really been there. He found traces all about the spot where the fight had taken place the day before, and saw that the poor fellow had torn up the earth where his mate's blood had been spilled. Then he had left the country.

The hounds took up the trail and, followed it up Richland Creek, across by Brown's woods, over the fields and into the woods along Skunk River, then directly up the river till the hounds gave up the trail and came home. The word soon passed that Graycoat had left the country, and it was not long before everyone knew this was really true.

The farmers were pleased. Their ducks and chickens were safe. The coyotes were

gone. No more need chicken houses be fastened up at night or sheep driven inside the fold. The oldest hunter of them all, Riley Coble, died, and his hounds died with him. Jim Mills married and moved out of the neighborhood, taking his dogs with him. Bob Cortis owned the only hound left for miles around, the famous wolfhound he had shipped from Kentucky. He boasted he would not take fifty dollars for that dog. No one asked him to do so. But if he would not take fifty dollars for his dog, neither would he feed it; so soon it became known and hated for miles around because it made its living by sucking eggs.

One day it came to our house as usual and raided the hens' nests. I had just come home from college for a few days' visit, and found it in the hen house and swore vengeance on it. Mother said I must not do anything about it, for Mr. Cortis would not take fifty dollars for his dog. I said he would never need to do so.

The next day the dog came back, and again I caught it robbing a hen's nest. One shot with father's old gun and its troubles were over. It would never go hungry again, neither would it ever rob any more hens' nests. Father gave it a decent private burial in the far end of the raspberry patch. Again the neighborhood was glad. Not only were the coyotes gone - their old enemies, those disturbers of the evening peace - but the foxhounds were gone also.

Thirty miles west of the old home neighborhood, Skunk River flowed through a district that was not settled so soon or by such progressive farmers as the rest of the country. Here the river overflowed the lowlands regularly, and they were flanked on either side by rough hills, and many of these hills were still covered with hazel brush and timber. Even much of the lowlands were still just as the white man had found them, natural meadows of wild grass that grew three or four feet tall.

It was to this country the old coyote fled when his mate was killed. Here were rabbits in abundance, fat, tender rabbits that could be had for the catching. Quails and prairie chickens nested in every grassy meadow, or led their young to the open spaces to bask in the sunshine or catch baby grasshoppers. The birds were almost as easy to catch as the farmers' stupid hens, and they were even more satisfying to the appetite.

When Graycoat left the scene of his mate's death he had no intention of leaving the country. He merely knew daylight was coming and it was dangerous to stay where he was. He had not eaten for twenty-four hours, and he had run many miles during that time and was tired. He would go to Brown's woods and rest for the day. Perhaps he might even pick up a rabbit. But he had scarcely reached there and lain down in a thicket of blackberry briars and hazel brush before he heard the baying of hounds and was soon aware that they were trailing him.

Usually he would have regarded this as nothing to worry about, but yesterday's experience had upset him. He left his bed at once and ran across the fields to the farthest part of his domain. He even forgot to be cautious, and that explains why as Van Williams went out to plow that morning he saw a coyote crossing their field in full flight long before he heard the hounds coming,

When he reached the place where Rock Creek flows into Skunk River, he entered the creek and waded up stream for perhaps a quarter of a mile, then climbed a steep bluff on the opposite side and lay down among the gray stones to rest. Water carries away all scents, as Graycoat knew well. He also knew that by wading the creek he made a break in his trail that would baffle all but the most experienced hounds.

When foxhounds follow a trail, they seldom run fast. Even when the trail is fresh, they may spend fifteen or twenty minutes in running a mile; and Graycoat had run fully twelve miles since he left Brown's woods. So he had a chance to sleep two hours or more before he was awakened by the dogs trying to find where he had gone when he had entered the water.

Usually he would have waited till he learned whether they succeeded in finding which way he had gone, and only when they were near would he have recrossed the creek and cut across the fields for Graham's brush or Brown's woods. But this was no usual time. He was thoroughly frightened, so he quietly slipped back through the woods and up the river.

The hounds never found his trail. They were tired from yesterday's chase and so did not try very hard, but he never knew this. He was fleeing for his life through unknown country now, so he kept well under cover and used all the tricks he knew, such as doubling back on his trail, jumping up on high logs and running on them for some distance and then making a long leap to the ground and running off in a different direction. But he kept his general direction and before night he had passed beyond the town of Delta and entered the territory already mentioned. When at last he entered the tall grass of a wild meadow, he felt safe. Here he could rest. He had heard no hounds for more than three hours; and even if they followed him here, he could easily outwit them in the tall grass. So he lay down on some dry grass and slept for hours.

When he awakened, the moon was shining brightly, and two rabbits were playing tag in the edge of a pasture near by. He was hungry, so he crept so noiselessly through the tall grass to the edge of the pasture that even the alert ears of the rabbits heard no sound. Where the rabbit path led from the pasture into the meadow he crouched ready to spring, and waited. He did not have to wait long. One foolish rabbit came down the path as fast as he could run, his playmate not far behind. There was a snap of jaws, a squeak of terror, and Graycoat was eating his first meal for two days.

A full-grown rabbit makes a good meal for a coyote, so when Graycoat had eaten he went back to his bed and to sleep again, and there he remained through the rest of the night and all of the next day.

That evening he was awakened by the gathering call of the coyotes, and knew there were others of his kind near by. He was thrilled by the sound. Now he did not feel so lonesome. He got up leisurely, stretched himself, and went out to see what he could learn. To his ears, the call he heard did not seem to come from everywhere in general and no place in particular, as it does to ours. He had no trouble in locating the coyote that was howling, and reached the spot where she stood just as two others trotted up.

He had looked for something like this, but was surprised to see two instead of one coyote answer the call. Clearly this was a mother and her two almost grown pups. He lay down a few feet from them and waited, partly to see if her mate would come, and partly because very few wildlings ever force their company on strangers. They know that to do this is almost sure to mean a fight, and a fight is no way to make friends. Besides, wild animals seldom fight when there is nothing to gain by it.

Presently one of the pups came over and smelled of him and growled a bit, but Graycoat sat still and submitted to the inspection in silence. Soon the pup trotted back to his mother, and all started towards the meadow. Graycoat followed a few paces behind. Soon all were busy hunting field mice, the game of inexperienced pups.

Now Graycoat knew his new acquaintance had no mate, or he would have joined the party before the hunt began. He did not know that Al Hicklen lived less than a mile away, and that he kept two hounds, and that after a recent chase of several hours he had succeeded in shooting her mate as he circled back towards his home after losing the hounds.

Old Coyotes seldom hunt field mice, though they never fail to catch them should they find them unexpectedly; but it is a part of every pup's training to learn to hunt them, for in an emergency any coyote may have to live on mice. These pups were in training, hence the hunt.

Graycoat entered into the hunt with zest and caught several mice, which he ate. Then he

jumped up a rabbit. The wind had been against him, and he had not scented it at all. Immediately the two pups bounded away in full pursuit. Graycoat did not resent this, though it was his rabbit, for when wolves are hunting they do not stand on ceremony. The most important thing is to catch the game. Its ownership can always be settled later.

Graycoat did not follow them. He saw they were green at hunting and were not so fleet of foot as they would be later. He observed which way the rabbit was turning, and cut across in such a way that it ran almost into his jaws before it saw him. It only took a bound or two to catch it and crush its life out. This he did just as the pups came up.

They were enraged that this intruder should have caught what they regarded as their prey. Without hesitation they attacked him, and so the inevitable fight began. They were two to one, but they were but puppies. They lacked weight and size as well as fighting experience. Besides, their adult teeth were not fully developed. They were attacking a veteran fighter in the prime of life - a wolf who had been able to defend his range against all comers for years. The fight did not last long, though it was fierce enough while it lasted. Soon the puppies were bleeding and completely cowed.

Their mother sat at a distance watching. The stranger had not provoked the fight, and she did not interfere. Besides, her puppies had already reached the age when they should be driven from home. Had she not lost her mate they would have been driven away before this. This newcomer might do the unpleasant task for her.

Graycoat was not resentful. He did not push his advantage. When he had taught the pups their place, he picked up his rabbit, walked over and gave it to their mother. Then he stood by while she ate it, lest the pups get a part it.

With no other demonstration, the pair of coyotes walked away together, and when the pups attempted to follow, Graycoat raised his bristles and growled threateningly. Thus warned, they stopped and were left behind. Graycoat and his new friend hunted that night, and so simply and quickly are attachments made among the creatures of the wild that they were boon companions by morning, and together they slept in her favorite hiding place the next day.

They hunted together that fall and winter, and made their den in a piece of thick brush near where I boarded while attending high school; This den was less than a quarter of a mile from Al Hicklen's home and hounds. That winter we saw the coyotes frequently, but that was all. They managed to keep a safe distance all winter and the next summer. But in the fall, things began to happen. Bill Rea began clearing up the brush where Graycoat and his new mate were living and where they had reared their young. Al Hicklen helped him and Al always took his hounds with him. Of course they found the coyotes' trail fresh every morning and ran them most of the day. Graycoat was growing old, and did not enjoy this as he once would have done.

One day Al Hicklen sent an invitation to a friend across the river who kept hounds to come over and help catch these wolves. The friend came over with his dogs, and for a night and a day they ran Graycoat and his mate. Finally, hard pressed and cut off in all other directions, they were forced to run down the river towards Graycoat's old home. When at last the dogs gave up the chase, Graycoat and his mate were on the border of his old domain. Both were tired, so he led the way to a safe resting place where they slept till night.

When night came, they were ravenously hungry. His mate did not know the country, so again Graycoat led the way. Even animals love their old home, and never fail to return to it if they have an opportunity. After Graycoat had led the way to a near-by hen roost where each secured a fat hen, they trotted a mile or two farther to one of his old dens. Here they spent a few days in idleness and luxury, but at last Graycoat's love for home prevailed, and they galloped to Brown's woods.

Much of it had been cleared, but there was enough left for safety, and besides it was home. In a few days they visited Graham's brush and found it a cornfield, but even here two or three acres along the creek were left in brush. It was enough. They decided to remain.

They kept themselves carefully concealed for months. Both were old and did not care to take any chances. But the old wolf hunters and their hounds were gone. The old duck and squirrel hunters had also grown too old to hunt, and the younger generation were busy raising prize corn and fat steers. They might occasionally hunt rabbits or squirrels, but they would never disturb a coyote. They would not even discover there were any in the country.

There never had been so many mice and rabbits in this neighborhood before, and it never had been so easy to steal chickens and ducks. It was even easy to get a goose occasionally.

Most people suppose the wildlings cannot live in an old, thickly settled country. The facts are that all but the largest of them are safer there than in an unsettled country. Their natural enemies are fewer and it is easier to get food. Even inside our largest cities there are a surprisingly large number of wild animals. It was recently reported that wild deer had been seen within the limits of New York City; and one morning during the fall of 1927, a wild fox was seen on Market Square in the very heart of Nashville, Tennessee. It was chased for several blocks by men and boys, but easily escaped. There are too many hiding places and too few hunting dogs in a modern city to make it dangerous for wild animals. No one is allowed to use a gun within the limits of a modern city. It is no wonder small animals thrive there.

A few years ago I was back in the old home neighborhood. When I asked my brother if there were any coyotes in the neighborhood again, he said they were becoming so plentiful as to be a nuisance, and no one knew what to do about it.

So again when the evening shadows gather, or when the moon shines full on the winter snow, in the old haunts, where I heard it as a boy, one may hear the gathering call of the coyote, or his chant to the moon, and many a child who is caught alone in the night doubtless feels the same cold chills creep up and down his spine when he hears them that I felt when I was a boy.

## ***The Coyote***

(*Canis latrans*)

The coyote is purely an American animal. He was at first called simply the prairie wolf, which, in fact, he really is. The name coyote is a Mexican name, which was carried over the border to the United States before much of the West was known to settlers.

There is some discussion as to how far east the Coyote ever lived in the wild state, for in many places we had small wolves that differed from the large gray wolf about as much as the coyote does, and the modern tendency among the common people has been to call these coyotes.

The coyote never was a dangerous animal, for it did not attack human beings, or at least never under ordinary circumstances. It is even more cunning than the gray wolf, as indeed it has to be in order to live on the prairies, where it has neither caves nor timber in which to hide.

In many parts of the country the coyote was believed to have been exterminated, only to reappear as soon as the settlers slackened their vigilance. Doubtless sometimes the same individuals that had been run out of a community came back, as in the case of Graycoat. At other times, individuals seeking a new home found a place that promised plenty of food and safety.

Coyotes destroy many mice, rats, rabbits, and other small animals that are a nuisance to man. In this they are a benefit to the country. Only when they become numerous, or when they learn that it is easier to catch poultry than rabbits, do they become a pest.

They cross readily with dogs, especially with collie dogs. If taken when they are young, they can be readily tamed and make fairly good pets. They are not the equal of dogs in this respect, though they might easily become so in a few generations of domestication.

They are still numerous over most of the country west of the Missouri river, and are occasionally found over most of Iowa and Minnesota. They are now very scarce east of the Mississippi River.

## Frisky the Gray Squirrel

IT WAS not so many years ago that I became acquainted with Frisky. It was while I was teaching in the college at Madison, Tennessee.

For several days I had noticed a squirrel running in and out of a hole in an old tree, but thought little of it. Not only was the weather cold, but there was rain almost every day not common, gentle rains, but cold, dreary downpours that drenched everything. Any sensible squirrel might be expected to live much in a hollow tree in such weather, especially if the hole opened where the rain could not flow in, as did the hole in this tree.

As I passed the tree, going to and from my meals, I often tossed pieces of whole-wheat bread to this squirrel, which she always took with evident pleasure, and held in her dainty hands while she ate them. Should I toss her a piece of white bread, she would nibble off the crust, then toss the remainder away as though it were not good enough for a squirrel to eat.

In this way we became good friends - so good, in fact, that when I came near, she kept about her business without paying the least attention to me, unless she was hungry, when she would stop to beg. This will perhaps explain my being able to see the following incident.

One afternoon the weather had cleared, and the sun was shining brightly. The elm buds were swelling, and the first red maple trees were already showing green. My squirrel had gone to the top of a near-by elm tree for a supper of elm buds. I noticed her swinging on the small twigs and pulling buds to her with her paws, seemingly having a great feast.

A number of men were doing some sort of work on the campus and happened to be near the tree where my squirrel lived. Suddenly one of them cried out, Look there! What is that running across the lawn?"

Everyone looked in the direction he pointed, and I saw one of the queerest little animals I have ever seen scampering across the lawn as fast as it could go. It was about the size of a third-grown rat, but its legs were far too long for a young rat's. It had a tail as long as that of a rat, but it carried it high in the air, something no rat would do. Besides its tail had too much hair on it for a rat's tail. An argument started as to what it could be, some saying one thing and another something else, but no one could be sure. The creature seemed so awkward on its long, gangling legs, and it made out so badly at running that at our distance it did not look like anything we knew. For some reason I glanced back at my friend in the tree eating elm buds.

Suddenly she let loose of the twigs on which she was swinging and dropped to a limb below, caught it, and ran down the tree to the ground as fast as she FR could go. Then she raced away across the lawn like a flash. I had no idea a squirrel could run so fast.

At first, I could not think why she should be running so hard; but soon I saw that she was chasing the creature we had been watching. She quickly caught up with it and pounced on it as

a cat would pounce on a mouse. There was a struggle, the little fellow doing his best to get away; but at last the squirrel gathered him up in her mouth, ran up a tree, and started toward her nest, jumping from branch to branch and from tree to tree. The creature hung limp in her mouth, and I supposed she had killed it, whatever it was.

I watched eagerly to see if I could learn what she had caught; for though I had heard that squirrels catch young birds at times, and I had once seen one catch a baby chicken, I had never heard of their catching a four-footed animal of any kind. Besides, when I had seen a squirrel catch a baby chicken, it never carried it to its hole, but merely took it up into a tree and ate it there.

Finally my squirrel reached her home tree and ran down to the hole. I was at the foot of the tree, watching to see what she had in her mouth. And what do you suppose it was? It was a baby squirrel, so small that its tail was not even broad and bushy, though it was fully covered with hair. It was one of her babies. Frisky was the name I gave him when I came to know him better. He was so venturesome that he had stolen from the nest hole - just as a wee child sometimes gets out of the yard when mother is not looking - and had run away. He was far too small to take care of himself, and it was not at all safe for him to be out of the nest hole; but he was determined to go where he pleased, in spite of his mother.

When she reached the hole, she let her baby loose, so he could go inside; but he promptly started around the tree and tried to get away again. She soon caught him, and in the struggle, nearly dropped him to the ground. Now she dragged him to the mouth of the hole, and actually pushed his head into it. But Frisky, protesting at the top of his voice, placed a little paw on each side of the hole, and refused to go in, but she was determined.

The mother pushed and scolded, and moved from one side of the hole to the other; still he would not go inside. Finally she seemed to lose patience, and bit him till he squealed with pain. Then she crowded into the hole herself, and dragged him after her. For several minutes, I could hear the little fellow crying and protesting in a way that made it evident -he was being punished for his naughtiness. Afterwards everything became quiet, and soon the mother squirrel came out of the hole and ran to the elm tree, and again began eating her supper of elm buds.

Some young animals are like some children they seem determined to do as they please no matter what their parents say, or how much they may worry about their wayward children. But the great difference between these disobedient animals and disobedient children is that the animals usually pay for their disobedience with their lives. They venture into danger and are killed and eaten by some enemy.

For over a week Frisky stayed in the nest with his brothers and sisters, and made no trouble. He was growing fast, however; and day by day he became surer that he could take care of himself, and that there was really no reason why so big a squirrel as he should stay in a dark hole all the time.

As I passed his tree, I soon began to notice his bright eyes watching me out of the hole. One day, about a week after his first adventure, when I threw some bread to his mother, he scampered out of the hole and came down after a piece on his own account. His mother was sitting on her haunches near the tree with a piece of bread in her paws, and was so busy eating that she did not see what he was about. Frisky was even more awkward by this time, and seemed to be all legs and tail. Because of lack of practice, he wobbled a good bit as he came down the side of the tree, and once or twice his hold slipped and he came near tumbling on his head. But he was a plucky fellow, and as soon as he recovered his hold he would come on down as if nothing had happened.

When he reached the ground, I threw him a piece of bread, which he grabbed eagerly,





























































