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*** START OF THE PROJECT GUTENBERG EBOOK BUDDY JIM ***

BUDDY JIM

ELIZABETH GORDON







BUDDY JIM

By ELIZABETH GORDON

Pictures by JOHN RAE

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Foreword

Out in the Park one day, children, I met a little boy not bigger than you are, who told me that he liked stories about a boy and a dog and the things they did together.

He said that it must be a *real boy* and a *real dog*, and there must be other animals in the story, not great, big, fierce ones, but just *neighborly* ones—animals a boy might, perhaps, meet when he went for walks in the woods—and take pictures of and get to know.

So this is the story of the way a *real boy* and a *real dog* spent their first summer in the *real country*; and the fun they had together.

Buddy Jim and old Dog Sandy are waiting for us over on the front page.

Your very own,
Elizabeth Gordon



They were going to get
an early start



LEAVING HOME IN THE CITY

*"We're going to the Country,"
Said little Buddy Jim.
And all his little play-mates said,
"How dull 'twill be, for him."
"It's like a great, big, vacant lot,
Just land and air and sky!"
"No boys! No games! Oh dear!" said Jim,
"Don't want to say Goodbye!"*

BUT he had to say "Goodbye," because all the other boys' Mothers were calling them in to go to bed, and as Buddy Jim and his family were going to get an early start for their trip to the country in their automobile, there would be no time for saying farewells in the morning.

So all the boys ran home, shouting last messages to Buddy Jim as they went. "Bring us a tame bull-frog," said one, and "I'd like a grey squirrel to keep in a cage," said another.

As Buddy Jim heard the last door close behind the last small boy he felt very lonely indeed; so he sat down on the porch swing to think it over.

He could hear Daddy moving around in the house, getting everything ready for the early morning start, and he knew that it would not be very many minutes before he would be called in to go to bed; and he wanted to get his thinking done first, so he had to do it quickly.

There was one thing that he was very sure of; he did *not* want to go away and leave all his play-mates behind. "Course," he thought, "there would prob'ly be *some* fun in the country,"—but he *knew* that there was loads and *loads* of it in the city, base ball and three old cat, and swimming in the lake, and chasing butterflies, and working in the school gardens, helping Alex the crippled boy in the wheel chair to train his bull-pups, and "Oh, Goodness' Sakes! So *many* things! So many *int'resting* things to do."

"I don't *want* to go," he murmured aloud. "There'll be no one to play with; three whole months, and no one to play with! Not much fun to think about! I'll prob'ly just fade away and *die!*" he wailed.

Then somebody laughed, "Ha, ha, ha!" To be sure, it was a queer, squeaky little laugh, and Buddy Jim had never heard anything like it before, but it sounded very jolly.

"Now I wonder," said Buddy Jim, "what *that* was? It *sounded* just like somebody laughing! But there's no one here 'cept me."

"Hello, Buddy Jim," said the same squeaky little voice, "Hello! Can't you see me? Here I am, up above you, in the corner of the porch ceiling, hanging on a nail."

Buddy Jim peered up into the darkness above him, and sure enough he saw a funny, fussy little body, hanging head downward, so that a pair of little eyes, in a funny little fox-like face, were laughing down at him.

"Why!" said Buddy Jim in surprise, "Why! Who are you?"

"I? Oh! I'm just Reddy Bat, and when I heard you say that you were sad because you were going to the Country to live this summer, I just couldn't help laughing. I just laughed right out loud! Why, I'd almost give my right wing to go to the Country to live."

"Then why don't you?" asked Buddy Jim. It's "not very far." "Can't" said Reddy Bat, "Can't, I've got a family to support. Can't afford to leave these good hunting grounds just for the pleasure of living in the country."

"What do you hunt, here?" asked Buddy Jim, politely.

"Oh, flies and mosquitoes, and dragon flies, and bugs of all sorts," said Reddy Bat. "Don't you ever hear us swooping around after dark?"

"Now I come to think of it," said Buddy Jim, "I think I have. But I thought you were some night bird. Anyway, do you really think there will be any fun in the Country?"

"There will be if you make it," said Reddy Bat, "there never *is* any fun anywhere *unless* one makes it for himself. But *I* could have a good time there. I've some cousins who live there, and if you happen to meet them, just give them my best wishes, will you, like a good chap?"

"Why yes, I certainly will," said Buddy Jim, "if I *see* them," he added. "But maybe I won't see them! I've never seen you before in all my life until now, you know."

Reddy Bat laughed again. "I know it," he said, "and I live right here on your front lawn, in your own oak trees, and bring my family out for supper and exercise every evening."

"Where do you leave your children when you come out?"

"Leave the *children!*" said Reddy Bat in surprise. "Leave the precious *children!* Why, we wouldn't *think* of such a thing. Mrs. Reddy Bat always takes our children with her when we leave home. Why we would not have an easy moment all the time we were away if we left *them* at home!"

"I think you are very tender-hearted," said Buddy Jim. "Most folks say the Bats are ugly and not friendly." "Well," said Reddy Bat, "*I know* we are *not* very beautiful to look at, but I suppose we are very much like other people; we try to defend ourselves when we are molested. But if people treat *us* kindly, we treat *them* kindly."

"But, Reddy Bat," said Buddy Jim, "tell me what fun *is* there in the Country?"

"You'll see," laughed Reddy Bat, "living in the Country will make your eyes open wide so that you *can* see! And now Goodnight and Goodbye, Buddy Jim. It's time for me to go to work and for you to go to bed." And Reddy Bat unhooked the tip of his wing from the nail in the corner of the porch roof, and flew past Buddy with a laugh and a whizz and was gone!

Buddy Jim sat up and looked after him. He felt much happier! Just then Daddy called, "Bedtime, Son!"

"Dad," said the little boy, "I b'lieve I'm going to like living in the Country, after all!"

"Sure to, Son," said Daddy, and they gravely shook hands on it.





BUDDY JIM, OLD RED SQUIRREL AND THE ROBIN BIRD

*The summer shower had scurried by
And left the world all new;
And the fleecy clouds were floating
In a sky of clearest blue;
The plants were all so grateful
You could almost see them grow;
Said Buddy Jim, "The Country is
The nicest place I know!"*

BUDDY JIM was in the hammock on the porch with a book. But he had not been reading. It was much more fun to watch the zigzag streaks of lightning flash across the world, and to see the tall trees bend and sway in the wind, and to hear the big boom of the thunder-bird's wings. It was all so different from a shower in the city, when you had to rush and close all the windows, and stay indoors until it was over.

Buddy Jim laughed to himself when he thought about how much he had disliked to leave the city, and come to his Father's farm for the summer. His Father had bought it just so that they could have a summer home where the little boy could run and play and be interested. "I *xpected* to be lonesome," said he to himself, "but I'm not. I've never had so much fun before in my life!" And he settled back in the hammock to read his new book.

But he had hardly begun to read, when he sat up with a start. There was a great chattering and scolding from the branches of an old elm tree on the front lawn. And there was a cry that sounded to Buddy Jim like a call for help, so he threw his book aside and running out to the old elm tree peered up into its leafy branches.

Old Dog Sandy got up from the porch steps, shook the rain drops from his shaggy coat, and followed his master.

But the leaves of the old elm tree were very thick and they could see nothing, though the chattering and scolding and calls for help were still going on.

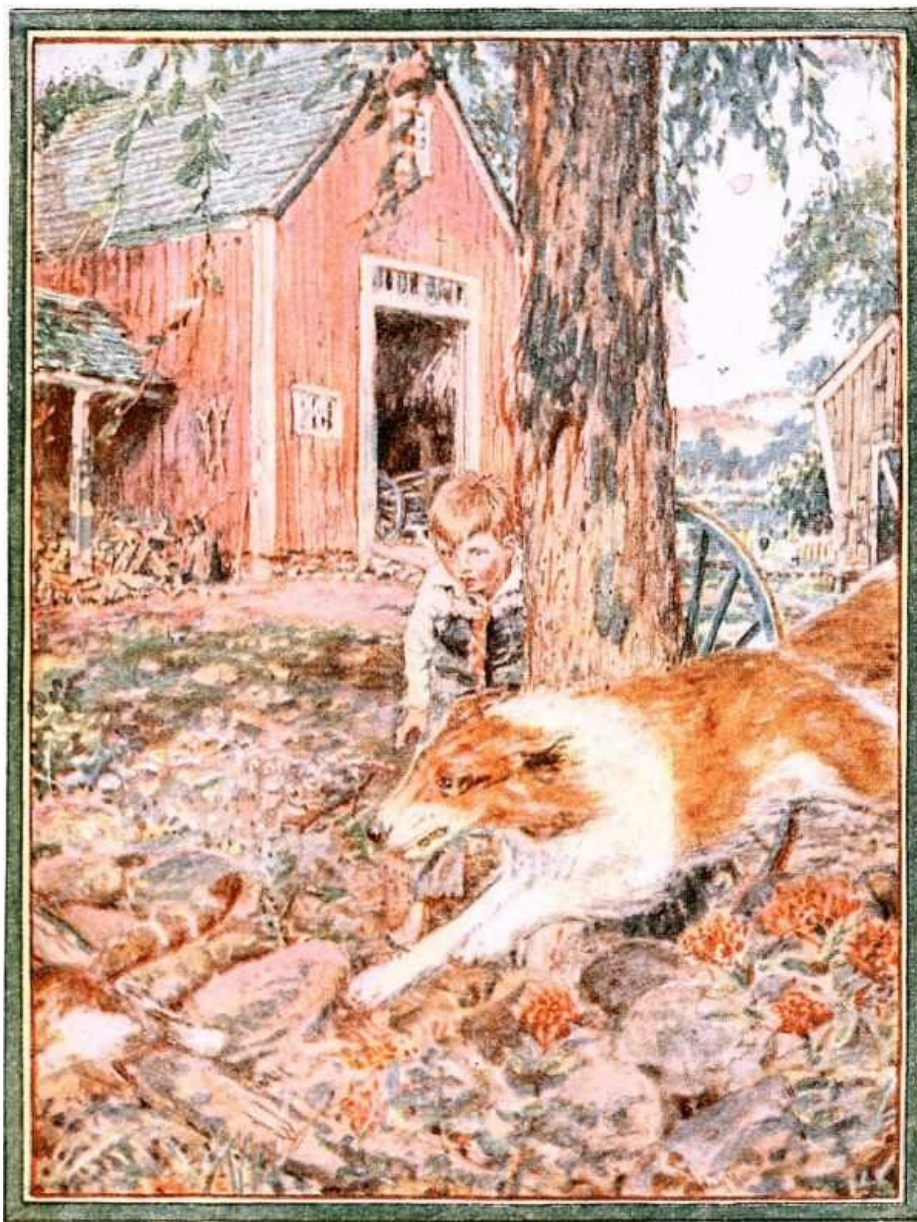
"Sounds as though old Red Squirrel was trying to help himself to Mrs. Robin Redbreast's eggs," said Old Bob the gardener, as he came by.

"Is *that* what it is?" said Buddy Jim. "Well, you watch me! I'm going up there and spoil that old fellow's game."

"I'll give you a boost, if you're going up," said Old Bob the gardener. "You'll get there quicker." And he swung Buddy Jim up to his shoulders. From there Buddy Jim could reach up and catch the lower branches of the old elm, and so clinging with his bare brown feet like a regular little monkey, he was soon in sight of Mrs. Robin Redbreast's nest.

It was just as Old Bob the gardener had suspected. There was old Red Squirrel chattering and scolding at poor Mrs. Robin, doing his best to chase her away from her nest; and she, poor brave little Mother bird, was sticking tight and refusing to leave her precious blue eggs.

When old Red Squirrel saw Buddy Jim he knew his game was up, and so he turned and ran, like the coward he was, past Buddy Jim, and down the trunk of the old elm tree.



Old Dog Sandy doesn't like Cats!

Of course he did not know that old Dog Sandy was waiting there for him, and he ran right into him! If old Dog Sandy had been young Dog Sandy it would have gone hard with old Red Squirrel. But even if old Dog Sandy could not catch him, he *could* chase him away and that is just what he did, barking so loudly it gave him a very good scare anyway, so that he made up his robber mind that he would keep away from *that* place in the future!

Up in the elm tree poor little Mother Robin was trembling all over. "I thought you never *would* come, Buddy Jim," she said. "And then I thought perhaps you were one of those boys who don't care much what becomes of birds."

"Indeed I am not," said Buddy Jim. "I care very much for birds, indeed I do, but you see I'm just out from the city, and I did not know what your call for help meant. I don't know much about Country life yet. Does old Red Squirrel bother you much?"

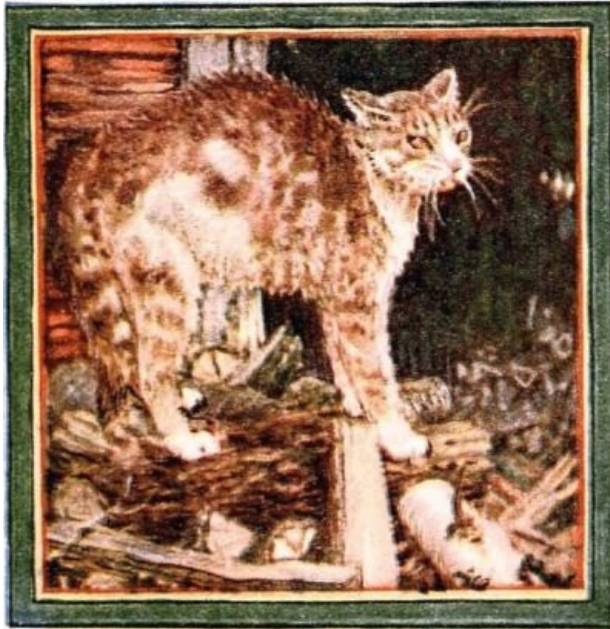
"I should say he does," said Mother Robin. "If he can only find out when Father Robin is away after worms for my dinner, he is sure to come and try to frighten me away so that he can have a chance to eat my beautiful blue eggs for *his* dinner. He is a *dreadful* pest. Between him and Peter Prowler the Cat, who is very likely to catch my babies before they are big enough to fly, it's a wonder I am ever able to bring up a family."

"Well, little Mother Robin," said Buddy Jim, "you can be quiet now, and forget all about it. Old Dog Sandy will be sure to see that Peter Prowler does not come around here. He doesn't like cats. And I'm going to live here all summer, and I'll see that old Red Squirrel keeps away. Goodbye, little Mother bird." And Buddy Jim slid back down the old elm tree, and found old Dog Sandy just coming back from his long chase after old Red Squirrel.

"Sandy," said Buddy Jim, "If you happen to see Peter Prowler the cat around here after Mrs. Robin's babies, I want you to chase him away. Do you hear?"

"Woof, woof!" promised Old Dog Sandy. And he kept his word, and so after awhile there were

four very fat, speckly young robin birds running around the lawn, and they got so tame they would hop right up on the swing and chatter to Buddy Jim.





Buddy Jim loved to
look at his Mother.



BUDDY JIM AND THE PIN-CUSHIONY PERSON

*"The Strawberries are ripening,"
Old Bob the gardener said,
"And I must thin the beets next week,
They're crowded in their bed;
So I shall go to town today,
While there's not much to do;"
"O dear, O dear," said Buddy Jim
"I wish I might go too!"*

FOR Buddy Jim *knew* that he was going to have a *very* lonely day! There was no doubt about it. He liked well enough being in the country, when he could tramp about after Old Bob the gardener, and plant things, and pull up other things, and learn the name of every thing and the reason for it.

Old Bob the gardener said every day that he had never before seen a "city chap" who learned so easily to tell the weeds from the plants, and who knew just which things to take from the garden to feed to his pet rabbits.

But Old Bob the gardener was going to town for a whole long day! And there was nothing to do; and even if there had been anything to do, there was nobody to do it *with*; and he was just plain lonesome; but he s'posed he'd have to feed his rabbits; so he started to the garden for some weeds.

Just then Mother called: "Buddy Jim! Are you there?" "Yes, Mother," said Buddy Jim, running back to the porch where Mother was standing in her pretty, cool-looking pink dress, with her hair blowing in little curls around her face.

Buddy Jim loved to look at his Mother. She was *so* pretty!

"Buddy," said his Mother, "do you think you could go down to the edge of the Fir thicket and get me some more Fir tips for the Porch pillows?"

"Why, yes, Mother, of course I can, and I will, too, just as soon as I have fed my rabbits," said Buddy Jim.

"That's a good son," said Mother, "and you'd better go around to the kitchen and ask Mary the maid for a basket and some blunt-pointed scissors. And be careful about poison ivy, son; there's a bunch of it down near the edge of the Fir thicket that Bob the gardener has not had time to destroy."

"Don't worry, Mother," said Buddy Jim, "I know that stuff when I see it, and I'll be sure to keep away from it." And the little boy whistled to Old Dog Sandy to come along, happy that he had found something to do.

It was lots of fun running across the fields to the woods. The grass was long and wet with the dew of the morning, and it curled around Buddy Jim's little bare legs just as though it loved to have little bare-legged boys wade through it. Old Dog Sandy thought it was wonderful to chase the big gray Grasshoppers that flew up in all directions, with a ch-r-r-r, that sounded just like a pin-wheel on the Fourth of July.

Pretty soon they came to the Fir thicket, where all the young Fir trees were standing like tall young ladies in pale green dresses ready to go to church on a Sunday morning.

Buddy began carefully to cut off the pale green tips of the boughs as his Mother had shown him, while Old Dog Sandy roamed through the bushes amusing himself.

Buddy Jim's basket was almost full of the fragrant Fir tips, and he was just going to whistle for Old Dog Sandy, to come home with him, when there was a *dreadful* commotion from inside of the Fir thicket. It was Old Dog Sandy barking for all he was worth, in a way that Buddy knew meant, "Come here, *quickly*, and see what *I've* found!"

So Buddy Jim put his basket down and ran into the Fir thicket, where he found Old Dog Sandy doing his best to climb an old dead Fir tree, which was much taller than the rest of the trees, at the same time barking his *very fiercest* at something that was perched up on a limb of the tree. Something that was very much alive, and looked like a big round pin-cushion stuck full of pins, points up.

"Hello!" said Buddy Jim, "What's the matter here?" "Matter enough, *I* should say," chattered a very indignant little voice, "and you'd better call off that foolish old dog of yours if you want to save him trouble. He'll be a sorry dog if he bites me!"

"Don't be afraid of Sandy," said Buddy Jim. "He *is* an old dog. I've had him always, and his bark is worse than his bite; besides, he can't climb a tree anyway; he just thinks he can!"

The round Pin-cushiony Person in the tree just laughed. "Bless your heart," he said, "*I'm* not *afraid* of Old Dog Sandy; I'm just being polite to him because he's a *City* dog and doesn't know any better than to try to bite me; any country dog would *know* better."

"You go outside and lie down, Sandy," said Buddy Jim, and when the old dog had gone, growling deep down in his throat because he did not want to go, he turned to the Pin-cushiony Person and said, "Now tell me what your name is and *why* Sandy would be a sorry dog if he should bite you."

"You must have read about me in books," said the Pin-cushiony Person, "and if you would think a bit you would know that my name is Prickly Porcupine. My pins are stuck in *very loosely*, so if a dog bites me he gets something to remember me by. He gets a mouthful of pins that do not come out very easily and I don't get hurt very much. Sometimes, just for fun, I let one start to bite me, and just as he thinks he has me I hit him in the mouth with my tail, and he goes home in a hurry to ask his master to pull my pins out!"

"I don't call that being very friendly," said Buddy Jim. "It isn't very friendly for dogs to try to bite me, either, just because they're bigger than I am," said the Pin-cushiony Person. "Mother Nature made me the way I am, so I'd have some way of defending myself. I'm so *fat*, and my legs are so *short* that I do not run very well, and besides, I don't feel like running away from my enemies."

"Well, I don't blame you for that," said Buddy Jim. "Nobody likes to run, even if the other fellow *is* the biggest. I don't! I know just how you feel about that. But do tell me. What do you do all the time? Do you live all alone?"

"Not all the time," answered the Pin-cushiony Person, "I have a family; but we are rather independent people and *like* to be alone. Days I sleep mostly, unless I am disturbed, as I was by your Old Dog Sandy just now, and nights I go out for food."

"What do you eat?" asked Buddy Jim. "I'm almost afraid to tell you," said the Pin-cushiony Person, "for fear that you'll tell old Bob the gardener, but I live in this Fir thicket because it is so near to the farm of your Father."

"Why should Bob the gardener care?" asked Buddy Jim. "Well you see," said the Pin-cushiony Person, "I go out at night and I nibble a bit here, and a bit there, from old Bob's garden, and I know how very particular he is about his garden and so I know if he ever catches me at it I shall be driven away from the Fir thicket."

"Do people hunt you much?" asked Buddy Jim. "Not very much nowadays" answered the Pin-cushiony Person, "but I've heard old Grandfather Porcupine tell stories to the Young Ones. He said his Grandfather had told him about the times when the Red Men lived in the forests, and used to hunt our people with bows and arrows. And how the Red Women used to cook us to feed their children, and to use our quills that Mother Nature had given us to defend ourselves with to trim their dresses and moccasins." "But those dreadful days are all over," he went on, "and now about all we have to fear are the eagles and the larger animals." "Aren't they afraid of your sharp pins?" asked Buddy Jim. "Some of them are, after they get one mouthful," answered the Pin-cushiony Person, "but Old Man Fisher is always hungry and willing to take a chance of getting stuck full of pins. But if you don't mind, Buddy Jim, I'm a bit sleepy—it always makes me drowsy to talk—so I'll say Goodbye and just turn over and have my nap out."

"Goodbye, old Mr. Porcupine," said Buddy Jim, "and good luck to you." And he picked up his basket of Fir tips and whistled to Old Dog Sandy, who was still growling.

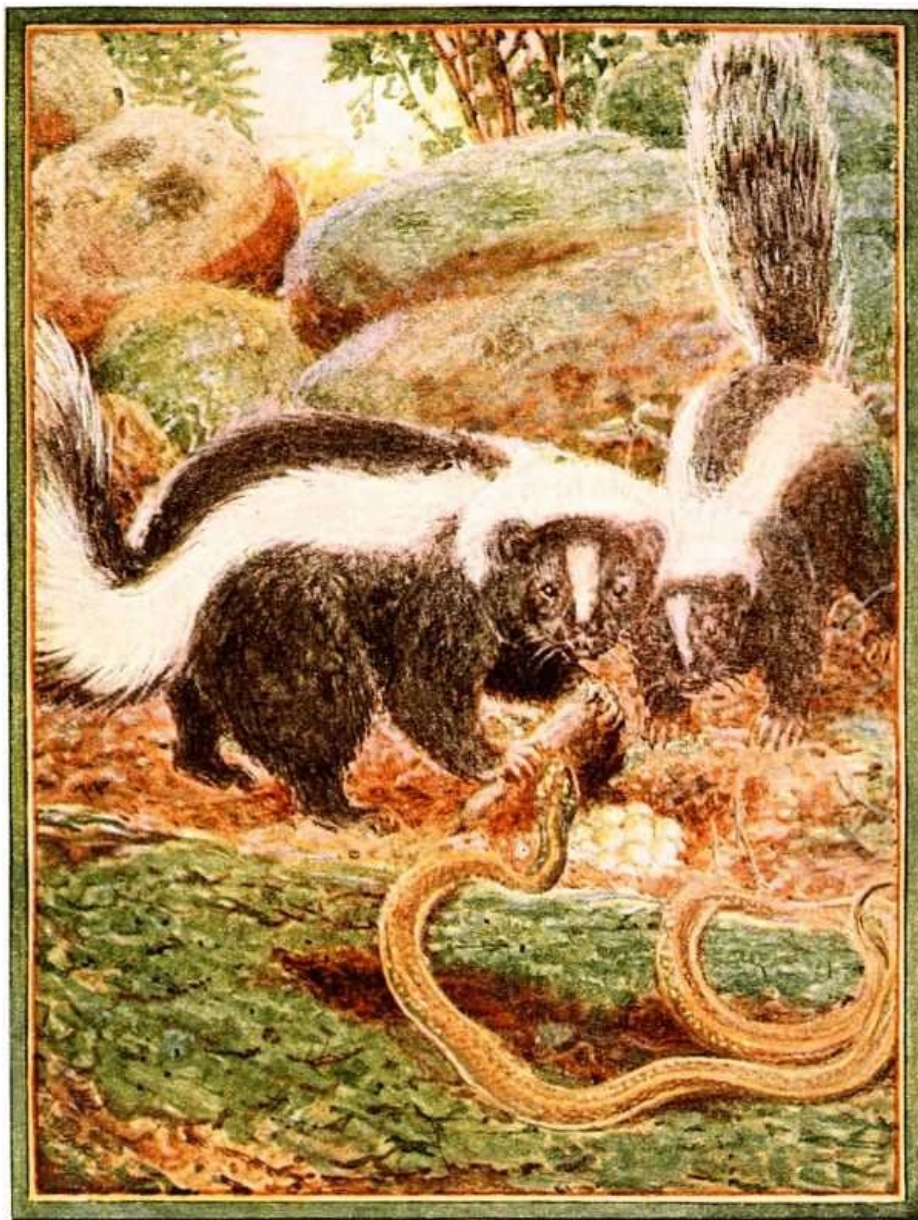
"Old Dog Sandy and I ran on to Old Prickly Porcupine down in the Fir thicket today," said Buddy Jim to Old Bob the gardener, that night. "And Old Dog Sandy wanted to bite him."

"He would have been a sorry old dog if he had," said Old Bob the gardener.

But Old Dog Sandy just opened one eye, and tapped the ground with his tail.

He was thinking that some day when there was nobody looking, he was going back to that Fir thicket alone! And he was going to *show* that old Pin-cushiony Person!





They were very pretty
little Neighbors



BUDDY JIM GOES SWIMMING AND MEETS A QUEER LITTLE NEIGHBOR

*The sun came climbing up the hills
As red as red could be,
And not a leaf was moving on
Any shrub or tree;
The little birds forgot to sing,
The winds forgot to roam;
"There's nothing to do," said Buddy Jim,
"But stay around at home."*

J UST then Old Bob the gardener came along, mopping his brow with his old, red bandana handkerchief which he wore tied around his neck, like a cowboy in a wild west movie.

"O Bob," said Buddy Jim, "Isn't it hot? I don't feel as though I'd *ever* be cool again!"

"It is, *so*," said Old Bob the gardener, "for the last week in June, it is about as hot as I've ever seen it; you look a bit peaked, Son, seems to me," said he, sympathetically, "has the heat got hold of you?"

"Oh, I don't think so, Bob," said the little fellow. "But it just seems as though there were not a thing in the world to *do*!"

"Old Dog Sandy seems a bit tuckered out, too," said Old Bob the gardener. Old Dog Sandy, stretched out flat under a lilac bush, didn't bother to open his eyes. He just thumped the ground feebly with his tail. It was too hot to *move*, if one didn't have to, but one must always be polite!

"Now let's see," said Old Bob the gardener, "there *should* be something that a boy could do on a hot day, and get some fun out of it? Can you swim?"

"Some," said Buddy Jim. "I learned in the pool at the gymnasium, at home—I mean in the city."

"*Pool!*" said Old Bob the gardener, contemptuously, "run and get your bathing suit and I'll take you down to the old swimming hole, where I used to swim when I was your age, and where I've been swimming every year since! I think I would enjoy a swim myself, this morning," he added. Buddy Jim forgot all about the weather, but went tearing like a small whirl-wind to Mother, asking *where* was his bathing suit, and hopping excitedly around until she had found it. He was so enthusiastic that he could hardly wait until Old Bob the gardener had found his own suit and was ready to go. Even Old Dog Sandy waked up and decided to go along, and it was a happy little procession which went, Indian file, along the narrow path which led through the alder bushes to the swimming hole.

Someone who loved boys must have made that swimming hole. The sand had been scooped out from the bed of the brook, and used to make a fine, wide beach; the brook had been made deeper and wider, and a big old tree had been felled in just the right place for a clean, high dive. The alders grew thickly around the beach, and made the nicest dressing room imaginable, and very soon, all three, the old man, the little boy, and the old dog were splashing happily around in the cool water.

Old Bob the gardener taught Buddy Jim many things that he had not learned at the gymnasium; how to tread water like a dog, how to keep his eyes open under water, and how to lie on his back and just float; it was great fun, and they were soon as cool as though jolly old Mr. Sun had not tried to see how hot he could *make* a day in June.

After awhile Old Bob the gardener said that they had been in the water long enough for one day, and that he had some work to do, and must go back, but Buddy Jim said that he was going to stay and lie on the beach for a while; it was cooler there.

Old Bob the gardener said, all right, if he wouldn't go in the water alone, because he couldn't yet swim well enough to go in alone, and Buddy Jim promised that he would not. Old Bob knew that when Buddy said he would do a thing, that it was just as good as done, because he was very careful to *always* keep his word. Mother said that a real man always did. And Buddy Jim meant to be a *real* man.

It was so cool and comfy there under the alder bushes that Buddy Jim fell fast asleep, and then he was aware of voices, and that Old Dog Sandy was grumbling and complaining that "a fellow never could get forty winks, but that *someone* had to chatter and wake him up."

"Lie down, Sandy," whispered Buddy Jim, "and keep quiet." The old dog obeyed, though he did not want to, and Buddy Jim *crawled* quietly over towards the voices and lay *very* still until they began again.

"I saw it first," said a queer lispy little voice. It was not a very good-natured sounding voice either.

"Why the very idea," said a calm, quiet, little voice, "how can you say so, when we were already here when you arrived? *We* saw it first, and we intend to keep it; isn't that so, Brother?"

"Of course," answered another little voice, "that's what we intend to do. You go and find another nest if you are hungry."

"No, no," lisped the first voice, "this nest is mine and I'm going to have it."

"Well now, Mrs. Garter Snake," said the first little voice, "you know well enough it's no good wrangling; we are not going to give up our rights to you; finding's keepings; anyway Mrs. Snapping Turtle lays so many eggs that very likely there will be some left, after we have had enough, and we don't mind sharing them with you; you are quite welcome to what we cannot use."

"All right," said Mrs. Garter Snake, "go on and dig them out, then, because I want to get back home to my children."

Buddy Jim crawled a bit nearer to see if he could discover who the little neighbors were who were not a bit afraid of Mrs. Garter Snake.

They were very pretty Little Neighbors indeed, in cool-looking black-and-white suits and they were as frisky as kittens. It was only the work of a moment for them to dig open Mrs. Snapping

Turtle's nest in the sand, where she had trustingly laid her eggs to be hatched out by kind Mr. Sun while she was cool and happy in the bed of the brook, or swam around catching frogs for her dinner.

It did not take them long to eat their lunch, either, and when they were no longer hungry, they ran away together, laughing, leaving what was left of the eggs to Mrs. Garter Snake, who immediately ate them and then rustled away out of sight among the bushes.

"I guess that's the last of Mrs. Snapping Turtle's children," said Buddy Jim as he dressed, "it does seem too bad, that her eggs are all lost, but she could not expect anything else to happen. Let's go, Sandy," he called to the old dog.

Old Dog Sandy made believe that he didn't hear; he knew that the Little Neighbors must live somewhere near, and he wished very much to call on them; they had spoiled his nap, and he wanted to give them a chance to apologize.

"Come along, Sandy," said his little master, who knew his tricks, "I know what you want to do; you want to find our Little Neighbors, and you know I do not allow *that!*"

After lunch Buddy Jim went out to the tool house to find Old Bob the gardener. "Feel better, Son?" asked the old man kindly. "I feel fine, Bob, thank you," said the little fellow, "but I want to ask you something. Who were the Little Neighbors that I saw digging Mrs. Snapping Turtle's eggs out of the sand this morning? They were black and white and looked something like Peter the Prowler, only much prettier. Old Dog Sandy wanted to go after them," he added, "but I made him keep away."

Old Bob the gardener laughed. "It's a good thing for him that you did," said he, "and for all the rest of us, too; that was Brother and Sister Skunk!"

"*Why* is it a good thing, Bob?" asked Buddy Jim. "They were just as good-natured as could be, and generous also; they let Mrs. Garter Snake have part of the eggs."

"O yes, they're *generous*," said Old Bob the gardener, "and easy to get along with, too, if you let them alone; I hope Old Dog Sandy was not enough interested in them to go back and try to find them, because, in the matter of perfume, now, they're *more* than generous."

"O yes," said Buddy Jim, laughing, "Now I remember!"

But Old Dog Sandy didn't remember; he just couldn't forget; and he told himself that he knew the way back there, and that no black-and-white kitteney looking things like that could wake him up without explaining why; and *some* day,—*well* they'd *see*.





" **I** don't see any Joke"



BUDDY JIM GOES FISHING

*The Bob-o-link was whistling
His merry-hearted song,
To tell his name, and the wondrous news
His babes would fly 'fore long;
"I'd like," said Buddy Jim "to go
A-fishing in the brook,
The day is fine and all I need
Is a rod, and line, and hook."*

LOOK in the upper left hand drawer of my work table in the tool house," said Old Bob the gardener, "and you will find a line and hooks. You can cut yourself an alder pole for a rod."

When Buddy Jim had found the tackle and had cut the alder sapling for a rod, he took them to Old Bob the gardener and asked him to help him put them together.

"These have not been used," said Bob, "since my small city cousin was down here a few summers ago."

"Did he catch any trout in the brook?" asked Buddy Jim. "No, he didn't," said Bob, "he claimed something always chased the fish away. But there's nothing in the brook except some little spotted trout, anyway."

"What bait shall I use?" asked Buddy Jim. "Angleworms," said Old Bob the gardener, "if old Robin Red Breast has left any. He has fed at least a dozen to that fat child of his since morning."

"I believe he hears them walk," laughed Buddy Jim. "Just look at him with his head on one side listening. If I were an angleworm, I would not even *wiggle* while he was around."

"Well," said Old Bob, the gardener, "I suppose they are his meat."

"Prob'ly," said Buddy Jim. "But he must spare me a few for bait. I'll get mine in the back yard, though, because I make bigger holes getting them out than father Robin does."

It was very still and pleasant down by the brook, under the alder trees.

There was no living thing in sight, except a whole family of Snapping turtles, asleep on a log which had fallen partly across the brook at the deepest place.

Buddy Jim baited his hook. Then he cast it far into the deep shadows under a big rock, and waited. He waited a long time. Then just as he was sure he felt a nibble, the tiniest turtle jumped "pl-o-o-m-p!" into the water.

"O dear!" said Buddy Jim. "That scared away my fish!" He pulled in his line, and found that his bait was gone. So he put on some more, and tried again.

Then just as he was *certain sure* that he felt a nibble, "pl-o-o-m-p!" went the next smallest turtle.

Patiently, Buddy Jim put on more bait, and tried again. But just as he *knew* he had a *bite* "pl-o-o-m-p!" went the third turtle into the water. Once more he tried, and again the same thing happened. Until there were only the father and mother turtle left on the log.

"I'm going to drive those two old turtles away," said Buddy Jim. So he threw a stone and hit the log, but the father turtle and the mother turtle did not stir. "They are sound asleep," said Buddy Jim, "I'll try again." So he did. But just as he was *sure* he had a nibble, both those old turtles woke up and jumped "Ker-plunk!" into the water. "Now," said Buddy Jim, "they are all gone, and this time I'll catch that old trout."

But just as he got his bait on the hook, there were all those meddlesome turtles back on the log, looking as though they would never wake up in the world.

"O, what a joke! O, what a joke. Ha Ha Ha-a," cried a voice very near. Buddy Jim looked up. There was Old Jim Crow, on an old hemlock stump, dancing with glee, and nearly doubling up laughing.

"I don't see any joke," said Buddy Jim.

"That's always the way with folks when the joke is on them," gurgled Old Jim Crow; "they never can see it. The joke is on you today, instead of on Old Man Kingfisher."

"Do you mean to say those turtles jumped in the water just to warn the fish?" asked Buddy Jim, his eyes wide open.

"Certainly they did," said Old Jim Crow, "that's their regular job. There are always some of Spotty the Trout's young ones, who don't know any better than to nibble at hooks, and go near enough shore so they can be caught by prowlers. So they must be looked after."

"Who tries to catch them?" asked Buddy Jim. "Well," said Jim Crow, "Old Man Kingfisher is about the *worst* one, and then there is Slinky Minky, and *always*, of *course*, boys, like you, who come fishing just for fun. Not because they need fish to eat at all, but just for fun." Buddy Jim somehow felt very small, and ashamed of himself. "Fun!" went on Old Jim Crow. "Destroying a beautiful bit of life just for fun. And you look like a *nice* boy, too."

"I *am* a nice boy," said Buddy Jim. "Nobody ever told me that it's wrong to catch fish." "It isn't," said Old Jim Crow, "if you need them to eat. But it would take six of Spotty's babies to make a mouthful."

"Well, I may as well go home," said Buddy Jim. "Old Bob the gardener will laugh at my empty basket."

"Fill it full of wintergreen berries," said Old Jim Crow. "They are just scrumptious now. Fat and mealy!"

So Buddy Jim lined his basket with fresh green leaves, and then gathered enough of the spicy crimson berries to fill it.

"Any luck, Son?" asked Old Bob the gardener, "Well," said Buddy Jim, "I had several nibbles, but the turtles kept jumping off a log and frightening the fish away."

"Same old trick," said Bob the gardener. "They've been doing that ever since I was your age. But

I'll take you down to Long Lake some day next week, and let you catch some real fish. Perch and Pickerel and, like enough, an eel."

"O Goody, Goody!" said the little boy. "Have some berries, Bob?" "Iv'ry Plums," said Old Bob the gardener.

"I thought they were wintergreen berries," said Buddy Jim. "Some folks call 'em that," said Old Bob the gardener. "But *we* always called 'em iv'ry plums. See any one else down to the brook?" he asked.

"Nobody but Old Jim Crow," said Buddy Jim. "He prob'ly had one eye on Mrs. Snapping Turtle, hoping to find her nest full of eggs," said Bob the gardener.

Buddy Jim, opened his eyes wide. "Do turtles lay eggs?" he asked. "Sure," said Old Bob the gardener. "In the sand."

"And he looked like such a *nice* Crow, too," said Buddy Jim.





BUDDY JIM AND THE HOUSE MICE

*The new moon up above the world
Looked like a silver boat
That some wee playmate of the sky
Had launched and left to float;
The night winds all went laughing by
To drive the heat away;
"Almost I think," said Buddy Jim,
"I like night more than day!"*

"THAT settles it, then," said a tiny, squeaky little voice from the corner of the sleeping porch where Buddy was cosily tucked in bed, "that settles it! He *likes* night better than day; so, just as likely as not, he will stay awake all night to enjoy himself, or anyway so long that we shall get no supper at all! And the whole family so hungry, too!"

"Now be patient, little sister," said another little voice. "That is not a grown-up person, there in the bed,—that's a boy, and boys never stay awake very long. It won't hurt us to wait a bit for our supper. My!" he went on in a lower tone, "I think he has heard us, but never mind, sister, we both know the way out, and there isn't a *bit* of danger."

Buddy had heard the voices and, always interested in his Little Neighbors, he sat up in bed and peered into the corner of the porch in the direction of the voices—of course he could not see a thing, but he knew that someone must be there.

So he called very softly, "Who are you, Little Neighbors?"



Old Bob was outside

"I'm just Buddy Jim and I won't harm you—you must have heard of me—I *live* here in this house."

"Oh," cried both little voices in a relieved tone, "You don't know what a load you have taken off our minds! Why of *course* we have heard of you. Mrs. Harvest Mouse says that you really saved the lives of her whole family the day Red-Headed Woodpecker came to collect the rent. But you see that was different. She was in her own house and we are in yours, and for some reason we have never been able to find out, people dislike to have us come in their houses."

"They set traps for us," said Little Sister Mouse, "and kill us—and we are *no good* to them—our fur is so soft that it is useless—and then the *cats*! Why! we are in constant fear of *their* dreadful claws!"

"Yes indeed," said Brother Mouse, "we never came in this house until Old Dog Sandy came here to live and made Peter Prowler live under the barn."

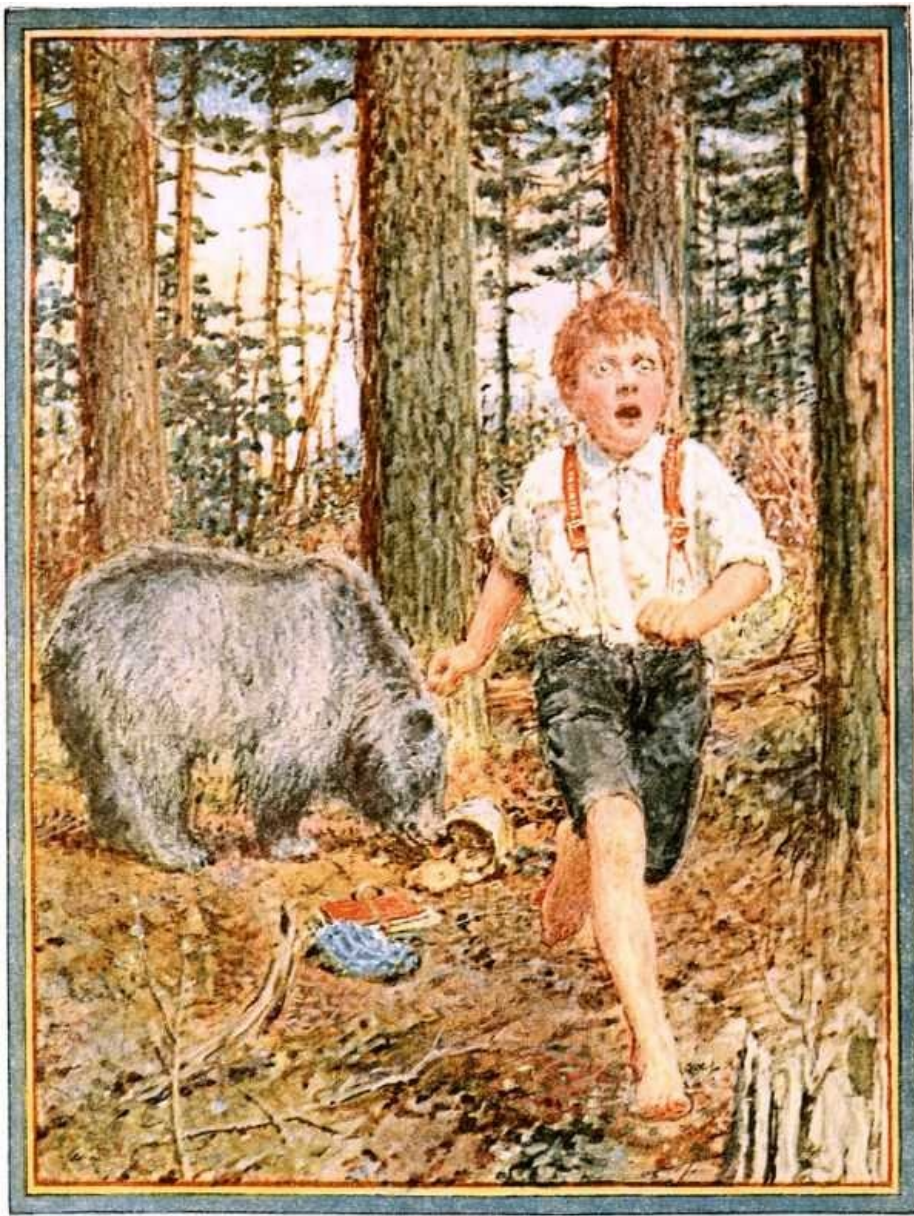
"In that case," said Buddy, "I can not imagine why you go into people's houses. I would certainly not go where I was not welcome."

"Why, dear me," said Brother Mouse, "we're House Mice—we always live in houses. *We* don't know *why*, we just know it's *so*! and we're no trouble to any one; we take only the tiniest crumbs of food, when Mary the cook leaves us anything at all—she doesn't often—and the children are so hungry and Mother hasn't a bit of anything in the nest to give them." "And they're hungry," chimed in little Sister House Mouse.

"What would you like for their supper, and yours too?" asked Buddy, "because I think I can get you something, and if you will *promise* not to go into the kitchen again I will promise to leave your supper wherever you say every evening this summer. *Will* you promise?"

"*Will* we?" chorused the little Mice, "we certainly *will*! Honest 'n true 'n black and blue."

"Well, then," said Buddy, "just you wait right where you are—" and he slipped out of bed and ran



" **I** didn't look behind
me"



BUDDY JIM SEES MADAME MINK

*'Twas a misty, moisty morning
And the big clouds overhead
Looked like balloons all weighted down
With tons and tons of lead,
The trees held up their dusty leaves
For a freshening drink of rain,
"It's plain to see," said Buddy Jim,
"It's going to rain again."*

EVEN Robin Redbreast knew it, and sang his "cheer up" song from the topmost bough of the old elm tree, as much as to say, "What's a little wetting, anyway?" And the chickens knew it and went singing dolefully about because they didn't like wet weather; and Mother Duck and her twelve yellow ducklings knew it, and went about quacking merrily and looking happy because they *did* like it; and Buddy Jim knew it and didn't care either way; he liked the rain or he liked the shine. But first, he thought he would go and see what Old Bob the Gardener was doing.

He found Bob in the tool house, reeling up some fascinating-looking fishing lines.

Old Bob looked up as Buddy Jim entered, smiling in his cheery way, and the little boy thought that as long as Bob smiled that way he didn't care how much it rained.

"Like to go fishing with me, over to Long Lake, Son?" asked Bob. "I promised you I'd take you fishing some day, and this is going to be a good day for the fish to rise."

"*Would* I?" said Buddy Jim. "Thanks for asking me, Bob, and I'll be ready in no time."

"Be ready in half an hour from now," said Old Bob the Gardener, "and ask Mary the cook to put us up some lunch, because we shall be gone all day. I'll go and harness old Maud."

By the time that Old Bob the gardener was at the door with Maud and the buggy, Buddy Jim was ready.

He looked exactly *like* a little fisherman in his yellow slicker, and long rubber boots, with his old felt hat turned down. Mother laughed as she kissed him "goodbye" and wished him luck.

It was great fun riding along the road through the woods, and listening to the rain falling on the leaves. But there wasn't a thing in sight except a flock of crows.

"Have you always lived around here, Bob?" asked Buddy Jim.

"Sure," said Old Bob the gardener, "ever since I was a baby; right over in that field yonder was where I used to go to school; the school house is gone now, and there's nothing left to mark the place except a clump of lilac bushes that I helped the teacher to set out one spring day, when I wasn't a mite bigger than you are now."

"I remember that day well," he went on. "I was late getting the bushes planted and so I took a short cut through these woods and just as I got about where we are now, who should come from behind a big hemlock tree but old lady Black Bear, thin as a rail from her long winter sleep, and looking hungry."

"My!" said Buddy Jim, his eyes wide open. "*What* did you *do*?"

"I'm afraid I was rude to the lady," said Old Bob, "because I did not even wish her 'good evening,'—I ran for home just as fast as my legs could carry me."

"Did she run after you?" breathlessly asked Buddy Jim.

The old man laughed. "I couldn't truthfully say," said he, "I didn't look behind me."

"I *think* I should have done the same thing," said Buddy Jim.

"And I wouldn't blame you, Son," said Old Bob the gardener, "but here we are, hook, line, *and* sinker, and we will soon find out if Mr. and Mrs. Perch are at home."

As soon as old Maud was hobbled and turned loose to graze, Buddy Jim and Old Bob the gardener launched the old flat-bottomed boat at the landing, and began fishing.

Bob "baited" the hooks, and they both cast off. Old Bob the gardener caught the first fish, a beautiful big perch, and in no time at all Buddy Jim had one also.

It was such good fishing that they soon had all they wanted, and Old Bob the gardener said that they would go ashore now. But Buddy Jim begged so hard for just one more cast that Old Bob said, "all right," and stooped to put the fish in the basket.

A startled exclamation from Buddy Jim made him turn, just in time to catch the little chap as he was going head first out of the boat.

"Here, Son," said the old man as he pulled him back into the boat, "aren't you wet enough yet?"

"O, Bob," panted the little fellow, "I've got a bite—and I *think* it's a whale—he pulls so—help me land him." So together they pulled him in—about two feet of wiggly, *snaky-looking* fish!

"What is it, Bob?" asked Buddy Jim. "I don't *like* him—he isn't pretty!" "It's an eel," said old Bob the gardener, laughing, "do you want to keep him or shall I throw him overboard?"

"Deed I *do* want to keep him," said Buddy Jim, proudly, "I want to show him to Mother."

"All right," said Old Bob the gardener, "but he can't go in the basket with the regular fish. And now we'll go ashore and cook some of our catch for our luncheon."

"How can we make a fire, Bob?" asked Buddy Jim. "Everything's wet."

"That's easy," said Bob, "I'll go over in the woods and gather some birch bark, and you may pick up some small twigs that will dry quickly, and pile them on that flat rock by the water's edge."

It took only a few minutes for Buddy Jim to gather a big pile of the small dead twigs and branches, and then he sat down on another rock to look at his big eel and think about the fun it had been to land him.

There was no sound at all except the gentle splashing of the rain, when Buddy Jim heard soft

footsteps, and then voices. "Now, isn't that a shame?" said a voice. "Some one has been catching our fish again, right out of our own lake!"

"Ssh, Children," said an older voice, "keep quiet—some one may hear you. They have gone away and left the basket open, and I will go and get the fish back again. Just wait here and keep quiet."

Buddy Jim kept quiet, because he very much wished to know which Little Neighbor it was; so quiet indeed, that Mrs. American Mink came fully into sight before she saw him. Buddy Jim knew her at once, because her picture was in one of his Nature books; and he knew also that she is very fond of fish to eat.

She was very much surprised when she saw Buddy Jim and immediately tried to look just like a bit of brown earth, but Buddy Jim spoke, and she knew she had been seen.

"How do you do, Little Neighbor," said he, "and what can I do for you?"

"You can go away from here, and stay away, and not come catching my fish," said Mother Mink, very crossly. "How *do* you think I can make a living for my children, if you come and take the food away from me?"

Buddy Jim laughed. "Don't be impolite, Little Neighbor," he said. "The fish belong to us all, but I'm willing you should have your share."

"I'm going to *take* my share whether you are willing or not," said Mother Mink, and without saying "thank you," she grabbed Buddy Jim's big eel and ran away with it!

Buddy Jim looked after her in astonishment! No other Little Neighbor had ever been so impolite.

Just then Old Bob the gardener came back with a load of birch bark. Buddy Jim's throat felt a little choky, but he was brave about it.

"Mrs. Mink called to see me while you were away, Bob," he said, "and she took my big eel away with her."

"Well, well!" said Old Bob the gardener, "wasn't she bold? She must have had young ones with her. But don't you care, Son, Mary wouldn't have cooked him anyway. She thinks eels aren't fish."

"I *wanted* to show him to Mother," said Buddy Jim, "He was such a big one."

"We'll go out again right after lunch," said Old Bob the gardener, "I know where there's a pickerel hole, and a pickerel is a *regular fish!*"





Little Mermen and Mermaids were playing all around him



BUDDY JIM, MRS. WEASEL AND LITTLE MOTHER BOB WHITE.

*The cobwebs were a-glistening,
Dew-spangled, all about;
As though the fairy folk had spread
Their dainty washing out;
The wild rose wore her pinkest gown,
And saucy old Blue-Jay
Called out for all the world to hear,
"Strawberries are ripe today!"*

"THAT'S so, Mr. Blue-Jay," said Old Bob the gardener, as he came by the place where Buddy Jim was weeding his vegetable garden, "that's so; wild ones too, and I only wish I had time to go and gather some."

"Why, Bob," said Buddy Jim. "Are wild strawberries any better than the big ones that you grow in the garden?"

"Better!" exclaimed Old Bob the gardener, "better! Well I should *think* so! *Wild* strawberries are the sweetest things that grow! Only wish that I were going to have some for my breakfast tomorrow morning."

"Well, you're going to have some," said Buddy Jim, "if you will tell me where they grow, for I'll go and get enough for us both, and we'll eat breakfast right out here on the porch, together!"

"Do you see that open patch of ground off yonder in the far field?" asked Old Bob the gardener. "Well, that's where they grow; around the edge of the old stone wall is where the best ones will be."

"I like to pick berries," said Buddy Jim. "I'll ask Mary to let me have a pail to put them in, and go right away to get them."

"The dew will be nicely dried up before you get over there," said Old Bob the gardener, "and it will be fine picking; if I were not so busy I'd go with you."

Mary had a pail, all nice and shiny, which used to hold lard, and she was very glad to lend it to Buddy Jim, who first ran to tell Mother goodbye, and then, whistling to Old Dog Sandy to come along, was off across the fields.

It was a very pleasant run across the dewy meadows and they met no one at all except Mrs. Black Garter Snake who was out looking for breakfast for herself and children, and it was not very long before they came to the place where the berries were, and Buddy Jim began to pick them. They were so large and plentiful that he soon had his pail full. He covered them from the heat of the sun with a big burdock leaf which he picked from the side of the stone wall, and putting them aside he began picking some to eat.

Then he thought he would rest before going home, so he stretched out on his back and fell fast asleep and dreamed that he was afloat on a calm, blue ocean in a little white boat, surrounded by mermen and maidens. Suddenly he was awakened by Old Dog Sandy who was barking furiously.

"Now I wonder what's the matter with Sandy?" said he to himself, running as fast as he could go in the direction of the sounds. "That isn't a fun bark; that's a business bark!"

He found Old Dog Sandy doing his best to climb a big hawthorn tree that grew near the side of the old stone wall, all the time barking as loudly as he could. He was not succeeding very well in climbing the tree, but he was sending a very earnest warning to whatever was in the tree that it would be much better not to come down again, or something would be sure to happen.

"What is it, Sandy?" asked Buddy Jim, but Old Dog Sandy was too busy to pay attention to his little master, and besides, he wanted to attend to this matter himself—the long, slim, brown, cruel *thing* hidden among the branches of the hawthorn tree really *needed* a good *shaking*, and he, Old Dog Sandy, was just the dog to give it to him.

So he paid no attention to his master, and did not answer, but a queer, chuckling little voice from the top of the old stone wall *did*.

"It was Mrs. Weasel who ran up in the tree," said the chuckling little voice. "She was determined that she would have one of my children for lunch, and almost caught one, when your old dog came along and made her stop. Goodness only knows what might have happened if he had not come just at that moment."

"You're little Mrs. Bob White, aren't you?" asked Buddy Jim. "Why didn't you and your children fly away or hide somewhere?"

"Why," said Mrs. Bob White, "my children cannot fly yet. They're only about three weeks old, just little bits of chickens, and as for *hiding* from Mrs. Weasel or her young ones, it simply can't be done—she is so slender she can go *anywhere*, and if we run away from her we are likely to run right into the jaws of one of her young ones—they hunt together you see, and they're almost sure to get one of us—I don't know *what* to do. I simply can't move away from here until the children are older."

Buddy Jim thought a minute. It seemed as though there must be some way to help the little mother. "I'll tell you," he said, "Sandy seems to be very much interested in Mrs. Weasel, and I'm sure he will be glad to run down here every day, and perhaps Mrs. Weasel will let you alone when she sees that you have friends."

"O thank you, Neighbor," said little Mrs. Bob White. "That will be *such* a help!"

Just then came a clear call from across the fields. "Bob White, Bob White, Bob, Bob White."

Instantly little Mrs. Bob White answered, "Ooo, ooh! *All* right, Bob White."

"That was Daddy calling to see if we were safe and happy," said the little mother. "He always does that if he has to be away from home."

Just then came another call, "Hoo, oo, Hoo, oo." Buddy Jim laughed. "That's Old Bob the gardener calling me home to lunch," said he, "so goodbye, and the best of luck, Little Mother Quail."

"Get any berries?" asked Old Bob the gardener. "Lots," answered Buddy Jim, "and I'll get some more tomorrow, because I'm going down again. Old Dog Sandy wouldn't come home with me—he has a new job down in the far field."

"What sort of a job?" asked Old Bob the gardener. He was always so *interested* in things.

"He is going to protect little Mrs. Bob White and her family from Mrs. Weasel," said Buddy Jim.

"He has his work cut out for him then," said old Bob the gardener, "because Mrs. Weasel is a very clever lady, and fond of small quail. If she is working around here I think I'll set a trap in the chicken yard, just as a hint to her to keep away from *our* chickens."

"Would she dare to come up here?" asked Buddy Jim. "She would *so*," laughed Old Bob the gardener.

Buddy Jim sighed. "What makes Mrs. Weasel so cruel and dishonest, Bob?" he asked.

"She isn't 'specially,'" answered the old man, "she has to get food for her family, and that's her way of doing it."

"But she frightens little Mrs. Bob White so, and it seems so cruel," said the little boy, who wanted all his Little Neighbors to be happy.

"Yes, I know," said Old Bob the gardener, "but I have no doubt that the bugs and caterpillars that little Mrs. Bob White catches feel quite the same way about her, that *she* does about Mrs. Weasel.

"Like to help me transplant some more plants before supper time?"

"Sure would," said Buddy Jim as he went to give Mother some wild strawberries for her luncheon.





It looked like a very
tiny Air-plane

BUDDY JIM AND THE FLYING SQUIRRELS



*'Twas lots of fun to help the men
Bring in the new-mown hay;
Far better than the newest game
A boy could ever play;
"There couldn't be" said Buddy Jim,
"A happier time for you
Than haying time, for it's so full
Of jolly things to do."*

BUDDY JIM was a bit hot and tired when the last load of hay had been stowed away in the loft in the barn.

It was almost time for supper he knew, but it was so cool and dim up there under the rafters, and the hay was so cool and fragrant, that he decided he would stay and take a little rest.

And you know how it is; when you're a bit weary and very comfy; well, Buddy Jim *nearly* fell asleep.

But just as he was on the thin edge of dreamland, he woke up. And he heard voices! Very earnest little voices, too, they were.

"Don't worry, Mother," said one little voice, "I don't believe there will be many more loads of hay this year. And anyway it will never, I'm sure, reach up as high as this cross beam we are on. I don't think we shall have to move."

"I would *not* take the chance of staying in this nest one single day more," answered a second little voice. "Why, there was one time this afternoon when I thought *surely* that our home and our babies were going to be ab-so-lute-ly covered up under great forks-ful of hay.

"So we are going to move, Daddy," went on the voice, "and we are going to move this *very night!*"

"O well, if you feel that way about it," said the first voice, "I will look around while I'm out to dinner, and see if I can find a new place."

"Yes, Daddy, please do that," said the second little voice earnestly, "and while you are out, I'll get the children to sleep, so they won't be stupid when moving time comes."

Then there came the sound of something almost, but not quite, like the flutter of wings, and Buddy Jim was surprised to see what looked like a very tiny air-plane sailing across the loft and out at the window that had been left open for the barn swallows.

"Now I wonder," said Buddy Jim, "who these funny little people can be?" Just then across the loft, came the sound of a little, croony, sleepy-time song. Just the kind of a song that mothers the world over sing to their babies at bed time.

Presently it died away, and all was still, and Buddy Jim knew that the babies, whoever they were, had gone to sleep.

"I'm going to find out who that is," said he, crawling softly across the hay towards the place from where the sound of the voices and the singing had come. Presently, in the dim light he could just make out a tiny creature in a tawny dress sitting on a tuft of hay. She had been daintily munching the seeds from a buttercup stalk. But now she sat very still. Buddy sat very still, too. He knew that the small Mother person had seen him.

But she did not run away. She couldn't, you see. Because her precious babies were there. So she sat quite still and hoped that Buddy Jim had not seen her.

"Don't be afraid of me," said Buddy Jim, "I'm just a neighbor, and I won't hurt you."

"My! you make me breathe easier," said the small Mother person, "most boys would drive me away and take my babies away to live in one of those dreadful prisons they call cages. My! I'm glad that you are not *that* kind of boy. Why," she went on, "we came into this hay loft to live because we thought there wasn't a boy on the farm."

"There wasn't until my Daddy bought it," said Buddy Jim. "We came in the Springtime. Daddy wants me to know all about my little country neighbors. You see I'm from the city, and I've never seen many wild creatures—nobody but Reddy Bat—so I just want to know them all. I wouldn't hurt your babies, and I wouldn't think of taking them away."

"Well, that surely makes me feel better," said the little Mother person.

"But won't you please tell me your name?" said Buddy Jim. "Why, surely," said the small Mother person, "we are the Flying Squirrels, though we of course do not really fly, we just get our balance and sail through the air. Like this," she said, giving a little jump and sailing across the loft and back again.

"I heard you planning to move," said Buddy Jim. "Why! This is such a safe big place for the babies to play around in."

"That's what we thought," said Mother Flying Squirrel, "and that is why we moved into Barn Swallow's old nest instead of making one for ourselves—he isn't using it this year—see, it's up on that cross-beam. But now that they are filling the barn so full of hay, I'm afraid my children will be buried under it, so Father Squirrel has gone out to see if he can find us a new place to live in."

"Wait a minute," said Buddy Jim, "I think I can help you. You just sit tight until I come back."

Buddy Jim slid down from the hayloft and went out to his own little work bench which Daddy had given him. There he hunted until he found just what he wanted. It was a wooden box that used to hold soap. In a few minutes with hammer and nails he had made just the nicest little house you could wish for. And then he covered the floor of it with soft, fine shavings, and took it back to the hayloft.

Then he climbed up on the cross beam, and nailed the house way up high, so high that the hay just never could come up to it.

And then he sat down to watch little Mother Flying Squirrel move. First she fixed the shavings to suit herself. Then, for fear it was not soft enough she got some hay and put that in and trampled it down.

Then she moved the babies, taking one at a time, in her mouth, just the way Tabby the Cat moves hers. When they were all safely in the new nest, she sat up on the top of the house to look for Daddy Flying Squirrel.

Presently he came in and sailed straight over to where his house used to be.

You should have seen his face! But Mother Squirrel called, "We've moved, we live up here now."

"Well, well," said Daddy Flying Squirrel, "*where* did you ever get this house? And where are the babies?"

"All safely tucked in bed, bless their hearts," said Mother Flying Squirrel. "This house is a present from our new neighbor, Buddy Jim. There he is over there on the hay."

"A Boy!" gasped Daddy Flying Squirrel. "Now we *shall* have to move."

"Indeed we *won't*," said Mother Flying Squirrel, "Buddy Jim is the right *kind* of a boy. He takes care of small creatures instead of hurting them."

Just then came the call to supper. "Where have you been so long Buddy Jim?" asked his father.

"I was fixing a house for the flying Squirrels and their babies, up in the hay loft, Daddy," answered the little boy. "I'm going to tame them. I'm going to get them so tame that they will eat out of my hand before the summer is over."

"He will do it, too," said Old Bob the gardener to Mary the maid. "All the little animals around the place seem to love Buddy. He's so good to them."



BUDDY JIM AND MOLLY COTTON-TAIL

*The lovely Blackeyed Susans
Were nodding drowsily,
And the Katy-dids were singing
In the old red cherry tree,
The dusky, ripe blueberries called
An invitation sweet
"Come Buddy Jim, come up and see
How good we are to eat."*

BUDDY JIM ran around the house to the back porch where Mary the cook was busy shelling green peas for dinner.

"I wonder what kind of pie I can have for dessert tonight," she said. "The red raspberries are all gone, so Old Bob the gardener says, and I'm tired of pie-plant, aren't you, Buddy?"

"I was just thinking I would go and get some blueberries," said Buddy Jim, "and I'll get some so you can make a pie, if you want me to, Mary."

"Bless the lad," said Mary the cook, "that will be fine. Wait till I make you some sandwiches, and find a pail for the berries."

So with one pocket full of doughnuts and one full of sandwiches and one full of cookies—(you never can tell *how* hungry a boy is going to get when he is working hard picking berries, so Mary the cook said)—Buddy Jim called to Old Dog Sandy and started for the blueberry bushes.

Old Bob the gardener was very proud of those bushes. He had found them many years before, bravely growing in the open pasture, just little wild bushes that had strayed up there from the low places, and he had treated them well, and had given them what they liked best to eat, and had taken such good care of them they had grown into a wonderful blueberry orchard, and the sweet dusky berries were twice as large as any blueberries had ever been before.

So, Buddy Jim had lots of fun filling his pail with them, and long before it was filled he simply could not have eaten a single berry more, and his face looked just like a little black boy's face.

Blueberries do stain so! But Buddy could not see his face, and he would not have cared if he *could* have seen it, he was having so much fun.

All at once, Old Dog Sandy barked at something. Buddy knew what *that* meant. Sandy had found some Little Neighbor. So he ran quickly. He was always afraid that the silly old dog would at some time hurt some little helpless creature.

He found him in a thicket of brakes at the edge of the woods, dancing around an old stump, barking like mad at Molly Cotton-tail and her two babies, who were trying to squeeze themselves into a little hollow at the foot of the stump.

Molly Cotton-tail was trying to shelter the two little ones with her body, but she wasn't quite big enough.

"Sandy," said Buddy, "stop that barking and go and lie down until I come!"

Old Dog Sandy trotted off, looking foolish and disgusted, and talking to himself. He could not understand Buddy! Here he took all this trouble to hunt up game for him, and every time he got blamed for it. It was no way to *treat* a dog. He was going to stay at the house after this.



Mary was shelling Peas for Dinner

"My!" said Molly Cotton-tail, drawing a long breath, "I'm glad you called off that old dog. I thought we were surely done for just before you came. I thank you ever so much, not only for me, but for my poor babies who are only four weeks old."

"I am sorry my old dog was so rude," said Buddy. "Somehow he won't stop barking at the little neighbors. He thinks it's fun!"

"It may be—for him," said Molly Cotton-tail, "but not for us. You see we cannot climb trees, as some animals can, and we do not swim to speak of, and we have no holes in the ground to dodge into, unless we use some other person's house, and then we may be running into danger, because the snakes use the old houses of the wood-chucks and gophers, and of course mothers *cannot* run away and leave their babies—so you can see it's not very easy being a rabbit."

"I guess not," said Buddy. "Do you live near here?"

"My home is right around the corner, under an old log," said Molly Cotton-tail. "I have a very nice home, all lined with my last year's coat, and as comfy as can be. But I brought the children out here to sleep today, it was so pleasant and cool and dim in here. We were having such a *good* nap when your old dog found us."

"It is so early in the day," said Buddy, "that I don't see how you could have *needed* a nap."

"Oh, but you see," said Molly Cotton-tail, "we work nights and sleep days!"

"Why do you do that?" asked Buddy Jim. "Well," said Molly Cotton-tail, "it is so light in the day, and we can see so many things to frighten us—we're not very brave you know—and it's so much fun to come out when it's cool and dark to play our games and find our food."

"It's a funny way to live," said Buddy. "I couldn't find my way about in the dark."

"I suppose we are made differently," said Molly Cotton-tail, "so that we can all use the same world; it would be too crowded if we all had to be out in it at the same time. But if you will excuse

me now I will get my children to sleep again, so Goodbye," and she started for the comfy fur-lined nest under the old log.

"Goodbye," said Buddy Jim. "I'm glad I met you."

"Get many blueberries, Buddy?" asked Old Bob the gardener.

"Lots," answered Buddy. "And Old Dog Sandy scared up Molly Cotton-tail and her two little baby Cotton-tails, in the edge of the woods."

"That so?" said Old Bob the gardener, "did you see them?"

"Yes, I did," answered Buddy, "the babies were cute little things. Say, Bob," he went on, "why do people always say that rabbits have no brains?"

"I don't know," said Old Bob the gardener, "I've always thought myself that Molly Cotton-tail was a pretty bright Little Neighbor."

"I think so too," said Buddy.





" **T**hey must think it's
Candy"



BUDDY JIM AND THE HARVEST MICE

*The golden glow was waving
Her pom-poms in the sun,
And the click of busy reapers said
That harvest had begun;
The Sumac trees were dressing up
In gowns of crimson hue
But there didn't seem to be a thing
A little boy could do.*

BUDDY JIM sat on the top step of the porch and didn't know *what* to do! He had fed the rabbits and chickens, and everybody else was busy! He had been told that he must not go to the harvest field because the men didn't want little boys around machinery; and *nearly* he was *lonesome*! Then Old Bob the gardener came by with his cheery whistle and his "Hello,

Buddy, old scout, what's doing today?" "Nothing," said Buddy. "Why, Bob?" "Well," said Old Bob the gardener, "I'm pretty busy, myself, today, and I was wondering if perhaps a little boy about your size wouldn't be so kind as to go down to the far pasture and salt the sheep for me."

"Why, of course I will," said Buddy Jim. "But, Bob, how *do* you salt sheep?"

"Oh," said Old Bob the gardener, "you just take some salt along and sprinkle it on the ground. I always put it near the big flat rock just inside the five barred gate. The sheep will come and get it. They will be there by the time *you* are most likely, because they can smell salt a long way."

"Shall I take Old Dog Sandy along, Bob?" asked Buddy. "Better not," advised old Bob the gardener, "he wouldn't hurt them, I know, but the sheep would not understand. They think all dogs are their enemies."

When Buddy got to the far pasture the sheep were all in sight nibbling at the short grass. As soon as they saw him scattering the salt on the ground, how they *did* run to get it! Buddy climbed up on the five-barred gate to watch them eat it. "They must think it's candy," he said to himself.

After they had eaten every tiniest bit of the salt, the old bell wether started away and all the others followed him. "They are going to the spring now to get a drink," thought Buddy Jim. "So I think I'll go home." But just then who should fly gracefully along and light on the top bar of the five-barred gate quite near to Buddy Jim, but Mr. Red-headed Woodpecker, dressed all in his very best. He paid no attention at all to Buddy. He just sat there thinking about something. Then he flew over to an old stump with a hole in one side of it for a door, and began knocking loudly with his long bill on the side of the stump.

Presently a little bit of a Mother person came to the door and peeped out. When she saw who was there she drew her head back, and Buddy heard her say: "Please, Mr. Woodpecker, don't make so much noise. My babies can't sleep at all."

"O, so you are at home this time, Mrs. Harvest Mouse," said Red-headed Woodpecker. "Well, I've come to collect my rent, if you please!"

"I am sorry, Mr. Woodpecker," said the little Mother person, "but there isn't a thing in the house that you could use. Father Harvest Mouse has had to get up early and go out to find something for our own breakfast."

"In that case," said Mr. Red-headed Woodpecker, "I'll wait until he comes back, and if he doesn't bring something that I like better, why, baby mice will taste pretty good," and he began drumming on the old stump again. "I wonder what I can do to help that little Mother person?" Buddy asked himself. He could hear the little Mother trying to hush her frightened babies, and he knew that she was just as much frightened as they were. Just then little Father Harvest Mouse came running along the top bar of the five-barred gate. He had his mouth full of heads of wheat. They stuck out from his funny little face just like big whiskers, and he *could* hardly see over them. He stopped short as he heard Red-headed Woodpecker knocking at his door, and then he saw Buddy Jim. "O dear, O dear," he said, as well as he could with his mouth full of wheat, "this place is full of enemies! It is quite time that we moved."

"I'm not your enemy," said Buddy Jim, softly.

"Aren't you?" said the little fellow. "Well, you can see for yourself that Red-headed Woodpecker is."

"Why did he ask Mrs. Harvest Mouse for the rent?" asked Buddy. "Does your house belong to him?"

"It once belonged to one of his family," said Father Harvest Mouse. "But it had not been used in years and years until we found it and made it over for a home for ourselves and our babies. He never bothers us unless he knows we have small children. I scarcely ever leave home in the day-time, but I went out today to find a new home. We shall move tonight."

"Where are you going to live?" asked Buddy Jim. "We are going to move nearer the wheat fields," said Father Harvest Mouse. "I am going to build my own house this time. But I wish that old chap would fly away, so I could go and feed my family. They must be nearly starved."

"I'll make him go away," said Buddy Jim, taking his sling shot from his pocket. "I won't hit him, but I'll frighten him."

Mr. Red-headed Woodpecker was so busy knocking at Mother Harvest Mouse's door that he did not notice anything at all until Bing! came a stone from the sling shot. He flew over to the fence. Then as nothing happened he flew back, and began knocking as before. Then Buddy Jim sent another shot that hit the stump a little nearer *to* the old fellow. Then he saw Buddy, and with a saucy "Here, here, quit it, quit it," he flew away.

"Thank you ever so much for helping us," said the little Father Mouse as he ran home.

Buddy Jim stayed a while to see if Red-headed Woodpecker would come back. But he didn't. "He must think I'm one of those fellows who really mean to hurt the birds," said Buddy. "I'm sorry for that. But he wasn't fair, and he's got to learn better. I wish he could behave himself. He's so good looking I can't help liking him. But he's got to play fair. He's got to play fair," said Buddy Jim, striking out for home.





BUDDY JIM AND THE GRAY SQUIRREL FAMILY

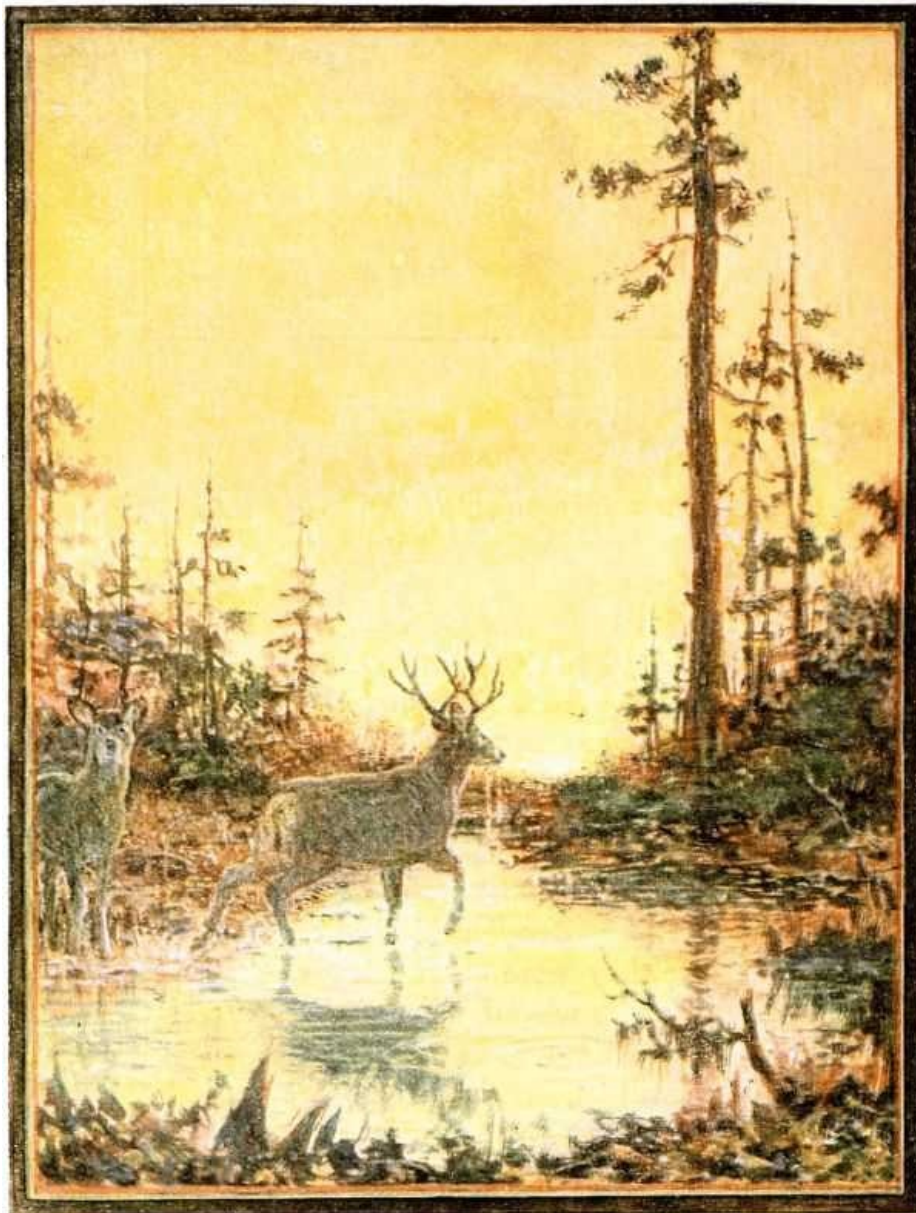
*The Golden-Rod was sprinkling
Fresh perfume on the air,
And the little Milk-weed fairies
Were flying everywhere.
The blackberries were ripening in
The splendid August sun!
Said Buddy Jim, "I'm sure there'll be
Enough for everyone."*

"ENOUGH of what?" asked Old Bob the gardener, who happened to be passing the porch just that minute.

"O, good morning, Bob," said Buddy, running to meet the old gardener; they were great friends. "Enough blackberries for all of us, is what I meant. For us and the birds too."

"Guess there will be," said Old Bob the gardener, "never did see such a blackbr'y crop as there is this year. Are you thinking of going blackberryin'?"

"Mary the cook said that if I would go and get some that she would make me some jam to have for my breakfasts next winter, with my own name on the labels," said Buddy. "So I'm going to get them today before they ripen too much."



There were really wild Animals in the Forest!

"Well, Buddy," said Old Bob the gardener, "if you are going into that blackbr'y bramble you'd better put on your shoes and stockings, unless you want to get your feet and legs scratched."

"I'll take them along," said Buddy, "and put them on after I get there. It is so much fun to go barefoot in the dewy grass."

So, after getting a shiny new tin pail from Mary the cook, Buddy tied his shoes together by the strings, and hung them around his neck, whistled to Old Dog Sandy, and went across the fields of late clover where the big bumblebees were busy, to the hillside where the blackberries grew.

Such a tangle of bushes as he found there; and all simply *loaded* with great ripe berries.

Buddy Jim sat down on a fallen log and put on his shoes and stockings, while Old Dog Sandy just nosed around. It was very pleasant up there, Buddy Jim thought. He could look away down on the shining meadows, where the little crooked river ran like a silver ribbon through the green of the wild fields that ran out to the edge of the big woods.

There were very big fish in the river, so Bob the gardener had said, and really wild animals in the forest. Bears and wolves even, and deer. And on dark nights sometimes, Jack O' Lantern danced and swung his light around. Old Bob the gardener had promised that Buddy should go along with him and camp out some night while the men were cutting the wild hay on the shining meadows. He wished he were going there now. Now, this minute! Then he remembered that he had come to pick blackberries.

Old Dog Sandy was not interested in the berries. So he started off by himself to see what he could find. "Look out for old man Porcupine," called Buddy. Sandy looked foolish, and ran away. His mouth was still sore at the corners, because he had sneaked away one day to settle an old score with Prickly Porcupine; and he did not like to be reminded of it.

It was fun to pick the berries, and although Buddy put one in his mouth for every two that he put in the pail, he soon had the pail full. Then he sat down to rest and wait for Old Dog Sandy to come back.

At first there was no noise at all, except the Katy-dids' quarrelling with each other, and then making up again, and the song of the locusts, but presently Buddy became aware of other voices.

"O-dear-O-dear," chattered a small somebody, "it is just as I expected, all the nicest berries are gone! You would loiter so, children, wasting our time on hazel-nuts that won't be ready to eat for a month yet."

"Now never mind, never mind, Mother," said a second small voice, "I'm sure we shall find enough ripe berries for our lunch. Here is a nice big one now, just full of seeds."

"The best thing about blackberries," said the first voice, "is that they are both food and drink."

"Oo—oo—ee—ee," shouted another little voice. "What luck! Somebody has picked a lot of berries and put them in a dish for us, and left them here. Come quickly, Sister, come quickly!"

"Now they've found my pail full of berries," said Buddy. "Children, Children!" called the Mother voice, "don't touch those. It may be a trap!"

"You must *never* touch anything that has the Man smell about it," said their father.

Very softly, so as not to frighten away those who were making so free with his blackberries, Buddy turned around. And there was Father and Mother and Sister and Brother Gray Squirrel.

They certainly looked funny, with their eager little faces all stained with blackberry juice. Buddy just couldn't help it. He laughed right out loud.

Then they saw him, and as quick as a wink there wasn't a squirrel in sight. They had all whisked like little gray streaks up in the branches of an old birch tree.

But squirrels are such curious little people that they just had to peep, to see who and what was down below them. And Buddy Jim, knowing that they would be back presently, stretched out on the ground and lay very still.

"He seems to be harmless," said Father Squirrel. "He does indeed," said Mother Gray Squirrel. "He *is* harmless," said Brother Gray Squirrel, "and what is better he is kind. He is the boy who made the nest for Flying Squirrel's family in the barn at haying time. I'm not afraid of him. I'm going down and get my lunch." "So am I," said Sister Gray Squirrel. And they both slid down head first, on the trunk of the big old birch tree. "Help yourselves, Little Neighbors," said Buddy softly. "I won't look. I can gather some more."

With little squeals of joy Sister Gray Squirrel and Brother Gray Squirrel stood up on their haunches and reached their little paws into the pail of berries, and ate and ate. Then they filled their pockets full and the juice all ran down on their little gray dresses, but they didn't care, and then they ran up the big birch tree to take some to Father and Mother. They were just in time,

too, for Old Dog Sandy came trotting back and barked at them.

"I'm glad you are safely back," said Mother Gray Squirrel, "for while you may be able to trust *some* people, you certainly can not trust dogs and cats."

Buddy laughed. "See what a bad opinion folks have of you, Old Dog Sandy," said he, as he filled his pail again.

When he took the berries to Mary the cook, she said, "Your lunch is all cold, Buddy. Didn't you hear the horn?"

"Yes, I heard it," said Buddy. "But I had to pick some more berries. Some little gray tramps ate part of what I had gathered."

"Tramps!" said Mary the cook. "*We* don't allow tramps here on this farm. You'd better speak to Old Bob the gardener about it."

Buddy Jim smiled. He knew Old Bob the gardener would never object to *his* little gray tramps!





BUDDY JIM AND THE MUSQUASH CHILD

*The downy purple Gentians
Were lately come to town,
And the maple trees wore crimson
While the oaks were dressed in brown;
There came a gentle splashing from
The merry-hearted brook
Said Buddy Jim, "It's hard to stay
Indoors and read a book."*

"DO YOU find it so, son?" laughed Mother. "Then why don't you take your books out of doors?"

"O may I, Mother?" eagerly asked the little boy. "Of course you may," said his mother, "but you are on your honor, mind! Your lessons must be ready for Father this evening; but if it will be easier to study outside, why not?"

Buddy was delighted. He loved nothing so well as being out of doors, so he wasted no time about getting there. Old Dog Sandy was asleep on the porch. "I guess I won't take him," said Buddy. "He is sure to find some Little Neighbor to bark at, and I've got to study."

Daddy had given Buddy his choice. He could go back to town to school, or he could study and keep up with his grade in the country for two months. And Buddy had voted for the country, so Daddy was his teacher, and he was a very strict one. *Very strict!*



A splendid place to lie and study

"I'll go down to the brook," said Buddy. "I know the very place." It was a lovely afternoon. The big yellow pumpkins looked like gold polka-dots in the sun among the shocks of corn. "What a fine place for Cinderella to get a new coach," said Buddy.

At the brook Buddy came to the place where he had once tried to catch Spotty the trout. The same turtle sentinels were asleep on the log, sunning themselves, before they went into their mud beds for the winter. As Buddy came along, splash! went the tiniest turtle into the water. Buddy laughed, "Never mind, Little Neighbor," he said, "I'm not fishing today. I'm going farther down stream."

The place Buddy had in mind for a place to study in was where the brook widened out, getting ready to join the river. A big old tree had fallen there. It reached away out into the swampy land on the farther side.

It made a perfectly splendid place for a little boy to lie and study. Buddy noticed some queer, humpy places across the brook in the swampy land. He wondered what could have made them. But the lessons were hard, so he forgot about everything else until he could say them all backwards. By that time the shadows were getting longer. Buddy was just going to start home, when Splash! something went into the brook. "My!" said Buddy. "That must have been a bear!" Then there was a second splash, and surely there was something swimming across the brook. And then all at once it sank right out of sight. He lay very still, wondering about it. Where could it have gone to? He watched and watched, but he was very sure that it did not come to the surface of the water again. And then all at once there came the patter of little feet along the old log where he lay, and a Little Neighbor almost ran over him, but, seeing him, stopped short and tried to look as though he were not there.

"Don't be afraid, Little Neighbor," said Buddy. "Who's afraid?" asked the Little Neighbor, "I'm not! But what are you doing on our bridge?"

"Is it your bridge?" asked Buddy. "Well, we call it that," said the Little Neighbor. "It is such a splendid place to dive from, when one is carrying something. It's a short-cut home, you see. I've got some corn for supper, and I must hurry. My father and mother just went in. Didn't you see them?"

"Where *is* your house?" asked Buddy. "Why, that's our house, across there," said the Little Neighbor, pointing to the queer humpy looking thing in the swampy land.

"How do you get into it?" asked Buddy. "And what's your name,—if you don't mind telling me."

"We swim, of course," said the Little Neighbor, "and I am one of the Musquash children. Some folks call us Muskrats, but we don't like that name. We like the Indian name better."

"I saw your father and mother going home," said Buddy, "but they just sank down in the water, and didn't come up. I'd be worried about them if I were in your place."

The Musquash child just laughed. "You don't suppose we go away and leave our front door open so any one can go in, do you?" he said.

"We make a tunnel that leads up to our house, under the water of the brook, and nobody can find it except ourselves. Much better than locking the door."

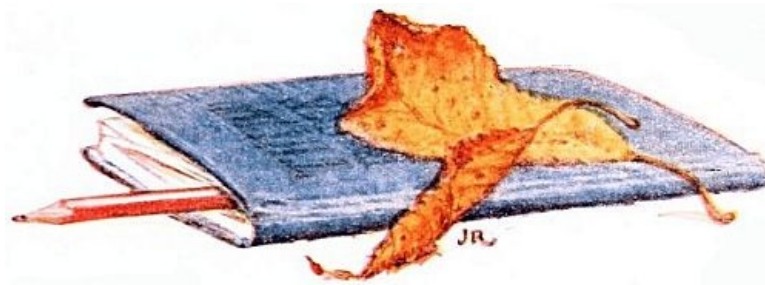
"What makes you so afraid of people?" asked Buddy. "I guess you would be afraid," said the Musquash child, "if people wanted your skin to make coats of. Traps all about, and spies and enemies, until we never know what is going to happen. But there is Mother calling me. We haven't had supper yet. Goodbye," he called and with a wonderfully big splash for so small a child he swam away.

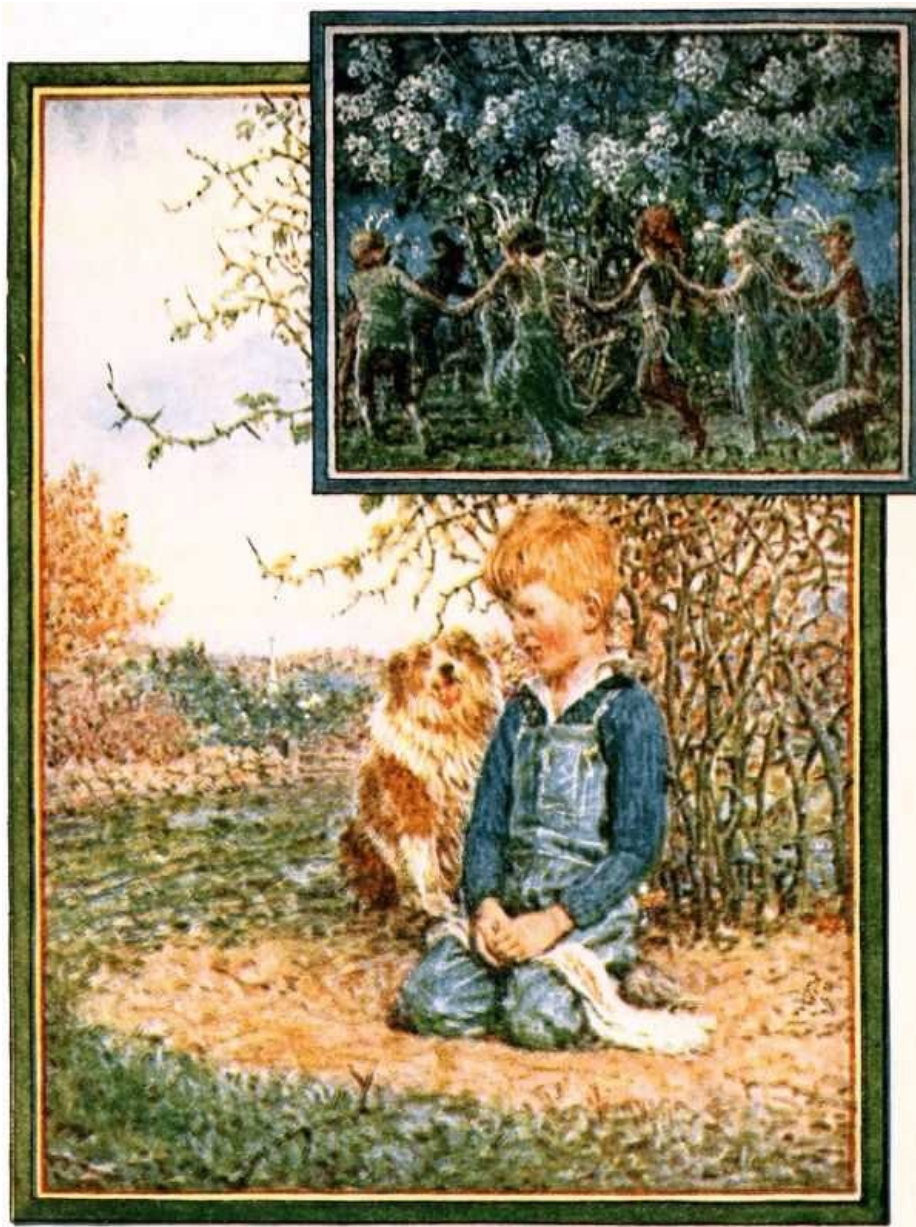
Buddy watched him out of sight. Then he too went home to supper.

After his lessons were over for the night, Buddy asked, "Daddy, what is a Musquash's skin good for? And why do people hunt them?"

"It's good for a beautiful coat," said Cousin Betty who was visiting there, "if you have money enough. I haven't!"

"Glad you haven't, Cousin Betty," said Buddy, "and I hope that no one *ever* catches *my* Little Neighbor, the Musquash child, to make a coat from his skin."





He was thinking
about old Bob's
story of the Fairies



BUDDY JIM AND THE WOOD-CHUCK PEOPLE

*The Mountain Ash was wearing
Her beads of coral red,
And the fuzzy caterpillars
Were all looking for a bed;
The Thistle birds were calling,
And the air was crisp and clear,
"Summer has gone," said Buddy Jim
"And Winter'll soon be here."*

THAT'S so, Son," said Old Bob the gardener, "and that being so, you'd better make hay while the sun shines."

Buddy was used to Old Bob the gardener, and his funny sayings, and so he knew that he didn't really mean that about making hay, because the hay had been made for months, but that he must do whatever there was to *be* done and not waste time about it.

So he said, "What were you going to tell me to do, Bob?"

"Why," said Old Bob the gardener, with a twinkle in his eye, "I s'pose you don't mean to make the squirrels a present of all the hazel-nuts up in the back pasture, do you?"

"Why, no," said Buddy.

"Well," said Old Bob, "they will be just right to gather today, on account of the frost last night, and if you will spread them out on the flat roof of the garage for a few days the shucks will come off beautifully."

"Thanks for telling me, Bob," said Buddy. "I'll go and get some today."

"They will come in handy evenings in the city," said Old Bob the gardener.

Buddy's smile faded out. He didn't *want* to go back to the city. But the smile blossomed again right away. He didn't have to go for a few more weeks anyway. "I'll get a basket," said he, "and go right away for the nuts."

"A sack will be much better," said Old Bob the gardener, "it will be easier to carry. Ask Mary the cook for one."

Mary the cook *had* a flour sack, which she was glad to give to Buddy. She also gave him some sandwiches for his lunch, so that he need not hurry back.

Buddy whistled to Old Dog Sandy, and the two started gaily for the back pasture. There was no hurry, so he thought he would go and see if there were any thorn-apples left. There was a big old hawthorn tree, with low branches, standing all by itself in the pasture. There was a funny sort of ring around it, like a tiny circus ring. Buddy had once asked Old Bob the gardener about it; what had caused it. And he had said that he really didn't know; that it had always been there since he could remember; but that his old grandmother, who came from Ireland, had told him when he was little that it was a fairy ring. Made by the feet of the fairies, when they danced in the moonlight. That they always danced around hawthorn trees.

As Buddy came near to the tree he was thinking about Old Bob's story of the fairies, and wishing he could see them. He was sure he could hear something that sounded like wings rustling, and little voices whispering; it came from the branches of the old hawthorn. For a minute he thought perhaps the tree was full of fairies, resting after their dance in the moonlight. And then Old Dog Sandy came running up, and began to bark, and a whole flock of Bob Whites arose from the tree, and flew away with a whirr into the woods. They had been lunching on the thorn-apples.

"Now see what you've done, Sandy," said Buddy. "You must be more careful; I don't want you to frighten the Little Neighbors. I am always telling you so. Just once more now, and I shall send you home."

Old Dog Sandy hung his head; he just couldn't seem to remember that he must not bark at things; anyway, wild things; they didn't belong to anyone, he thought.

Buddy Jim took only a handful of the crimson thorn-apples; they were not so very good, anyway; and besides, he felt that they belonged to the birds, and it was hazel-nuts that he had come for.

As he got to the hazel thicket he heard small voices chattering and laughing, and caught a glimpse of Red Squirrel and his family, with their pockets just bulging with the hazel-nuts.

When they saw him they all whisked up in a big tree, and hid in the branches. "Don't be afraid, Little Neighbors," called Buddy. "We won't hurt you; it is only when you steal eggs that we don't like you."

But Red Squirrel and his family would not come back. They thought that he might be like other boys they had met, and that he would follow them to their nests, and take away their winter supply of nicely-shelled nuts.

So Buddy started filling his sack with the crisp green and brown clusters of nuts, thinking what a treat they would be for the boys in the city, winter evenings after school. The sack was soon filled, there were so many nuts, and then Buddy sat down to eat his sandwiches and listen to the sounds around him. There was Old Jim Crow's "Ha, Ha," as he flew away from the corn field, and the clear whistle of the Bob Whites as they went back to the hawthorn to finish their lunch, and the "Quick, quick," of Mr. Blue Jay, who is always in a hurry over nothing at all, when suddenly Old Dog Sandy began to bark. Mixed with his barking and growling was a scolding, chattering voice that Buddy had never heard before.

"I wonder," said he to himself, running toward the noises, "what that meddlesome old dog is up to now?"

Old Dog Sandy was dancing about as nimbly as a puppy, in front of a tunnel in the side of a little hillock, barking at a funny little fat figure, which was sitting straight up, with its fore paws hanging down in front of itself.

Old Dog Sandy saw his little master coming, and stopped his barking, for he remembered just too

late that he was to be sent home. Just then the little fellow in the tunnel door saw Buddy. "I say," he called, "call off your dog. He makes me nervous; if he comes any nearer I shall bite him. And I can't go indoors until my mate comes back. How do I know he would not kill her, he's so savage? And she's so fat she can't run."

"Go on home, Sandy," said Buddy. "I *told* you, you know." "Oh don't send him off alone," said the small person, "I don't know which way my mate is coming back; dogs can't be trusted. He might meet her and tear her all to pieces. They always kill all wild creatures," he said. "That's part of their game; just their nature; they can't help it; we have to look out for them, that's all. But I do not want my mate killed, so will you please take him with you when you go?"

"Are you in a hurry for me to go?" asked Buddy, laughing. "Well," said the small person, trying politely not to yawn, "I really am a little sleepy, you know. My mate said she just had to have one more dinner before we go to sleep, so she went over to the turnip field to get it, and I wasn't hungry so I promised to wind the alarm clock. I had just come out to get the correct time from Mr. Sun, when your old dog came along."

"Do you really mean that you have a clock to get up by?" asked Buddy. "Why not? Don't you?" asked the small person. "Though our clock is not like yours; ours is a sort of calendar clock. We must wake up on Candlemas day, you know, else nobody would know what the weather was going to be for the balance of the winter."

"Oh, now I know who you are," said Buddy. "You're Mr. Ground-Hog. Bob the gardener told me about you."

"Some folks call me that, and some folks call me Wood-Chuck," said the small person. "I don't care either way, so long as they do not call me before February the second. But my mate is coming back, so if you will take your dog away so that she can come in, I'll be much obliged to you."

So Buddy and Old Dog Sandy stepped behind a big rock. Buddy peeped out and saw fat little Mrs. Wood-Chuck waddling along, blinking sleepily in the sun. As she joined her mate, in the door of their house, Mr. Wood-Chuck turned and waved a friendly goodbye to Buddy, who slung his sack of nuts over his shoulder and started home.

"Old Dog Sandy found a wood-chuck's hole up in the pasture," said Buddy to Old Bob the gardener, while they were spreading the nuts on the garage roof.

"Did you see them?" asked Old Bob the gardener. "Yes, I did," said Buddy. "They were very fat and sleepy."

"They were just going to den up," said Old Bob the gardener; "they will sleep till Candlemas day now."

"Do they really come out to find their shadow on that day, Bob?" asked Buddy.

"Guess they must," said Old Bob the gardener, "every body says so," and he went away humming to himself,

"Half the corn and half the hay
And half the oats on Candlemas day."





There were bright-colored Thistle Birds



BUDDY JIM AND THE CHIPMUNK FAMILY

*The world had turned to silver
Sometime throughout the night,
Each weed and twig, and shrub and tree
Wore robes of daintiest white;
The big round sun peeped out and smiled—
The world smiled back; "Oh look!"
Cried Buddy Jim, "It's like a page
From a fairy picture-book!"*

OF COURSE Buddy knew all about *why* the world was wearing lacy white dresses; Jack Frost had come and dressed it all up in the night to be sure; but he had not known how lovely it would be. Why, it looked exactly like a whole world full of glittering gems, like those Mother wore in her hair when she was going to a party.

Just then, around the corner, came Old Bob the gardener. He had a sharp and shiny axe in his hand. "Hello, Buddy," said he, "Want to do something for me?" "'Deed I do," said the little boy. He was always anxious to do something for Bob, because the two were great chums.

"I've got an axe to grind," said Old Bob the gardener, "and I want you to turn the grindstone for me. We are going up to the beech woods this forenoon to cut out the dead-and-down trees for wood, and old wood needs sharp axes."

"I like to turn the grindstone," said Buddy, as he started the big wheel slowly turning around on its axis, watching Bob the gardener as he held the axe closely against it, and poured water on the stone from time to time.

"Why do you put water on the stone, Bob?" he asked.

"So it won't get heated by the friction," said Old Bob the gardener, "it would spoil the stone if I didn't wet it, and the axe too, very likely. But there goes the breakfast gong, and the axe is sharp and I am much obliged to you, Buddy."

"You're welcome," said Buddy, as he made a dash for breakfast.

When breakfast was over, Buddy went out of doors, and found Old Bob the gardener just ready to go.

"Know of any youngster who would care to go beech-nutting this morning?" called Bob to Buddy Jim. "If you do, tell him to bring along a sack to put the nuts in, because there'll be beech-nuts a plenty after the fine frost we had last night."

"I certainly do know a youngster who wants to go," said Buddy, "and he will be all ready as soon as he finds a sack for the nuts, and puts on some hiking shoes. So be sure to call him, won't you Bob?"

"I'll sing out when I go by," said Old Bob the gardener. So Buddy asked Mary the cook for a flour sack, and put on warm shoes and stockings, and was quite ready to start when Old Bob the gardener shouted "All aboard!"

Old Dog Sandy stretched himself and looked at Buddy so beseechingly that he hadn't the heart to leave him at home. So he said he could come along if he would promise not to frighten any Little Neighbor.

Old Dog Sandy promised with his eyes, but down deep in his heart he was afraid he couldn't keep the promise, not if he should happen to meet something *really* interesting. However, permission to go along was all that he wanted, and maybe he wouldn't see any wild thing, so why think about it?

He was a happy old dog as they ran across the crisp fields; there were flocks and flocks of bright-colored thistle birds, chattering and getting their breakfast of seeds from the weeds, but old Dog Sandy didn't count those. They were too small and besides, they were just like the canary that Mary the cook kept in a cage, and made so much fuss over every day. It was a bit more exciting when he picked up Molly Cotton-tail's trail—but of course Buddy whistled him back—he never *could* have any fun.

Buddy thought he had never seen the beeches look so lovely as they did on this morning, not even in the summer—the leaves were so brown and rusty, and the trunks so smooth and such a lovely gray-green color. The wood cutters were there already, and after Old Bob the gardener had directed them where to work he came back to Buddy, and unrolled a bundle he had brought, which proved to be a blanket which he spread under a big tree.

"Now, Buddy Jim," he said, "I'll give you a boost, and you go up and shake the branches and the nuts will fall down on the blanket, and you will have plenty to do until noon time."

So, with a boost from Old Bob the gardener, up went Buddy, like a little brown monkey, and he began shaking the branches of the tree, so that the nuts fell down in a big shower, burrs and all.

When no more fell, Buddy scrambled back down the tree to fill his sack.

Old Dog Sandy wandered off by himself, talking to himself down deep in his throat about what would be likely to happen if he ever *should* happen to meet that Pin Cushiony Person again. There must be some spot on him not covered up with pins! "And *then* they'd see!"

Buddy lay face down on the blanket, busily separating the nuts from the burrs, and wondering how it could be possible that such a big tree could ever have grown from such a tiny, three-cornered little seed, when he became aware of voices just above his head.

"I am positive this is the tree that was so full of nuts yesterday," said a small voice, "because I marked it especially for this morning's work. And now there's only one or two clusters left!"

"Never mind, Mother dear," said another little voice, "perhaps the Red Squirrels got here first."

"Ssh," said the first voice, "it was not the Red Squirrels—I smell dog—and I smell man—and they're not far away, either. Look! what is that, on the ground at the foot of the tree?" Buddy looked up, just as the Little Neighbors in the tree looked down. "Hurray," said he, softly, "that's

Mother Chipmunk and her family, and they have always been so shy I couldn't get acquainted!" So he kept very still knowing that the curiosity of the little people was so great that they would just have to come down to see what he was doing.

"That's a boy down there, and he has taken all our beech-nuts," said Mother Chipmunk. "That's a shame. He surely doesn't need them, and we do."

"Come on down, Little Neighbors," called Buddy. "I won't hurt you. Come on down and help yourselves."

The Chipmunks looked at each other, half made up their minds to take Buddy at his word, ran part of the way down, and then ran back to the sheltering brown leaves again.

Buddy sat very still, until, making up their minds to have those nuts anyway, the timid, beautiful little animals ran down the trunk of the tree head first and jumped right in the middle of the blanket full of beech-nuts.

They paid no attention at all to Buddy, but went busily to work, filling their *pockets* full of nuts, selecting only the full-meated ones, and as fast as their pockets were full, running away, and hurrying back for more.

"You must live near here," said Buddy. "We do," said one little fellow, "That's why we needed the nuts on this tree, so we should not have to make such long trips home and back."

"I've always wanted to know," said Buddy, "what you do with the dirt that you take out of your burrows." Little Chipmunk started to speak, but his mouth was too full. "Chuck, chuck, chuck, chuck," warned his mother, "don't talk so much, children, and work faster."

"All right, little old lady," said Buddy, "keep your secrets. Goodbye! I'm going to find another tree, and you may have this one."

"Bob," said Buddy, when they were walking home, "do the Chipmunks sleep all winter, like the bears and the wood-chucks?"

"Deed they do not," said Old Bob the gardener, "they couldn't keep still that long. They're too restless, and they like to know too well what is going on in the world."

"Cunning little things, aren't they?" said Buddy. "Yes, they are," said Old Bob the gardener, "and they talk a lot without saying much."

Buddy Jim smiled. He was remembering that he had not found out very much about the friendly little Chipmunk people after all. Not from them!





Old Bob made a small
Fire and broiled
them



BUDDY JIM GOES CAMPING

*The wild geese all were flying south,
Because 'twas time to go;
And the Thistle Fairies all in white
Were dancing to and fro;
The Bittersweet hung crimson beads
Upon the brown old oak;
"To leave all this" said Buddy Jim
"Is cert'nly not a joke."*

FOR Buddy was going home tomorrow! Back to the city! He just had to laugh when he thought how he had not wanted to come to the country; and what a perfectly splendid time he had been having all summer in spite of that. Old Bob the gardener was *such* a good chum! And then there were all the Little Neighbors. He wondered if when he got back home that he would see Reddy Bat again. He hoped so; he wanted to thank him. He was glad he was going to have his happy summer to remember, and he was more glad that he was coming back next year. While he was thinking about all these things, there came, around the corner, Old Bob the gardener. He had on his high boots and an old sheepskin-lined, short coat. "Hello, Buddy," he called. "Want to go camping?" "O, Bob, do you mean it?" asked the little boy in delight. "Of course I mean it," said Old Bob the gardener, "You've got just time to get ready. Put on your warmest clothes, and your thickest boots. I'm going to harness old Maud. We are going down-stream after pickerel, and we are going to stay all night, so we'll need Mrs. Mare to carry enough blankets and food."

Buddy was sure that there never had before been such a ride as that was; across smooth meadows, through bumpy wood roads, over little running brooks, under tall trees, and low-hanging firs and spruces, with Old Dog Sandy trotting along behind, barking at everything he saw. Once, in the woods, Buddy heard a noise he thought must be thunder. But Old Bob the gardener had said, "No, it was just old Mr. Partridge drumming, just to let Mrs. Partridge know that he was not far away." Old Bob the gardener always seemed to know everything. And pretty soon, sure enough they came upon the Partridge family eating their lunch of birch buds, and when old Dog Sandy barked at them, as you might be sure he would, they all flew away with a great whirring of wings.

When they got to the camping ground it was great fun to cut the fir branches for their beds. "Shall we use the hunting cabin, Buddy?" asked Old Bob the gardener, "or shall we sleep out of doors?"

"O, please, Bob, out of doors," said the little boy. "I have never really slept out of doors." So they brought up lots of dry wood for a camp-fire, and made their beds near it. They were going to light it when they got their supper. When everything was ready they went fishing in the boat that was always kept there. And they soon had plenty of fish for lunch and old Bob made a small fire and broiled them. My! but they were good!

After lunch Old Bob said he was going to have a nap, so as Buddy Jim was not sleepy he went down stream to find what he could. He wanted to get some spruce gum to take to the boys, so he stopped at every big tree to dig off what he could reach. He got some fine clear lumps! Presently Buddy heard voices. He knew that it was some Little Neighbor, because it was that kind of a voice.

So he told Old Dog Sandy to keep quiet. "Always the way," muttered the old dog, as he dropped on the ground, "Just as soon as anything interesting comes along I'm supposed to be deaf and dumb; no fun in being a dog anyway, woof!" Buddy crept along the edge of the stream and peeped through the undergrowth. It was a very busy sight that met his eyes. There were actually dozens of Little Neighbors busily at work.

Some were cutting down trees and some were pushing rafts through the water, and some were pounding clay with their flat tails to mend a hole in a dam they were making, and some were working on huts.

There was one larger than the others who seemed to be the Master Workman. Buddy was so much interested that he forgot to be quiet, and snapped a twig that he was holding, and immediately every one of the Little Neighbors dropped out of sight in the stream.

Pretty soon the Master Workman came out. "Hello, Little Neighbor," said Buddy. "I'm sorry that I interrupted your work. You were all working like Beavers, weren't you?"

"Of course we were," said the Little Neighbor, a bit crossly, Buddy thought, "what else could we work like?"

"Are you Beavers?" asked Buddy, "I never saw one before."

"Then what made you say we worked like Beavers?" asked the Master Workman. "Why, that's what folks always say about people who are very 'ndus'trous," said Buddy, stumbling a bit over the big word. "Why did your crew jump in the water as soon as they saw me?"

"Wouldn't you get out of sight if you saw an enemy coming?" asked the Master Workman. "Course I would," answered Buddy, "but I'm not your enemy." "Well," said the Master Workman, "you *are* very small, but of course you've got somebody grown up with you. What are you doing down here if you did not come to hunt us?"

"Old Bob the gardener brought me down, to camp out all night," said Buddy. "And you need not be afraid of us at all. My father owns all this land around here, and he never allows any Little Neighbor to be disturbed."

"That's good news," said the Master Workman, and just then Buddy heard Old Bob the gardener calling him. So he said goodbye, and ran back to camp. "What are you trying to do, Buddy?" asked the old chap, laughing, "lose yourself in the woods?" "I couldn't get lost just following the stream," said Buddy. "I could always follow it back. I found old Mr. Beaver and his crew working down there fixing up their houses for winter."

"Well, let's have supper now and get to bed," said Old Bob the gardener.

Buddy meant to stay awake all night. He wanted to tell the boys at home how it felt to sleep outdoors. He saw the stars come out one by one, and the slender new moon began sailing in the sky like a little silver boat almost before the sun had gone to bed.

In a tree top near by, a big old owl wanted to know "who, who, who?" and he could hear the sleepy twitter of the chick-a-dee birds.

He was *glad* he was there. Then he snuggled closer under the blankets, and the Little Neighbors came softly and tiptoed up and looked at him, and then tiptoed softly away again. They were sorry too, that he was going back to the city tomorrow! But they were sure he would return with the springtime, and then how glad would they all be to welcome him back.

For Buddy Jim was the *right* kind of a boy! And they appreciated him! And were glad to be his Little Neighbors.

RACKY RACCOON

"THANK Goodness," chuckled Racky Raccoon, "that Old Dog Sandy has gone back to the city, and I can get down on the ground and stretch my legs in the daytime if I want to.

"He's been snooping around here all summer, so that *nearly* I didn't *get* in this book at all.

"But better late than never, and it's been worth being up a tree all summer, to get in here with Buddy Jim and all the rest of the Little Neighbors.

"But hungry! I haven't had a bite since twelve o'clock by the moon last night, and I see that Old Bob the gardener has thoughtfully left some nice yellow pumpkins on the hillside for me. You didn't know I liked pumpkins? No more *do* I; only the seeds.

"How do I get the pumpkins open? Say, what do you s'pose my claws are for?

"And after I get the seeds I have to take them to the brook and wash 'em. What for? O, my mother told me never to eat anything without first washing it.

"S'long! See you later."





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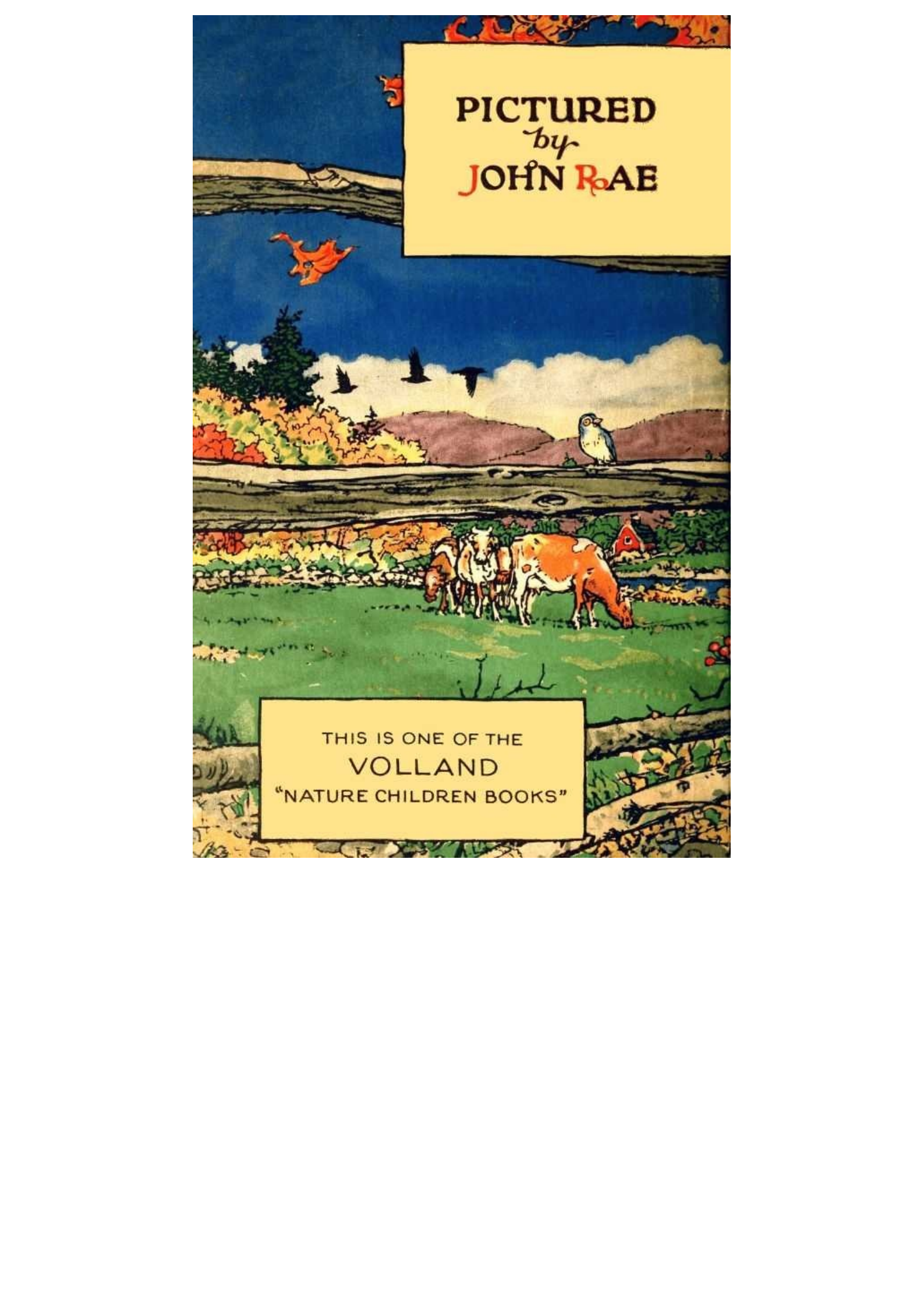
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