

LOST IN A FIELD OF CORN



By Louise Lexington

PAPA was cultivating the corn for the last time before "laying it aside," and mamma was preparing the breakfast of bacon and eggs, coffee and cream.

Little Frankie came into the kitchen in his nightgown, and after mamma had kissed him, she said: "Dearie me, I wonder why papa doesn't come! The coffee has boiled and the johnny cake is about done."

"Frankie will go tell papa to tum," said little Frank. But mamma called to him as he passed from the room on an errand: "You couldn't find papa, honey; he is in the big field."

The "big field" was 30 acres of corn, full grown and ripening in the Kansas sun. Papa cultivated it with a horse, up and down, row by row, and he had promised mamma to come to breakfast on the first "up-row" after 6 o'clock.

Frankie was so eager to find his papa that at first he almost ran over the hard, rough ground, stumbling and falling and

could find papa easily enough in the "big field," and so started for the big field, that shimmered and waved and rustled and nodded.

He stopped to say good morning and to chat a few minutes with his dazed neighbor, where mamma heard him as she passed an open window. And then he trotted on until he reached the cornfield, which he entered just as papa and Old Doll came forth from an "up-row" a few rods away, thus missing each other.

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getting up again. And then, as his little legs tired, he went forward more slowly, calling again and again: "Papa, papa, tum to breakfast!" and adding always in his piping baby voice: "Ze toffee is weedy, and ze donny cake is weedy."

But all to no purpose did he call and trail his white nightie in the dirt and the dew. Papa was at the barn by this time rubbing down Old Doll and giving her a good breakfast before going to the house for his own.

After washing his hands and face at the pump, he entered the kitchen, where mamma was just taking the eggs from the pan and placing them on the hot platter with the crisp bacon.

"Well, papa," said she, "I'm glad you're here. I thought Frankie and I would eat breakfast alone if you didn't come soon. I want to start the washing, you know."

"Where's the boy?" asked papa, placing Frankie's highchair next his own. "Great Scott, I'm hungry, mamma!"

"Frankie, Frankie," called mamma, peering out the window where she had last seen him. "Dearie me, the child is not there. Now, I do wonder if he could have gone after you! I remember he said he would, and I told him he couldn't find you in that big field."

Papa arose from the bountiful table as hungry as when he had sat down, and going back to the edge of the cornfield, he also called: "Frankie! Frankie!" but all the answer he got was the loud rustle, rustle of the high corn that shot up 10 feet into the air, and tossed its silken plumes of brown and red and white, and waved its thousands of green arms.

And then he went back to the barn and, much to Old Doll's amazement, mounted her before she had finished her breakfast and urged her again to the cornfield, where up and down, up and down, he rode the entire length of the "up-row".

About midway across papa discovered the little truant, tear-stained and earth-stained, leaning against a great green stalk, exhausted from crying and almost asleep.

He was so entirely weary that when papa swung him up to his lap on Old Doll, he just cuddled his tangled head close to papa and closed his eyes as he murmured:

"Frankie tum to tell ze breakfast is weedy, papa. Ze toffee is weedy, and ze donny cake is weedy."

And papa, never minding all the trouble at all, so soon as he had his baby safe at last, kissed the dirty, little face as he said:

"What would papa do without his dear little man to tell him when 'breakfast' is ready?"

"Queer Things in a Funny Country" (Written by the Boy Himself to the Gang at Home.)

YOU fellows know the lumber yards down by the freight station where there's always grass and things like that and even butterflies. Well, that ain't even a teeny patch on the kind of country where Dave and me are now. I tell you what. We made a mistake about those lumber yards. When you fellows ever see the real country, you'll know it, too.

First off, Dave and me didn't know whether we was going to like it or not. There wasn't any other fellers around, and most everybody was always getting up around daylight and going out to plough and things. Ploughing is funny. They drive a little iron riga-majig behind two horses, and they make little streets straight across the farms, one alongside of the other. First off Dave and me thought it was done so we could make short cuts, but only swivel kindhearted old farmer chased us half across his farm to tell us different, and he said that it was done to plant seeds in them. He was a nice man, but a terrible farm dweller. He got all excitement and red in the face just telling us that.

Things got a little better the next day. Dave fell in the pond and got nearly drowned, but not quite, when he came out he had funny wriggly fat things hanging all over him, and they was drawing the blood on him. So they said that they was leeches, and after Dave changed his clothes and drank some bitter stuff, we went out and caught a whole lot of them. They ain't pretty, but awful interesting.

When they got on you they just suck your blood, but not quite, and then I would send you fellows some, only after we got a canful we brought it in the house and couldn't find it again. And later on when it was dark, Dave's and I changed his clothes and drank some bitter stuff, we went out and caught a whole lot of them. They ain't pretty, but awful interesting.

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SURPRISE AT REAL PICNIC



"WE CAN'T go to the picnic, Rosy," said Katrine ruefully to her doll. "Sister Nell won't take us, 'cause she said she didn't want to be bothered with kids. Sister Nell's got a bo. A bo is a young man with kid gloves on, an' he takes her to ride in a buggy, an' you wear your best hat with the roses on, and your stiff-necked muslin dress."

"When he comes to call you set in the front parlor, and those nights you don't have to wash the dishes; an' you hurry upstairs the minute you've e't your jam and cake, so'st you'll have time to curl your hair 'fore he gets here."

"I like it, Rosy, when Sister Nell has a bo, 'cause mother lets me scrape the jam dish, an' I have a little pan of soapuds and wash the butter dishes, so'st I won't

be running in the parlor an' botherin' them. That's cause sister Nell, she said: 'Mother, I wish you'd keep Katrine out of the parlor when Jack calls. She hears everything, an' next day I hear her say: 'em over to her old doll.'

"I do tell you, Rosy, 'cause you're my best friend, next to mother, 'an you understand me awful well."

"Jack used to be a very nice bo, and he used to take me in his buggy an' let me hold the reins while he was waiting for sister Nell to find her coral pin. Last year he brought me some real firecrackers on the Fourth; but they're 'gaged now, an' I guess he's forgotten about me. I thought he was goin' to take me to the picnic, an' mother she said she would ask him to leave me with Mrs. Pratt, but sister Nell she put her foot right down on me, an' so I got to stay home."

"You see, mother is jollyin' currents

and things, an' they didn't tell or somethin', an' she's gotter do 'em over, so she can't take me, an' I'm fearful disappointed."

Katrine rose dejectedly from the front porch, tucked Rosy under her arm, and went around to the kitchen, where mother was dipping the clear red liquid into the tumblers.

"Mother, did you have a bo to take you to picnics?"

"Yes, Katrine, your dear father used to take me."

"Like Jack does Nell?"

"Just the same, dearie."

"An' now can't you go 'cause he's planted in the graveyard?"

"Mother sighed. 'We must try to make each other happy, little girl.'"

"All right, mother. What could I do to make you happy?"

"I'll tell you, Katrine. Let's think of a surprise for each other to celebrate the day."

"I don't know can I surprise you, mother. You know everthing."

"Well, you try. Now, run away, and don't come till I call you to lunch."

Katrine trotted off, wondering what she could do to "surprise" mother. Soon after her merry laugh came rippling out of the garret window. Then all was quiet for half an hour, when mother called:

"Katrine! Lunch."

When Katrine came she uttered a long "Oh!" for mother had the lunch spread on the grass under the apple tree.

And mother said the same kind of an "Oh!" when she saw Katrine, for she had dressed herself in a quaint old blue silk that she found in great-grandmother's cedar-trunk. With a wreath of red paper roses on her head she was a funny little picture as she came trailing down the steps, holding up her skirts with both hands.

"I'm Mrs. Liberty, mother!" she cried in glee. "An' that ain't all of the 'prise. They're more in a bag in my lap."

"This ain't all of my surprise, either," said mother. "There's a second course."

The tablecloth was mother's prettiest, and there were tiny biscuits and warm maple syrup. There were sandwiches with ham in them, and cookies; and Katrine ate and ate. Then mother went for the second course.

Katrine said a bigger "Oh!" than ever when she saw it.

"Current tarts! Oh, mother! I just love 'em!"

"Now what's your other surprise, little girl?"

"Fireworks!" said Katrine; and she opened the bag and showed a heap of old dried chestnuts.

Why Patsy's Forest Home Was Never Built

ALMOST more than anything Patsy loved the little woods. That meant the ones where she could go by herself and not be scared.

Patsy made up her mind that she was going to make herself a little house here, a place all her own. There was a big rock for one side of it, and she would only have to cut down saplings enough to make a slanting roof to fit between two pine trees which grew close to the rock.

The loveliest part of all was that this same rock had garnets in it! They weren't very valuable ones, to be sure, and most of them were small, but it would be fun to pretend to be a diamond miner and live in the house.

Mrs. Peabody said somebody once had found a garnet as large as a green pea in that neighborhood. Perhaps she might be as lucky as that.

One morning early Patsy borrowed Mr. Peabody's axe and a big chisel, and setting off to the grove, she set to work. Usually Don was with her, but today he was left behind, and Patsy was alone.

She began her work with a bang, and it was not long before she had a good hold and dragged Mr. Don to the side of the road. He gave him a good bit scolding, and then said:

"Just hang on to him, please, Patsy, till I get these new sheep together and into pasture. He's a good for nothin' dawg, and I'm jest downright 'shamed of him."

Don's ears and tail were perfectly limp. He knew what mischief was afoot, and he hated to be scolded worse than any disobedient child.

The effects of the reproof lasted until Mr. Peabody had driven the sheep into a fold and started them toward the farm-house. Then Don began to wriggle and squirm and bark and whine. But Patsy had a good grip of his wide leather collar, and she had no intention of letting go. She did, however, make the concession of walking along with him toward the house, for she thought perhaps if he could keep the sheep in sight he wouldn't be quite so unhappy.

Everybody went well until Mr. Peabody had let down the pasture bars and the sheep were filling in one by one. Then Don began to leap and fairly scream with excitement. Patsy held on tighter and tighter, and when Don had tried every possible twist and curve and couldn't get loose he deliberately turned and taking Patsy's hand in his mouth he gave it a good hard bite.

Of course Patsy screamed and let go, and away rushed Don after the sheep, too late, however, to do anything but make the last one run hard into pasture.

Mr. Peabody raced to Patsy and carried her to her room. Patsy in the kitchen. Patsy wasn't really much hurt, for Donie hadn't snapped but just succeeded so her skin was not even torn. After she recovered from the shock she was all right.

Mrs. Peabody gave her some fine fresh cherries, and she began to laugh once more. Soon there was a whine and a scratch at the door and in walked Mr. Don, so pitifully ashamed and miserable that it was truly funny.

"Well, Patsy," said Mr. Peabody, looking at her and then at Donie, "shall I punish her? He's been a very bad dog."

Never had Patsy seen a more appealing glance than that in Donie's brown eyes when he looked at her.

"No-o-o," said Patsy slowly, as if she were considering his request. But she knew in her heart that if he had hurt her a great deal she would have said the same thing.

Donie came close to her and licked the hand he had bitten. Patsy stroked his satiny black head and peace and harmony were restored.

But the forest mining home remained unbuild.

"All in good time, children," Whitley answered.

She was already in a flower bed just under the eaves of the porch. The earth was soft and fine there, and Whitley made it fly as she scratched it up. She didn't care a bit how dusty her white feathers got—that would all roll off. For a long time she worked, and the dust bed grew bigger and softer.

Deeper and deeper she dug, until at last she was satisfied. Then she stood off and called:

"Cluckity-cluck! Cluckity-cluck-cluck! Now, one at a time—jump! It won't hurt you."

Then those babies, not a day old, clustered on the edge of the Ranch House porch, and the boldest one leaped at his mother's bidding, straight down into the dust-bed of old Whitley had made.

Spluttering and fluttering the dust from his absurd bits of wings, he clambered out, not a bit hurt, and stood proudly beside his mother.

Down came another ball of dust, then another, another, until all the eight were safely on the ground.

Then she gave an extra toss to her red comb, for the mongrel Yellow Pullet came around the corner of a poppy; and the Pullet's heart was filled with envy, for her eggs were all in the incubator.

A True Story About a Really True Hen

"ALL six things this time so they won't find my eggs. Chicken County is all right as far as social privileges go, but there's no privacy. Even here in the garden, just as I think I've gotten my nest nicely hidden away among the leaves in a flower bed, along comes that mongrel Yellow Pullet and lays her old brown eggs right in with my peary white ones. Or worse still, Little Boy finds the nest and runs off with all the eggs but one, and I get no chance at all to raise a brood."

Old Whitley grumbled away, but it did not hurt anybody, because she was just talking to herself. Whitley was one of a family on a chicken ranch in California, and there is no disputing the fact that she had her troubles.

Then one day she had found that the yard fence was not high enough to keep her in, and she left the Chicken Metropolis forever. She steered her flight for the Ranch House Garden, and there she made friends with Little Boy, and so was allowed the freedom of the place—a privilege shared only with the mongrel Yellow Pullet, who had strayed there from a neighboring ranch when an infant, and had been adopted by the family.

"I will not have my eggs carried off and my children hatched and educated in an incubator. What can they learn without a mother to teach them? What affection can they feel for a kerosene lamp?"

All this time Whitley was walking around on the mossy roof of the old Ranch House porch. In spite of her grumbling, in her chicken heart she was a spy, for under the climbing branches that hung thick with yellow roses she had found a sheltered corner, shady, soft with moss, secure from the other White Leghorns, because they had to stay in their own yard; secure from the mongrel Yellow Pullet, because her wings could not carry her ungainly body so high; secure from Little Boy, because he had no eggs at all.

So Whitley proceeded to lay her eggs in peace, and in due time there were eight great pinky, peary round things under the yellow roses—all her own. Then Whitley disappeared for a long time, and nobody saw her, not even Little Boy, who really loved her, and did not know he plagued her when he took the eggs.

"Whitley's gone, murver," he said one day. "She showed up on the roof of the porch last I saw her, an' I 'spect she went on up to Heaven when she got so cew."

"Wait a little," said Mother, smiling. "I think she'll come back in a few days." So Little Boy waited and waited.

One sunny morning he was in the garden, playing, when he heard a familiar sound.

"Cluckity-cluck! Cluckity-cluck-cluck!"

"Peep! Peep! Peep!"

It all sounded from the porch roof. Little Boy looked up, and there she was, and not alone. All around her, running, peeping, pecking happily at the moss in the California sunshine, the first they had ever seen, were eight little balls of fluff, yellow as the roses they were born under.

"Muvver, Muvver!" called Little Boy. "Old Whitley's back from Heaven, an' she's brought some teeny-teeny babies with her. Come out an' see 'em quick. They're live as-as real chickens!"

So Mother came out, and laughed as she saw them.

"How will she ever get them down, I wonder," said Mother.

Old Whitley heard her, and tossed her head.

All of a sudden Whitley flew down to the ground, leaving her brood on their native roof. The whole eight rushed to the edge, crying for mother, and looked fearfully over at the daisy 12 feet of distance between them and the smiling earth.

"Peep! Peep!" they called. "Take us down."

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How Eva and Rose Straightened the Pie

ROSE and Eva were at the table. Mother had been called out. Before leaving she had given each little girl a triangle of delicious strawberry pie.

These little girls did not have strawberry pie every day.

They ate their pieces daintily. The small forks cut very carefully. The little girls played a sort of game. They tried to see which could make her piece last the longer.

When the pieces were quite gone not a crumb of flaky crust nor an atom of fragrant berry left, they still sat at the table. They looked at their plates, for mamma had used some of the nicest, to make the feast unusual in every feature. One plate had Cupids on, and the other some children playing.

After a time exact Eva, looking critically at the pie from which their pieces had been cut, said: "I am afraid that pie is not quite even."

Rose's eyes were not so ready to detect unevenness, but after careful examination she agreed. There did seem to be a little bit of a "jog" out.

Nothing more was said for a moment, till Eva remarked: "I think I could straighten the edge if I tried."

Rose gasped. The very thought of such a thing was awful.

straight. When mamma came to the door to bid them run and play, they felt rather frightened, but finally did run and get out of doors.

When mamma was free at last she cleared the table. She was puzzled by the size and shape of the remaining bit of pie, and was standing with the pie plate in hand as Eva and Rose crept in.

"Mother," said Eva, and her eyes were brimming with tears, "I tried to make the pie straight."

"It was willing she should," said Rose. "I didn't feel good to play and think

about the pie all the time," said Eva.

"We thought we'd rather be punished first and play afterward," said Rose bravely, and her eyes looked as if the dew had fallen in them.

"There are other things better than straight pie," said mother. "I think straight consciences are."

She kissed both little girls. Soon they were playing happily under the shadow of the honeysuckle.

"To think," said mother, as she washed the pretty luncheon dishes, "that I did the very same thing when I was little."

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