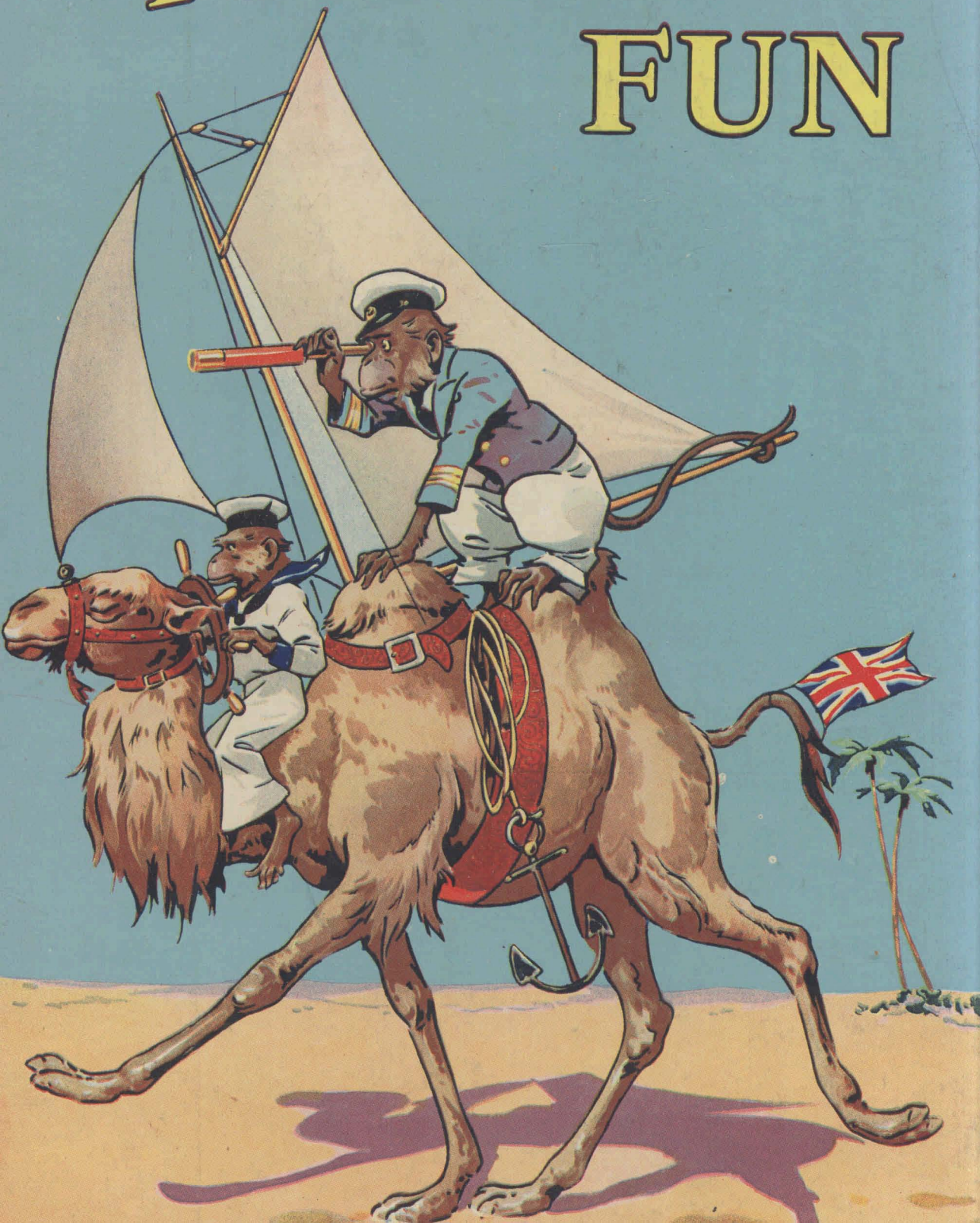


FROLIC *and* FUN



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FROLIC AND FUN



THE FLOOD

FROLIC AND FUN

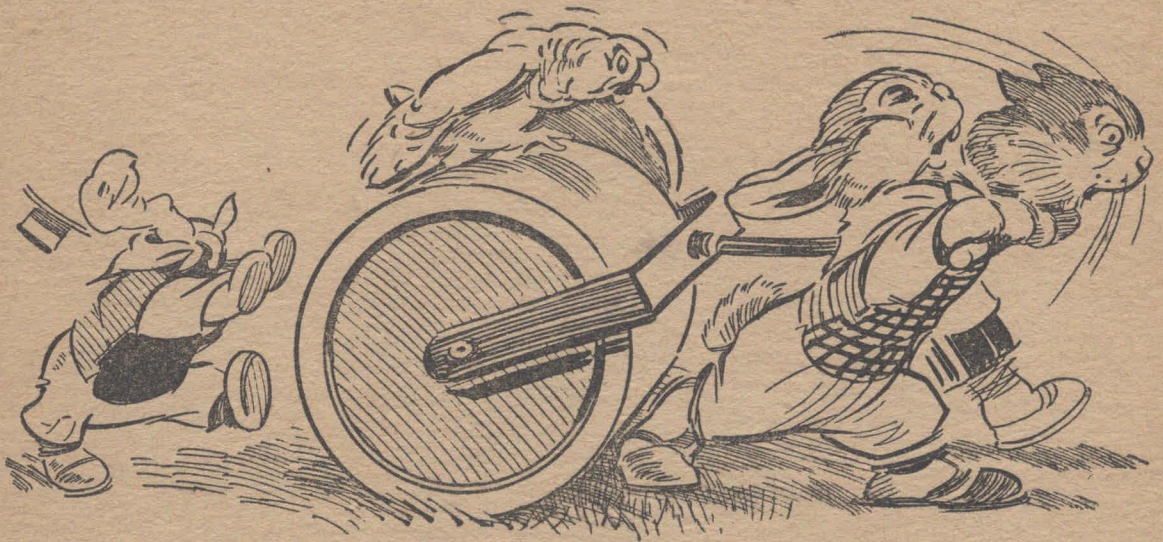


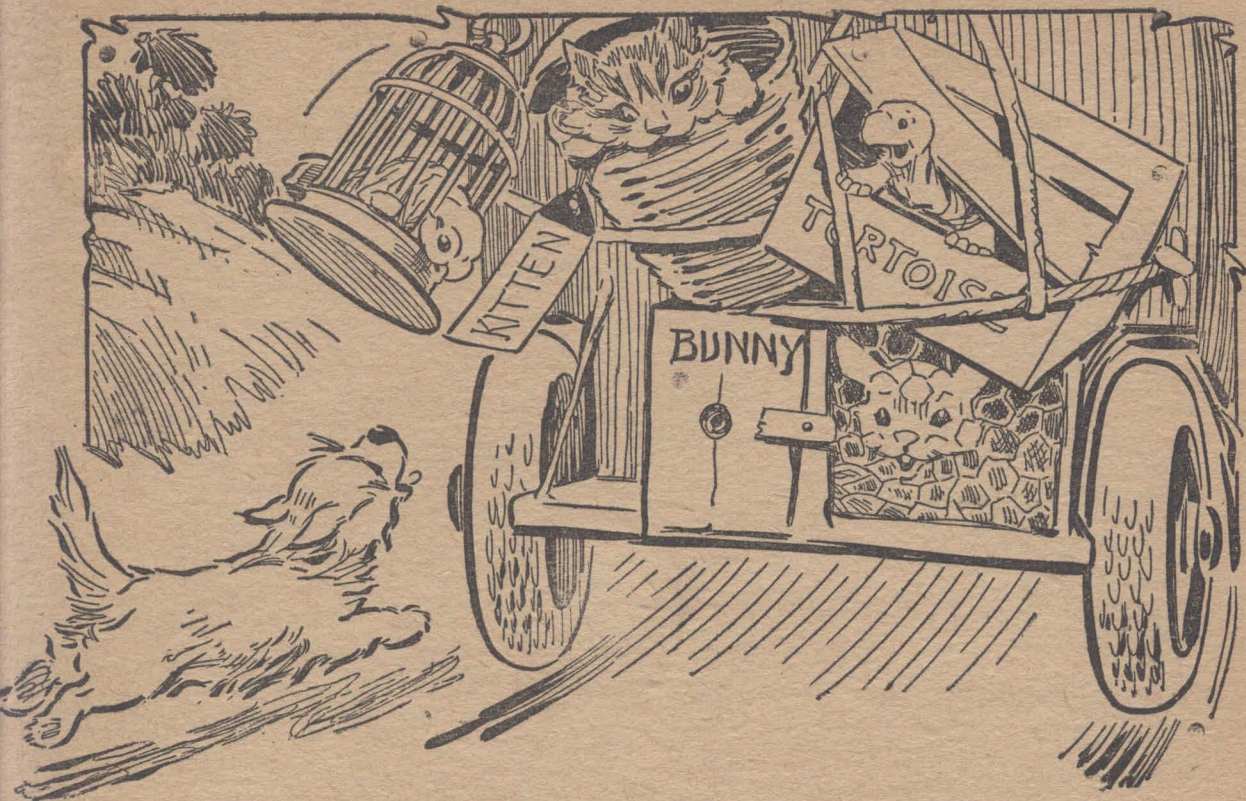
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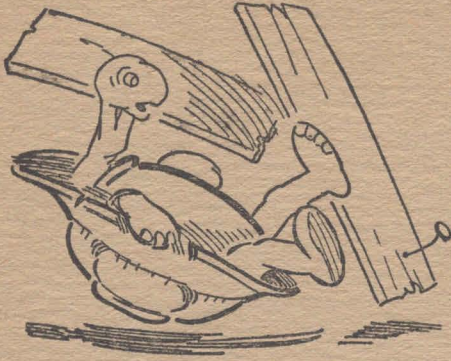


THE RUNAWAY REMOVAL VAN

AS all four of the comrade pets agreed afterwards, if they had not all been tied on to the tail of the removal van as though it didn't matter a bit what happened to them, what *did* happen might *not* have happened. Not that it mattered, they all decided, because, what with the awful jolting of the van when it ran away and the barking after them of every Tom, Dick and Harry of a dog to rack their already upset nerves, they were not a bit sorry, when the first shock was over, that things came to bits all at once and tumbled them out on the road one after another.

It was just as Percy Parrot was telling a specially noisy dog to go home and gargle his throat or he would have trouble, that dreadful cracking noises sounded and out of a box came the first half of Egbert

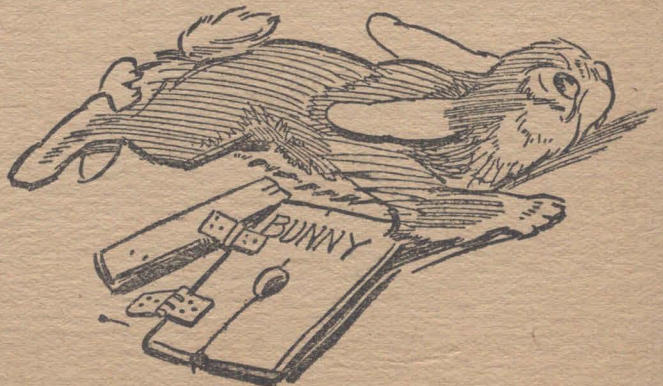
THE RUNAWAY REMOVAL VAN



Tortoise. An instant later Maudie Kitten's head appeared from her basket; she had chewed the string that held its lid till an extra big jolt had finished the job by snapping it and freeing her, and next minute Reggie Rabbit's blood was curdled by the added

din, as Maudie and Egbert helped Peter talk to that dog about his sins.
"Yow! Wow!" screamed Reggie at the top of his voice to try and make himself heard. "As if the noise of us being run away with isn't bad enough without any more. Stop it, you three! You are being more noisy than the dog."

But just then Egbert's excitement got too much for the rest of his box; the bottom fell out, knocking the bunny hutch door right off its hinges as it fell into the road, carrying Egbert with it; and Reggie, who had been shouting through a little hole in his door, followed it sprawling. The only good thing about the affair was that the dog got the fright of his life, for Egbert's hard back caught him a bang on the nose that did what Percy's advice had failed to do—it stopped his barking, although his yelps were frightful as he turned and ran off home with his tail between his legs. However, the comrade pets were free of him for good and all. But they were not free of other troubles; oh, no! Before Egbert and Reggie could pick



THE RUNAWAY REMOVAL VAN

themselves up, crash! came Percy's cage, to the sound of his most piercing squawks, as the cause of *his* downfall—Maudie and her basket—landed on top of him, and by the time everybody had got sorted out, the runaway van had disappeared in a cloud of dust that nearly choked the party left behind it.

"Oh! oh! oh! here's a pretty kettle of fish!" wailed Egbert at last, hold-

ing his head.
"Kettle of fish! What a silly thing to say, Maudie. I don't suppose there's *one* less a ful, within us. I only wish there were."

But Egbert moaned on. "Nails box have my brains. I know they have. My head feels all pins and needles."

"They can't have," snapped Maudie; "because you haven't any brains for them to run into. None of us have, or we wouldn't have started this moving. Just because the birds go into new houses in the Spring is no reason why *we* should want a different home."

"Still, we must have *got* brains to have even thought of it," Reggie argued crossly. "Brains are what we



of fish! Egbert snarled. "I suppose there's much more than a kettle-miles of wish there"

bert only on. "Nails box have my brains. they have. feels all needles."

THE RUNAWAY REMOVAL VAN

think with, anyhow, so if Eg has got nails in his, they must be pulled out. It would be awful if he could never do any more thinking in his life."

"Pooh! he does precious little as it is," sneered Maudie Kitten. "That's why he is always in a pickle of one sort or another."

"Don't you be unkind, Maudie," Percy was beginning to squeal, when a humble-bee policeman flew up all of a buzz.

"I say! have you folks lost a furniture van?" he inquired. "Because there's one come to roost against a fence at the bottom of the hill, after strewing the road with goodness knows what. You look like some of the goodness knows what yourselves, so hurry up, or I shall have to take you in charge for blocking the highway and making a litter."

None of the four thought about brains, naily or otherwise, after that; they just pelted down the hill till they came to the next thing that had fallen from the van—a big clothes trunk which had burst open under its shock and tossed out most of its inside.

"Jolly obliging of it, too," cried Reggie, as they all viewed the strewn road ahead. "Well! we can't possibly move the van, so we must just move ourselves as quickly as we can, before that bobby comes back; bunk with all the clothes and things we can lay hands on and make a fresh start somewhere."

"But he can fly and none of us *can*, except Percy," objected Maudie Kitten. "How shall we travel fast enough to get away from him?"

But Egbert had been getting information from two beetles who happened to be passing.

"It's quite all right," he said cheerily. "The bobby's beat ends here and there is some woodland farther on



THE TRUNK HAD BURST OPEN

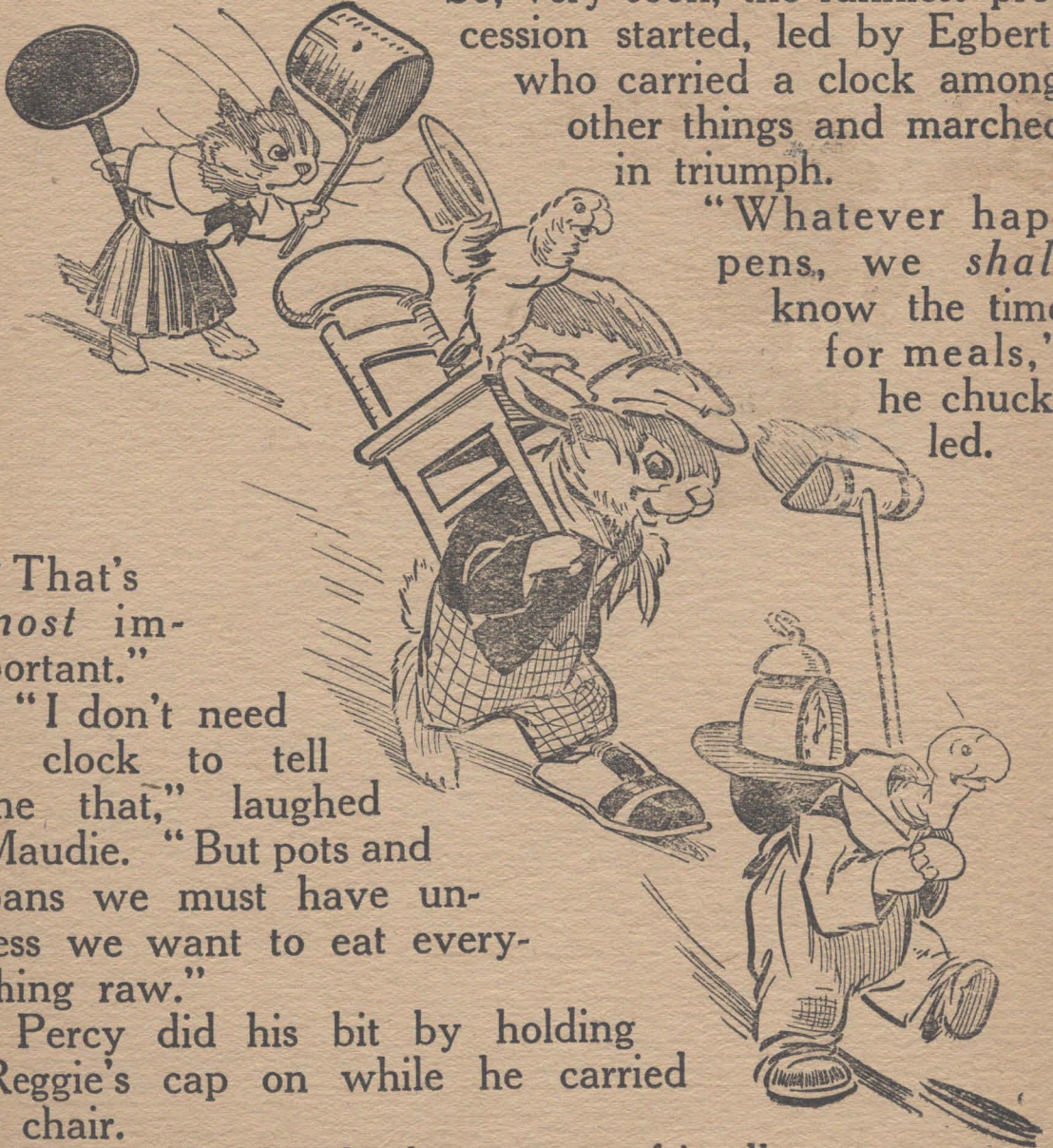
THE RUNAWAY REMOVAL VAN

where we can picnic while we build a new house or a bungalow."

"Hurrah!" cheered Reggie. "Load up, everybody, and off we'll go as fast as we can."

So, very soon, the funniest procession started, led by Egbert, who carried a clock among other things and marched in triumph.

"Whatever happens, we shall know the time for meals," he chuckled.



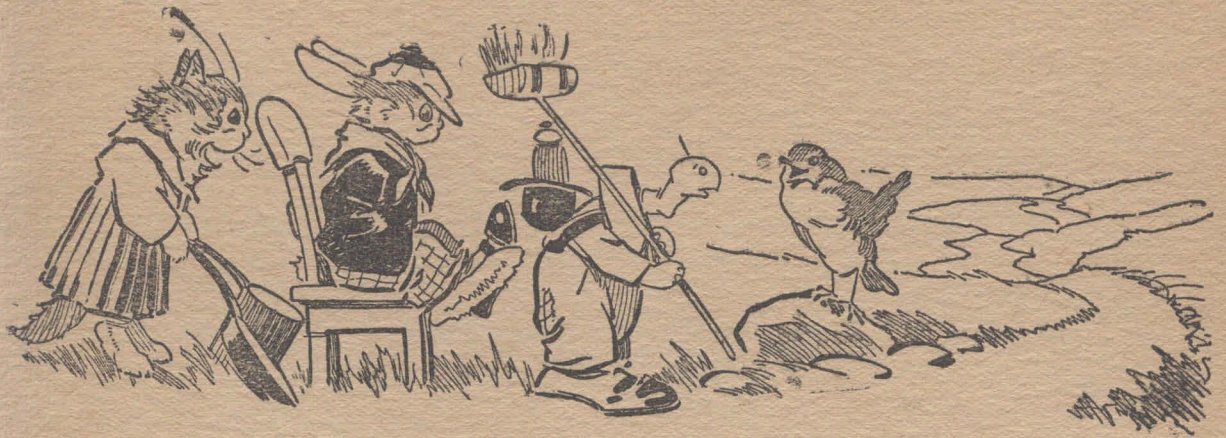
"That's most important."

"I don't need a clock to tell me that," laughed Maudie. "But pots and pans we must have unless we want to eat everything raw."

Percy did his bit by holding Reggie's cap on while he carried a chair.

But on the heath they met a friendly bird who listened politely to their plans while they stopped for a rest and to talk things over.

"H'm!" twittered the bird presently. "You don't



look *very* well stocked for a move, in my opinion. Are you sure you have brought along everything you need? I'm afraid I can't offer to lend anything but a nest, and *that* wouldn't be big enough for the feathered one of *your* party. Now you all think for a bit."

Egbert looked blank, as he always did when there was much thinking to be done, but Reggie gave a bawl, after fumbling in all his pockets and even in the one shoe he wore.

"Matches! we've forgotten *them*. How are we to light a fire to cook our food, without matches? We simply *must* have matches."

"And where's our food to cook?" wailed Maudie Kitten. "Matches are of no use without food."

But Percy soon came to the rescue with an idea. "Don't worry," he screeched. "I'll fly back to the van and rummage for some matches and food. What's a beak for if it can't dig through paper parcels? You leave it to me," and while the others made a picnic place, lit the fire and fetched water, he flew to and fro with matches and all the food he could find.

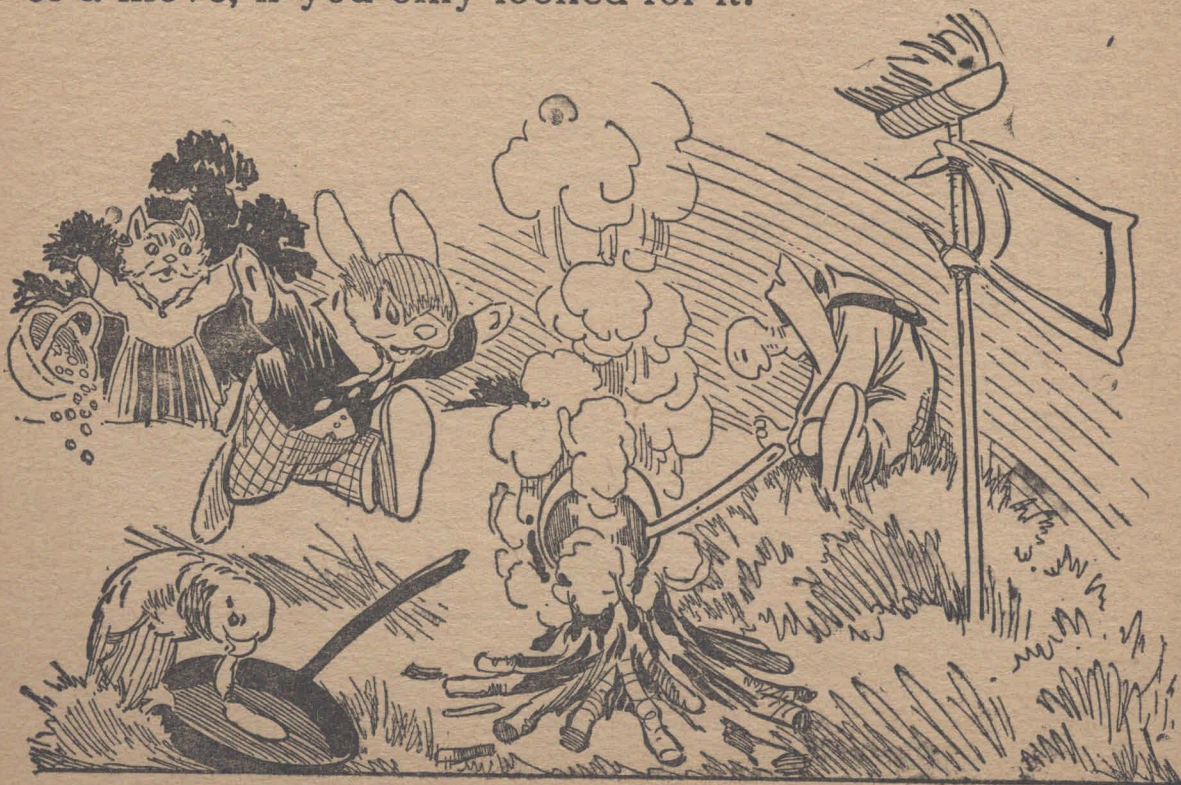
"What a dear he is!" cried Maudie Kitten. "We must do something for him. You boil the water and

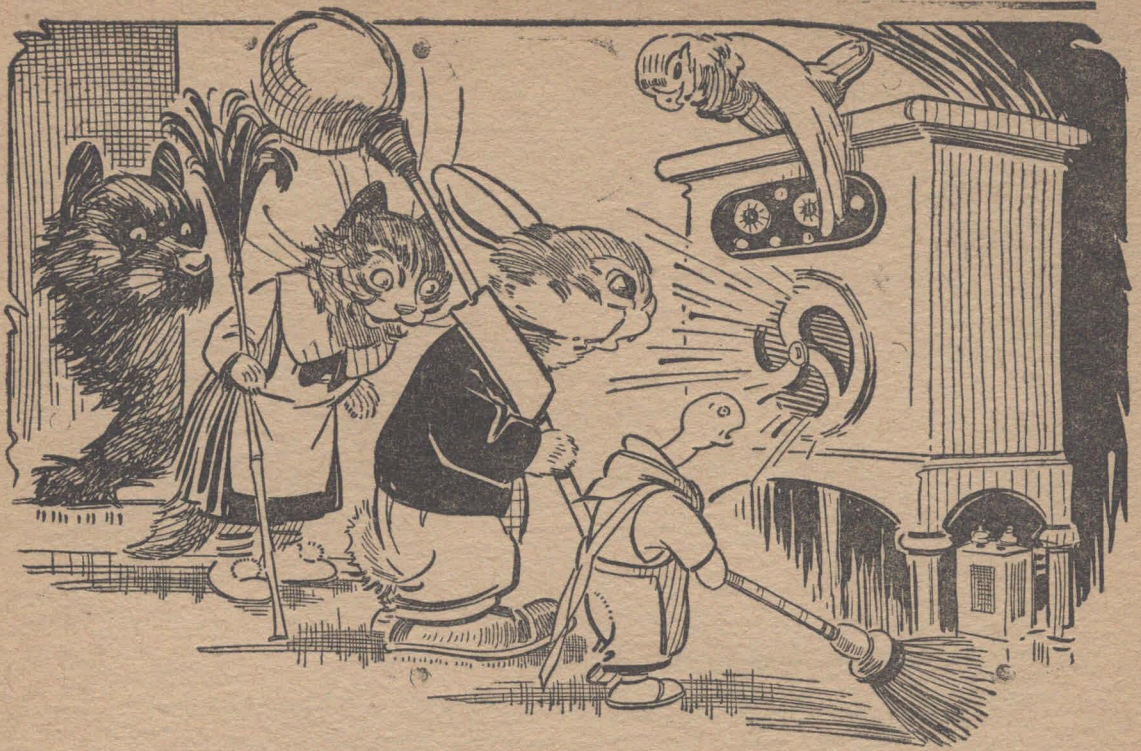
THE RUNAWAY REMOVAL VAN

fry the sausages, Eg, while Reggie and I go and pick some wild strawberries for him. We shall be quicker than you would."

But no sooner were their backs turned than Egbert, made sleepy by the Spring day and the fire, began to snore; presently Maudie and Reggie came racing back to find that Egbert's dreadful snorts had blown the pot over and nearly put the fire out, while Percy had eaten nearly all the sausages—raw!

Of course, there was a frightful row, but as peace was patched up over the rest of the food, the four remained friends, because they were too full up to do anything else. This gave them time to grow good-tempered again, so they had jolly games of treasure-hunting and hide-and-seek, and even managed to get some cricket by using oak-apples for balls. As Maudie Kitten said, it was wonderful what fun could be got out of a move, if you only looked for it.





SPRING-CLEANING DAYS

"IT'S no good, we shall have to get on with that spring-cleaning job *some* time," Reggie Rabbit told his friends one morning. "It's Thursday now, remember, and the people are coming back on Saturday night."

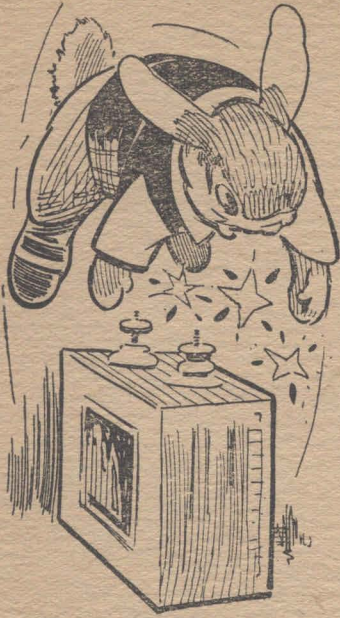
"Very well, we'll go this morning," agreed Maudie Kitten, so they set off in less than half an hour, bent on making up for lost time. For the fact of the matter was that they had spent Tuesday in just eating and sleeping, to get over Monday's doings. Then they had had to spend Wednesday just sleeping, to get over Tuesday, because they had eaten such a lot.

Arriving at the house, they armed themselves with brooms and brushes and prepared to set to work with a deal of energy.

"I shall sit up here and direct things," Percy declared, flying up on to the wireless cabinet, "and I can amuse myself with these funny knobs," he added, with a chuckle.

But the result startled them all, for as Percy fiddled a

SPRING-CLEANING DAYS



loud voice began to sound at which the four gave yells of alarm, then crowded round to stare in awe at this strange thing from which came a steady flow of talk in a very funny kind of voice.

"If you ask *me*, there's someone shut up inside there," came in gruff tones from the doorway after a minute or two.

Jumping at the fresh shock, they all looked round to find a dog peering in. He had been attracted by the

noise, had pushed open the door and come in to see what was afoot.

Reggie looked worried. "Well, I can't think who could be in there, or how they could have got shut in. But we must try and rescue whoever it is. Let's see if the top lifts off."

But although they tapped, poked, shoved and generally tinkered, they could find no entrance of any sort. However, the voice went on, so Reggie presently got desperate.

"I can't understand what he's saying, but we'll free him, even if we have to break this beastly box to bits. Come on! hammers and fireirons, everybody, and get busy."

It didn't take the five of them long to make short work of the cabinet, but great was their amazement when they found that there was nobody inside; nothing alive at all, in fact.

"There's something uncanny about this thing," the dog said; "here,



SPRING-CLEANING DAYS

let's cart all the bits away and throw them into a pond; there's one quite near here. Come along!"

The pets set to work, but Egbert said he hardly felt strong enough after such exertion, so he sat down to sample the contents of a case which opened quite easily.

"A new kind of biscuit," he declared, after staring at the gramophone records for a moment or two. So he bit off a large chunk. But oh dear! he didn't want a second bite!

"That just serves you right for being a lazy little pig," Maudie told him, when the dog had gone and they were settling to work once more. "But you're not



going to idle any longer, if I know it. I can find you plenty to do, and you've just got to work or starve."

"Let's get the drawing-room done first," Reggie suggested. "We could get all the furniture out into the garden, then, while you scrub the floor, Maudie, we others could beat the carpet and rugs; there are plenty of golf clubs."

To which she agreed, so the four began to carry the smaller furniture out into the garden, with no mishaps beyond a few chips off the hall walls and a door knob or two knocked off—mere trifles, Reggie said, as he carried out a cracked vase. This had not been cracked before the comrades had entered the room, but of course, that was a mere trifle, too.

SPRING-CLEANING DAYS

It was when they had to begin moving the large articles that the trouble and excitement began; they *did* seem so big and awkward.

"Can't think how they managed about this thing," Percy panted, as they shoved and struggled in an attempt to coax or bully a piano through the doorway.

"Must have brought it in bits and stuck it together when they got inside," grunted Egbert, who was keeping well out of its way.

"No! through the window, of course!" Reggie burst out. "What an idiot I was not to have thought of it before. Come on, let's pitch it and everything out that way; it'll save no end of bother and us some bruises."

Save bother it did, the only pity being that it didn't save the furniture as well. As it was, the four were far too intent on heaving each article over the sill, to trouble what happened to it when it landed, so before very long the grass plot outside looked like a rather superior rubbish heap.

"Only the curtains to get down now," Maudie cried. "We *are* getting on nicely."

"Oh, I'll soon have that done," Reggie assured her, so he fetched a chair to the window and climbing upon it, began to fumble with the rod, which it was all he could do to reach.

But before he could unfasten it, Egbert came up behind him and laid both hands upon the chair while Maudie wasn't looking for a minute.

"I'll soon have you hanging like a sheet on washing day," he chuckled and dragged the chair away. "Ha! ha! now for some fun."

Reggie was left hanging on to the rod, and as he swung to and fro he put his foot through one of the window panes.



THE HUMP BEGAN TO HEAVE

SPRING-CLEANING DAYS

"You wicked Eg!" shrieked Maudie, and rushed to the rescue with the chair.

As Reggie climbed down vowing revenge, Egbert toddled off to start carpet beating out in the garden, deciding he would be safer.

He was greeted by a couple of birds who were hopping about in a great flutter.

"Come and look! there's a queer humpy thing under that rug," they pointed out. So Egbert hurried after them and just as he was taking his first pop-eyed stare, the hump seemed to move very slightly up and down.

The birds gave tweets of fright and skipped to one side, but Egbert called them back in a lordly voice, for as Reggie had arrived for carpet beating and Maudie was at the window, he felt that he must sound as grand as possible to show how brave he was.

"It's quite all right," he announced, "I'll just give it a good whang, to show that I stand no nonsense, then we'll lift the rug and find out what it is. Oh, no, I'm not in the least afraid. I happen to be rather brave. I suppose it's a gift," he added modestly.

"I should hope it is, because your courage certainly wouldn't be worth *paying* for," Reggie shouted jeeringly.

Egbert gave him one haughty glance, then he picked up the carpet beater and gave the hump in the middle of the rug a mighty and sounding thwack that shifted lots of its dust.

The very next minute



SPRING-CLEANING DAYS

the hump began to heave wildly. With all his boasted bravery scattered, Egbert leapt like a startled frog and in another second Percy poked his head out from under the rug and stared about him.

A very wrathful Percy, too. "How dare you spoil my sleep?" he demanded. "I crawled under there in the hope of getting a spot of peace after all the noise and scrimmage, and before I've been there ten minutes, you start hitting me. I'll pay you out," and he made a dive for Egbert that looked as if he meant business.

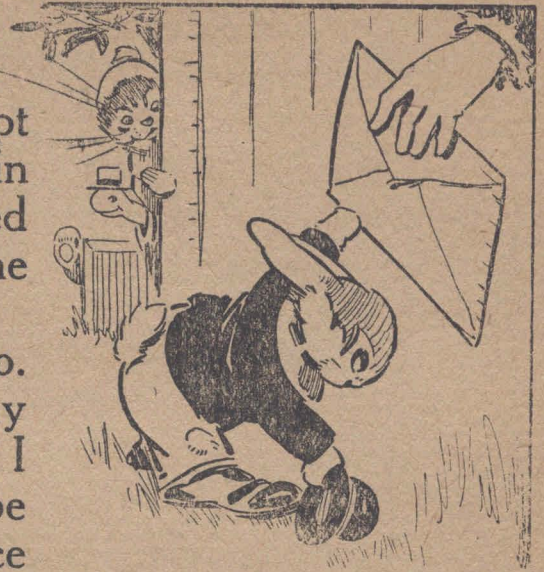
The tortoise scuttled for his life. "Yow! save me, Reggie!" he gasped, and dodged behind the rabbit out of the angry parrot's way.

"If I treated you as you deserve, I'd let you be pecked to death and then hung up on the line for the birds to laugh at," Reggie growled, "but I suppose I'll have to take your part, or there'll be a free fight and we won't get any more work done for ages."

"Eg hasn't the pluck to fight," taunted Percy, trying hard to draw the tortoise on.

"Order! order!" Reggie bawled. "Hard work and no scums from now on, and the first one who breaks that rule will be shut up in the dustbin for the rest of spring-cleaning time."

Reggie's firmness won the day, and from then the four worked fairly peaceably. It is true that when they had finished, everything that had not been smashed to a powder, was cracked, chipped, bent or other-



SPRING-CLEANING DAYS

wise wounded, but the workers chose to forget this.

"It is clean, at any rate," Maudie said, as though this made up for everything else that had happened, even the dreadful smashes.

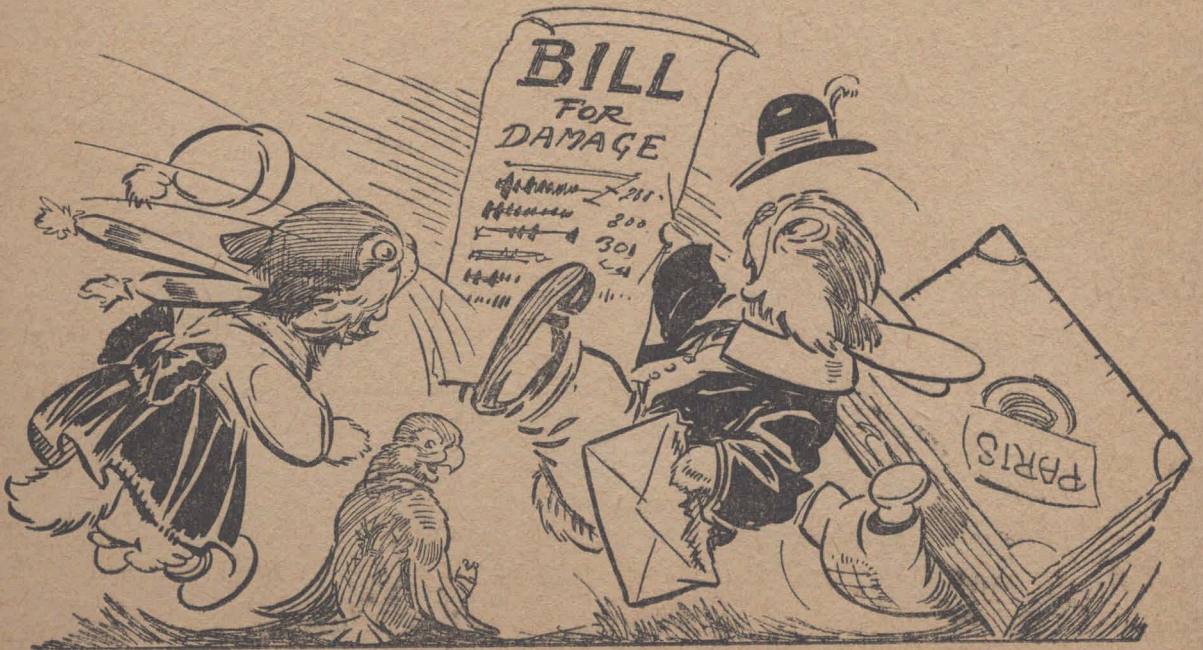
Early on the following Monday, they all went off to collect their wages, and when they came to the house Maudie, Egbert and Percy stood at the gate while Reggie went up to the front door.

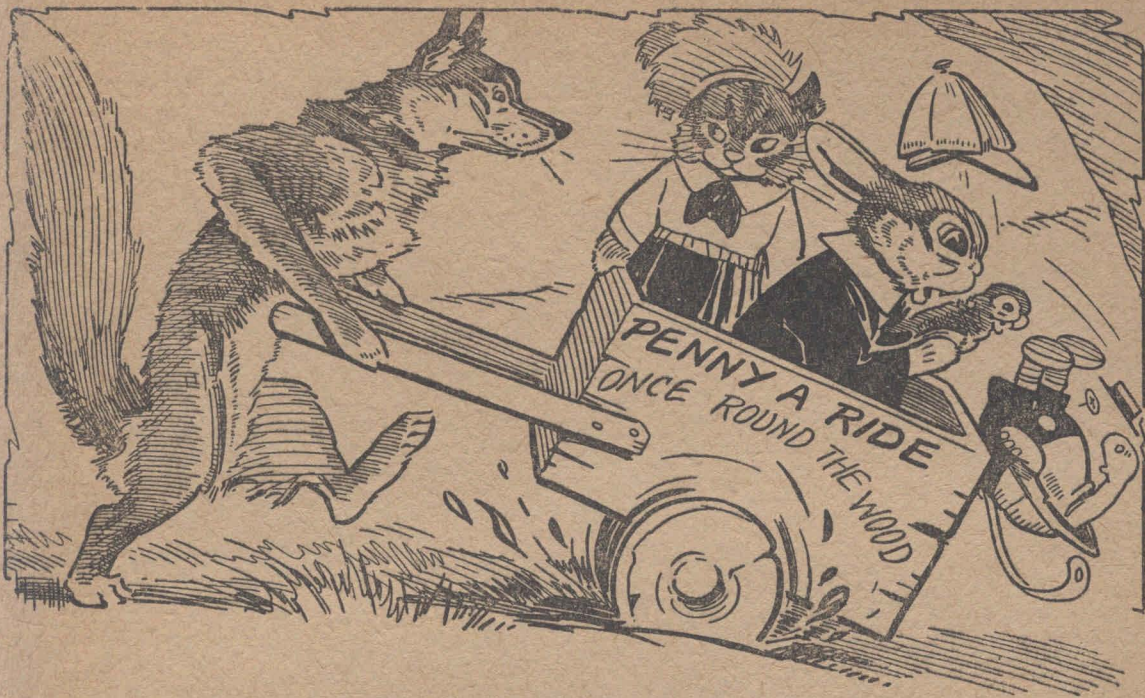
It was opened almost at once, and a hand thrust out an envelope, and when Reggie had taken it the door was quickly shut in his face.

"Well, she might just have thanked us!" he fumed, as he walked back to join his friends; but then there were shrieks from the others, for the envelope contained not money, but a huge bill for damage!

"We shall never be able to pay that, if we try for years," wailed Maudie, "Oh, what shall we do?"

"I think a change of air would be good for us now," Reggie said. And he winked.





LIFE IN THE WOODS

I VOTE we lead the simple life in the woods till next winter," Egbert suggested to his three friends. "It will be cheap and pleasant. What do you all say to it?"

Maudie Kitten sniffed. "I dare say it would be cheap, Eg, but I'm not sure about it being pleasant," she said. "For *me* that would depend on whether I could get any milk to drink. Water all the time I simply *could* not stand, especially pond water with frogs and water-spiders popping about in it. Supposing I swallowed one by mistake! Ugh!"

"I say! look at this fox cart coming!" broke in Reggie Rabbit. "A penny a ride round the wood. Just the thing! We can see what the wood is like and if there's a farm where we can get Maudie's milk. There's pretty sure to be a farm where there's a fox," he added, meaningly.

"Fares, please," barked Sam Fox, when the four presently crowded into his rather rumbly cart for the great ride.

LIFE IN THE WOODS



Maudie Kitten's whiskers twitched rather angrily; she didn't at all like his sharp manner. "Oh, but we should like the ride first, please," she said, very firmly. "How are we to know that you would take us all round the wood for the money?"

Sam Fox gave her a sly look. "And how am *I* to know that you won't all run off at the end of the ride without paying me?" he retorted. "No! no! fares *always* have to be landed over first, so pay up, please, or hop out of my cart faster than you hopped in."

"Wait a minute, Foxy," cried Reggie. "It isn't fair to charge a penny each when two of us are not tall enough to look out at the scenery. If Percy Parrot perches on me, so that he can see, we two ought to count as one. Couldn't you manage to hold up Eg, Maudie, then we need only pay twopence?"

"Oh-ho, not if *I* know it," barked Sam Fox. "People talk about foxes being cunning, but you beat any fox hollow. That tortoise chap can very well sit on the edge of the cart and see all he wants to. The parrot could perch there, too, at a pinch, but as the top looks a bit wide for his claws, I'll take a halfpenny off his fare if he is carried. That will make threepence halfpenny for the four and a jolly cheap ride it will be," and he nodded his head so fiercely that the passengers saw it was no use arguing any longer.

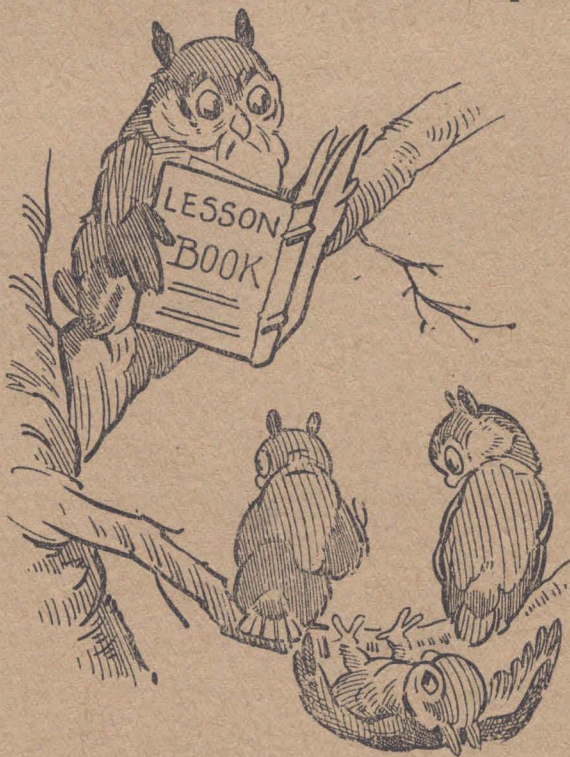
So the ride began. But Maudie Kitten was so busy watching that artful Sam didn't take any short



LIFE IN THE WOODS

cuts instead of going right *round* the wood that she didn't notice much of the scenery. And Egbert was so busy screwing himself all about and craning his neck to find a farm for Maudie's milk, that *he* didn't notice the scenery much either, and presently made a to-do by falling out backwards off the cart.

"I only wish *I* had a shell for a back," Reggie told him, when they had picked him up not much the worse for the tumble. "You're always in the wars; you weren't a go. *My* fall like that. leave me your will. I it useful protector in as a shield a fight with "Fight? a fight?" cried a loud voice and over a ridge popped the head of a big dog.



the tumble. always in it's a wonder killed long back would broken by a You might yours in should find as a chest winter, or when I have anyone."

Who wants I'm ready," yapping

"Help! Murder!" yelled Sam Fox, leaping high in the air in his fright and tipping out his passengers all higgledy-piggledy.

Well, there might easily have been a fight *or* murder; but Sam Fox made off like lightning for a nearby hole, the dog chasing but not catching him. And while the dog was busy snuffling down the hole, Sam's four passengers scabbled his cart over the top of them and

LIFE IN THE WOODS

shut even their tails out of the dog's way in the hope of escaping his attention.

"He will think *we* have run away too, if we can manage to breathe in here long enough for him to clear off," Reggie panted, and luckily, he was right, for the dog, after one sniff round the overturned cart, just grinned to himself over the fright he had given and ran away to find someone else to worry.

"Phoo!" puffed Maudie Kitten a minute or two later. "If I don't breathe some fresh air I shall burst. Dog or no dog, I'm going, and let him beware of my claws if he is outside."

So she and Reggie heaved up the side of the cart a little, and held it till Percy and Egbert had peered cautiously underneath and given an "all clear" signal.

"I expect Foxy will have run to Jericho by this time," was Reggie's remark when they were all free of the cart, "so we can reckon our ride finished. I should like a word with him; he ought to give us back our three-pence halfpenny after tipping us out as he did."

"Oh course," agreed Maudie Kitten. "And he should be made to pay us damages for shock. Fancy his getting into a panic like that just because a dog bobbed up. But I expect he has robbed farms and has got a guilty conscience. *I* know! Let's knock up a mole and send him down the hole to ask Foxy for our money back." So a hunt began for molehills, but there seemed to be so many bumps in the ground that did not belong to those burrowing little folk, and a lot of time went by, the four getting hotter and more tired every minute, as they thumped, stamped and jumped in the hope of making a mole hear and answer their summons.



"HELP!" YELPED SAM FOX

LIFE IN THE WOODS

"They must all be deaf moles in this part," Reggie said in disgust at last, but just as they were giving up in despair, Egbert sighted a real mole village of mounds and a rush was made for fresh efforts.

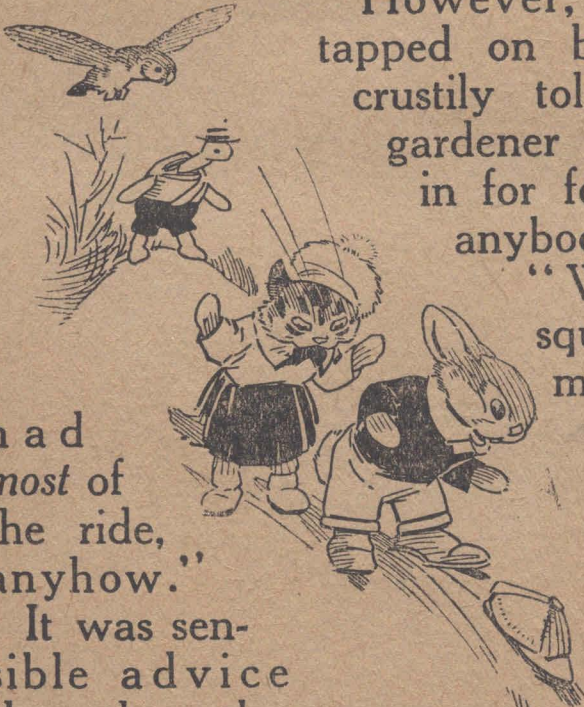
However, the molehill door they tapped on brought out a mole who crustily told them he was only a gardener and couldn't afford to go in for fox hunting for himself or anybody else.

"What a crosspatch!" squawked Percy. "Never mind, don't let's waste any more time over Foxy, but hunt for adventures in the wood instead. We

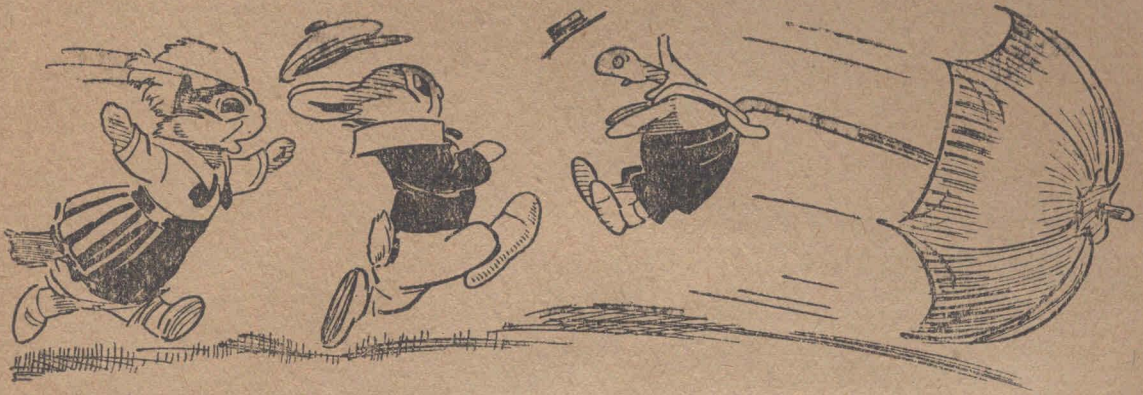
had most of the ride, anyhow."

It was sensible advice that the others wisely took; and in the joys of the woodland troubles were soon forgotten, and when Maudie Kitten had the luck to find a big umbrella that a picnicker had left behind, she said that now they had a tent to pitch she would certainly agree to Eg's life in the woods, especially as there was a farm not very far off.

But as they pitched the tent they got a fright, for the wind suddenly lifted the



LIFE IN THE WOODS



umbrella, its crooked handle caught in Egbert's braces and he was whisked away in a trice.

"Oh! Eg!" shrieked Maudie Kitten frantically. "Save Eg! He's quite a dear, *really*."

"Oh, I don't know about that. I think we should get on much better without him," argued Reggie, only grinning at Egbert's plight. "He's in some trouble or other at least a dozen times a day and we can't be *always* doing life-saving—it's too tiring. Once a day is going to be my limit in future, so we may as well let Eg blow to a better land."

But Maudie Kitten screamed at him till she nearly split his ear drums. "You horrid, cruel thing!" she yelled as she pummelled him. "Just *look* at the poor little chap being bumped along the ground and against trees! How would *you* like to be killed by inches? Help me catch him."

"Can't! I'm tired! Besides, he'll hook up somewhere all right presently," snapped Reggie contrarily. However, Egbert's imploring face and howls soon softened his heart. Suddenly he shouted: "To the rescue! Come along!" and was off. But after the delay caused by his arguing, Reggie was to find that catching Egbert wasn't going to be as easy as all that. The wind blew in spiteful gusts and puffs that worried the would-be rescuers just as

LIFE IN THE WOODS

much as they did poor Egbert. First of all, Maudie Kitten was blown clean over into a bog and Reggie and Percy had to stop to save her. Then a tree branch fell, pinning Percy by the tail, the two others having an awful job to release him without dragging out all his tail feathers. After that, Reggie fell into a bramble bush and left it decorated with many tufts of his fur. And while these accidents were happening, poor Egbert was being whirled helplessly on and on. However, the umbrella presently bumped into a tree trunk which held it up for a few moments and so gave the chasers a chance.

“Now! after it!” screeched Maudie Kitten with all the breath she had left.

And with great presence of mind Percy flew and perched on the end of the umbrella stick to weigh it down, while Maudie and Reggie dashed along to grab at poor Egbert's legs. But everything ended happily with his rescue and the camping party that evening was a great success, thanks to the umbrella tent.

