

* BED TIME STORIES *

Toodle and Noodle
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Howard R. Garis





B E D T I M E S T O R I E S

Toodle and Noodle Flat-Tail

(THE JOLLY BEAVER BOYS)

By

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HOWARD R. GARIS

Author of "SAMMIE AND SUSIE LITTLETAIL," "JOHNNIE AND
BILLIE BUSHYTAIL," "CURLY AND FLOPPY TWISTY-
TAIL," "UNCLE WIGGILY'S AIRSHIP," "UNCLE
WIGGILY'S ADVENTURES," "UNCLE
WIGGILY'S JOURNEY," ETC.

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TO

THE FAMOUS BED TIME STORIES

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BED TIME ANIMAL STORIES

by

HOWARD R. GARIS

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TOODLE AND NOODLE FLAT-TAIL

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Toodle and Noodle Flat-Tail

STORY I

TOODLE AND NOODLE FLAT-TAIL

Once upon a time, not so very many years ago, when every one was younger than he is now, but when the sun shone just as brightly and the wind blew just as sweetly, there lived in a curious little house, built right in the middle of a pond of water, a family of animals called beavers. They looked something like Nurse Jane Fuzzy-Wuzzy, the muskrat lady who took care of Uncle Wiggily Longears, the rabbit gentleman, only these beavers were larger than Nurse Jane, and they had long, broad, flat tails, which they could fold up under themselves and sit on, just like a stool. That's why I have named them "Flat-tail," and I'm going to tell you some stories about these beavers, who are really very wonderful animals. They are covered with soft fur.

In the Flat-tail family there was, of course, Mamma and Papa Flat-tail, and there was also dear old Grandpa Whackum. Grandpa had such a funny name, not because he was fond of whacking the little beavers, but because, when there was any danger, the old gentleman beaver

would whack or pound his broad, flat tail on the ground two or three times.

That made a sound like a drum, and whenever the other beavers heard it they would rush for the pond, dive down in it, swim to the front door of their house, the door being under water, and, once inside, they would be safe. So that is why the oldest beaver of them all was called Grandpa Whackum.

Well, then, to begin on the story—

Oh, dear me! I beg your pardon. I'm forgetting the most important part. Toodle and Noodle Flat-tail, to be sure! Toodle and Noodle were the two small boy-beavers of the family, and without them and the funny things they did, and dangers they got into, and out of again, there would be very few stories to tell. Toodle wore a spotted suit of clothes, and Noodle one that was striped. Now you can tell who is which.

Now, then, to start all over again.

Toodle Flat-tail, the little boy-beaver, came out of the under-water door of his home one day, dived down under the pond, holding his breath so the water would not get in his nose, and swam to shore. Then he sat up on his broad, flat tail and looked back toward his house.

“I wonder where Noodle is?” spoke Toodle, as he turned his head from side to side. “He said

he'd come right out and play. What can be keeping him?"

But Noodle, the brother of Toodle, was not in sight.

There were other beaver children, and some grown-up ones, to be seen about the pond. Some were putting mud-plaster on their houses, others were cutting down trees with their four strong, orange-colored front teeth, and the nice green bark of these trees would be eaten by the beavers during the long, cold winter. But Noodle Flat-tail was not with the others.

"I guess he must be playing a trick on me," said Toodle, as he picked up a piece of a birch twig in his front paw and began chewing the soft bark. A beaver's front paw, you know, is almost like a monkey's, and he can hold things in it almost as well as you can in your hand. His hind feet, though, are made for swimming and are webbed like a duck's.

All of a sudden Toodle felt some one pushing him from behind, and before he knew what had happened he went kerflop! off the little hill on which he was sitting, into the water.

"Wow!" cried Toodle. "Who did that, I wonder? If it was a bad fox, or a lynx, or some animal that wants to eat me, I'd better stay under water, or go back home."

But Toodle Flat-tail was a brave little chap

and he wanted to see who it was that had pushed him into the water. So he swam around a little, and then he carefully stuck his nose up, and then his eyes, and then, sitting in the same place where he had been sitting, he saw his brother Noodle. Noodle was laughing as hard as he could laugh.

“Oh, ho! So it was you who pushed me in, eh?” cried Toodle. “Well, I’ll fix you for that!”

Out of the water he came with a rush and raced after Noodle. But Noodle waddled away and soon the two little beaver boys were having a regular game of tag.

Finally Toodle caught Noodle and pushed him into the water. But do you s’pose Noodle minded that? Not a bit of it, for he was more at home in the water than on land. In fact beavers have to go quite slowly on land, and they walk with a waddle like a duck, but in the water they can swim so fast that scarcely anything can catch them.

Toodle and Noodle splashed each other about in the pond, throwing water all over themselves, wrestling, playing tag and hide-and-go-seek, and when they were tired they climbed out on the bank and rested.

They looked at the other beavers working away. Some of the older ones were mending a hole in the dam. The beaver dam, you know, is just like a time when it rains and the gutter in

front of your house fills with water. Then if your mamma lets you, you take some sticks and stones and mud, and pile it in the gutter so the water can't run down. This is called a dam, and it holds back the water, making it deeper back of the dam and shallow in front.

Beavers do the same thing. They build a dam across a little brook, so as to make a deep pond, for beavers have to have deep water to live in, and build their houses in; and in this pond, back of the dam, they also keep their food for the winter, big pieces of trees with soft bark on. The beaver dam is made of tree trunks and branches, sticks, mud, grass, stones—in fact, anything the beavers can get. When the dam breaks all the beavers work together to mend it.

So Toodle and Noodle watched their papa and mamma and the other big beavers folk mending the hole in the dam. A bad bear had clawed the hole there, hoping that all the water would run out of the pond so he could catch and eat the beavers. But the bear's plan did not work, I'm glad to say.

"I hope I didn't hurt you when I crawled up behind you and pushed you in the water," said Noodle to his brother most politely.

"Oh, no," said Toodle. "I liked it. First, though, I thought it was a fox after me."

"Ho! If it had been a fox!" exclaimed

Noodle, "I guess you would have heard Grandpa Whackum pounding on the ground with his big tail to tell us there was danger."

"Yes, I guess we would," said Toodle. "Oh, Noodle!" he cried suddenly, "let's go over where those nice, juicy aspen trees grow, and get some bark off them. I'm just hungry for an aspen-bark ice cream cone."

"But papa said we weren't to go there without him," objected Noodle. "You know he said there was an old wolf not far from there, and he might get us."

"Oh, I don't believe there is any danger just now," said Toodle. "It's daylight. Besides, Grandpa Whackum can see that far and he'll bang with his tail if there's any danger. Come on!"

So the two little beaver boys went over to where some aspen and willow trees grew, though it was not just exactly right. They swam through the water and then came out and waddled over the land. Soon they were in the grove of trees.

"You take a willow tree and I'll take an aspen," said Toodle, "and after we each cut off a nice piece with the juicy bark on we'll take them home and divide them."

So, sitting up on their big tails, which were like stools to them, the little beaver boys began

to gnaw away. A beaver's gnawing teeth are as good to cut with as a carpenter's chisel. There are four gnawing teeth, and the funny part of it is that they are colored yellow, like an orange.

Well, Toodle and Noodle were gnawing away, and they had almost cut down two little trees when, all of a sudden they heard:

“Whack! Whack! Thud! Thud!”

“Hark! What's that?” cried Toodle.

“It's Grandpa Whackum, telling us there's danger!” shouted Noodle. “Run, Toodle! Run!”

Away they ran for the water, and only just in time, for the bad old wolf sprang after them. But he did not get either of them, for Toodle and Noodle slipped into the water just in time and swam safely home.

From where he was working Grandpa Whackum had seen the wolf stealing up on the two little chaps and had warned them. So the wolf didn't have a beaver dinner that day, and Papa Flat-tail made Toodle and Noodle stay in the house the rest of the afternoon for not minding him.

But they were not always like that, and so in the next story, if the stove poker doesn't take the teakettle out to the moving-picture show, I'll tell you about Toodle Flat-tail cutting down a tree.

STORY II

TOODLE CUTS A TREE

“Hey, Toodle, wake up! Wake up!” called Noodle Flat-tail, the little beaver boy, to his brother one morning. “Wake up! Breakfast is ready!”

Toodle turned over on the bed of white birch chips in the beaver house that was built in the middle of the pond of water, and said, sleepily:

“Oh, please let me alone, Noodle. I don’t want to open my eyes yet. Let me sleep!”

“But don’t you know what we’re going to do today?” asked Noodle. “Have you forgotten what papa said?”

“Oh, it is a picnic? Are we going on a picnic?” asked Toodle, and this time he sat up on his tail and rubbed the sleepy feeling out of his eyes with his handlike paws.

“No, it isn’t exactly a picnic,” answered Noodle, as he combed out his fur with his hind claws so as to be nice and neat for breakfast. “But papa said he’d show us how to cut down a big tree today. Don’t you want to learn how to do that?”

“Indeed I do!” cried Toodle, and he rolled

from his bed in such a hurry that he nearly fell out of the front door, which led into the water. In that case Toodle would have had a swim before breakfast.

Not that he would have minded that much, for, like all beavers, he loved being in the water just as much as being on land. In fact, beavers, when they wear any clothes at all, as they have to, in stories of course, wear a kind that water cannot hurt—sort of rubber garments, you know.

“Oh, goodie!” cried Toodle. “That’s what I want to do—cut down a tree,” and he opened his mouth and felt his four sharp, orange-colored front teeth that were purposely made for gnawing. They were always sharp, too, and made in such a way that when they grew dull they sharpened themselves. No scissors-grinder ever had to come to the beaver colony to sharpen their teeth. Nature did that for the queer animals.

“Let’s see who’ll be first at breakfast,” cried Noodle, and then he and his brother washed their paws and faces, brushed some dirt off their broad, flat tails, combed out their fur until it shone like Grandfather Goosey Gander’s silk hat, and went into the dining-room, where Mamma Flat-tail was getting breakfast for her

husband and for Grandpa Whackum, the oldest beaver of them all.

“Good morning, Toodle and Noodle,” said their papa, as he helped himself to some willow bark pancakes, flavored with water-lily root sauce. “You are a little late this morning, and if you are going to be working beavers, and learn how to cut down trees, you must get around earlier than this.”

“I should say so!” exclaimed Grandpa Whackum, as he spread some water-cress butter on his piece of birch bark bread. “Why, when I was a boy I used to get up before breakfast every morning, and cut down two or three trees. Then I’d float them down the canal to the dam we were building.”

“Well, anyhow, we got up before breakfast,” said Toodle, winking at his brother.

“Yes, but you haven’t chopped even a toothpick,” laughed their mamma.

“What’s a canal, Grandpa?” asked Noodle, who wanted to learn all he could about beaver work.

“Oh, it’s like a little stream of water, or a brook,” said the old gentleman beaver, “only it’s deeper, and we have to make it ourselves. We cut through the dirt and grass and take out the stones, and make a place for the water to run from one pond to another. Then we can

float our logs through the canal, just as you boys play float your toy ships."

"I see," said Noodle, and he made up his mind he would soon dig a canal.

Well, the two little beaver boys ate their breakfast, and then got ready to go with their papa who was to give them their first lesson in cutting down a tree. Grandpa Whackum, who, as I told you before, used to whack on the ground with his tail to give warning of danger, went along also.

Mrs. Flat-tail stayed home to do the dishes in her kitchen. Of course, not all beaver families have a house with as many rooms in it as the Flat-tails had. But then Mr. and Mrs. Flat-tail were quite rich. Most beavers have only one room in their house.

So Mr. Flat-tail, the two boys, Toodle and Noodle, and Grandpa Whackum swam out of the front door of the water-house and across the pond to a little wood where some sweet willow trees grew. This was near the place where the wolf had nearly caught the two boy beavers the day before, as I told you in the first story. But now, with their papa and grandpa beavers to look after them, Toodle and Noodle were not afraid.

"Now, Toodle," said Mr. Flat-tail, when they had come out of the water and were all waddling

along on land, "I'll give you a lesson in tree-cutting first. Then I'll show Noodle. Meanwhile, Noodle, you can go with Grandpa Whackum and get some fresh aspen bark for dinner."

So Grandpa Whackum and Noodle went off to another place, while Papa Flat-tail began to give Toodle his first lesson.

"We'll cut this tree," said Mr. Flat-tail, as he put his paw on one that was about as big around as a clothes post in your yard.

"Oh. I never can cut down such a big tree," said Toodle. "It would take me a week."

"Nonsense!" exclaimed Mr. Flat-tail. "You don't know what you can do until you try. Now get a good seat on your tail and reach up with your four sharp front teeth and bite into the tree. Pull off the slivers and chips, and soon you will have cut through the trunk and the tree will fall."

"Gracious!" cried Toodle, "I hope it doesn't fall on me. It's no fun to have a tree fall on you."

"Of course not," laughed Mr. Flat-tail. "But that is what you must look out for, Toodle. Don't let the tree fall on you, or on any one else. And when you see that it is just ready to topple over, whack on the ground with your tail, just as your grandpa does. That will tell every one else around you to get out of the way. An an-

other thing. Always pick out a tree that won't fall on top of another and get all tangled up, so it can't be moved."

"Will this tree do that?" asked Toodle, looking up into the top of the tree his papa wanted him to cut down.

"No," said Mr. Flat-tail, "it will not. Begin now, Toodle. This tree will fall just right."

Toodle thought he could never cut down such a large tree, but then he was a brave little beaver boy, and he was not going to give up without trying. So, sitting on his big, thick, broad tail, which, as I have told you is like a stool, he began. Into the soft wood he sank his sharp orange-colored front teeth, and soon the bark and chips began to fly, just as they do when a woodman cuts a log.

Mr. Flat-tail saw that his little son was learning his lesson well, so he said:

"Now, Toodle, I'll go over here and cut down a large tree by myself. But don't forget what I told you about whacking your tail on the ground just before your tree falls."

"I won't," promised Toodle.

Well, he was cutting and cutting away with his teeth, and then he began to think what fun he and his brother would have that afternoon, playing water-tag.

And Toodle was thinking so much about the

fun that he forgot all about what his papa had told him. All of a sudden he heard a sound he knew well.

“Whack! Whack! Thud! Thud!” echoed through the woods.

“That’s Grandpa Whackum!” exclaimed Toodle. “Good gracious sakes alive! There must be some danger. I must run!”

Poor Toodle started to run, but alas he was not quick enough. Down crashed the tree he had been cutting, and one limb struck him on the back, pinning him fast to the ground. Poor Toodle could not move. It was just as though he had been caught in a trap.

“Oh, dear!” he cried. “Oh, dear! My tree fell on me!”

And had it not been that Grandpa Whackum and Papa Flat-tail were there in the woods Toodle might never have gotten loose. But the two old beaver gentlemen soon came up and gnawed through the tree branches so Toodle could get up. His brother Noodle helped, too.

“Why didn’t you watch out to see when your tree was going to fall?” asked Papa Flat-tail when they were on their way home again.

“I—I forgot,” said Toodle, sort of ashamed-like.

“Well, if I hadn’t seen it falling, and whacked on the ground with my tail,” said his grandpa,

“you might have been killed. Be more careful after this.”

Toodle said he would, and he was quite proud after all that he had cut down a tree all by himself. Then they all swam home.

And on the next page, if the shoe horn doesn't blow so loudly that it wakes up the rubber doll in the puppy dog's hammock, I'll tell you about Noodle building a dam.

STORY III

NOODLE BUILDS A DAM

Toodle Flat-tail, the little beaver boy, was so lame and sore from having been caught under the tree he was gnawing down, as I told you in the story before this, that the day afterward he could not leave the house in the pond to go out and play.

“Cutting down trees is more dangerous than I thought it was,” said Toodle when Dr. Possum came to put some sassafras liniment on his sore places.

“Indeed it is,” said Dr. Possum. “I can climb trees very well, and hang on by my tail, but I never tried cutting one down. I don’t believe I could do it. Though often I have heard of hunters, who when they are after friends of mine, cut down trees to get them out.”

“How dreadful!” exclaimed Mrs. Flat-tail who was baking some apple-bread for dinner. “But, Dr. Possum, do you think Toodle will have to stay in the house long?”

“Well, maybe two or three days more,” said the old gentleman doctor.

“Oh, dear!” exclaimed Mrs. Flat-tail, the

beaver lady. "Boys are so troublesome when they are in the house!"

And I guess this is so. Anyhow Noodle, who was the brother of Toodle, stayed in to play with him, and the two of them frisked around and got up all sorts of games, and nearly upset the piano and did all things like that. At least Noodle did, for Toodle was too sore and stiff to do much. But Noodle was trying to amuse his sick brother you see, and really he did not mean to make trouble.

"I'll tell you what I'll do," said Dr. Possum, as he closed up his birch-bark satchel filled with all sorts of colored medicines. "On my way back home I'll stop and tell Nurse Jane Fuzzy-Wuzzy, the muskrat lady, to come over and take care of Toodle. Then Noodle can go out and play, and your house will be quiet, Mrs. Flat-tail."

"Oh, that will be fine!" exclaimed the beaver lady, and Toodle said the same thing.

Noodle said he would be very glad to go out and play, for though he did not much mind staying in the house to amuse his brother, still he would much rather have gone out, to swim around in the pond, play on top of the big dam, that made the beaver pond, or even cut down a little tree so he could gnaw the green, sweet bark.

So Nurse Jane Fuzzy-Wuzzy came from Un-

cle Wiggily's hollow stump bungalow, and she read stories to Toodle and told him how she could swim under water, almost as well as the beavers could, and how she could make a fiddle out of a cornstalk and play a tune on it. And she did, and it was such a nice, sleepy sort of tune, all about going to by-low land, that, before he knew it, Toodle was fast, fast asleep, and the house was quiet.

But what happened to Noodle? Ah, ha! We must find out about that before we go much further. For Noodle had made up his mind to do something, and when he did that something almost always happened.

As Noodle did not have to stay in the house any more to play with his little sick brother, he dived down through the front door, which was under water, so no bad animals could get in, and out the little beaver boy swam into the pond. This pond was made by a big dam being built across the lower end, to keep the water from running away, as I have told you, and in this pond were many beaver houses, built of sticks, mud, grass, stones and pieces of trees.

On the dam, which was wide enough on the top for several beavers to walk, there were a number of the animal folk talking, laughing and doing different things.

Some were gnawing pieces of tender bark,

which they had stripped off the aspen or willow trees. Others were carrying in their front paws mud or sticks to mend holes in the roofs of their houses. Some beaver children were playing tag and pushing each other into the water.

“I wish I could make a dam,” thought Noodle. “I would like to make a little one and have a pond of water all to myself. Then I’d build a house in it, and when Toodle gets well he and I can have lots of fun in it. I think that’s what I’ll do. I’ll build a dam and have a toy beaver pond just for us boys.”

The more Noodle thought of this the better he liked it, so he swam off up the big pond until he came to a place in the woods where a little brook ran along over the green stones, singing a pretty song all to itself.

“Here is where I will make my dam,” said Noodle.

He remembered how his papa had told him to do it—to cut down little trees, pile them across the brook, then how to pile sticks and stones and mud and grass against the trees until the water could not trickle through. Then it would stop running and there would be a pond, just as the children make one in the gutter after a rain storm.

Noodle was soon a very busy little beaver

boy. But he was careful only to gnaw down small trees, so that even if they fell on him before he could get out of the way he would not be caught or hurt, as his brother had been. Soon he had quite a pile of wood, and then, pulling it in his strong teeth or paws, he piled it across the brook. Then he carried sticks and stones and grass until he had made a fine little dam.

Of course it wasn't as large as the big dam, nor made so well, but really it was quite good for a small beaver boy, and Noodle was quite proud of it. The water back of the dam got deeper, and soon there was enough of it for Noodle to swim in. And how he could swim!

He could dive, and float on his back, and stay under water so long that it is a wonder how he could hold his breath. With his strong hind paws, and sometimes by using his tail like the propeller on a steamboat, Noodle went back and forth across the pond he had made by building the dam.

"Now I'll begin the play-house," thought the little beaver boy. "I can't finish it today, but when Toodle gets well he can help me."

So Noodle began. He gathered a lot of sticks and pushed them down in the mud of his pond. Then he got more and arranged them around in a pile, plastering them with mud he

dug up from the bottom, under the water. This mud he carried in his front paws, walking on his hind ones like a bear in the circus.

Soon the play-house began to look almost like the real ones beavers make. And while Noodle was taking a rest and glancing from side to side to see that there was no danger, all of a sudden, out from the woods sprang a bad old fox. He made a run for Noodle, and almost caught him, but the little beaver boy, thudding on the ground with his tail, to warn others who might be near of the danger, gave a jump into the water and dived down under it.

“I’ll fool that fox!” thought Noodle. “I’ll just swim along and stay under water until he goes away.”

So he stayed under, but after a while he wanted to get some air to breathe, and of course he had to come up. And, as it happened, he came up near shore where the fox was waiting for him.

“Ah ha! I have you!” cried the fox, and he made a grab for Noodle. But Noodle dived under water again. The fox didn’t dare go in water, you know, for he couldn’t swim as well as Noodle.

“I fooled him again,” thought the little beaver boy. “I guess he must be gone by this time, and I can come out.” Noodle had to come up

for another breath of air, but no sooner was his nose out of the water than the fox, who had been watching, made another grab for him, and Noodle only got a sniff of air.

“No you don’t get me!” cried Noodle, and down he went again. But he was getting tired, and out of breath, and I don’t know what would have happened if Grandpa Whackum, the old gentleman beaver, hadn’t come along just then. He saw what the trouble was, and the danger Noodle was in. So Grandpa Whackum gathered up a big ball of mud on the end of his tail, and, when that fox was making another grab for Noodle, Grandpa Whackum threw the mud in the eyes of the fox.

“Oh, wow!” cried the fox, and then he couldn’t see (not even with his glasses on) to bite Noodle, so the little beaver boy got safely away, and so did Grandpa Whackum, and all the fox had to eat that day was peanut shells. But it served him right, I think.

So that’s how Noodle built a dam, and what happened afterward, and next, in case the man in the moon doesn’t come down and take my straw hat to play ball with, I’ll tell you about Toodle and Noodle in the canal.

STORY IV

TOODLE AND NOODLE DIG A CANAL

“Come, boys,” said Mrs. Flat-tail to Toodle and Noodle, the little beaver chaps, one morning when they were swimming around the house in the pond, playing tag; “come boys, I want you to go to the store for me.”

Mrs. Flat-tail, the beaver lady, had swam out of the front door of her house, and was sitting up on the roof, looking to see if there were any holes there where the snow might come in during the winter. She saw a small one, and made up her mind that her husband or Grandpa Whackum, would have to plaster that hole up with mud before cold weather set in.

“What do you want from the store, mamma?” asked Toodle, as he dived down under the water, and began swimming toward his brother, who had his back turned. Toodle was going to tickle the other little beaver boy, and make believe it was a water snake that had done it.

“Well, if you’ll keep still long enough for me to tell you what I want, I’ll do so, and give you the green-leaf money to get it,” said Mrs. Flat-

tail, laughing, for she loved to see her two boys play in the water.

Up came Toodle from the bottom of the pond, where he had dived—up he shot, right under Noodle, and he upset Noodle, who went toppling head over tail, and then the two beaver boys splashed around in the water and had a lot of fun. Oh, it's great to be a beaver, I tell you!

“Well, are you done playing?” asked Mrs. Flat-tail, after a while. “If you are I'd like to have you get me some cat-tail flour and some candied cocoanut from the store. I'm going to make a cake!”

“Oh, goodie!” cried Noodle. “I'm going to carry the cocoanut!”

“No, I am!” said his brother. “You might eat some on the way home.”

“Huh! You mean you would yourself,” cried Noodle.

“Well,” said their mamma, “I'll give you a basket with a water-proof rubber cloth on it, so you can dive down under the water with the things in it if you have to, and then you won't get them wet. So you may each carry half the basket with the cocoanut in it.”

Toodle and Noodle thought this a good plan, and soon they were swimming on toward the store, which was kept by a nice old water rat, and the store was in an old rowboat that no one

wanted any more. Mr. Rat had stuffed up the holes in it with cheese, and it did very well for a grocery.

There were two troubles with it, however. One was that often Mr. Rat got hungry and then he would graw some of the cheese out of the holes. That would make the boat leak, and the grocery store got wet. The other trouble, which was almost quite as bad, was that the boat would float away all over the beaver pond, and when you started out to find it you could never tell just where it was going to be, whether at one end of the pond or the other. So going to the store was not as easy as might seem, but still no one minded much.

But this time Noodle and Toodle were quite lucky. They soon found the floating boat store, and bought what their mamma had sent them for, putting the things in the basket and covering them up with the water-proof cloth so as to keep them dry.

“Now let’s see how quickly we can go home,” said Noodle.

“All right,” agreed Toodle. “The sooner we get home the quicker mamma can bake the cake and —” Then he stopped and laughed. So did Noodle.

“I know what you’re thinking of,” said Toodle, blinking his eyes.

“What?” asked Noodle.

“You’re thinking that maybe we’ll get some of the cake,” spoke his brother, and truly, that was right. Oh, those beaver boys were just like you real children! Indeed they were.

So, carrying the basket, with the candy coconut for the cake, between them, Toodle and Noodle swam away from Mr. Rat’s floating boat store. Then they had to get out on dry land, for this pond did not go all the way to the pond where the Flat-tail house was built.

“Now we must be very careful,” said Toodle, as he and his brother crawled out on shore. “Look carefully around for danger, Noodle, for you know we can’t go as fast on the land as we can in the water, and something may catch us. So if you see a fox, or a wolf, or a bear, bang your tail on the ground as Grandpa Whackum does, and we’ll both run.”

Of course, Noodle said he would, but for some time the two little beaver boys went on together and saw nothing to alarm them. Then, all at once, when they were almost to the pond where they lived, and were ready to plunge in it and swim home, they saw a big, savage lynx on the path ahead of them. A lynx is like a wolf, only worse, and he has sofa-cushion tassles on the tips of his ears, so you can always tell him when you see him. In a picture, I mean, not

real. I wouldn't want you to meet a real lynx.

"Oh, the lynx!" whispered Noodle. "He'll get us sure if we don't look out! Let's go back to Mr. Rat's pond."

"No, wait until I bang the ground with my tail," said Toodle. "Maybe papa or Grandpa Whackum will hear it and come to help us."

"No, don't make a noise with your tail now," said Noodle, "or the lynx will hear it and come for us."

"Then let's run," suggested Toodle. "We'll go back to the other pond."

"I'm afraid if we do that the lynx will see us, and chase after us," spoke Noodle. "Oh, dear!"

"Then what can we do?" asked his brother in a whisper.

"Dig a canal," was the answer. "Listen! We are not far from our own pond. If we can dig a canal from here to there we can walk down in it, for it will be like a ditch without any water in it, and the lynx won't see us. Then we can run along and when we get to our pond we can easily swim home."

"That's what we'll do!" cried the other beaver. So keeping down low in the grass, where the lynx would not see them, they began digging a ditch. With their strong claws Toodle and Noodle could easily do this, for they had often watched the older beavers doing it. They

wished there was water at the place where they had begun to dig, for that would have made it easier for them, but it could not be helped. They hid the grocery basket under a bush in the grass as they began to dig.

My! how the dirt did fly! The two little beaver boys worked very hard, for they wanted to get away from that lynx. As for that bad animal, there he lay in the sun, just wishing some fat beaver, or some other poor chap, would come along to be eaten.

Pretty soon Toodle said:

“I think we’re near our pond now, Noodle.”

“I think so, too,” whispered Noodle. “Soon the water will rush into our canal and we will be safe. Then we can tell papa and he’ll get the basket of groceries.”

The beaver boys dug a little more and then, all of a sudden, with a rush, the canal filled with water, and Toodle and Noodle were swimming. This was just what they wanted.

Then something happened. All at once a lot of beavers came paddling down the new canal Toodle and Noodle had made, and among them was Grandpa Whackum.

“Oh, ho!” cried the old gentleman beaver. “Look here! What’s this? Who dug this canal?”

“We did,” answered Toodle proudly. “Noo-

dle and I dug it to get away from the lynx. Isn't it a good one?"

"The canal is all right," said Grandpa Whackum, with a laugh, as he splashed water with his broad tail, "but you made your canal so low down that all the water is running out of our pond into it. We will have no water left if we don't stop up your canal, boys. Hurry, friends!" cried Grandpa Whackum to the other beavers. "Make a dam across the boys' canal and that will keep the water in our pond. It won't all run out then."

So the beavers did this, bringing mud and sticks and grass for a dam, and soon the canal was dry again, and the beaver pond stopped running out. Then the big beavers stole softly up to where that lynx was and they threw stones at him until he was glad enough to run home.

Then Grandpa Whackum got the basket of cocoanut and flour which Toodle and Noodle had hid in the grass and brought it home, so Mrs. Flat-tail could make a cake. She did, and the two beaver boys each had a large piece.

So that's all now, but in case the baker man doesn't let his cake of ice roll over our lawn and spoil the watering can, I'll tell you next about Grandpa Whackum being caught.

STORY V

GRANDPA WHACKUM IS CAUGHT

“Come, boys!” called Grandpa Whackum, the old gentleman beaver, to Toodle and Noodle, the little beaver boys, as they awoke one morning in their mud and stick house in the pond. “We must be off early today for we have a great deal to do.”

“Oh, dear!” exclaimed Toodle. “I was going to play ball with Bully No-tail, the green frog, this morning.”

“And I was going to play tag on the flat lily pad leaves with Bawly, his brother,” spoke Noodle. “What do we have to do, grandpa?”

“I am going to show you how to dig a canal,” answered the old gentleman beaver.

Toodle looked at Noodle, and Noodle looked at Toodle. Then they both looked sort of ashamed-like.

“Do you mean a canal like the one we dug the other day, when we wanted to get away from the bad lynx?” asked Noodle, brushing a mosquito off his ear.

“No,” answered Grandpa Whackum with a laugh, as he got up from where he was sitting

on his tail. "You dug that canal all right, only you didn't look where it was going to end, and you nearly let all the water from our pond run away through it. No, I'll show you how to make a canal just right."

You remember I told you how, when Toodle and Noodle went to the store for their mamma, they had to dig a canal to get away from a bad animal.

"Well, I guess then we'd better go with you," said Toodle, "for we must learn how to make canals in the right way. Sometimes we might want to get away from a bear by swimming in one of them."

"That's so," agreed Noodle. So he and his brother gave up the idea of playing ball or tag, and off they set with their grandpa, who was the oldest beaver in all the beaver colony, or city, and the wisest and strongest.

"You'll have plenty of time to play after you practice your canal-digging lesson," went on the old gentleman. "Come along, we're going over to the aspen tree grove."

"Hadn't we better take along some sandwiches, or maybe an ice cream cone to eat," suggested Toodle. "We've just had our breakfast, I know," he added as he saw his mamma looking at him, "but we may be gone a long while."

"Oh, there will be plenty to eat where we are

going boys," said Grandpa Whackum, with a laugh and a whistle through his big, orange-colored front teeth. "There are sweet aspen trees there, and willows with nice, thick, juicy bark—indeed, you'll not get hungry, even though you don't have an ice cream cone. Come along."

So off the old gentleman beaver went, with Toodle and Noodle frisking on ahead. Mr. Flat-tail, their papa, stayed home to plaster with mud a hole his wife had found on the roof of the house in the pond. It would never do to have a hole there, for a bad water rat might easily scratch it larger, and some night, when Toodle and Noodle were asleep he might sneak in and bite them. No, indeed!

As Grandpa Whackum and the two boys swam along the pond, and then went out on dry land to waddle for a short distance, Toodle suddenly exclaimed:

"Why, I know where this is!"

"Where?" asked his brother Noodle.

"It's the same place where I had my first lesson in cutting down a tree!" cried the little beaver boy. "That time I was caught under it, you know."

"Oh, yes!" exclaimed Noodle. "Is that where we are going, Grandpa Whackum?"

"The very place," said the old beaver gentleman, as he kindly stopped to allow a toad that

accidentally sat on his tail to hop off. "And, boys, we are going to dig a canal so we can float down through it, on the water that will run in, the very tree Toodle cut down. That tree is good to eat, Toodle, my boy," went on Grandpa Whackum, "and it will be very good this winter."

"Oh, fine!" cried Toodle, and he was very glad that he could be of some use to the other beavers, even if it was only in cutting down one tree for use as food.

"I wish I could cut down a tree!" exclaimed Noodle.

"Well, you can soon," promised his grandpa. "But now I need you both to help dig the canal. We will soon begin. Here is a little brook that runs into our pond. Now if we dig a sort of ditch from this brook to where Toodle's tree is, we can float it right to our house, and that's what we'll do."

Soon the work of digging the canal was started. The old gentleman beaver and Toodle and Noodle used their sharp claws to loosen the earth. Then they would carry it off to one side, either holding it in their front paws, which were like hands, or by taking a lot of it on their tail, and holding their tail close to their body so the dirt would not slip off. In this way they soon had quite a ditch dug, and when the water from the little brook ran in it would be a canal.

“You boys are doing very well,” said Grandpa Whackum, after a bit. “I think I will leave you for a little while and go off in the wood to see if there are any more good trees to cut down for winter. If there are I’ll show Noodle, tomorrow, how to cut them. While I’m gone you boys can finish the canal.”

So Grandpa Whackum, washing the mud from his tail, went off in the aspen grove, and Toodle and Noodle worked harder than ever on the canal. Soon it was dug all the way to where lay the tree Toodle had cut down.

“Now let’s rest,” suggested Noodle. “When Grandpa comes back he’ll show us how to cut down the little wall of dirt that is between the brook and our canal, and that will let in the water. Then we can float the tree home.”

“And while we’re waiting let’s eat,” suggested his brother. So they gnawed off some sweet willow bark, which is as good to them as are lollypops or popcorn candies to you children.

Toodle and Noodle were just finishing their little bark lunch, when, all of a sudden, they heard a voice calling:

“Help! Help! Help!”

“Hark! Who’s that?” asked Toodle.

Then they heard a whistle and the sound:

“Whack! Whack! Thud-ud-dud!”

“That’s Grandpa Whackum!” cried Noodle.
“He must be in trouble!”

“Help! Oh, boys, come and help me!” they heard the old beaver gentleman calling. “I’m caught in a trap!”

Toodle and Noodle rushed as fast as they could toward where they heard the sounds. All the while the old beaver gentleman was thumping his flat tail on the ground, to tell his little grandsons how to reach him.

Pretty soon they came to where he was, and there poor Grandpa Whackum stood, caught fast by his hind leg in a wooden trap.

“Oh, boys!” he cried. “Hurry and get me out! I was walking along, looking up at the trees to make sure which were the best to cut, when I stepped into this trap. It has snapped shut on my paw, and I can’t turn around to gnaw myself loose! Can you do it for me?”

“Of course we can!” cried Toodle bravely.

“Right away, quick!” cried Noodle.

Then with their orange-colored front teeth those beaver boys gnawed and gnawed on the wooden trap until they had gnawed it all to pieces and their grandpa could come out. He was not much hurt, I’m glad to say. And the hunter who set the trap, thinking to catch a beaver, was much disappointed that night, I guess.

“It was very foolish of me not to look where I was going,” said Grandpa Whackum, a few days later as he rubbed some witch hazel leaves on his sore paw, which was nearly well now. “I’ll never get caught again, and I hope you boys will not, either. How is the canal coming on?”

“It is all done,” said Toodle.

“Good!” cried Grandpa Whackum. Then he went with the two beaver boys to where they had dug. With a few strokes of his strong claws the old gentleman soon tore down the last bit of the earth, and that let the water into the canal. It was filled very shortly, and then the three beavers rolled into it the tree which Toodle had cut down.

“Now, sit on the log,” said Grandpa Whackum. “Hold up your broad, flat tails for sails and we’ll ride home.” And they did, as nicely as you please, and every one was glad to see them.

So that’s how Toodle and Noodle dug a canal and how Grandpa Whackum was caught and got out again. And on the next page, if I don’t lose all my money, so I have to walk down town instead of going on my roller skates, I’ll tell you about Toodle making a house.

STORY VI

TOODLE BUILDS A HOUSE

“Hurray!” cried Noodle Flat-tail, the little beaver boy, as he hopped out of his clean shavings bed one morning, and tickled his brother Toodle with a turkey feather. “Hurray! no school today!”

“That’s so,” spoke Toodle, rubbing the sleepy feeling from his eyes so he could look out of the window and see if the sun was up yet. As it was quite high in the sky, it shone, making the beaver pond sparkle like silver.

Most beaver houses have no windows, and they are all dark inside, but the one where Toodle and Noodle lived had several windows in it, for Mr. Flat-tail was a very rich beaver.

Besides there was Grandpa Whackum, the oldest beaver of them all, and he helped make the windows. So if some of you children have seen real beaver houses, and have never noticed the windows, don’t say they never have any. Because this Flat-tail family of beavers was different from those you may know.

“Well, I guess we may as well get up,” said Toodle, when he saw how high the sun was.

“And I’m glad it’s Saturday, so we don’t have to go to school.”

I believe I forgot to tell you that Toodle and Noodle went to school just the same as any animal children do, and later on in these stories I’m going to tell you some of the things they did there.

“Yes, we can have a lot of fun,” spoke Noodle. “Bully No-tail, the frog, is going to have a ball game, with the broad lily pad leaves for bases, and you and I can play.”

“Good!” cried Toodle.

So the two little beaver boys hurried down to their breakfast of willow-bark oatmeal with frizzled watercress pancakes, and soon they had dived down through the water, in their rubber cloth suits, out of the front door, and across the pond they swam.

Down on the beaver dam, which was built to keep the water from running out of the pond where the animal folk lived, were a number of the grown-up beavers, and they were very busy. They were bringing mud and sticks and stones and grass in their paws, and putting it in a pile near where Grandpa Whackum stood on his hind legs sitting on his tail for a stool.

“That’s right!” the old gentleman beaver was saying. “Hurry now, everybody, bring a lot of

mud and plaster it over the hole. Hurry, everybody!”

“What’s the matter?” asked Noodle. “Is there a fire?”

“No, but in the night a bad bear tore a hole in our dam, to let all the water out of our pond, so he could tear open our houses and get us,” said a policeman beaver, who was sitting on top of the police station, looking out for danger. And when he saw any he was ready to whack his tail on the water, making a noise like a firecracker. When the other beavers heard this they would all run and hide.

“A bear; eh?” exclaimed Toodle. “Wow!”

“Yes, and you boys must be careful where you play today,” said Grandpa Whackum, as he showed the other beavers how to mend the hole the bear had torn in the dam. “I can’t be with you to look out for danger.”

“Oh, we’ll be careful,” said Noodle, sort of easy-like, as all boys are.

They watched the mending of the dam for a little while, and then they went on to play ball with Bully, the frog, Jimmie Wibblewobble, the duck, and some other of their animal friends.

Well, this story isn’t about the ball game, though I will tell you one like that some time. But now I must relate what happened when Toodle built his playhouse. So I’ll just say that

there was lots of fun at the ball game, and that Noodle's side won.

Soon after that Noodle had to go to the store for his mamma, and as Toodle did not want to go along he stayed home.

"But I would like to have some fun," said this little beaver boy to himself, "so I guess I'll build a playhouse. Then, when Noodle comes back it will be a surprise to him and he and I can stay in it, and play soldier, and Indians, and all things like that."

So Toodle began to build his house. Perhaps if Grandpa Whackum, or his papa, or some of the older beavers had seen him they might not have let Toodle do this, for he started his house away off at one end of the pond, near the wood where the bears and wolves lived.

"But if we are going to play Indian in our house," said Toodle to himself, "we don't want it too near the other houses. The people will make a fuss if we yell and holler."

So off he went by himself, while all the grown beavers were mending the hole the bear had torn in the dam. Other boy and girl beavers were playing around, some swimming, some sliding down slippery, muddy banks, that were just like coasting-hills, and some girl beavers were playing with their dolls, which were made out of pieces of wood.

Toodle had watched other beavers making houses, some of them very large, so he thought he knew how to do it. But he only wanted a small playhouse. He gathered a lot of sticks, and then, diving down to the bottom of the pond, and holding his breath, he scooped up a little pile of mud and grass roots. This was the bottom part of his house. On top of this he laid sticks, and more sticks, until his house was above the water. Then he brought still more sticks and mud and grass roots up from the bottom of the pond.

Toodle then piled some long poles up slanting, just as you might take a lot of bean poles and stand them up in a circle in the garden, to make an Indian tent. Toodle did this, and then he spread mud all over the outside, and when this had partly dried in the sun, there he had a nice little house.

“Won’t Noodle be surprised when he sees this!” cried the little beaver boy.

If you had been there you could not have seen any door to the queer house, but there was one just the same. The entrance to it was under water, and when he wanted to go in Toodle had to dive down below the water and swim up along a dark front hall to get into his house. It was safer that way, as no other animal dared come in.

Well, the little beaver boy finished his house, and then he began to wish for his brother to come along so they could have a good time. Toodle was sitting on the roof, putting some mud plasters on a few holes he saw, when all of a sudden, there was a swirl in the water, and along came the bad old skillery-scalery alligator with the double-jointed tail. He swam straight for Toodle, crying:

“Ah, ha! This is the time I have you! Wuff!”

“No, you haven’t!” cried the little beaver boy, and with that he gave a dive off the roof of his playhouse into the water, and swimming with his paws and his broad, flat tail, he soon had found his front door. The next minute he was up inside his house.

“Now you can’t get me!” he cried through the sides to the skillery-scalery alligator.

“I can’t, eh? You just watch me!” cried the bad old ’gator.

With that he began to scratch and claw, and to claw and to scratch at Toodle’s house, scattering all over the sticks and the mud, that was not yet hard and dry.

“Oh, dear!” thought the little beaver boy. “I shouldn’t have come in here. When I was in the water I should have swum home; for I can go faster in the pond than that ’gator can. Now he’ll get me sure! And I don’t dare go out now,

or he'll grab me. Oh, dear! I wish I'd made my house nearer the dam, where Grandpa Whackum is. He'd save me."

Well, the 'gator went on clawing away at Toodle's nice little house, and he had it almost clawed apart, and was going to reach in and grab Toodle, when, all of a sudden, Noodle, who had come back from the store, came swimming along, looking for his brother.

"Help! Help! Oh, will no one help me?" cried poor Toodle in his little playhouse.

"Yes, I will!" said Noodle. He had with him two ice cream cones, one for himself and one for Toodle, and they were full, and heavy with ice cream. But Noodle knew there was but one thing to do. First he threw one cone at the bad 'gator, and the sharp point stuck in one eye. Then Noodle threw the other cone, and the sharp point of that stuck in the 'gator's other eye. Then the 'gator couldn't see to scratch or claw Toodle's house any more, and he couldn't see to grab the little beaver boy, who easily swam out and got safely away with his brother.

Of course, the ice cream cones were lost, for the 'gator took them away with him, and had to go to a dentist to have them pulled out of his eyes. But, anyhow, Toodle was saved by Noodle, whom he thanked very much. And Toodle

never built a house so far away from the dam again.

So this is all now, but on the page after this, if it happens that the butterfly spreads some honey on a cracker for the rag doll to eat, I'll tell you about Toodle saving Noodle.



STORY VII

HOW TOODLE SAVED NOODLE

Toodle and Noodle Flat-tail, the two little beaver boys, sat on top of the big dam, that kept the water in the pond from flowing all away, as the water does in your gutter on a rainy day, unless you make a pile of mud and sticks to hold it back. Toodle was gnawing a bit of sweet bark from an aspen tree, and Noodle was making a whistle out of a bit of willow wood.

“Well,” said Noodle after a while, when he had blown on the whistle, making a noise like a toy choo-choo engine, “is this all we’re going to do today, Toodle?”

“Oh, I don’t know,” answered Toodle as he looked at the stick to see if there was any more eating-bark on it, and, finding there was none, he threw it away. “I don’t know,” said Toodle again, “what would you like to do to have fun?”

“Let’s go away in the woods,” spoke Noodle, “and gnaw down some trees with our teeth, the way Grandpa Whackum showed us, and we can build a little cabin and play Indian.”

“That would be fun,” agreed Toodle, “only

suppose a bad bear or an unpleasant wolf should get after us?"

"Then I would just blow on my whistle," said his brother, "and Grandpa Whackum, or maybe papa, or some of the big folks would hear it and come to save us. I say let's go off to the woods," and he blew his whistle quite loudly, so that Grandpa Whackum, the oldest beaver of them all, who was mending a hole in the dam where the water was running away, Grandpa Whackum, as I say, came running up, banging his broad, flat tail on the ground, and asking:

"What's the matter, boys? Is some one trying to catch you? Are you in a trap?"

"Neither one, thank you kindly, Grandpa Whackum," said Noodle, speaking very politely, as he had been taught to do, "we are in no danger, and I was just blowing on my whistle to show Toodle how I could call for help if we went to the woods."

"I see," spoke the old gentleman beaver. "I heard the whistle, all right, but if you boys go off to the woods I could not get to you as soon as I did this time. So you want to be very careful if you do go."

"We will," promised Noodle. "Come on, Toodle. Let's go have some fun."

So the two little beaver boys jumped down from the big dam, and began swimming toward

the woods some distance off. The beavers could swim in the water much better than they could waddle, or walk, on land, even if they did stand up on their hind legs. And they were much safer in the water, but of course they could not stay in it all the while.

On and on swam Noodle and Toodle, and sometimes the little beaver boys would see gold or silver fish in the water around them, and they'd stop for a minute and talk about how warm the pond was, and whether there would be a fishball game that day, and all things like that.

And sometimes Toodle and Noodle would see some little girl beaver friends of theirs playing with their dolls, and their hair ribbons, and their sewing on top of the big beaver houses that stuck up out of the water.

"Well, here we are at the woods," said Noodle, after awhile, and he swam to the bank, and climbed out of the water.

"Yes, we're here," said Noodle, as he climbed out and sat down beside his brother, to dry off a little. Both the little beaver boys sat on their big tails, which were as good as little stools to them, as I have told you in the stories before this one.

"Now for some fun!" cried Toodle, as he turned a somersault and part of a peppersault, while Noodle blew on his whistle, not very

loudly, you know, for he did not want to scare Grandpa Whackum and make him come running up, thinking there was danger.

Then the two beaver boys began to play. With their four strong orange-colored teeth they gnawed down small trees, and began to pile them on shore to make a little log cabin. They did not build a regular beaver house, which is almost always made in the water. This time Toodle and Noodle were just playing, and they wanted a cabin on shore.

“Now it’s almost done!” exclaimed Toodle, as he went inside and looked out of the window.

“Yes, a few more logs and it will be ready for us to play in,” spoke his brother. “Then you can be an Indian part of the time, and I’ll be a soldier, and make believe chase and shoot a bang-bang gun at you, and then it will be your turn to be a soldier with a gun, and I’ll be an Indian.”

And just then, all of a sudden, something fell down out of the air, and came down, cracko-whacko! hitting Toodle on the head as he was looking out of the play-cabin window.

“Wow,” cried Toodle. “Did you do that, Noodle?”

“Indeed, I didn’t,” said his brother. “Can’t you see that I’m busy here gnawing down this

tree to make the bang-bang gun with? I didn't hit you."

Just then Toodle heard some one laughing, and, looking up, he saw Billie Bushytail, the squirrel boy, sitting on a tree branch right over the log cabin. Billie was eating a hickory nut.

"Excuse me, Toodle," said Billie, the squirrel boy. "I hit you, but I didn't mean to. I was eating a nut and it fell out of my paws and landed on your head. Did it hurt you very much, Toodle?"

"Oh, hardly any," said the little beaver boy. "You see I have a lot of fur on top of my head, Billie, and it bounced right off—the nut did, I mean—not my head."

I guess if the nut had hurt him, Toodle wouldn't have said so. Boys are like that, you know. That's the reason they don't cry, after they get over being babies.

"Come on down and play with us," said Noodle.

"Yes, do," invited Toodle. So Billie, the squirrel boy, scrambled down from the tree, and soon he and the two beaver brothers were playing in the little log cabin.

"Oh, such fun as they had! They made up all sorts of games, including the one about Indians and soldiers, and then they played a new game called "Don't bite your Paws when all

alone, You try to eat An Ice Cream Cone.” That is a very funny game, only you have to have ice cream cones to play it, and it was a lucky thing Uncle Wiggily Longears, the old gentleman rabbit, came along just as Toodle, Noodle and Billie were ready to start it, for he had the ice cream cones with him in his valise, and he gave them to the boy animals to use.

Well, the old rabbit gentleman watched them playing about for some time, and then he hopped off to see his friend, Grandfather Goosey Gander, and Billie, the squirrel, went with him. So that left Toodle and Noodle alone. They played some more, and then Noodle thought he would make himself a little toy boat to go sailing in.

Noodle went off by himself down to the edge of the water where a nice little tree grew, and he was cutting this tree down with his sharp teeth, while Toodle was up in the play-cabin making believe he was a soldier on guard, when all of a sudden something happened.

A great big, old, gray wolf, who hadn't had anything to eat in a long, long time—not since Fourth of July I guess—this bad, old, gray wolf sprang out of the bushes and grabbed Noodle in his paws.

“Now I've got you!” growled the wolf, and really he had. There was no mistake about that. The wolf had poor Noodle!

“Oh, dear,” cried the little beaver boy. “Let me go! Oh, please let me go, and I’ll give you all the money I have home in my tin bank.”

“No! No!” growled the bad old wolf, and he started to take Noodle off to his den. Noodle tried to blow on his willow whistle to call for help, but it was in his pocket where he couldn’t reach it. And it looked as if the wolf would take him away.

But have no fear, little ones. I have a plan to save Noodle.

Toodle, up in the cabin, saw what had happened, and he cried:

“I’m coming, Noodle! I’m coming!” Down the hill ran Toodle, and going close up to where the wolf was with his brother, Toodle stood in the water, and with his broad, flat tail, which is just like a pancake-turner, that brave little beaver boy splashed water all over that wolf. In the wolf’s eyes and nose and mouth it went, making him sneeze and gasp and choke. Of course Noodle got all wet too, but he didn’t mind that a bit. He liked it. And finally the wolf was so soaking wet, and he sneezed and choked so hard, that he had to let go of Noodle, who at once ran away and was safe, for Toodle had saved him, just as I said he would.

“Come on, I guess we’d better go home,” said Toodle, and he and Noodle went back to the

beaver dam. As for the wolf he had to go to the doctor to get something to make him stop sneezing, and it served him right, I think.

So no more now, if you please, but if the little chicken next door doesn't come in and pick a hole in the baby's red circus balloon so that it bursts, I'll tell you next about Toodle's and Noodle's little sister.

STORY VIII

TOODLE'S AND NOODLE'S LITTLE SISTER

“Well, boys,” said Grandpa Whackum, the old gentleman beaver, one morning, as he swam out of the house in the pond and took a seat on his tail, on top of the dam, next to where Toodle and Noodle Flat-tail were sitting; “well, boys, I think you might take a few more swimming lessons today, for after you start going to school I won’t find much time to teach you.”

“School!” cried Noodle, “are we going to school, grandpa?”

“Of course,” said the old gentleman beaver, slowly blinking both his eyes.

“But school for the other animals began some time ago,” spoke Toodle. “Johnnie and Billie Bushytail, the squirrels, have been going two weeks, and so has Sammie Littletail, the rabbit. I thought we wouldn’t have to go.”

“Yes,” said Grandpa Whackum, “it is true you two boys will start in a little late, but that is because your papa and mamma first wanted you to have some lessons at home in tree cutting, and in house and dam making and things like that. But when you do start to school, say in a

week or so, you can easily catch up to the others.

“So, as I said, I’ll give you your last swimming lesson now, and then you will always be able to get away from any animals that chase after you in the water.”

Now Toodle and Noodle liked the water very much, and they so enjoyed having Grandpa Whackum show them the best way to swim and dive and float, as well as stay under water without breathing for a long time—they liked this so much, I say, that they forgot about soon having to go to school.

My! how they splashed about in the pond, using their hind paws, which were something like a duck’s feet. They fairly rushed through the water, and when they wanted to go very specially fast they used their broad, flat tail just like a propeller on a steamboat.

“That’s the way to do it!” cried Grandpa Whackum, as he told the beaver boys what to do. “Turn around quickly in the water, and dive down when an alligator or a sea lion chases you,” said the old gentleman beaver, showing them how.

So Toodle and Noodle practiced their swimming lesson, and then their grandpa said:

“Now, boys, come up on this old stump and do some diving. Jump right into the water; don’t be afraid!”

Grandpa Whackum showed them how to do this, springing off his hind feet and going away down under water where no one could see him until he popped up again.

Toodle and Noodle did this after him, and, though at first they were not very good at it, soon they got so they could dive as nicely as could be.

“Now you are good swimmers,” said the old gentleman beaver, “and you may have time to play. But be careful not to go too far away, over to the woods, or the bad wolf may get you.”

Toodle and Noodle said they would be careful, and then they began playing tag, and hide your tail, and jump over your chewing gum, and all games like that. Finally they swam away up to one end of the beaver pond, and they were just going to climb out on land, and sit on their tails for a while, until they thought of a new game, or until some of their friends came home from school, when, all of a sudden, something happened.

No, it wasn't a rustling in the bushes, and no bad animal jumped out on them. Goodness knows that takes place often enough, as you well know. But it was something different this time.

Toodle and Noodle heard a gentle little voice somewhere off in the woods, and it kept saying:

“Oh dear! Oh dear! Oh dear! What shall

I do? Who will take care of me? Oh dear!"

"Hark!" cried Noodle. "Did you hear that?"

"Indeed, I did," answered his brother. "Come on, let's go home!" and he started toward the pond.

"Go home!" exclaimed Noodle. "What for? Let's go see what that is."

"No, sir! Never!" cried Toodle. "Why most likely it's a bear or a wolf, making believe cry like that so we'll come closer, and then he can grab us. No, sir! don't you go see what it is at all. Come on home!"

"Oh, don't be a silly!" exclaimed Noodle. "That's some little boy or girl animal in trouble. A wolf or a bear couldn't cry in such a tiny, weeny voice as that. I say let's see what it is."

Toodle listened to the crying voice again. Truly it did sound like some little animal, and not like a bad bear, and finally Toodle said:

"Well, let's go take a look. But be all ready to run in case there's danger. Remember Grandpa Whackum isn't here to help us."

"Oh, I'll be careful," promised Noodle.

Slowly and carefully the two little beaver boys went toward where they heard the voice. It was still crying away like this:

"Oh, dear! Oh, dear! Will no one come and take care of me? Oh, dear!"

"It's in that old stump over there," said Toodle after a bit of looking about.

"Yes, that's where it is," agreed Noodle. "The stump is hollow and some poor chap is inside it."

So Toodle and Noodle went up to the hollow stump, and they stood up on their tippy-toes, and they looked in, and at first it was so dark they couldn't see anything, and then—and then—all of a sudden—they looked once more, and—what do you think they found?

Why, there was the dearest, sweetest, cutest little baby beaver girl you ever saw! She was all dressed in a long blue-pink-yellow dress, and she had a little bottle of milk in one paw and a rubber rattle-box in the other, but she was crying, this little baby beaver girl was, and she seemed so lonesome and afraid that Toodle and Noodle felt very sorry for her, and loved her at once.

"Oh, look!" cried Toodle. "A baby in a hollow stump!"

"Yes, and maybe we can take her home and keep her for our little sister," said Noodle. "Oh, joy!"

"Oh, dear!" said the little baby beaver.

"What's the matter?" asked Noodle.

"Oh, I'm left all alone," said the baby. "I was out in the woods with my papa and mamma, and a bear and a wolf chased us. My papa and

mamma ran as fast as they could, but the bear and wolf kept after them, and finally they got so close that my papa and mamma couldn't get away. Then my mamma hid me in this stump, hoping, I guess, that some one would find me, and then she and papa ran on and—and——”

But the little baby beaver cried so hard that she couldn't talk. Toodle and Noodle felt the tears coming into their eyes also, but Toodle asked, very, very softly:

“What happened after that, baby?”

“The—the bear and wolf carried my papa and mamma away to their dens,” said the baby beaver, “and—and I'm left all alone. Nobody loves me! Oh, dear!”

“Don't cry any more!” said Toodle, and with his handkerchief he wiped the eyes of the baby beaver. “We love you, and we'll take care of you, won't we, Noodle?”

“Indeed we will!” exclaimed the other beaver boy. “We'll take you home with us, and you can be our little sister.”

“Will you really?” asked the baby, who was old enough to talk, you see, and she could walk a little. “That will be lovely!” she said, and she stopped crying.

So Toodle and Noodle helped her out of the hollow stump, and then they made a little boat out of a piece of tree which they gnawed down,

and they rowed the baby beaver across the pond to their house. And Mrs. Flat-tail said her boys did just right to bring the poor little thing home; and she took her for her very own baby and for a sister to Noodle and Toodle.

They named her Crackie, for she used to drop the dishes and cups and crack them. But no one minded that very much, for they loved Crackie so. And one day a wolf chased her and she threw an ice cream cone at him and cracked that, but it scared the wolf so that he ran away, which was what Crackie wanted.

So that's how Toodle and Noodle got a little sister, whom they loved very much, and some day Grandpa Whackum said he might find that bad wolf and bear and make them let Crackie's papa and mamma go. But lots of things happened before that.

And in the next story, if the cocoanut pie doesn't roll off the table and break the cream pitcher's leg, I'll tell you tomorrow night about Toodle and Noodle sliding down hill.

STORY IX

TOODLE AND NOODLE SLIDE DOWN

Once upon a time Toodle and Noodle Flat-tail, the little beaver boys, went sliding down hill when there wasn't any snow on the ground, and a very strange thing happened to them. I'm going to tell you all about it, if you'd like to hear it. So, if you will kindly not wiggle too much, and not call the dog over here to rub his wet tail on my newly polished shoes and take all the shine off so I can't go to the party, I'll tell you all about it.

It began this way. Toodle said to Noodle, his brother, one day:

"Let's have some fun."

"All right," said Noodle to Toodle, "we will. What shall we do?"

"Let's go out on the dam and look around," said Toodle. "Maybe we'll see something there."

The dam, you know, was the big wall of sticks and stones, and grass and mud, that held the water of the beaver pond from running away and leaving all the beaver houses on dry

land. Because the beaver animals, you know, like to have their houses in water.

“Shall we take Crackie with us?” asked Noodle. Crackie, you remember, was the new little baby sister of the beaver boys. They had found her in a hollow stump. “Shall we take Crackie?” asked Noodle.

“Why, yes, I guess so,” answered Toodle. “She’d like to come and have some fun.”

So they swam back to the beaver house, dived down under water where the front door was (so no bad animals could get in without at least getting wet) and then Noodle called:

“Hi there, Crackie! Want to come with us?”

“Of course I do,” answered Crackie, and then something sounded “Bango!”

“My goodness! What is that?” cried Mrs. Flat-tail, mother of the beaver children. “What did you break that time, Crackie?”

“Only the looking glass. Oh, dear!” answered the little baby beaver. “It’s all cracked to pieces.”

“Oh, Crackie!” cried Toodle, sadly like.

That’s the reason her name was “Crackie,” as I told you in the story before this one. The poor little girl did not mean to do it, but she was always cracking or breaking something. Some people are like that; aren’t they?

“I—I was just looking in the glass to see if

my hair ribbon was on straight," said Crackie, "when the mirror just fell out of my claws and broke!"

Crackie was getting to be quite a girl, you see, to have hair ribbons and all things like that. Oh, beaver children grow very fast, you know. They are something like mushrooms that spring up over night.

"Well, never mind, Crackie, my dear," said Mrs. Flat-tail. "You couldn't help it, I know. You didn't do it on purpose. Run along out with the boys and play."

"Yes, come on, Crackie!" cried Toodle. "We're going to have some fun!"

Say, I guess, I'd better begin telling about that sliding down hill without any snow on the ground pretty soon, had I not? or else I'll get to the end of this story without putting it in.

Well, anyhow, as the telephone girl says sometimes, Toodle and Noodle and Crackie, the three beaver children, swam out of the house in the pond and began looking for something so that they might have a good time.

They looked over toward where Grandpa Whackum, the oldest beaver of them all, was showing another beaver gentleman, who had just gone to housekeeping, how to stop a leak in his roof. And the animal children saw their grandpa climb up on the roof with some plaster-

mud in his paws to fix the hole, and then, when he had used up the plaster, they saw him slide down the roof for more, going splash! into the water.

“Say, that’s what we can do to have some fun!” exclaimed Toodle.

“Do what?” asked Noodle.

“Slide down hill,” answered Toodle.

“How can we slide down hill when there isn’t any snow,” asked Crackie, who was a very smart little beaver baby girl.

“I’ll show you,” said Toodle. “You know mud is very slippery, and the roofs of lots of our houses are made of mud. Grandpa Whackum just slid down one, sitting on his flat tail, and we can do the same.”

“That’s right,” cried Noodle. “We’ll find an old house, where no one lives any more, and we’ll wet the roof by splashing water on it, and then we’ll take turns sliding down into the pond. That will be jolly fun!”

Toodle thought so, too, and so did Crackie. She swam along with her brothers, carrying her rubber doll in one paw. The rubber doll didn’t mind being wet, you know.

Well, finally the beaver children found a big house, that was rounding on top just like a hill, and no one lived in it. The roof was covered with dried mud, but with their tails Toodle

and Noodle and Crackie soon splashed water on it and made it as slippery as the most slippy-ippy hill covered with snow or ice that you ever saw. For you know how sluppy-slippy wet mud is if you have ever fallen down in it when you were going to school. Or maybe your rubber has stuck in the slippery-sticky mud and come off. Mine did once, and I dropped my ice cream cone in a puddle of water, and the worst of it was I didn't have any more money to get another, either.

Well, finally the rounding, hilly top part of the roof of the beaver house was all wet and slippery mud, and Toodle and Noodle began to slide down it. They wanted to try it first before they let their little sister Crackie go on it, to be sure it was safe for her.

And it was all right, I'm glad to say, and when the beaver boys sat on their tails and gave themselves a little push away they went down the muddy hill, without any snow on it, almost as fast as a choo-choo train, or maybe even an automobile, for all I know. Think of that!

"Now may I try it?" asked Crackie.

"Yes, come along," said Toodle.

"We'll give you a good push!" said Noodle.

Crackie let her rubber doll swim in the water while she climbed up on top of the house-hill and got ready to slide down into the water. It

was like shooting the chutes at Coney Island, you know.

“Splish-splash!” went Crackie into the water, and she laughed and shouted, it was such fun.

“She slides as well as we do, Noodle,” said Toodle.

“Indeed she does!” said Noodle to Toodle.

Then the beaver children took more turns sliding down the muddy hill. Sometimes they slid separately, and often all three of them would go down together. Then Toodle got a long piece of birch bark for a sled, and they all sat on that, holding their tails up in the air, and down they went, whizzing along until they hit the water with a splash.

Oh, it was great fun!

Then, all of a sudden, when Toodle and Noodle had gone sliding down together, leaving Crackie standing alone on the top of the muddy hill, to come down after them, all of a sudden, up out of the water came the bad old skillery-scalery alligator, and before Toodle or Noodle knew what was happening the savage creature, with the double-jointed tail, had grabbed them both in his paws.

“Oh, let us go! Let us go!” cried Toodle.

“Yes, please let us go!” begged Noodle, and he tried to make his tail go “whack!” on the water, the way his grandpa had taught him to

do to call for help. But the alligator held him too tightly, and Noodle couldn't move even his nose.

"Oh, will no one help us?" shouted Toodle.

"No, there is no one here to help you," barked the alligator, just like a dog. "I am going to take you off to my den!"

"Oh, ho! No, you're not!" cried little Crackie, up on top of the mud-hill, and with that she came sliding down so fast that she suddenly hit that alligator right on the end of his nose, and that made tears come into his eyes, and whenever that happens to a skillery-scalery alligator he has to go right away to the dentist. It was that way with this one, and, as soon as Crackie bumped him, he dropped Toodle and Noodle, letting them go, and away the bad creature swam to have a tooth pulled out, which served him right, I think.

So that's how Crackie saved Toodle and Noodle by sliding down the mud-hill and bumping the alligator. Then the beaver children had a lot more fun in the water and the alligator didn't bother them any more that day. And in the story after this, if the merry-go-round doesn't dance a jig on the roof, and wake up the little mouse in the pantry, I'll tell you about Toodle and Noodle going to school.

STORY X

TOODLE AND NOODLE AT SCHOOL

“Hark! What’s that?” cried Toodle Flat-tail, the little beaver boy, as he rolled over in his bed of clean, white pine-splinters one morning. “Did you hear that, Noodle?”

“Indeed I did,” answered the other beaver boy. “Listen, Toodle.”

They both listened, and they heard a bell ringing off in the distance:

“Ding-dong! Ding-dong!”

“Fire!” cried Noodle. “It’s a fire. Let’s get up and—”

“Fire! That’s no fire!” said Toodle. “That’s the school bell that’s ringing, and we have to go to school today, Noodle, my boy. Don’t you remember what Grandpa Whackum said to us?”

“Indeed I do,” answered Noodle. “So this is the day we have to start school? I wonder if our little sister Crackie is coming?”

“I don’t believe she is old enough,” answered Toodle. “It would be fun if she could, though. But did you hear anything else besides the bell, Noodle?”

Then both the little beaver boys listened

again, just as the telephone girl does when you talk to her, and they heard some one calling:

“Hi there, Noodle! Hi there, Toodle! Time to get up! You have to go to school today.” It was their papa.

“All right!” called the two beaver boys very politely, as all animal children do. “We’re coming.”

Quickly they washed their faces and paws in the water of the beaver pond, and then they were ready for breakfast. They had water-lily pancakes with birch-bark syrup on, and winter-green muffins with maple sugar, and their mamma, Mrs. Flat-tail, also put them up a nice lunch of watercress bread with willow bark jam in between the slices.

“I wish I could go to school,” said Crackie, the little beaver girl baby, whom the two boys had found in a hollow stump one day. “I’d like to go and learn how to make mud pies.”

“Some day you may, my dear,” said Mrs. Flat-tail, as she hurried about the kitchen, making some nice warm ginger-root soup for Grandpa Whackum.

So Toodle and Noodle started for school. They were a little bit behind the other animal children, for the school had opened a week or so before this, but then the beaver boys had to

practice their swimming, and gnawing and other lessons, which is what kept them home.

But now they were going to school, and as they waddled along, wondering what sort of lessons they would have to recite, they met a number of their friends. Bully No-tail, the frog, was hopping on the path by the water, and Jimmie Wibblewobble, the boy duck, was swimming in the water, as were Toodle and Noodle. Overhead, also on his way to school, was Dickie Chipchip, the sparrow boy.

The school where Toodle and Noodle went was in an old boat that floated around the beaver pond, just like the grocery store that one of the animals kept. And the school-boat, not being tied fast anywhere, was never in the same place any two mornings. Sometimes it would be here, and sometimes it would be there.

And on that account the animal children were often late. They would start for the boat-school at the place where it had been the day before. But in the night the wind might have blown it far off, so by the time they found it the animals would be late for their lessons. But the old gentleman teacher, Mr. Water Rat, did not mind that much, and he never kept any of the children in for being late. Sometimes Woodie and Waddie Chuck, the groundhog boys, would

be so late that they only got to school just as it was letting out for the day. That was jolly.

So, as I said, Toodle and Noodle started for school. On the way they had lots of fun with their animal friends, and once, when Sammie Littletail, the rabbit boy, was chasing Toodle, the beaver boy jumped into the water and swam a long way, so Sammie couldn't tag him.

But the school bell kept ringing and ringing, and finally Toodle and Noodle were at the old floating boat where they were to study their lessons. It had not drifted very far in the night, so no one was late this morning.

"Now, children, attention!" said old Mr. Water Rat, who kept the school. "We will first have a lesson in arithmetic, or number work.

"Toodle Flat-tail, you may tell me this. If you had a pear and your brother, Noodle, had two apples, how many would there be altogether?"

"Do you mean if we were very hungry?" asked Toodle, slowly like.

"Why, what has that to do with it?" asked the school teacher rat. "Two apples and one pear are always the same, whether you are hungry or not."

"Oh, no," said Toodle, as politely as he knew how. "For if Noodle and I were hungry there wouldn't be any left no matter how many pears

or apples there were at first. We would eat them up, you see, teacher."

"I see," said the teacher. "That is very good. You may go up head, Toodle." So that is how Toodle got up to the head of his class the first day in school. Wasn't that good?

Well, then, the teacher asked Noodle a question. Said Professor Water Rat:

"If you had five pennies, and your mamma should give you ten pennies more, how many pennies would you have?"

"Not any," said Noodle, as politely as he knew how.

"Why not?" asked the teacher. "Do not five pennies and ten pennies make fifteen pennies?"

"Maybe," said Noodle; "but, please sir, if I had fifteen pennies I'd buy three ice cream cones—one for Toodle and one for my sister Crackie, and one for myself, so I would not have any pennies, you see."

"Very good," said the professor rat. "You may also go up head, Noodle." So Noodle did, and he and Toodle sat in the same seat. They were quite proud, too, at getting up head their first day in school. Not too proud, you know, but just proud enough.

Well, all of a sudden, as the animal children were studying away very quietly, a voice called:

"I want Toodle! I want Noodle!"

Everybody looked up surprised like. The two beaver boys were sort of scared, too.

“Oh, dear!” cried Noodle, and he looked for a window so he could jump out into the pond and swim away.

“It’s a bear after us!” cried Toodle, jumping up.

The professor rat teacher got out his ruler to fight the bear, if he should come in, but instead, there walked into the school only little Crackie, the baby beaver girl. She had her rubber doll with her.

“I want Toodle and Noodle!” said Crackie. “I’m tired of staying home and playing all alone. Please teacher, can’t you let them out of school and amuse me?”

Well, you should have heard the animal children laugh at that! The idea of a little girl beaver coming to get her brothers out of school to play with her! Did you ever hear of anything like that? I guess not!

Even Professor Rat had to laugh, and there was so much fun that no one could study.

“Can’t Toodle and Noodle come home with me?” asked Crackie again.

“Well, pretty soon,” said the teacher. “You just sit down here, Crackie, and make some pictures on the blackboard.”

So Crackie came to school also, you see,

though it was not intended, and pretty soon, when school was nearly out a bad old fox stuck his nose in the window, looking to see if he could grab Lulu Wibblewobble, the duck girl. But Crackie Flat-tail threw a piece of chalk at him, and the fox was glad to run off and not come back any more that week, fearing he was going to get a bad chalk-mark, you see.

So that's how Crackie did good by going to school to get her brothers. And when lessons were done she went out with them and had a good time. And on the next page, if the door knob doesn't turn over in its sleep and roll out of the window, I'll tell you about Crackie breaking her doll.

STORY XI

HOW CRACKIE BROKE HER DOLL

I may as well tell you at the very beginning, for you would find it out sooner or later anyhow, I suppose, so I may as well tell you at the beginning, that this is partly a story for girls, and partly a story for boys. The girl part is about the doll, and the boy part is about breaking it, and after that—

Well, I guess I had better tell you the story, and let you see for yourselves what happened afterward.

The reason this story is to be both for girls and boys is because my little girl asked me to write a story with a doll in it. I said I would.

And right after that my little boy, who heard her, said:

“And please put a scary part in it for me.”

You see boys like the scary part. So that’s why this is a sort of double-jointed story—one part for girls and the other for boys.

Now that I have explained it I will begin.

One day Toodle Flat-tail, the little beaver boy, hurried home from school with his brother Noodle, and said:

“I know what let’s do! We’ll get in our play-boat, and go off on a voyage. Maybe we’ll find an island where oranges and bananas and coconuts grow, and we can play we’re shipwrecked, and pirates and all like that.”

“All right—let’s,” agreed Noodle. “Shall we take our sister Crackie along?”

“No, not this time,” said Toodle. “She might be afraid if we played pirates, or anything like that. Besides, she is having a good time with her doll. We’ll leave her home.”

And, truly, Crackie, who was the baby beaver girl, who was always dropping things, and breaking or cracking them (without the least in the world meaning to), Crackie, I say, was playing with her doll. It was a new wooden doll, made from a part of a birch tree that Grandpa Whackum, the oldest beaver of them all, had gnawed down for the little girl. Crackie’s rubber doll was asleep under the refrigerator, where she would be nice and cool.

So Toodle and Noodle started off in their play-boat which was a log hollowed out so they could sit in it. They used their tails for sails.

Now those beaver boys could swim much faster and better than any boat you ever saw, and that’s why it is so queer that they wanted to go off in a hollowed-out log. But they did. Why, do you know, I have seen real boys who

would rather get on an old raft made of boards, and paddle around in a mud puddle, getting all wet—they would rather do that almost any day than go to school, or have their hair cut or a tooth pulled. Isn't that odd?

Well, anyhow, as the peanut man sometimes says, Toodle and Noodle sailed off and Crackie stayed home and played with her doll. She made a new dress for it out of part of a clothes-pin and a lead pencil. And she made a hat out of a strawberry box, trimming it with shavings. That's what it is to have a wooden doll, you see.

And now, for a minute or so, I'll tell you what happened to Noodle and Toodle. This is where the scary part comes in, so cuddle down in papa's or mamma's lap if you like, though it isn't going to be so very scary.

The two little beaver boys sailed on and on in their play-boat and pretty soon they were nearly across the big beaver pond. And then they saw an island. It had some trees growing on it, and it looked to be a good place to pretend being shipwrecked, and pirates, and all like that, and Toodle called to Noodle:

“Let's land there, my brave old salt!” He said that, making believe he was a sailor, you understand.

“Ha! We will land there, messmate!” re-



plied Noodle to Toodle, also making believe he was a sailor.

So they steered their boat toward the island and landed there. There were no orange trees, I am sorry to say, and no cocoanut ones, though I suppose I could just as well as not have written about them growing there. Perhaps next time I will. But, anyhow, as the hand organ man says occasionally, Toodle and Noodle saw a hickory-nut tree there, and the two beaver boys thought they would get some of the nuts.

“We can eat some,” said Toodle.

“And with the others we can play marbles,” said Noodle.

With that they began to gnaw down the tree, for that to them, was easier than climbing up, as Billie or Johnnie Bushytail, the squirrel brothers, would have done.

Well, Toodle and Noodle had the tree almost gnawed down, and they were thinking how good the nuts would taste, when, all of a sudden, the bad wolf, who owned the island and the trees, and all on it, came along, and he growled:

“Ah, ha! This is the time I have those beaver boys! Taking my trees, eh? Just for that I’ll take them both off to jail and bite them on each of their ears. Wow!”

Wasn’t he the bad old wolf, though?

So before Toodle or Noodle could run away,

for they were not very quick on their feet on land, as I have told you, before they could get away the wolf had them both. He held Toodle in one paw and Noodle in the other, and he just glared at them, worse than a rag doll stares at the ceiling when she's asleep.

"Oh, please let us go!" begged Noodle. "I'll give you an ice cream cone if you do."

"Yes, and I'll give you two," said Toodle.

"No, sir-ee sir!" exclaimed the wolf, just as the coal man sometimes speaks before he brings in the ice. "I am going to take you off to jail," and away the wolf started with Toodle and Noodle.

Now, just about this time Crackie, the little girl beaver, had her wooden doll all dressed, and she thought she would start out to find her brothers. She asked some other boy and girl beavers, who were out playing after school, which way Toodle and Noodle had gone in their play-boat, and in this way Crackie started toward the make-believe shipwreck island. But she did not go in a boat—she swam, and carried her doll on her back so as not to wet her strawberry-box bonnet.

Crackie easily found the island, for she was a very smart little beaver girl, but at first she could not see her brothers. Then Crackie saw where the two boy beavers had started to gnaw

down the hickory nut tree, and next she saw the tracks of the wolf, and she guessed what had happened.

“Oh, the bad wolf has my brothers!” said Crackie. “I am going to try to save them!”

So, without stopping to think that she, a little beaver girl, could not do much against a bad wolf, Crackie started out. And she had not gone very far before she came up behind a blackberry bush, on which strawberries happened to be growing, and on the other side of that bush sat the wolf, holding Toodle in one paw and Noodle in the other. The wolf had become tired and had stopped to rest.

“You boys are a regular nuisance,” growled the wolf. “I wish I had you in jail now.”

“Pray, do not take us if it is too much trouble,” said Noodle, politely, hoping he and his brother would be let go.

“Oh, I’ll take you to jail just the same,” said the bad old wolf, “only I’ll bite your ears now instead of after I get you there. It may be so dark when I get you to the jail that I can’t see to do it.”

Then Toodle and Noodle felt very badly at having started to gnaw down the hickory trees but they had not meant to do wrong, and if they had known the island belonged to the wolf they’d never have gone there at all.

“Well, I guess I’ll bite your ears,” said the wolf, and he opened his wide mouth. And, just as he did so, brave Crackie reached around from behind the strawberry-lemon pie bush, and right between the wolf’s opened teeth she stuck her wooden doll, and when the wolf closed down his jaws he bit on the wooden doll, instead of on Noodle’s ear, and the doll broke in two.

So that’s how Crackie spoiled her doll.

“Wow! Double wow and some pepper hash!” cried the wolf, as surprised as anything at having bitten on a wooden doll when he didn’t mean to. “This is terrible!” And with that the wolf dropped Noodle and Toodle and ran off to have his dentist make him a new set of teeth, as he had broken his. So the two beaver boys were safe, you see.

Of course they were very thankful to Crackie for saving them, and they felt sorry about her broken doll. But the doll was easily fixed when Uncle Wiggily Longears, the rabbit gentleman, came along with some paste, so Crackie’s pet was soon as good as ever.

Then she went home with Noodle and Toodle to have her supper and get to bed. And in the next story, if the lady’s hatpin doesn’t stick in the automobile tire and let all the juice run out, like an orange shortcake at a picnic, I’ll tell you about Toodle and Noodle playing Indian.

STORY XII

TOODLE AND NOODLE PLAY INDIAN

One day Grandpa Whackum, the oldest beaver gentleman of them all, came in from where he had been looking at the dam which held the water in the pond from running out. Grandpa Whackum, who was called that, you remember, because he used to whack his tail on the ground, to warn his friends of danger — Grandpa Whackum brought with him to the beaver house where Toodle and Noodle and Crackie Flat-tail lived, some long, slender pieces of wood he had picked up.

They were left over after a hole in the dam had been mended, and the hole was made by the bad skillery-scalery alligator sticking in his double-jointed tail.

“There, boys,” said Grandpa Whackum to Toodle and Noodle as he tossed them the sticks, “there is something you can make bows and arrows of.”

“Oh, goodie!” cried Noodle.

“And we can play Indian!” said Toodle.
“That will be fun; eh, Noodle?”

“Sure,” said Noodle.

“May I play?” asked Crackie, who was making a sawdust dress for her wooden doll, the same one the wolf bit in two and Uncle Wiggily Longears, the rabbit gentleman, mended, you remember.

“Pooh! Girls can’t play Indian!” said Noodle. “You could be a Red-Cross nurse if you wanted to, though, and take care of us when we get shot.”

“I don’t want to do that,” said the little beaver girl. “I want to be a real Indian myself and play with you.”

“Oh, girls can’t be Indians,” said Toodle, and with that he and his brother, thinking no more of Crackie, began to make their bows and arrows.

To make a bow you take a stick and bend it. Then you make it fast, so it can’t uncurve, by tying the two ends with a long string. That makes the string tight, and when you put an arrow on the string and stretch it and let it go suddenly, the arrow shoots a long way off.

But you must be very careful not to have sharp arrows, and not to aim them at any one—ever! Shoot at the fence. The fence doesn’t mind it.

Soon Toodle and Noodle had their bows and arrows all made and they started off to find a good place to play Indian.

“We won’t go to the wolf’s island this time,” said Toodle.

“No, indeed,” agreed Noodle. “It’s too dangerous. If we go anywhere let’s go to a butterfly’s island. A butterfly won’t hurt us, even if we should gnaw down his peach tree.”

So off they started in their play-boat, leaving Crackie at home as before, playing with her mended wooden doll. And the rubber doll was asleep in the bathtub, for she was very fond of soap and water. Not to eat, of course, but to float around in.

Well, Noodle and Toodle sailed on and on in their boats, hoisting their tails for sails, and soon they came to a new little island. They were sure this did not belong to the wolf, and so they decided to land on it and play Indian.

Out of the boat they got, and soon they were having a good time on the island, where a huckleberry bush grew with oranges dangling from the branches. I know that seems queer, but it was so in those days. Of course things have changed since then, and I don’t suppose there are now any huckleberry bushes with oranges on, or even lemons, for that matter, but I am telling you this exactly as it happened.

Toodle and Noodle ate a few oranges and then they began to play. They took some poles and made themselves a wigwam, which is what an In-

dian calls a house. It has a hole in the roof for the smoke to go out, and it looks like a lot of bean poles stacked up in the garden after summer is over.

Toodle and Noodle were playing away at a great rate in their Indian wigwam, shooting arrows at other make-believe Indians in the bushes, sometimes hitting and knocking down an orange or two. And whenever they did this they would stop and eat the oranges. In this way their faces and paws got quite yellow. But the boy beavers did not mind that.

“It only makes us look more like Indians,” said Noodle.

“To be sure,” agreed his brother.

“Now,” said Noodle after a bit, “let’s both shoot our arrows at once at that big black stump over there. We’ll make-believe it’s a bear.”

Whizz went the two arrows. And then—

“Yow! Wow! Growl! Howl! Scowl!” some one yelled, and the stump rose up on its hind legs and came rushing at Toodle and Noodle. You see it wasn’t a stump at all—it was really a bear.

“Oh, dear!” yelled Noodle dropping his bow and arrows. “Come on, Toodle!”

“Yes, let’s jump in the water, and then the bear can’t catch us!” said Toodle. For you

know beavers are very swift in the water, and few animals can swim as rapidly as they.

But alas! Likewise alack-a-day! Before Toodle and Noodle could get to the water the bear had grabbed them in his hairy paws and hugged them. He didn't hug them because he loved them. Oh, no! But because he thought he was going to have a good dinner.

"Oh, yum! Yum!" growled the bear, smiling so that he showed his red tongue and white teeth. "I can see where my dinner is," said the bear.

Toodle looked around, but he could see nothing good to eat. He said so to Noodle.

"I—I guess he means—us!" exclaimed Noodle, sadly-like.

"Oh, dear!" cried Toodle. "Now we are in trouble! I guess we had better not come to any islands after this."

"I'll fix you for shooting your Indian arrows at me!" growled the bear.

"We—we thought you were a stump!" said Noodle.

"Worse and worse! Calling me a stump!" cried the bear. "Now I shall certainly frizzle you in buttermilk for my lunch."

Then the bear picked up Toodle in one paw, and Noodle in the other, and off he started with them.

"Where are you taking us, if you please?"

asked Noodle, politely. His mamma had taught him to be polite, even to a bear.

“I am going to take you to my den,” said the bear. “Then my wife will cook my lunch for me.”

So the bear took the two little beaver boys to his den, and as his wife was not at home just then, having gone down to the five and ten cent store to buy a new pair of slippers, the bear said:

“I’ll just tie you two chaps to a tree until my wife gets back!”

So what did that bear do but take some strong telegraph wire and wind it around Toodle and Noodle, making them fast to a tree.

“I suppose I could tie you fast with a piece of grapevine,” said the bear, “but I know you have sharp teeth, and could soon gnaw yourselves loose. But you can’t bite through wire.”

And Toodle and Noodle knew with sorrow that they could not, and the bear knew he could go to sleep and safely leave them tied up, which is just what he did.

Down on the ground in front of his den lay the bear, and soon he was sound asleep and snoring. Toodle and Noodle tried to break loose, but the wire was too strong.

“I—I guess this is the end of us,” said Noodle sadly. “We are gone!” Toodle thought so,

too, and I don't know what would have happened if Nurse Jane Fuzzy-Wuzzy, the kind muskrat lady, had not happened to come swimming along. She had been to market to get Uncle Wiggily something for breakfast.

As soon as Nurse Jane saw poor Noodle and Toodle tied up there she came softly out on the island, without waking the bear, and then with her tail, which is just like a rat-tail file you know, Nurse Jane easily cut and filed through that telegraph wire in a jiffy, which is very quickly indeed, and soon Toodle and Noodle were all loose, the cut ends of the wire being bent back.

“Quick now!” whispered Nurse Jane. “Let's get away before the bear wakes up, or his wife comes back!” And they did, the beaver boys and the muskrat lady swimming off under water and the muskrat lady swimming off under water.

So Toodle and Noodle got safely away, thanks to Nurse Jane and her file-tail, and when that bear woke up, and found his dinner all gone he was mad as hops—and there is nothing madder than them. But it served him right, I think, for being so mean, don't you?

And now we have come to the end of this story, and I guess you are glad of it. But on the page after this, if my new hat blows up on top of the flag pole, so the monkey can put his peanuts in it, I'll tell you about Noodle Flat-tail's long swim.

STORY XIII

NOODLE'S LONG SWIM

"Come on, Noodle!" called Toodle Flat-tail, the little beaver boy, to his brother one morning as he slid down off the roof of the house in the pond and slipped into the water with a splash. "Come on or you'll be late for school."

"Oh, it's early yet," said Noodle. "We've got lots of time. I just want to finish making this little canoe out of birch bark. Maybe then we can paddle to school."

"Swimming is good enough for me," said Toodle, as he took a little ball of soft mud up on the end of his flat tail and threw it at his sister Crackie. It hit her on the back, but was so soft that it did not hurt her.

Toodle wouldn't have hurt his little sister Crackie for anything—not if you were to give him two ice cream cones and part of another one.

Crackie only laughed, and then she turned a peppersault into the water to wash off the mud. Beaver children, you know, play in the mud and water a good deal of the time, and how they love it! Why, you should see them make mud pies,

with white stones for raisins. Some day I'll tell you about that.

"Well, are you coming?" called Toodle to Noodle, as he started to swim to school. "You'd better, Noodle, or you'll be late. The first bell has rung."

"Oh, I've got time enough," spoke the other little beaver boy. "I just want to see if my birch bark boat will sail."

"Well, I'm going, anyway," said Toodle, and away he started.

"I wish I could go to school," spoke Crackie, sort of sadly like. "I don't like to stay home alone when you boys go away to your lessons."

"Never mind," whispered Grandpa Whackum, the oldest beaver of them all. "Some day, Crackie, you shall go to school, and you'll learn as much as Toodle and Noodle," and then the old gentleman animal gave Crackie a whole ice cream cone for herself, and she let it fall on a stone and broke it. That's why she was called Crackie—she was always dropping things and cracking or breaking them.

But it didn't hurt the ice cream cone much, for only the sharp point was cracked off, and the little beaver girl didn't like that part, anyhow. None of the ice cream was spilled, I'm glad to say.

So Toodle started off to school, and as he

swam away he looked back and called to his brother: "You'll be late, Noodle."

"Oh, I guess not," answered Noodle. "I'm coming right along now."

Well, Noodle finished making his birch bark boat, and it sailed very nicely, but there was not enough wind for the beaver boy to sail to school in it, so he thought he had better swim. He was just starting off, having said good-by to his sister Crackie, and he was wondering if he knew his spelling lesson, when Mrs. Flat-tail, the beaver lady, called out:

"Oh, I say, Noodle, do you think you'd have time to swim over to Mrs. Wibblewobble's, the duck lady, and borrow a cupful of salt for me? I want to make a sweet-grass pudding and I need a little salt for it."

"Of course, I'll go, mamma," said Noodle. "I have time enough, for I'll swim very fast. But I thought you put sugar in pudding, instead of salt."

"Oh, this is a new kind," said Mrs. Flat-tail. "I'll give you some of the pudding for supper."

So Noodle started to swim over to Mrs. Wibblewobble's house. He found the duck lady busy in her kitchen, and she got the salt for him, putting it in a cup so that it would not spill.

"You had better hurry," said Mrs. Wibble-

wobble to Noodle. "My boy Jimmie started for school some time ago."

"Oh, I'll hurry as soon as I go home with this salt," spoke Noodle.

So off the little beaver boy swam once more, but he had not gone very far before he looked around behind him, and he saw something coming after him in the water. He could not see exactly who it was—just a sort of little flurry in the beaver pond, and Noodle said:

"Perhaps thit is Nurse Jane Fuzzy-Wuzzy or some of my friends. I'll wait and see."

So he swam slowly, and the creature in the water swam faster toward him, and then, all of a sudden, Noodle saw that it was no friend of his at all, but the bad old skillery-scalery alligator, who was swimming down under water so Noodle couldn't see him so plainly. But the alligator happened to stick his nose up for a second, to try and bite a fly, and then it was that the little beaver boy knew who the bad creature was.

"Mercy me!" cried Noodle. "That alligator is after me! And he looks hungry, too. I've got to swim with all my might to get away from him. Oh, dear!"

Then Noodle began his long swim to get away from the bad old alligator. Beavers can swim very fast, you know, on top of water, or

under it, though when they swim under water they have to come up to breathe every once in a while. And alligators can swim fast, too.

So there was a race between Noodle and the 'gator. The little beaver boy swam on top of the water for a while, and then he would dive down underneath. And he held his spelling book, which had a rubber cover, so it wouldn't get wet, on top of the cup of salt so no water would get in that.

"Oh, if I can only get home before the alligator grabs me I'll be all right," said Noodle.

On and on swam Noodle, but home seemed far off. Sometimes the beaver boy would dive down suddenly, and swim under water. Then, for a little while, the alligator would not know what had become of Noodle. But soon the bad creature, with his long nose, would smell Noodle in the water and take after him again.

Noodle swam this way and that, hoping he could fool the 'gator, but he couldn't seem to, and Noodle was getting tired, for he had swum a long way. It was farther to Mrs. Wibblewobble's house, and back again, than he had thought.

All at once the 'gator made a big spring, giving a jump through the water. He grabbed Noodle.

"Ah, ha!" the bad creature cried. "Now I

have you! You gave me a long chase but I have you!"

Poor Noodle didn't know what to do. There he was caught; and he couldn't go to school any more, and he could not go home to give his mamma the cup of salt and—

"Ha!" thought Noodle suddenly. "The salt! Maybe if I throw it in the 'gator's eyes it will make him sneeze, and he will let me go!"

No sooner said than done. Just as the 'gator was opening his mouth to show Noodle his sharp teeth and red tongue, the little beaver boy quickly tossed the cup of salt right into the eyes and nose and mouth of Mr. Alligator.

"A-ker-choo! Foo-do-do! Ker-snoo-ker-choo!" sneezed the 'gator, and he was so excited that he let go of Noodle to reach for his own pocket handkerchief. That was just what the little beaver boy wanted, and a second later he had dived down and swum away.

And the alligator couldn't get Noodle again, either, for he couldn't see with all that salt in his eyes, so Noodle swam safely back to his beaver house again.

He had lost the salt, of course, but Mrs. Flat-tail said that was all right, as she would go herself and borrow some more of Mrs. Littletail, the rabbit lady.

"And you had better hurry on to school, and

don't let any more alligators chase you," said Noodle's mamma to him.

"I won't," he answered, and on he went to school, safely and he didn't miss a single lesson. I'm glad to say, getting there just as the last bell rang, so he wasn't even late.

And on the next page, if a little girl named Elizabeth doesn't turn my typewriter upside down to take the ribbon off it for her lollypop doll, I'll tell you about Toodle Flat-tail's fire engine.



STORY XIV

TOODLE'S FIRE ENGINE

One day, in school where Toodle and Noodle Flat-tail, the beaver boys, went to learn their lessons, Sammie Littletail, the boy rabbit, seemed very much excited.

And it was not about his lessons, either, though Sammie was a very smart little school-rabbit. No, it was something else, and pretty soon old Mr. Water Rat, who taught the class, noticed that Sammie was not paying any attention to his school work. Instead of trying to find out how many apples there would be left if you took three potatoes from half a dozen carrots, Sammie was looking at something under his desk.

“Sammie Littletail, what have you there?” asked Mr. Rat, after a bit.

“A water- pistol, if you please, sir,” said the rabbit boy, very politely.

“Humph!” exclaimed Mr. Rat. “A school is no place for water-pistols. You may bring it here, Sammie, and then you had better study your lessons.”

So Sammie had to bring his water-pistol up

to the teacher's desk, and Toodle and Noodle Flat-tail, and all the other animal boys and girls, looked on. And Sammie got all red around his ears, he was so ashamed like.

"Oh, dear!" thought Toodle Flat-tail the beaver boy, as Sammie gave up the toy, "a real water-pistol. It's too bad teacher has it, for he won't know how to have fun with it. I wish Sammie hadn't taken it out; and maybe he'd have let me play with it after school. But now it's gone and the teacher won't give it back until vacation. Oh, dear!"

Sammie, himself, felt badly about his water-pistol, too. But then he knew he should not have taken it out in school. And so the lessons went on.

"Where did you get the water-pistol, Sammie?" asked Toodle Flat-tail of the boy rabbit, at recess.

"Uncle Wiggily Longears gave it to me," said Sammie. "It was a fine one, too. There was a rubber ball on it, and when you squeezed the ball and put the small end of the pistol in the water it sucked up a lot of it. Then, when you squeezed the rubber ball again, the water would shoot out like anything. But now it can't, 'cause Professor Rat has my water-pistol."

"Yes, it's surely too bad!" said Toodle. "I've been saving up for one a long time, but

I haven't got my water-pistol yet."

All the animal boys talked about how unlucky it was for Sammie's pistol to be taken away from him, and they all said they thought maybe if Sammie asked Mr. Rat, the teacher, he would give it back.

So Sammie did, after school, and Mr. Rat, being a very kind animal gentleman, said:

"Well, Sammie, if you promise not to bring the water pistol to school again you may have it back."

Of course Sammie promised, and then he had his toy again. He let all the animal boys take turns squirting it, and when it came to Toodle Flat-tail, the little beaver chap said:

"What'll you sell this water-pistol for, Sammie? I'll give you my new pop gun, and the birch bark whistle I made."

"All right," answered Sammie. "I'll trade you. I'm getting tired of my water-pistol, anyhow."

So that's how Toodle got the water-squirting-pistol that he wanted so very much, and he had a lot of fun with it. But he was very careful not to bring it to school with him, for he did not want Mr. Rat to take it away. Toodle and Noodle played with it around the house, and the best part of it was that their mamma didn't mind how much water they squirted, for beav-

ers live in the pond, you know, and they are wet more than half the time. Only the upper part of their house is out of the pond, and to get in through the front door you have to dive down under water. Isn't that odd?

Well, Toodle and Noodle had a lot of fun with the water-pistol, and Toodle let his sister Crackie shoot it once or twice. She was careful not to let it fall, I'm glad to say, so that it did not get broken.

"Let's play a game with it," said Noodle after a bit. "I'll make believe I'm a funny old sea lion who comes to your house while you're asleep, to try and get in. And you must wake up, and pretend to be scared, and shoot at me with the water-pistol."

"I will!" cried Toodle, and the two beaver brothers had lots of fun playing that game.

And now something is going to happen. I wish I didn't have to tell about it, but I do, for I have promised that I wouldn't leave anything out of these stories, so I have to put the bad part in with the good. But I'll make it come out as nicely as I can at the end.

A few days after Toodle had got the water-pistol from Sammie Littletail, Noodle Flat-tail found some old firecrackers that had been left over from the Fourth of July. They had fallen down a crack in the floor, and there they had

been hiding ever since. Firecrackers always like to sleep in cracks you know.

“Oh, goodie!” cried Noodle. “Come on, Toodle. We’ll fire them off and have a lot of fun. We’ll make believe having a war, and shooting, and all that.”

Mrs. Flat-tail didn’t happen to be home just then, or I think she would not have let the boys take matches and start to shoot the firecrackers. Toodle and Noodle didn’t mean to do wrong, but you know how it is yourself, sometimes.

So they shot off the old firecrackers, and some of them made a loud noise. It grew dark before the beaver boys had finished, and the sparks from the crackers looked quite pretty.

Then Mr. Flat-tail came home and heard, and saw, what the boys were doing. He said:

“Oh, Toodle and Noodle, you must stop this at once! You might set the house on fire!”

“Well, if we did, I could put it out with my water pistol,” Toodle said with a laugh.

“But, anyhow, we haven’t any more firecrackers left,” said Noodle.

“I’m glad of it,” spoke his father.

And that night, when Toodle went to bed he put his water pistol, all filled with a lot of ice water, right near him on a chair.

“For,” he said, “maybe the bad old fox might

try to get in tonight, and, if he did, I could squirt water in his eyes, and scare him.”

But something else happened. I guess it was worse than a fox, for, all of a sudden, when it was all dark and quiet, and the beavers were asleep, Grandpa Whackum, the oldest beaver of them all, awakened, and cried out:

“Fire! Fire! Fire! I smell smoke. The house is on fire!”

That woke everybody else up, of course, and such a running around as there was! Surely enough the beaver house—that is, the dry top part that was out of water—was on fire, and it smelled like firecrackers, too. You know how they smell.

“Oh, dear!” cried Mr. Flat-tail. “That’s how it happened. Some of the firecracker sparks got under the roof, and they glowed and smoked until they have set fire to our house. Oh boys!”

Of course Noodle and Toodle felt very badly about this, even though they had not meant to do it.

“Come, hurry out everybody!” cried Grandpa Whackum, and he helped Mrs. Flat-tail and little Crackie to get out. The fire was quite hot now, and a lot of the other beavers woke up.

“Call the fire engines!” some one cried.

“No—don’t do that!” suddenly shouted Toodle. “I have a little fire engine of my own. My

water-pistol! I'll put out the fire with that.' He had taken it with him when he rushed from the burning house, and now he began to squirt the water on the blaze—the water in his pistol. My how Toodle did squirt his water-pistol! And in a few minutes the fire was out, the house was not burned much and the beavers could go back in it.

So that's how Toodle and Noodle accidentally set fire to the house and how Toodle put it out with his water-pistol, which was as good as a fire-engine, wasn't it?

And in the next story, if the door bell doesn't knock all the salt out of the pepper caster, and make the window get a pain in its toothache, I'll tell you about Toodle and Noodle helping Billie Bushytail.

STORY XV

TOODLE AND NOODLE HELP BILLIE

Toodle and Noodle, the two little beaver boys, were on their way to school one morning. It was rather cool, for Jack Frost, the gentleman, who makes the icicles and snow balls and ice cream cones, had been flying around in the night and had left some of his finger marks on the window panes.

So Toodle and Noodle were hurrying along, with their paws in their pockets to keep them warm, and they tucked in their books as best they could.

“There’ll be skating soon,” said Toodle to Noodle.

“Yes, and snow-balling and sliding down hill and all that,” said Noodle to Toodle.

“Bur-r-r-r-r! don’t speak of winter!” cried a voice behind an old stump that Toodle and Noodle had just passed. “You young chaps don’t know what it means to have snow and ice and all that.”

Toodle and Noodle stopped short. They looked at each other and then they looked around the corner at the stump.

“Do you s’pose that’s a bear?” asked Toodle
(Noodle.

“Maybe it’s a wolf,” said Noodle to Toodle.

“Ha! Ha!” laughed a voice behind the stump, and out popped Grandpa Whackum, the oldest beaver gentleman of them all. “I didn’t mean to frighten you, Toodle and Noodle,” he said, “but when I heard you talking about snow and ice I just couldn’t help calling out. You see winter makes a lot of trouble for us. Sometimes the beaver pond freezes so hard that we can’t swim in it.

“Of course we can stay in our houses and sleep during the winter, but even that makes it very hard. We have to dive down under the icy water to get at the soft pieces of bark we have stored away to eat, and in winter the hunters come with their traps and dogs to catch us. Oh, ice and snow are not as much fun as boys and girls think they are.

“But never mind. We all want you to have as much fun as you can, even if it does get cold. So run along to school now, and when winter really comes, I’ll show you how to make a sled out of a piece of hickory bark and skates out of some old bones.”

So Toodle and Noodle hurried on, getting nice and warm as they hopped, skipped and

jumped, as they talked about snow and ice and sleds and skates and all things like that.

“Do you s’pose any dogs and hunters will come after us this winter?” asked Toodle of Noodle.

“I hope not,” said Noodle to Toodle. “We must have some lessons in how to keep out of traps, and what to do when dogs chase us.”

“Yes, Grandpa Whackum will teach us,” said Toodle.

Well, the beaver boys kept on going to school, and they were about half way there when, all of a sudden, Toodle called out:

“Look there!”

“Why, it’s Billie Bushytail, the squirrel boy,” said Noodle. “And he’s carrying a big bag of something.”

“Let’s see what he’s got,” suggested Toodle. “Maybe it’s a present for teacher.”

So they ran up to Billie and called:

“What you got, Billie?”

“Oh, what haven’t I got,” answered the little boy squirrel. “I’ve got handkerchiefs, and combs and brushes, and nuts, and some dishes and—oh, dear! I don’t know what all is in this bag.”

“Why, where did you get it?” asked Noodle.

“It’s from our house—where we live in the old oak tree, you know. We’re moving away

from there, and Johnnie, my brother, and I have to help carry the stuff. Oh, I'd a good deal rather go to school."

"What!" cried Noodle. "Don't you have to go to school?"

"Of course, not—on moving day," answered Billie. "I got an excuse from teacher. Johnnie and I are both staying home."

"I wish we were moving," said Toodle, looking at Noodle.

"So do I," said Noodle, looking at Toodle. "Then we wouldn't have to go to school. Where are you moving to, Billie?"

"To the old hollow stump, next door to where Jackie and Peetie Bow Wow, the puppy dog boys, live," answered the little squirrel. "Oh, say, but this bag is heavy!"

"Let us help you carry it," said Toodle. "We'd like to; wouldn't we, Noodle?"

"Indeed, we would!" cried the other little beaver boy. "Mamma has always told us to help our friends when we could. I'll carry it part way, Billie—"

"And I'll carry it the rest of the way!" interrupted Noodle, before Toodle could finish. "You just let us take it, Billie."

So the squirrel boy gave the bag to Toodle—the bag that was filled with needles and pins, and combs and brushes, and little salt cellars and odds

and ends that Mr. and Mrs. Bushytail, the squirrel lady and gentleman, did not want to pack in the wagon that Old Dog Percival brought to move them in.

You know how it is when you move—there are always some little things left out. Why I remember once, when we moved up from the seashore, I left out my hat on the clothes post and I had to go all the way back for it, and a big wave nearly washed my face and—

But there, I started to tell you about Toodle and Noodle helping Billie, not about myself.

On and on went the two little beaver boys and the little squirrel chap. And surely enough, just as they had said they would, Toodle carried Billie's bag part of the way, and then it would be Noodle's turn, and he would take it. Billie carried the books of the beaver boys, and every once in a while he would open the covers, look over the pages and say:

“Oh, my! But I'm glad now, I don't have to go to school!”

“I—I wish we didn't!” said Toodle with a sigh.

“So do I,” said Noodle.

On and on went the two beaver boys, helping Billie Bushytail. The bag was heavy, for it had a lot of things in it, but Toodle and Noodle did

not mind that, for they were so glad to help Billie.

Then, all of a sudden, just as the three of them were passing a hole in the fence, out jumped a big bad old fox, and he made a grab for Toodle. But Toodle happened to be carrying the moving bag just then, and he banged the fox on the nose with it, and a hair brush which was in the bag struck the bad animal on his eye, and the fox cried out:

“Oh, excuse me! I guess I made a mistake!” and away he ran as fast as he could, and didn’t bother Billie or Toodle or Noodle any more that day.

Well, pretty soon the three of them reached the old hollow stump where the Bushytail family was to move in, and there was Johnny Bushytail, with another bag full of stuff, and Old Dog Percival with a whole wagon load and the squirrel papa and mamma with their paws full of the things they had moved from their house.

“It was awfully good of you two beaver boys to help me carry my bag,” said Billie. “Thank you very much.”

“Oh, we liked to do it,” said Toodle.

“Sure we did,” spoke Noodle. “May we help you carry in some of the moving things, Mrs. Bushytail.”

“Yes, I guess so,” said the squirrel lady, not

stopping to think that maybe the beaver boys ought to go to school.

So Toodle and Noodle helped the squirrel family move, and, all at once, when everything was inside the hollow stump house, Toodle cried:

“Oh, Noodle! We forgot all about school!”

“So we did!” said Toodle. “Let’s go now. Maybe we won’t be very late.”

So they went to school, but they got there very, very late indeed, and when Mr. Rat, the teacher, asked them what had happened, Noodle said:

“We were helping Billie Bushytail move. He didn’t have to come to school, and we—”

“We wished we didn’t either,” interrupted Toodle. “And—and—”

“I see,” said Mr. Rat, with a smile that went away up under his whiskers. “Well, it is so late now there is no use in your coming to school at all. I’ll excuse you for today, but don’t be behind paws again.”

“We won’t!” exclaimed Toodle, and Noodle said: “Oh, goodie!” and then they ran off to play with the squirrel brothers at their new house, and had lots of fun. So that’s how Toodle and Noodle helped Billie, and in the next story, if the scrubbing brush doesn’t go out sleigh-riding on the front porch with the sofa cushion, I’ll tell you about Crackie’s secret.

STORY XVI

CRACKIE FLAT-TAIL'S SECRET

“Don’t tell Toodle and Noodle; will you, mamma?” asked Crackie Flat-tail, the little beaver girl, as her two brothers popped into the kitchen where she was talking to Mrs. Flat-tail one morning. “Don’t you let them know anything about it; will you?”

“No, indeed!” exclaimed the beaver lady with a smile at her little girl, and then one for each of the boys. “I’ll not whisper a word, Crackie!”

“Huh! A secret!” exclaimed Toodle. “Secrets are only for girls, anyhow. And they always tell ’em, so they aren’t secrets any more; I don’t care!”

“You can tell me and I won’t tell. Honest I won’t! Cross my tail!” exclaimed Noodle. “Do you want to tell me, Crackie?” and he sidled up to his sister as he asked her.

“Nope! I’m not going to tell—at least not now,” answered Crackie.

“I—I know where there’s a nice sweet piece of aspen bark, Crackie,” went on Noodle. “If you want to tell me the secret I’ll show you where the bark is, Crackie.”

“Nope!” said the little beaver girl, laughing. “I can’t tell you until it’s ready, anyhow, and now I must go to the store to get some—”

“Look out, Crackie!” exclaimed Mrs. Flat-tail, “or you’ll tell your secret before you know it.”

“Oh, then I’m going to hurry right away,” said Crackie, “and you boys had better go to school, or you’ll be late, won’t they, mamma?”

“I guess so,” answered Mrs. Flat-tail. “Run along Toodle and Noodle.”

The two beaver boys looked at their little sister, who was named Crackie because she so often dropped things and cracked them—such things as cups and saucers and once in a while she’d drop her doll. But then this was a rubber baby, and it did not so much matter, for they can’t crack until they get very old, and Crackie’s rubber doll was quite young.

“I wonder what it was Crackie didn’t want mamma to tell us?” spoke Toodle as he got his books ready to go to school.

“I don’t know,” answered his brother Noodle, “but we’ll find out when we come home from our lessons.”

“That’s what we will,” answered Toodle. “But come on now. We don’t want to be late the way we were the other day when we helped Billie Bushytail move.” ?

"No indeed!" said Noodle.

So off the beaver boys swam to school. They swam instead of walking, you know, because they lived in a house that was in the middle of a pond of water, and the only way they could get to shore was by swimming.

And the school was in an old boat, as I have told you before, and Professor Rat was the teacher. Sometimes the old boat would float away, and none of the school children could find it. Then there would be no lessons that day. And oh, how sorry those animal children were that they could not go to school! Oh, dear me, yes indeed! I guess so!

But this didn't happen to be one of the days when the school was lost, and soon Toodle and Noodle had reached the place, meeting a number of their friends and having a good time.

But, all the while, Toodle and Noodle were wondering what their mamma and sister Crackie had been talking about in the kitchen, and why it was they weren't let into the secret. In fact, Toodle and Noodle thought so much about it that they didn't study as they should have done.

And when Professor Rat asked Noodle: "How much are two apples and one apple?"

Noodle answered: "It's a secret."

"What!" exclaimed the teacher, surprised like. "A secret! Why every one knows what the an-

swer is. And what every one knows is no secret. Susie Littletail, you may tell us how much one apple and two apples are."

"Three," said Susie.

"Exactly," went on Professor Rat. "So you see it was no secret, Noodle Flat-tail."

"Oh, I guess I was thinking of something else," replied the little beaver boy.

"Well, in school you must think only about your lessons," said Mr. Rat. And that is very true. I only tell you that about Noodle to show how much he was thinking of what Crackie had said. How he did wish he knew the secret!

But now I must tell you about Crackie herself. The little beaver girl did not go to school, being too small, but she was big enough to go to the store, and that is where she swam after Toodle and Noodle had left. And Crackie bought sugar and spice, and everything nice, just as it tells about in the story book, and home she went with them.

"Now, mamma," she said, "you show me how and I'll make it, and when Toodle and Noodle come home they'll be so surprised! Won't they, mamma?"

"Indeed they will, Crackie," said the beaver lady.

So she and Crackie began to make it. What's that? You want to know what it was? Oh, I'm

not allowed to tell, for it's still a secret, you know. But in a little while you shall find out. Anyhow, I'm allowed to tell you this much. When it was all done Mrs. Flat-tail put IT in the oven, and—Well, I'll give you three guesses, not another one.

Anyhow, when it was in the oven Crackie said: "Well, I guess I'll go out and play a little bit, mamma. I'll go see Jennie Chipmunk. She is ill today and didn't go to school. I'll be back when it's done."

Off swam Crackie, and soon she and Jennie were having a fine time playing under the trees; for beavers play out on dry land as well as in the water. Jennie felt better after school was out. I've often heard of real boys and girls who were just like that.

By and by Crackie went back home, and when her mamma opened the oven door there came out the loveliest smell you can imagine.

"Oh, goodie!" cried Crackie. "It's all done, and how nice and brown it is. Now I'm going to fool the boys."

So what did she do but take the secret out of the oven, her mamma helping her, of course, and then Crackie wrapped it all up in a nice clean paper and a clean cloth—the secret, you know—not the oven.

And when the secret was all wrapped up,

Crackie took it outside in the yard and she made a big mud pie—a pie out of nice clean mud, such as the beaver animals use to plaster their houses. Inside the mud pie Crackie put her secret, and then she waited for Toodle and Noodle to come home from school.

The beaver boys were not long in coming, either. They did not stop much to play on the way, for they were very anxious to find out the secret. Soon they were at their house. Out in front was Crackie, making believe stuff sugar plums in her mud pie. The sugar plums were only stones, but it was easy enough to pretend with them. I've often done it.

“Where's the secret?” cried Toodle.

“Oh, Crackie, are you going to tell us?” said Noodle.

“There it is,” said Crackie, and she pointed to the mud pie she had made.

“That!” cried Noodle.

• “Pooh! What a secret!” exclaimed Toodle.

“Wouldn't you like a piece?” asked Crackie, and she looked over at her mother and smiled. Mrs. Flat-tail laughed. Toodle and Noodle looked disappointed-like.

“Only a mud pie,” said Noodle.

“Come on, let's play ball,” suggested Toodle.

“You'd better wait until I cut my mud pie,” said Crackie, and then, while her brothers watched

she broke open the mud pie, which she had baked hard and dry in the sun, and there, inside it, covered over with clean, green grape leaves, was a lovely apple pie, all brown and sugary, with birch-bark frosting in one place, and water-cress candy in another, and inside—oh, my! I can't write any more about it, for it makes me too hungry.

“That's my secret!” said Crackie. “I baked the real pie all by myself, only mamma helped me, of course. And I put it inside the mud pie just for fun. I wrapped it up so it wouldn't get soiled. Will you have some, boys?”

“Will we!” cried Toodle, quickly.

“I guess we will!” shouted Noodle, and they both together kissed little Crackie. And then they ate a piece of her secret pie. Wasn't that nice? I think so, even if I did write this story myself. And on the next page, if the coffee strainer doesn't take the piano out to a moving picture show and leave it there for the banana man, I'll tell you about Toodle and the big log.

STORY XVII

TOODLE AND THE BIG LOG

One day, when Toodle and Noodle Flat-tail, the little beaver boys, were on their way to school, Grandpa Whackum, the oldest beaver gentleman in the beaver town, called to them:

“I say, boys, when you come home from school this afternoon I’ll have something for you to do.”

“Is it a secret?” asked Noodle, wishing he did not have to go to school that day, for he didn’t know his reading lesson.

“No, not a secret,” answered Grandpa Whackum. “But swim along now. “I’ll tell you when you come home.”

“If it is a secret I hope it’s one like Crackie’s apple-mud pie,” spoke Toodle. “Oh, wasn’t that good?” he asked his brother.

“Yum! Yum!” exclaimed Noodle, smacking his lips, and flopping his big tail up and down. “I should say it was! I wish we had some now, and a piece for recess.”

“So do I,” went on Toodle. “Well, anyhow, if we go somewhere with Grandpa Whackum he’s sure to treat us. Maybe he’ll get us ice cream cones.”

“It’s getting too cold for them,” spoke Noodle. “I’d rather have some candied water-lily roots, or maybe a birch bark lolly-pop.”

“Oh, I guess I would, too,” said his brother.

Well, they went on and on to school, but in the night the wind had blown pretty hard, and the schoolhouse, which, as I have told you, was in an old boat, had drifted off. So Toodle and Noodle couldn’t find it right away. Neither could some of the other animal boys and girls who were on their way to recite their lessons.

“Let’s look over this way for it,” said Bully No-Tail, the frog, pointing one paw toward an old stump where a bear used to live. But the bear had gone off to act in a circus so he wasn’t there any more. “Let’s look over that way,” went on Bully. “Maybe the boat is hidden behind the bushes.”

“Oh, no, don’t let’s look any more,” suggested Jillie Longtail, the mousie girl. “I—I don’t want to go to school, anyhow.”

“Neither do I,” added Toodle. “Besides, we’ve looked pretty good, anyhow, and if we can’t find it it isn’t our fault,”

Well, some of the other animal children said the same thing, and they were just thinking about giving up the search for the school-boat, when along it came floating in the pond, and out in front was Professor Rat himself.

“Good morning, children!” exclaimed Professor Rat.

“Good morning, teacher!” said all the animal children, sort of disappointed like.

“I’m sorry I am late bringing the school to you this morning,” went on Mr. Rat, “and I would have been later only Miss Jane Fuzzy-Wuzzy kindly pulled the school along for me. It had drifted away off this time.”

“Indeed it had,” said Nurse Jane Fuzzy-Wuzzy, who used to take care of Uncle Wiggily Longears, the rabbit gentleman, when he had the rheumatism. “But now, children, you have your school back again, and I hope you also have your lessons. Good-by.”

Off swam Nurse Jane, and some of the animal children—in fact, all of them, thanked her kindly, as did Professor Rat. Still, all the children would have been more thankful if Nurse Jane had not brought the school to them. But there it was, and inside they had to go to study their lessons.

But I started to tell you about Toodle and the big log, and it’s about time I began, isn’t it?

By and by, after a while, not so very long, school was out, and Toodle and Noodle hurried home, for they wanted to find out what Grandpa Whackum wanted of them.



Soon the two boys saw the old beaver gentleman waiting for them, and as they swam up to him, Grandpa Whackum said:

‘Now, boys, you know winter will soon be here, and we beavers must begin to store away the things that we are going to eat when the cold weather comes. Real people put a lot of coal in their cellars, but in our cellars we will put sticks and logs of wood, covered with bark, and we will eat this bark all winter.

“We will store it down under the water, where, even when the pond is covered with ice, we can get it. And besides logs and sticks of wood, we can also eat grass and roots that grow on the bottom of the pond. But we must have lots of bark. So now if you will come with me to the woods, we’ll gnaw down some trees and bring them home to put in the cellar for winter. That is something all young beavers must learn, and it is time you began.”

“All right,” said Toodle.

“We’ll be glad to come with you,” said Noodle. And he smiled, for he saw, sticking from his grandpa’s pocket, some nice, sweet, juicy, mushroom lollypops, which he and his brother like very much.

Well, soon Toodle and Noodle were in the woods gnawing down little trees with their four sharp orange-colored front teeth, about which I

have told you. Grandpa Whackum also gnawed down trees with his teeth.

By and by, somehow or other, Toodle wandered away from his grandpa and brother, and soon he was in a lonely part of the forest. But he didn't mind that—at least not just then.

“Ah, there is a fine big aspen tree!” exclaimed Toodle, as he looked at a large one. “That will be dandy for us this winter. I'll gnaw that down.”

And he started to do it, sitting on his broad, flat tail, which was like a stool for him, as I have told you before.

Soon Toodle had almost cut the tree down, and when it began to fall he hurried out of the way, and whacked with his tail on the ground, to give warning to any other beavers, that might be nearby, to get out of the way. But Toodle was all alone. None of his animal friends was in sight.

When the tree was down Toodle tried to drag it toward the pond, so it would float like a boat to his house. But Toodle found that the tree was too heavy for him to pull. He wished he had not cut down such a big one, but he did not want to have to ask his grandpa and brother to help him. Toodle was sort of proud, you know, and he wanted to get this large log to his house

all by himself, just as you want to do things all for your own self sometimes.

“Well, I can cut the top branches off and then I think I can pull the rest of the log,” said Toodle.

So, sitting down on his tail again, Toodle gnawed the top off the log. Then he thought surely he could pull it to the water. But though he strained and tugged and pushed and pulled with all his might, still he couldn't do it.

“I guess, after all, I'll have to get grandpa to help me,” he said. “But I don't want to. I'll try once more.”

My! how hard Toodle tried. And just as he was going to give up, and call his brother to help him, out of the bushes jumped a big black bear.

“Oh, dear!” cried Toodle. “Now I am a goner! This bear will get me surely!” and he was so frightened that he couldn't jump into the water and swim away; this little beaver boy couldn't. He just sat there shivering and sort of hiding down behind the log, hoping the bear hadn't seen him. But the bear had, and the bear said:

“Ah, ha! There you are!”

“Ye—yes,” stammered Toodle. “Are you going to—going to eat me—all up?”

“Why, no, indeed!” laughed the bear in a jolly voice. “I just came to help you, Toodle. I have

been watching you trying to roll that big log into the water. It is too much for you, so I'll help. Let me get hold of it."

So the bear stuck his long claws into the log and he pushed, and Toodle pulled, and in a jiffy, which is a very short time, indeed, that log was in the water. Then Toodle could very easily swim along and push it with his paws.

"Thank you very much—thank you twice, Mr. Bear," he called out.

"Why twice?" asked the bear, wiggling his short tail.

"Once for not eating me," said Toodle, "and once for helping me."

"Pray do not mention it," said the bear, blinking both eyes. And then he went back in the woods to go to sleep.

So that's how Toodle gnawed down a big log, and how he got it home with the help of the kind bear. And Noodle and Grandpa Whackum were very much surprised when Toodle told them about it.

And in the next story—that is if the clothespin doesn't pinch the table leg and make it dance so the sugar bowl rolls off and tickles the parlor rug—I'll tell you about Noodle finding a trap.

STORY XVIII

NOODLE AND THE TRAP

“Boys, come over here, I want to give you a talking to,” said Grandpa Whackum, the oldest beaver of them all. He spoke to Toodle and Noodle, the little boy beavers, one morning when there was no school.

“A—a talking to,” said Toodle.

“I wonder if we’ve been bad?” asked Noodle.

“Nonsense! Bad? Of course not,” said Grandpa Whackum, who heard what his little grandson said. “I just want to give you a little lesson.”

“Lessons today—when it’s Saturday, and there’s no school?” cried Noodle.

“Oh, don’t be worried!” exclaimed Grandpa Whackum, who had such a funny name because he used to whack his big tail on the ground (making a noise like a bass drum in the circus) whenever there was any danger. That’s the way he used to warn the other beavers to look out. So his name was Whackum. Some of you may, perhaps have thought he was called that because he used to whack the little beavers. Never!

Grandpa Whackum never did that. He gave them ice cream cones, or lollypops, instead.

“Don’t be worried,” said Grandpa Whackum to Toodle and Noodle, who were almost like twins—but not quite. “This will not be a very hard lesson. Besides, animal children, you know, have to always learn things—whether in school or not. And, for that matter, so do real children. Your school teacher can tell you how to add up two apples and three apples, and how to spell cat and dog and boy, and things like that. But she can’t always be with you, to teach you how to look out for danger, and how to be polite—though, of course, all school teachers are always polite themselves—and she can’t teach you how to eat nicely at the table.

“These things have to be done at home,” said Grandpa Whackum, “and so, you see, there are lessons on Saturdays and Sundays, too, as well as on school days.”

“Oh, dear!” exclaimed Toodle, looking to see if Noodle was stepping on his tail—but he was not.

“So we’ve got to study!” spoke Noodle, with a sigh.

“Oh, not very much,” said their Grandpa Whackum. “I am just going to give you a few lessons in how to keep out of danger. And one big danger is traps.”

“Traps, eh?” asked Toodle. “Are there any around here?” and he looked all about him.

“You never can tell,” replied Grandpa Whackum. “It is coming on winter now, and you know we beavers get our thicker coats of fur then to keep us warm. And whenever our fur gets nice and thick hunters like to catch us, take off our fur and make muffs and caps and overcoats of it.”

“Does it hurt to have your fur taken off?” asked Toodle.

“I should say so!” cried Grandpa Whackum. “Of course I never had it done to me, but lots of my friends have, and they never lived after it. So look out for hunters and dogs. And when a hunter hasn’t a gun he may have a trap.”

“What’s a trap?” asked Noodle.

“A trap,” answered Grandpa Whackum, “is something made of steel, with strong springs. Hunters put them near our houses, or where we have to walk along near the dam that holds in the waters of our pond. They cover up their traps, and if you are not careful you may step into one.

“As soon as you do, snap! it goes shut, catching you by the leg. And, unless you can pull your leg out you’re caught. Then along comes the hunter, and—well, the next part isn’t nice to talk about, so we’ll skip that,” said Grandpa

Whackum. "Anyhow, you want to keep away from traps, and today I'll give you a lesson in how to do it."

Well, Toodle and Noodle thought it wouldn't be so bad after all, to have a lesson on Saturday, when there was no school, so they followed after Grandpa Whackum.

The old beaver gentleman led Toodle and Noodle off through the woods, and along the edge of the beaver pond. He walked on ahead in order to be the first one to see the traps.

"For you know," he said to Toodle and Noodle, "you may step into a trap before you see it. They may be hidden under leaves or even under water. You can't be too careful."

So Grandpa Whackum went on with Toodle and Noodle, giving them a lesson on the way. All of a sudden he stopped short.

"There!" he cried, pointing to a pile of leaves. "There's a trap. The hunter thought he hid it, but I saw it."

He led Toodle and Noodle close up, and there they saw the trap. The sharp steel jaws were open, all ready to spring shut in case any one stepped ever so lightly on the part called the trigger. You know how a toy gun shoots. Well, a trap goes off just like that.

So Grandpa Whackum told the boy beavers all about traps, the different kinds, and how they

were baited and set. And he found some more traps, and let the boys look at them—but not too close, you know.

“Oh, I hope I never get caught in a trap,” said Noodle.

“What can we do if we are ever caught in one?” asked Toodle.

“Bang your tail on the ground for help, and, if any of us hear you, we’ll come,” said Grandpa Whackum. “But if you do get caught—well—I don’t like to talk about it. Let’s go get some lollypops.”

So they went, and Toodle and Noodle were more glad than ever that they had had a lesson in traps, even on Saturday.

“Now you may go off and play—lessons are over,” said Grandpa Whackum with a smile, and Toodle and Noodle ran off to meet some of their friends.

“I wonder if I can ever find a trap?” thought Noodle, as he was playing ball with Sammie Littletail, Bully, the frog, and others of his friends. “I guess I’ll go look, when this game is finished,” he said.

So, when the ball game was over, Noodle started off to find a trap. He asked his brother Toodle to come with him, but Toodle said he wanted to play tag with Billie and Johnnie

Bushytail, the squirrel boys. So Noodle went off by himself.

As he was walking through the woods, looking on all sides for a trap, the way Grandpa Whackum had taught him to do, the little beaver boy saw the kind old bear who had helped Toodle pull the log into the water.

“Hello, Toodle,” said the bear.

“If you please,” said Noodle, “I’m not Toodle; I’m his brother.”

“Oh, excuse me,” said the bear, and he was just going back in the forest to sleep some more, when Noodle saw that the kind bear was about to step into a big bear trap that was right behind him. The bear hadn’t seen it.

“Look out!” cried the beaver boy. “A trap! A trap!”

“Mercy me!” exclaimed the bear, and he stepped to one side just in time. “Say, that certainly is a trap,” he went on. “Some hunter is after me. But I’ll fool him.” So the bear sprung the trap shut with a piece of wood, and left it there to show the hunter that some bears were smart. “And I’m glad you told me of the trap,” said the bear to the beaver boy. “Otherwise, I might have been caught.”

Then Noodle went on a little farther, looking for beaver traps, and all of a sudden he heard a snap, and something caught him by the paw, and

there he was, held fast. He had found another trap, but before he had seen it he was caught in it!

“Oh, dear!” he cried, and he pulled and tugged, trying to get loose, but he couldn’t. Oh, how badly he felt. After all his Grandpa’s lessons to be caught this way. Wasn’t it too bad?

“Oh, what shall I do?” he cried. “Soon the hunter may come along and take off my fur. Oh, I know. I’ll whack my tail on the ground the way Grandpa told me to. Maybe some one will come to save me.”

Noodle’s tail wasn’t fast in the trap, so he could bang it on the ground. And he had only hit two or three times before the kind bear came rushing up.

“Hello! What’s this? In trouble, eh?” said the kind bear. “Well, well! I must help you, since you were so kind to me.” So the bear, with his strong paws, easily opened the beaver trap, which was small, and not like a big bear trap. Then Noodle was loose, though his paw hurt him very much.

So he thanked the good bear, and hurried home to tell Grandpa Whackum, and all the other beavers how he had found a trap, and how the bear had helped him out of it.

And now I know you must be tired and sleepy, and want to go to bed. So I’ll say good-

by, and next, if the frying pan doesn't fall on the gas stove and scare the milk bottle, so all the cream turns sour, I'll tell you about Toodle saving Bully, the frog.

STORY XIX

TOODLE SAVES BULLY

Toodle Flat-tail, the little beaver boy, was coming home from school all alone. The reason of this was that his brother, Noodle, and all his other friends had gone on ahead, not waiting for Toodle.

No, Toodle didn't have to stay in—don't think it! He hadn't whispered, or chewed gum in school, or anything like that. Still he didn't get out when the others did because, you see, he happened to lose a penny out of his pocket, and he stayed to find it—find the penny, not the pocket, you understand, for the pocket was still fast in his little spotted trousers.

The penny which Toodle lost was one Grandpa Whackum, the oldest beaver of them all had given him with which to buy a birch bark lolly-pop. Toodle had not had time to buy the candy on a stick before school, and so kept his penny in his pocket all that afternoon, while he said his lessons.

And, every once in a while, he would put his paw in his pocket to see if his money were safe. And it was—all except the last time.

Toodle was just feeling of his penny when Professor Rat, who kept school, called out:

“Toodle Flat-tail, please stand up and spell me the word ‘fox!’ ”

Well, if you will kindly believe me, Toodle was so excited when he heard that word “fox,” thinking, for all I know, that maybe a fox was trying to get in a window, that he jumped up quickly, pulled his paw out of his pocket, and, alas! the penny came with it. Away rolled the money, over the schoolroom floor, rattle-te-bang! and down a crack it went.

“Oh, dear!” cried Toodle, and all the other animal children laughed.

“Never mind,” said Professor Rat, kindly. “You did not mean to do it, Toodle. Now you may recite your lesson, and after school you may stay in and look for your penny.”

So that is why the little beaver boy had to stay in to find his penny. His brother Noodle said he’d stay and help him hunt for it, but Toodle said:

“No, you had better go along home and tell mamma that I will be a little late. Then she won’t worry.”

You see it’s too bad to make mammas worry, and if ever we can do anything to stop that it’s a good thing. Toodle knew that.

So, as I said, he stayed in after school to hunt

for his penny, when all the other pupils went home. And when Professor Rat had finished cleaning off the blackboard, he helped Toodle look for the lost money.

And, all of a sudden, as they were looking for it, and when the kind old rat gentleman teacher was partly under a desk, Toodle cried:

“Oh, I see it!”

“Where?” asked Professor Rat, and he jumped up so quickly that his head bumped on the underside of the desk, and jiggled the ink bottle, and the ink ran all over his collar, and made it all striped black and white like a zebra in the circus.

“Oh, I’m so sorry!” cried Toodle, when he saw what had happened.

“Oh, never mind,” spoke Professor Rat, wiping the ink out of his left ear with the end of his tail. “Where did you see your penny, Toodle?”

“It rolled down a crack,” said the little beaver boy. “I can see it, but I can’t get it.”

“Then we will call Jilly Longtail, the little mouse girl, to get it for you,” said Professor Rat. Jilly Longtail lived near the school, and she was at her house helping her mamma get supper. She soon came over, and, being very small, she could get into little cracks. She quickly slipped into this one and brought up Toodle’s lost penny.

“Oh, thank you, so much!” said the little beaver boy. “I’ll give you some of my lollypop.”

Off Toodle hurried to the candy store that was kept by an old gentleman duck who lived in a molasses barrel, and the little beaver boy bought the nicest birch bark flavored lollypop he could see. Then he went back to Jillie’s house to give her a bite. And by this time it was getting rather late, so Toodle thought he had better hurry home.

As he was walking along he heard a rustling in the bushes and, before he could run away, out jumped a bad old fox, who cried:

“Give me that lollypop!” And he was going to take it away from poor Toodle, when, all of a sudden, a big, deep, bass voice cried:

“Here! You let my fried Toodle alone! Don’t you dare take his candy, or I’ll bite you!”

And that fox was so frightened that he ran away, taking his tail with him, and he never touched Toodle or the lollypop either. The little beaver boy wondered who it was that had saved him, when, out from behind a stump came Bully, the frog boy, laughing as hard as he could.

“Did you hear me?” asked Bully. “Did you hear me scare him?”

“I surely did,” said Toodle. “I’m much obliged to you? How did you do it?”

“Why, I have a bad cold,” said Bully, “and

my voice is very deep and hoarse, just like an automobile horn. I guess when that bad fox heard it he thought maybe I was a giant, and so he ran away.”

“I’m glad he did,” said Toodle, “for he might have bitten me. Here, Bully, have a bit of my lollypop. It will be good for your sore throat.”

So Toodle broke off, with a stone, a bit of his nice lollypop, and gave Bully some. And Bully liked it very much. He said it made him feel better.

Well, the frog boy and the beaver boy walked on through the woods together, talking of many things, such as how to keep out of traps, and how to get away from hunters and dogs, and all like that. Pretty soon, they came to the beaver pond, where Toodle’s house was built.

“Come on,” cried Toodle. “Let’s see who can swim across this pond, Bully.”

Into the water sprang the frog and the beaver boy, and they were swimming away, first one and then the other being ahead, when all of a sudden, Bully saw something red in the water.

“Oh, here is a cinnamon lollypop,” cried Bully. “Wait until I get it.”

“Maybe it’s a trap,” said Toodle, careful like.

“No, I’m sure it’s a lollypop,” spoke Bully, who, like all frogs, liked very much anything that was red. Up Bully swam to it, and as quick as

a wink, he bit it, intending to carry it away with him. But a second later he cried:

“Oh, dear! I’m caught. You’re right, Toodle! It was a trap!”

And, what do you think? That red thing was a piece of red flannel, and it was fast to a hook that a boy had thus baited, and put into the water, hoping to catch a frog. And he had caught Bully. Oh, dear!

Poor Bully squirmed and twisted, and tried to get loose from the hook, but he could not. It had fastened itself in his mouth when he bit on the red flannel that he thought was a cinnamon lollypop.

“Oh, what shall I do?” cried Bully.

“Hold on! I’ll save you!” shouted Toodle, swimming as fast as he could toward Bully. The boy, up on the bank of the pond, where he had his pole and hook and line, was trying to pull Bully out of the water. But Toodle took a tight hold of the frog in his paws and then with his big tail, Toodle splashed a whole lot of water in that boy’s face, as he sat near the edge of the beaver pond.

“Oh, dear!” cried the boy, surprised like. “It’s raining! I guess I’d better go home before I get wet!” You see, he never knew it was Toodle who had splashed him, for he could not see the little beaver chap.

So the boy ran home to his mamma, leaving his pole there. Of course poor Bully was still fast to the hook, but when the boy was gone he and Toodle swam out on the bank, and then Toodle hurried off and got Dr. Possum, who soon took the hook out of Bully's mouth.

Of course it hurt some, just as when you have a tooth pulled, but it's better to have a hook or an aching tooth, out of your mouth than in. And Bully was very much obliged to Toodle for saving him, and he said he'd never bite on anything red again, unless he was sure what it was.

Then Toodle gave Bully some more lollypop, and the two friends got home just in time for their suppers and that's all there is to this story.

But in the next one, if the potato masher doesn't fall on the doll's toes so she can't go roller skating with the sewing machine, I'll tell you about Crackie Flat-tail going to school.

STORY XX

CRACKIE GOES TO SCHOOL

“Come on, boys, wake up!” called Grandpa Whackum, the old beaver gentleman, to Toodle and Noodle, the two beaver boys, at their home in the pond one morning. “Be lively, now! I guess you forget what morning this is.”

“Ha! Is it Christmas?” asked Noodle, as he rubbed his sleepy eyes with his paw.

“Or Fourth of July?” asked Toodle, flopping his big, broad tail up and down to see if any mosquitoes had bitten him in the night. But none had, I’m glad to say.

“No, it isn’t Fourth of July or Christmas,” answered Grandpa Whackum, looking out on the beaver dam that held the waters of the pond from running away. The old gentleman beaver wanted to see if, in the dam, there were any holes that needed mending.

“Today is when your little sister, Crackie, starts for school,” went on Grandpa Whackum. He was called that, you know, because he used to whack his tail on the ground to tell when there was danger coming, so the other beavers could go and hide away.

And the little beaver girl was called Crackie because she was always dropping dishes and things and cracking them. She didn't mean to, of course, and lately she didn't drop nearly so many as she used to at first.

"My goodness!" cried Toodle, hopping out of bed. "And so Crackie is to go to school today?"

"Yes; and you and Noodle are to take her," said Grandpa Whackum. "So hurry down to breakfast. You don't want to be late for school the first day Crackie goes, you know."

"No, indeed," said Noodle. "Come on, Toodle, we'll have a race to see who gets dressed first."

So the beaver boys raced at putting on their rubber clothes, which they could wear in the water without getting wet, for beavers are very fond of swimming, you know, and live in the water half the time.

"May I wear my red dress and brown hair ribbons?" asked Crackie of her mamma at the breakfast table.

"I guess so," said Mrs. Flat-tail, who felt a little sorry because her only daughter was growing up big enough to go to school.

Well, pretty soon, in a little while, not so very long, Toodle and Noodle and Crackie were all ready for school. Off they started, after kissing their mamma and Grandpa Whackum good-by.

Into the water they jumped, and away they swam.

The school was in an old boat, as I have told you, and often this boat would float away, making it so hard for the animal children to find it that they were sometimes late. But this time Professor Rat, the school teacher, had tied the boat fast to an old stump, so it was easily found, and no one was late.

Toodle and Noodle took their little sister inside the school.

“Ah, ha!” said Professor Rat, kindly. “A new little pupil! Well, Crackie, we are glad to see you. We hope you will like it here. I think first I will put you in the kindergarten class. Later on, when you learn more, you may sit with Toodle and Noodle and Sammie and Susie Littletail and the others.”

So Crackie went in the kindergarten class and had a little chair all to herself. Her teacher was a nice lady bug, who could play a tin piano solo so tickily-ickly-like that you would always want to dance. And sometimes she let her pupils march around the room while she played.

Well, after a bit, Crackie looked around, and over on one side of the room she saw her brothers, Toodle and Noodle.

“Say, Toodle!” cried Crackie, right out loud in school, “I’m hungry. Can’t I have some of

that ginger-bread-cake mamma gave you to put in your pocket?"

"Oh, hush, Crackie, dear!" cried Toodle, but all the other animal children laughed to hear Crackie call out loud that way in school.

"But I am hungry!" said Crackie, and tears came into her eyes. You see she had never been to school before, and she did not quite know how to act. "I'm very hungry!" the little beaver girl went on. "Can't you give me something to eat, Noodle, dear?"

Noodle got red behind his ears to think that his sister acted so in school. Professor Rat looked up over his glasses.

"You must not talk in school, Crackie, dear," he said gently. "The others can't study if you talk."

"But I am hungry," went on Crackie. "Maybe if I had something to eat I wouldn't talk. You could try it, Mr. Rat."

Everybody laughed at that—it sounded so funny—and Mr. Rat tried not to smile as he said:

"No, Crackie, we're not allowed to eat in school. You must please be quiet."

"School is a funny place" said Crackie, still speaking out loud. "You can't talk and you can't eat. What can you do?"

"Really, my dear," said Professor Rat, "you

must keep quiet. I'm afraid you're not old enough to come to school."

So Crackie kept quiet for a little while and played with her kindergarten blocks and cut some funny things out of paper. But at last she could not stand it any longer. She cried out:

"Isn't it time to eat yet, Toodle?"

Well, it was so quiet just then, with no one saying anything, or reciting, that Crackie's voice sounded very loudly, and every one laughed.

"Crackie," said Professor Rat, and he had to speak sharply, "you really must keep quiet, or else go home,"

"Then please let me go home," said Crackie. "I don't have to keep so quiet there and I can get something to eat. Toodle, Noodle, please take me home," and she got up out of her seat, and walked over to her brothers.

"Oh, Crackie!" cried the lady bug teacher, sadly like.

"You mustn't do that," said Professor Rat, and really he didn't know what to do himself. He had never had any one like Crackie in school before. And, really, she didn't mean to be bad. She just didn't know any better. It was her first day, you see.

"I want to talk, I'm hungry, I want to go home," said Crackie, as if that was all there was

to it. She didn't see why she couldn't do just as she had been used to doing at home.

"Come on, Toodle and Noodle," she called. "School is no fun. I'm going home!"

Well, of course that upset everything. All the boy and girl animals laughed, and they couldn't study. The lady bug teacher, and Professor Rat himself, did not know what to do with Crackie. Mr. Rat was just thinking that perhaps he had better send one of her brothers home with Crackie when the little beaver girl, who was standing next to the window, cried out:

"Oh, the alligator! The bad, old skillery alligator! He is coming right in at the side door!"

And that was so. Crackie had gotten up just in time to see the alligator, and, only for her, maybe the bad creature would have gotten into the school before any one could stop him.

"Ha!" cried Professor Rat. "The skillery-scalery alligator, eh? I'll fix him! I'm glad you told me, Crackie."

Then the rat gentleman took two blackboard erasers in his paws. He clapped them together—the erasers, I mean—making a noise like a gun, and a lot of chalk dust that was on the erasers flew out, making it look just like smoke from a cannon, and when the 'gator saw this, and when he heard the bang-bang noise, he cried out:

"Wow! I guess I made a mistake. This must

be where hunters or soldiers live. This is no place for me!" And away he went, taking his double-jointed tail with him.

"Crackie," said Professor Rat, "you saved us all from the alligator by seeing him in time for me to scare him away. I guess, after all, it's a good thing you came to school, even if you did talk."

"And may I have something to eat?" asked the little beaver girl. "If I may I don't want to go home."

"Give her some of that ginger-bread cake," said Mr. Rat to Toodle. "I guess it won't hurt to let her eat in school, and she is so little, and she was so brave."

So Crackie ate some cake, and she felt better, and all the other animal children wished they had some. Then they had more lessons, and soon school was out, and, after all, Crackie was glad she came.

So, on the next page, if the peanut man doesn't take away our refrigerator to roast his chestnuts on at the moving picture show, I'll tell you about Toodle's roller skates.

STORY XXI

TOODLE AND HIS ROLLER SKATES

“Mamma,” said Toodle Flat-tail, the little beaver boy one afternoon as he came in from school, and looked around in the ice box to see if there was any cake left over from dinner, “would you do me a favor, mamma?”

“Well, Toodle,” said Mrs. Flat-tail, wiping some flour off the end of her nose with her paw, for she was making a raisin pudding for supper, “well, Toodle, it depends on what the favor is.”

“Oh, ma,” went on Toodle, making his tail go up and down like a palm leaf fan on Christmas eve, “I do want a pair of roller skates awful bad.”

“Roller skates!” cried Mrs. Flat-tail, raising both her paws in the air, she was so surprised like. “Why, you know they cost a lot of money, Toodle, and your father hasn’t any too much. You know winter is coming on, and there will be lots of things to buy. Besides, there will soon be snow and ice all over the ground, and ice skates would be better than rollers, I should think. Grandpa Whackum can show you how to make ice skates out of a flat bone.”

“I’d rather have roller skates, ma,” said Toodle. “It won’t be winter for quite a while yet, and I could have lots of fun. I saw one of the Bushytail squirrel boys with a pair coming from school, and he went along like anything—so fast!

“Say, ma, if I had a pair of roller skates I could go to the store for you twice as quick when you wanted anything. Mayn’t I have a pair—please?”

“Now, Toodle, said Mrs. Flat-tail. Don’t tease, that’s a good boy. You know if you had a pair Noodle would want some also, and so would Crackie. And three pairs of roller skates—my gracious goodness me sakes alive! Why your papa would be the poorest beaver in all this pond if he had to buy three pairs of roller skates with winter coming on. I’m afraid you can’t get them.”

“Oh dear!” said Toodle, with a sigh. “Oh dear!”

He felt so badly that he didn’t want to eat much of the nice green willow bark sandwiches they had for supper, and Grandpa Whackum said:

“What’s the matter with that boy? Is he sick?”

“He wants roller skates,” said Mrs. Flat-tail.

“If he has a pair I want some, too,” said Noodle.

“That’s how I thought it would be,” said Mrs. Flat-tail, with a look at her husband.

“Well, I’m afraid no one can have roller skates this year,” said the beaver gentleman. “This is going to be a hard winter. There aren’t many trees left around here for food any more, and we’ll have to bring them from a long way off. And the pond will soon be frozen over, too. Ice skates would be much better for you, Toodle, and you can make them yourself.”

“I’ll show you how,” spoke Grandpa Whackum.

“I’d—I’d rather have roller skates,” said the little beaver boy.

“Well, you had better study your school home work lesson now,” said his papa, as he sat down to read the evening paper.

But Toodle did not feel much like studying. You know how it is yourself, when you want a rubber doll, or maybe a water pistol, or a bicycle, or something that your papa or mamma can’t let you have, for one reason or another. You keep thinking of that, and nothing else, and it seems as if you really must have it.

That’s the way it was with Toodle. He thought of nothing much but roller skates. The

next day in school when Professor Rat asked him how to spell horse, Toodle said:

“R-o-l-l-e-r — roller, s-k-a-t-e — skate—roller skates,” and all the animal children laughed at him.

“Next,” said the teacher, and poor Toodle had to go down to the foot of the class. Oh, how badly he felt.

But, coming home from school that afternoon, something happened to Toodle and, after that he didn't want roller skates at all any more. I'll tell you about it.

Toodle was walking along by himself. His brother Noodle and the other boys had asked him to come with them to play football, but Toodle was thinking so much about his roller skates that he didn't want to do anything else. So he would not go.

So he was walking along through the woods, feeling rather sad and miserable, and wishing his papa was a rich beaver, when, all of a sudden, Toodle saw a little bear on the path in front of him. The bear was such a small chap, not much bigger than Toodle himself, that the beaver boy wasn't a bit afraid.

Of course he looked around to see if the big papa or mamma bear was in sight, but they were not, and so when the baby bear said “Hello!”

Toodle answered back, "Hello!" as bravely as anything.

"What are you doing out here?" asked Toodle of the baby bear.

"Oh just walking along," said the baby bear. "What are you doing here? You don't look very happy, my little beaver boy. Are you looking for anything?"

"Yes, I'm looking for a pair of roller skates," said Toodle. "Of course, I don't believe I'll find 'em out here, but I'm looking just the same."

Then a sharp, cunning look came over the face of that baby bear, and he said:

"Well, now, if this isn't the best luck! Say, beaver boy, come with me, and maybe my father will give you his roller skates. He's going to take a long winter sleep soon, and he won't need them. I'll ask him to let you take his."

"Will you really?" cried Toodle in delight. "That's fine! I'll come right along with you."

Now Toodle had been told never to believe what a bear—even a baby bear—said, or to go with one of them. But he was thinking so much about roller skates that he couldn't think of anything else. And so he forgot to be careful.

"Just come along to the den where I live,"

said the baby bear, "and maybe I'll get you some roller skates."

Toodle felt very happy to hear this, and walked along through the woods at the side of the brown baby bear. Pretty soon they came to the bear's den. At first Toodle was a little afraid when he saw the papa and mamma bear, but the baby bear waved his paws at them, and cried out:

"I've brought a nice fat beaver boy home with me. He wants some roller skates. I told him maybe he could have your old ones, papa, for you're going to take a long sleep."

"That's right," said Mr. Bear. "That's right."

Toodle thought it was funny for the baby bear to speak about how he had brought a fat beaver boy home.

"I wonder why he said I was fat," thought Toodle. Oh, if he had only known how bears like fat beavers just before they take a long winter sleep! Oh my, but just wait and see what happens.

"I'll go in and get the skates," said Mr. Bear. Then he said to his wife: "You stay out here with this nice fat beaver boy. Oh, isn't he fat!"

"I wonder why they're so glad I'm fat?" thought Toodle.

Well he sat down on his tail outside the bear's

stone cave and waited. Mr. Bear and the little baby bear went inside.

Pretty soon, through an open window in the cave, Toodle heard voices speaking. They were the voices of the papa bear and the baby bear talking together.

“Didn’t I do well to bring home a nice, fat beaver boy for our supper?” asked the baby bear. “I saw him in the woods, and when he said roller skates I could see that he wanted them very much. I knew you had an old pair, so I told him to come along.”

“Yes,” said Mr. Bear. “I’ll make believe to give the skates to him, and then we’ll ask him in the den to try them on, and then we can grab him, and——”

“Yum! Yum!” exclaimed the little bear, smacking his lips, and Toodle knew by that how hungry the little bear was.

“Ah, ha!” exclaimed the beaver boy. “So this is a trick, eh? The roller skates are only to fool me! Those bears want to get me in their den and then they’ll eat me. I’m not going to stay here!” And with that he ran off toward a pond of water, where he knew he would be safe, for a bear can never catch a beaver in water.

“Here! Where are you going?” cried Mrs.

Bear. "Come back for your roller skates, beaver boy!"

"I—I guess I don't want any," said Toodle, slyly-like, and with that he jumped into the water and swam safely home, though the big papa bear tried to catch him. But he didn't, I'm glad to say. So you see it was all a trick about the roller skates, and the baby bear tried to fool Toodle with them.

And when Toodle reached home he was all over the notion of wanting roller skates, which had nearly gotten him into a lot of trouble.

"Never believe what bears say—even a baby bear—unless they are good bears," said Grandpa Whackum when he heard what had happened, and Papa Flat-tail said the same thing. "And soon I'll show you how to make ice skates," said Grandpa Whackum.

So that is the story of Toodle, and how he didn't get his roller skates after all, and it's a good thing he didn't, I guess. And in the next story, if the spelling book doesn't jump over the geography and spill the ink bottle out of the parlor window, I'll tell you about Noodle and the pop corn.

STORY XXII

NOODLE AND THE POPCORN

One day, when Noodle and Toodle and little Crackie Flat-tail, the beaver children were on their way to school, which, as I have told you, was in an old boat, kept by Professor Rat, the three little animal children saw Grandfather Goosey Gander, the old duck gentleman, going along with a bag over his shoulder.

“Ha! Where do you s’pose he’s going with that bag?” asked Toodle of Noodle, as the beaver boys stopped on the path to watch.

“I don’t know,” said Noodle to Toodle. “Maybe he is pretending to be Santa Claus.”

“It is too early—Christmas is too far off—for anyone to be practicing Santa Claus now,” said Toodle. “And anyhow, Grandpa Goosey hasn’t a red coat on, all trimmed with white, and he hasn’t any white whiskers, so he can’t be Santa Claus.”

“That’s so,” said Noodle. “Let’s ask him what he’s got in that bag. He’ll tell us, and if it’s something good to eat maybe he’ll give us some.”

“You boys had better come on to school,”

said Crackie, "or else you may be late."

"Oh, this won't take a minute," said Noodle. "I'll run after Grandpa Goosey and ask him. You and Toodle can go on, Crackie, and tell Professor Rat that I'm coming."

So Toodle and Crackie, the two little beaver children, went on to school, holding their broad, flat tails up out of the mud. Their tails were so large that when they grew tired the beaver children could sit on them, just as you children sit on a stool.

Noodle ran after the old duck gentleman, who had kept wobbling along with the bag over his shoulder, and, when the little beaver boy got near enough, he saw that the bag was very heavy indeed, and that Grandpa Goosey had hard work to carry it.

"Good morning, Grandfather Goosey Gander," said Noodle politely. "Don't you want me to help you carry that bag?" You see, Noodle wanted to know what was in it, but he knew it wasn't just nice to ask at once. So he offered first to help the duck gentleman.

"Ha! Hum!" exclaimed Grandfather Goosey, with a sneeze that made his hat fall off. Noodle kindly picked it up for him.

"Excuse me," went on Grandfather Goosey, speaking through his yellow bill. "You see I have a bad cold in my head. I can't talk very

well, and I can't hear very well. Jimmie Wibblewobble, my little grandson, dropped part of his ice cream cone down my back the other night, at the duck party, and that gave me a cold. Oh dear!" and poor Grandfather Goosey Gander sneezed again. This time his spectacles flew off, and bounced into the pond of water.

But, in a second, Noodle, who could swim better than a fish, jumped in and got them out.

"Thank you very kindly," said Grandfather Goosey Gander, as he put his glasses on his ears—I beg your pardon—I mean his nose.

"What was it you asked me, Noodle?—just before I sneezed—excuse me—here I go again—aker-choo-choo-choo!" and surely enough, the duck gentleman sneezed like a choo-choo engine. This time a penny jumped out of his pocket, he sneezed so hard, and when Noodle picked up the money, Grandfather Goosey said the little beaver boy could keep it for himself.

"I asked if I couldn't help you carry your bag, Grandfather Goosey," said Noodle, when the sneezing had ended. "It seems too heavy for you. Maybe there is gold in it," he added, for, through a hole in the bag, the little beaver boy saw something yellow, just like gold.

"Gold! Ha! ha! No, I wish it were," said Grandfather Goosey Gander. "Then I would

be as rich as Uncle Wiggly Longears, the rabbit gentleman.

“No, Noodle, this isn’t gold. It is yellow corn, that we ducks will eat this winter, just as you beavers will eat the bark of trees.”

“Do you want me to help you carry it?” asked Noodle. Somehow or other he was just a little sorry that the bag didn’t have in it some Santa Claus Christmas presents. But then there was time enough for them later, he thought.

“Oh, bless your tail, no!” said Grandpa Goosey Gander, with a laughing quack. “I shall manage it very well. But, since you were so kind as to offer to help, Noodle, I will give you an ear of corn. It isn’t the yellow kind that we ducks eat, but a white kind.

“And if you shell off the kernels and put them in a popper or a pan over the fire the corn will pop, and you can put butter on it, and salt; or you can put sugar on it, just like down on the board walk at Asbury Grove. Here is your ear of pop corn.”

“Oh, thank you very much,” said the little beaver boy, as Grandpa Goosey gave him the extra white ear of pop corn. “I’ll pop it tonight and give Toodle and Crackie some,” said Noodle.

“Very good,” spoke Grandpa Goosey, and then, slinging his bag over his shoulder he



started for home, while Noodle went on to school. He left the ear of pop corn outside in a hollow stump, where no one could find it, for he did not want to take it in school with him.

“Well, what did Grandpa Goosey have in the bag?” asked Toodle of Noodle at recess that day.

“Corn,” answered Noodle, “and he gave me some of my own to pop. We’ll have a good time home tonight.”

Well, when evening came in the Flat-tail house, and when the lessons were all done, Noodle brought out his ear of corn, and he and Toodle and Crackie shelled off the kernels. There was a fire on the open fire place, and when the logs had burned down to red, glowing coals, Noodle put the popper over them and shook it back and forth, just as Grandpa Goosey had told him to do, so the corn would not burn.

“Now, children,” said Mrs. Flat-tail to them, “your papa and I are going over to call on Uncle Wiggily Longears for a few minutes. Grandpa Whackum is out to a moving picture show, and so you will be all alone. But I know you will be all right.”

“Yes, mamma,” said Toodle and Crackie.

Then Noodle shook the popper some more, while his papa and mamma went out. The corn was rather slow in popping, and the beaver

children were just wondering whether Grandpa Goosey had not made a mistake, and given Noodle the wrong kind, when, all of a sudden, the front door quietly opened, and in came creeping softly—oh! so softly!—a bad old fox!

He wanted to get one of the beaver children, but neither Noodle nor Toodle nor Crackie heard the fox, as they were so busy watching for the corn to pop.

Nearer and nearer crept the fox, and the bad creature suddenly stuck out his paws and grabbed Crackie.

“Now, I have you!” cried the fox, and at that Noodle, who was shaking the popper, turned around to see what had happened. And when he saw that the fox had hold of his sister Crackie, Noodle was so surprised that he forgot to shake the popper. That made the corn get very hot, and it quickly began to pop all at once.

All of a sudden poppity-pop-pop! it went, just like a lot of firecrackers, and the popper was so full that the cover flew off, and the white pop corn was scattered all over the room.

It showered on the fox just like snow, and the bad creature was so frightened at hearing the popping noise, and at seeing the snow white kernels burst out, that he cried:

“Oh, wow! Double wow and some pepper-

hash. Oh, I am shot! I am caught in a snow storm! Excuse me!"

And with that he let go of Crackie, and out of the door he rushed, home to his den where he belonged. And so he didn't get Crackie after all, nor Toodle nor Noodle. And the beaver children weren't frightened any more, and they popped corn, and made some with butter on, and some with sugar, and their papa and mamma and Grandpa Whackum said it was just fine.

So that's the story of Noodle and his popcorn, that Grandpa Goosey Gander gave him, and I hope you liked it. And next, if the puppy dog doesn't pull off the baby's stockings to play tag with in the gold-fish tank, I'll tell you about Toodle and Noodle in trouble.

STORY XXIII

TOODLE AND NOODLE IN TROUBLE

Of course, they didn't mean to do it. Children, whether they are animals, like little beaver boys, or real boys and girls like yourselves, never do mean to get into trouble, I suppose, but, sometimes they do, just the same.

And now, if you'd like to hear it, and won't wiggle too much, I'll tell you how Toodle and Noodle, the two little beaver boys, made a lot of trouble, just because they didn't stop to think.

It was one cool day, when there was no school, because Professor Rat had to go to the dentist's to have his spectacles fixed, that this happened.

Toodle and Noodle, with their sister Crackie, had started for school, and on the way, as they often did, they met Billie and Johnnie Bushy-tail, the squirrels, and Sammie and Susie Little-tail, the rabbit children, and Buddy and Bright-eyes, the guinea pigs, and many more of their friends.

And when they reached the school, which was in an old boat that floated around the pond, there was a sign on the door reading:

“No School Today. Come Tomorrow.”

“Oh, joy!” cried Toodle.

“Oh, happiness!” said Noodle.

“Now we can have some fun,” spoke Bully the frog. “Come on, boys, what shall we do?”

“Come over by our beaver pond and maybe we can have some fun there,” suggested Toodle.

“Yes, you can coast down our mud-slide into the water,” added Noodle.

“Oh, I couldn’t do that—rabbits are not supposed to do that,” said Sammie Littletail.

“Well, come on, anyhow,” urged Noodle. “We’ll find some way to have fun.”

So many of the animal boys went with Toodle and Noodle over to the beaver pond, where there was a dam, or a long, low wall of mud, stones, sticks and grass to keep the water from running away. It was just such a dam as you children build in the gutter on a rainy day, only the beaver dam was larger.

Most of the little girl animals—such as Susie Littletail, Dottie Trot, the pony girl; Kittie Kat, the little pussy girl—and, of course, Lulu and Alice Wibblewobble, the duck girls, went along with Crackie Flat-tail to the woods, to play with their dolls.

When Toodle and Noodle, and their boy friends, came running around the beaver pond—

some of them, like Bully No-tail, the frog, swimming in it—the beaver lady said:

“My goodness, my sakes alive and some cherry potpie! What does this mean, Toodle—Noodle? Why are you home from school at this hour? It isn’t out, is it?”

“There isn’t any school, ma,” said Toodle, putting away his books. “Professor Rat has the toothache in his spectacles. Oh, I’m so glad!”

“What!” cried Mrs. Flat-tail, “glad that any one is in pain?”

“Oh, no, ma,” said Noodle, quickly. “Toodle meant that he was glad there was no school.”

“That’s it,” said Toodle. “Come on, boys, let’s have some fun. We’ll go play around the dam, and I’ll show you how we coast down the mud slide.”

“Be very careful,” said Mrs. Flat-tail. “There is a lot of water in the pond, on account of the big rain and the dam is not very strong. Don’t do anything to break it, for that would make a lot of trouble. All the water would run out.”

“We won’t, ma,” said Noodle, and really he meant it at the time he said it, of course.

Well, the boys who had come home with Toodle and Noodle began playing. They had lots of fun, and when the beaver boys slid down the

slippery mud-slide by sitting on their big tails, why, Sammie Littletail said it was as good as a circus, and wished he had a big tail such as all beavers have.

But of course when Toodle and Noodle slid down the mud-slide that wasn't much fun for any one else, because the slide ran right into the water, into which Toodle and Noodle would go "ker-splash" every time they got to the bottom.

"I'll tell you what we can do," said Noodle, after a bit. "We can all go up to the top of the mud-slide, and roll stones down it. The one who sends his stone the longest distance wins the game."

"That will be fun," cried Toodle. "Let's all get stones and roll them down."

Now this is what Toodle and Noodle should not have done, for the mud-slide was close to the big dam that held in the waters of the beaver pond. And when the stones rolled down the slide they might break a hole in the dam. But Toodle and Noodle didn't think.

Soon all the boys were rolling stones, and many of the rocks hit the dam, bouncing off, turning somersaults over it, and some of them landing on it.

"Now for a big stone," cried Noodle," as he climbed up the slide, with a large rock on his tail, which was like a sled, you see.

“Oh, I have a bigger one!” cried Toodle, and up he came with one, too.

If Grandpa Whackum, the oldest beaver of them all, had been there he never would have let the boys play such a game, and, really, Toodle and Noodle should have known better. But they didn't think.

All of a sudden Toodle and Noodle rolled their big stones down the slide, which was made slippery with water from the pond. Toodle's stone struck the dam near the middle and Noodle's over a little to one side.

And then something happened. The stones broke large holes in the dam, and through these holes the water began rushing out. The beaver pond began to get lower and lower.

“Oh, dear!” cried Noodle. “Look what we did!”

“Yes, I guess we'd better be getting home, boys,” said Samuel Littletail. “The beavers will think we did that, Billie Bushytail.”

“You're right!” cried the squirrel boy. Then he and all the others were going to leave Toodle and Noodle, when Bully, the frog, cried out:

“Oh, say! That isn't fair! When we are playing ball, and we break a window, we all help pay for it. Now that the dam is broken, though

we didn't do it, we must help Toodle and Noodle fix it. Come on, boys."

The little beavers, who had felt sad when they saw all their friends going to leave them, were happy now. By this time the water was fast rushing out of the pond, through the holes the stones had made in the dam. And from their houses came rushing the grown-up beavers, wondering what had happened.

When they saw the trouble Toodle and Noodle had made they cried out:

"Oh, dear!"

For you know if the dam breaks and all the water in the pond runs out the beavers have to make another, or else they could not live in their houses. For their front doors have to be under water, you see, to keep out bad animals.

Just then up came Grandpa Whackum. He saw right away that something must be done.

"Quick, boys," he called to Toodle and Noodle and their boy friends. "Bring me mud and sticks and leaves and grass and stones and pieces of wood. We'll mend the dam!"

Those animal boys who were good swimmers jumped into the pond and brought to Grandpa Whackum the things the other animals gathered from the woods. Soon the old beaver gentleman had many willing helpers, and with his paws,

which were like a monkey's hands, and his big tail he stopped up the holes in the dam. Toodle and Noodle helped also.

But, oh! what a lot of trouble they had made, though they did not mean to. Soon the dam was all fixed and the water was stopped from running out of the pond. Then Grandpa Whackum gave all the animal boys a penny for ice cream sandwiches and everybody was happy. Toodle and Noodle said they would never roll bid stones down the mud slide again.

"Well, I hope there is school tomorrow," said Grandpa Whackum, with a sigh, as he sat down on his tail to rest.

So that's how Toodle and Noodle made trouble, though not meaning to, and on the next page, if the jam doesn't fall on the toy balloon and make it so sticky that it can't go out in the baby carriage with the rubber doll, I'll tell you about Toodle and the chestnuts.

STORY XXIV

TOODLE AND THE CHESTNUTS

“Oh, but I’m glad there’s no school today!” cried Billie Bushytail, the squirrel boy, as he made a noise like a popcorn ball and ran up one side of a tree and down the other.

“So am I!” cried his brother Johnnie, who was trying to see how long he could stand on his head without sneezing.

“Why are you so glad?” asked Toodle Flat-tail, the little beaver boy. “It’s Saturday and you know there’s never any school that day.”

“I know there isn’t,” spoke Johnnie, “but then, you see, on account of there being none yesterday, when Professor Rat had the toothache in his spectacles, I thought maybe he’d make us come this morning.”

“I didn’t hear the bell ring, so I’m sure there’s no school,” said Toodle. “And if it’s just the same to you, Billie and Johnnie, I wish you wouldn’t speak about yesterday. I want to forget all about how Noodle and I rolled the big stones down the mud slide and broke the dam, making a lot of trouble for Grandpa Whackum.”

“All right, we won’t speak any more about

it," said Johnnie, pleasantly. "But I'll tell you why I'm so glad there's no school today. It's because Billie and I are going after chestnuts."

"Chestnuts!" exclaimed Toodle, the beaver boy, looking at his tail to be sure there were no stickery bramble briars on it. "Where are they?"

"Oh, they grow on a tree like hickory nuts," said Johnnie, "only they come all wrapped up in a big burr, with sharp points on, and we have to wait for the frost to open the burr before we can get the nuts out."

"And when we do get them! Oh, yum-yum!" cried Billie. "How good they are—even better than ice cream!"

"Oh, now I know what you mean," said Toodle. "I have seen chestnuts, but I always thought they came roasted, and grew on a wagon that an Italian gentleman pushed around the street, on two wheels. So chestnuts grow on trees, eh?"

"To be sure," said Billie, "and if you like you may come with Johnnie and me when we gather some today."

"I'd just love to!" cried Toodle and he felt so happy that he tried to stand up on the end of his tail. But it was too broad and flat, and, though it was, as are all beavers' tails, good to sit

on, like a stool, Toodle could not stand upon its end.

So, the consequence was, Toodle fell over backward, but his coat of fur (getting ready for winter) was so thick that he never felt his tumble any more than if he had landed in a feather bed, or in a basket of soap bubbles, which are as soft as anything I know of.

“Where’s Noodle?” asked Johnnie, when Toodle had picked himself up and brushed the dirt off his coat by fanning himself with his wide tail. “Where is Noodle, Toodle?”

“Oh, he went to the store for mamma. She wanted some molasses to make a birch bark pudding with. We needn’t wait for Noodle, if you are going after chestnuts. I heard him say he was going to play football with Munchie Trot, the pony boy, when he came back from the store. If we get any chestnuts I’ll save him some, anyhow.”

“Oh, we’re sure to get some,” spoke Billie.

“Yes, for we know where lots of trees grow,” added Johnnie. “Come along now, Toodle.”

So Toodle, the little beaver boy, and Johnnie and Billie Bushytail, the squirrels, started after chestnuts.

On and on they went through the woods and as they went Toodle sang this little song, which

he made up all himself, without anyone helping him:

“Chestnuts grow on big trees,
Almost to the sky.
And if you ever climb one
Don't go up too high.

“If you take a tumble,
Don't fall on your head,
Unless you put under you
Mamma's feather bed.”

“Well, well!” laughed Billie Bushytail.
“That's pretty good!”

“It surely is,” said his brother Johnnie. “But how can you tell when you're going to fall, Toodle, so as to have the feather bed with you?”

“I guess you'd have to take it along each time you went nutting,” said the little beaver boy. “I only put the feather bed in the verse to make it rhyme, anyhow. You don't really need it.”

Then they went on a little farther and soon they had come to the place where the chestnut trees grew.

“Now, Billie and I will climb up,” said Johnnie. “We'll knock the chestnuts down to you, Toodle, and you can gather them into a pile. When we have all we want we'll divide them.”

“Very good,” said the little beaver boy, who knew he could not climb a tree as well as can squirrels. “And if you get up the tree and can’t get down again, I can gnaw it down for you, with my big orange-colored teeth. And I’ll let it fall so gently that you won’t be hurt.”

“Thank you,” said Billie, “but I guess we can get down, Toodle.”

Up the chestnut tree scrambled the squirrel boys and soon they were throwing down lots of chestnuts to Toodle, who gathered them into a pile. Once in a while, a chestnut would hit the little beaver boy on the head, but he did not mind that.

“You want to look out, though, if any of the big, round, stickery chestnut burrs fall on you,” said Billie. “Of course we wouldn’t mean to throw any on you and there are not many left that aren’t opened, but one might accidentally hit you.”

“Oh, I’ll look out,” laughed Toodle.

Well, some of the prickly burrs did come down, but they did not hit Toodle, and he brushed them to one side, in a pile, with his thick, strong tail, which even a chestnut burr could not hurt.

“Well, I guess we have all the nuts off this tree,” said Billie, after a bit. “Come on down, Johnnie, and we’ll go look for another one,” and

down the squirrel boys scrambled, as quickly as a monkey on a stick, or a jumping-jack, if you prefer that. So Toodle didn't have to gnaw the tree down.

"We'll go over there by that old stump," said Billie, pointing to it with his tail.

"Shall I come?" asked Toodle.

"No, you had better stay here and keep guard over the chestnuts on the ground," said Johnnie. "Some one might come and take them while we are gone. We won't be long, and if there are any nuts on the trees over there we'll come back and get you, and these nuts too."

So away went Billie and Johnnie, leaving Toodle on guard by the chestnuts. At first nothing happened, and Toodle was thinking he could even take a little sleep, when, all of a sudden, out from behind a stump came a big, black bear. Oh, but he was a bad one; and he came closer and closer to Toodle, until he stood right in front of the little beaver boy, all ready to grab him.

"Ah, ha!" growled the bear. "Now I have you!"

"Oh, dear!" cried Toodle. "What do you want?"

"I want you and the chestnuts, too," said the bad bear. "Come, get ready! I'm going to carry you off to my den!" and he came nearer to poor Toodle.

The little beaver boy looked to see if he could find anyone to help him. But Billie and Johnnie Bushytail were far off, looking for more chestnut trees, and no one else was near. Even when Toodle whacked with his tail on the ground, the way his papa had taught him to do when there was danger, no one came to help the beaver boy.

“Well, here’s where I grab you!” growled the bear, and he was just going to hug Toodle in his sharp claws and maybe scratch him, for all I can tell, when, all of a sudden, Toodle saw a big pile of the prickly chestnut burrs he had brushed together.

“Ah, ha!” thought Toodle. “These will do for that bear.”

And with one sweep of his tail along the ground, Toodle sent those burrs in a regular shower in the bear’s face. The sharp, prickly stickers stuck in the soft and tender nose of that bear and made him sneeze and cough, and have the toothache and turn a somersault all at once. And then the bear cried:

“Oh, woe is me! I’m all stuck up. I guess I’ll go home!”

And home to his den he went, leaving Toodle and the chestnuts alone, and pretty soon Billie and Johnnie came back, not having found any more nut-trees. So Toodle told them about the bear, and how he had driven him off, and the

squirrels said the beaver boy was very brave. Then they divided the chestnuts, and went home, and now it's time for you to go to bed.

But on the page after this, if the piece of cheese doesn't jump out of the mouse-trap and scare the clothesline into the waste paper basket, I'll tell you about Toodle and Noodle on the ice.

STORY XXV

TOODLE AND NOODLE ON THE ICE

“Come, boys! Get up!” called Mrs. Flat-tail, the beaver lady, who was the mother of the two little beaver boys. “Time to get up or you’ll be late for school!” and she pounded on the ceiling with a nice piece of birch tree stick, from which she gnawed the bark so that from it she could make griddle cakes for breakfast.

Toodle put one paw out of his bed, which had been made in a pile of nice clean shavings.

“Bur-r-r-r-r!” he cried, pulling his paw back quickly again under the warm bed quilt, made of soft brown leaves, sewed together. “Bur-r-r-r-r! It’s awful cold!”

“Is it?” asked Noodle, rubbing his eyes with his paws. “Is it cold, Toodle?”

“Indeed it is,” replied Toodle. “Just put your paw out and see.”

Noodle did so.

“My goodness me, sakes alive, and some icicle soup!” he cried. “I should say it was cold! There’ll be skating this morning, I guess. Is Grandpa Whackum down there?” he called to his mamma, who was already cooking the griddle

cakes, and putting the maple sugar on the back of the stove, where it would keep warm.

“Yes, I’m here,” answered Grandpa Whackum, the oldest beaver of them all. “I’m down here, boys, and if you don’t soon come down here too. I’ll go up there and tickle you so you won’t know whether you’re standing on your head or on your tail. Are you coming?”

“Indeed we are,” answered Noodle, and then, getting brave, he suddenly threw back the leaf-bedquilt and jumped out into the middle of the room that was built upstairs in the beaver house, which stood in the middle of a pond of water.

Beavers, you know, are little animals like muskrats, and they just love the water, as I have already told you. They love it so much that nearly always they build their houses right in a pond, which they make by raising a dam to keep the water from running away, just as you do in the gutter on a rainy day.

“See who’ll be dressed first!” cried Noodle, and then Toodle jumped out on the cold floor. Soon they were both dressed, for beaver boys have so much fur that they do not need to wear many clothes, even in winter.

“I won!” cried Noodle, who finished the last button on his shoes just as his brother Toodle was beginning to fasten his. “I’m dressed first.”

“Oh, well, I don’t mind,” said Toodle. “I’ll

be washed first!" and he was, because there was only one wash basin in the boys' room and only one of them could get his paws in it at a time.

"Come! Come!" cried Mrs. Flat-tail again. "The cakes are getting cold, boys."

"I'll be down stairs first!" cried Noodle, and he ran for the banister, reached it ahead of his brother, and down he slid—"ker-bang!" landing on the kitchen rug. So he was downstairs first. Then both the little beaver boys ate as many birch-bark pancakes as were good for them, and Crackie, their little sister, ate two and part of another one.

"Oh, look at our pond!" cried Toodle, as he gazed out of the window. "It's all frozen over!"

"So it is!" said Noodle. "Oh, it must be very cold!"

"Yes, you had better get out your skates and skate to school," said Grandpa Whackum, who had finished his breakfast.

"But we have no ice skates," said Toodle, "and I don't believe roller skates would be very good."

"Not on ice," answered Grandpa Whackum. "But I'll show you how to make ice skates. If I had some long, clean bones now—"

"I know where there are some!" cried Crackie. "I saw Jackie and Peetie Bow Wow, the puppy

dog boys, dragging some bones over on shore yesterday.”

“The very thing!” cried Grandpa Whackum. “I’ll swim to shore, under the ice, and get them. Then I’ll make skates for you two beaver boys.”

While the children were finishing their nice warm breakfast, Grandpa Whackum dived out through the front door of the beaver house. This door was under water, and the old gentleman beaver soon found himself under the ice that covered the top of the pond. But he was used to that. So he swam to shore until he found a place where the ice was broken through in a round hole.

Then, he popped out and along the frozen bank of the beaver pond he ran until he found the bones the little puppy dog boys had been playing with the day before.

“These bones will make fine skates for the boys,” said Grandpa Whackum. “They are long and straight and smooth.”

Down under the ice he went again, and soon he was once more in the beaver house. Toodle and Noodle were getting their books ready to start for school.

“I think it is too cold for you to go today, Crackie,” said Mrs. Flat-tail.”

“Oh, mamma, I don’t want to stay home! I want to go to school today!” cried the little beaver girl. “I know all my lessons.”

“We could pull her along on our tails for a sled,” said Toodle.

“Especially if we skate,” added his brother.

“Oh, you’ll skate, all right!” said Grandpa Whackum, as he went on making the bone skates. It was quite easy. All he had to do was to fasten some strings to the bones, so Toodle and Noodle could tie them to their hind paws. Then they could glide along on the bones, over the ice, just as you boys and girls use your roller skates.

Toodle and Noodle were delighted with the bone skates their grandpa made for them.

“It won’t take us long to get to school on these,” said Toodle.

“That is, if we don’t fall down much,” agreed Noodle.

“Oh! I’ll show you how to skate so you will not fall down very much,” said Grandpa Whackum.

So they all went out on the ice, the old gentleman beaver himself putting on a pair of bone skates. Then he showed Toodle and Noodle how to strike out, and how to glide, and they were soon able to skate very well.

“Ding-dong!” rang the school bell.

“Come on!” cried Toodle. “We’ll be late!”

“Wait for me! Wait for me!” cried Crackie, as her brothers started off without her.

“Sit on my tail, Crackie,” invited Toodle.

“I’ll give you a ride first, and then Noodle can take a turn. And you can carry our books.”

So little Crackie sat down on the broad flat tail of her brother Toodle, which, as you can see by the picture, was almost as good as a sled. I wish I could show you a picture of Crackie riding to school this way, but I am not allowed, as I don’t know how to draw.

Anyhow, off the two little beaver boys started, over the ice, on their bone skates, that were tied fast to their hind paws. Crackie went with them.

“Ding-dong!” rang the school bell. Faster and faster skated Toodle and Noodle. They felt sure they would not be late this time.

Pretty soon Crackie jumped over on Noodle’s tail, and on they went faster than ever.

But something happened. They were almost at the school, which was in an old boat, that was now frozen fast in the ice, when, all of a sudden, out from behind a stump popped a hungry bear. Oh, he was so hungry! He hadn’t had his breakfast, and when he saw Toodle and Noodle and Crackie, he just smacked his lips, and rolled out his red tongue, nearly biting it with his sharp teeth, and that bear cried:

“Oh, ho! Now I will have something to eat!”

He ran after the beaver children, and Crackie called:

“Oh, Toodle! Oh, Noodle! Skate! Skate as fast as you can away from that bear!”

“That’s what we will!” shouted Toodle. Then the two beaver boys skated faster than they had ever skated before, Noodle pulling Crackie along on his tail. On came the bear. He was getting nearer and nearer, when, all of a sudden, Noodle cried:

“Quick, Toodle, turn to the left. There’s a hole right through the ice!”

Toodle and Noodle both turned aside and skated past the hole, but the bear couldn’t stop himself, nor turn quickly enough, and “plump!” he went into the ice-cold water, making a spray just like a fountain. And he got all wet and frozen, and his feet stuck to the ice when he got out, so he couldn’t chase Toodle and Noodle or Crackie any more, and the beaver children got safely to school, a little out of breath, but otherwise all right. Every one said they were very brave.

So that’s how Toodle and Noodle skated on the ice and saved Crackie from the bear, and next, if the water pitcher doesn’t fall down cellar and put the furnace fire out in the ash can to sleep all night, I’ll tell you about Toodle and Noodle playing football.

STORY XXVI

TOODLE AND NOODLE PLAY FOOTBALL

It was quite cold and shivery one day when Toodle and Noodle Flat-tail, the little beaver boys, started for school. It was not quite as cold as the day they had skated on the ice, riding their sister Crackie on their tails, when they got away from the bear, who fell into the water, as I told you yesterday.

No, it was not quite as cold as that, but still it was very shivery, and as Toodle and Noodle hurried along, with their books tucked under their left forelegs, they put their paws in their pockets.

“There’ll be lots of skating if this keeps on,” said Noodle.

“Indeed there will,” said his brother Toodle.

And the reason there was no skating just then was because there had been a little warm spell, and the ice on the beaver pond had melted, cracking all up, and was floating about in chunks, like little boats. But they were cold little boats, and the beavers did not like to swim among them.

Crackie was not going to school that day, as she had the sniffle-snuffles and her nose was all



red and her eyes ached and filled with water, and she had to have a piece of red flannel around her throat. Oh, well, you know how it is when you have the snuffle-snuffles, don't you? So there's no use in me stopping any longer over that part. I may as well get on with the story.

"I wish it would snow," said Toodle, as he stumbled over a humpy place in the woods through which he and his brother were going just then to get to the school, which had been moved to a hollow stump, instead of being in the boat, as before.

Professor Rat, the principal, said it was getting too cold to have school in the boat any longer so he and the lady bug teacher, and the janitor, and the blackboards and the bell, all moved into the hollow stump—not the one where the bear lived, though. No, indeed! I guess not!

Of course the bell and blackboards didn't move themselves from the boat-school into the school stump. No, the janitor and Professor Rat did that, and the lady bug teacher looked on and said:

"Oh, dear! Isn't it dreadful hard work to move a school?"

"Why do you wish it to snow?" asked Noodle of Toodle, after a while.

"So we could go sleigh riding and build a snow house—"

“Oh, that’s so! I forgot what fun we can have when it snows!” cried Noodle. “I was thinking that it would spoil the skating, but there isn’t any to spoil now. Let’s wish real hard that it would snow.”

So the beaver boys wished as hard as they could, and looked up at the sky, hoping to see some of the white flakes sifting down. But they saw none.

“We’d better hurry,” called Noodle. “There goes the first bell and we’ve got quite a long way to go yet!”

So the two little beaver boys hurried on and, just as they got to the bridge over the tiny little brook that sang a merry song in the summer, but which did not sing so merrily in winter, Toodle and Noodle heard some one saying:

“Oh, who will buy? Oh, who will buy,
My last balloon before I cry?”

“Hark! What’s that?” whispered Noodle.

“I don’t know,” answered Toodle. “It sounded like—like—somebody!”

“Of course it was somebody,” spoke Noodle. “But who? That’s the question.”

They stood on the little bridge over the small brook and once more they heard the voice saying, louder than before, this time:

“Oh, buy it quick! · Oh, buy it quick
My red balloon upon a stick.”

“That’s funny,” said Toodle, looking at his brother, who was sitting down on his tail to rest himself. “Do you s’pose that could be the circus elephant? He used to like balloons.”

“It doesn’t sound like the elephant,” answered Noodle. “Still, you never can tell—”

“Then the voice, that seemed to come from under the bridge, interrupted the little beaver boy by saying:

“Please buy this red balloon of me.
It is my last one; can’t you see?
I’ll make the price—Oh, very low.
For just one cent I’ll let it go.”

“Oh, Toodle!” cried Noodle, “have you a cent? If you have let’s buy this balloon!”

“But how do we know who is selling it, or where he is, or whether it’s really a balloon or not?” asked Toodle, looking in his pocket to see if he still had the penny Grandpa Whackum had given him the night before.

“Well, we can look under the bridge;” said Noodle, “and find out. Any one who sells balloons—especially red ones—is sure to be kind and good. I’m going to take a look through the

crack in the bridge. We have time before the last bell rings.”

So Noodle peeked down through a crack in the bridge floor, and there sitting on a stone near the water was a little monkey-doodle boy, with one red balloon tied to a stick.

“Do you really want to sell that balloon for a penny?” asked Noodle. “We’ll buy it from you if you do.”

The monkey looked up and saw the beaver boys, and in an instant he had scrambled up on the bridge.

“It is my last balloon,” said the monkey-doodle. “I am all sold out except this one, so I am going to let you have it for a penny. Circus time is past, and I want to go and take a long sleep. I don’t need the balloon any more.”

“Well, then, we’ll take it,” said Toodle, lifting the penny out of his pocekt. “We can have fun flying it.”

“Oh, I can tell you how to have more fun with it than that,” said the monkey-doodle, as he got ready to go away down South where it is warm, for monkeys like it warm in the winter. “You can play football with that balloon, and football is a very nice game for cold weather. It warms you. You must get some leather and make a covering for the red balloon. Then, when you

kick it, the balloon won't burst. Make a football of it, I say."

"I guess we will," agreed Toodle.

Well, the beaver boys went on to school, with their red balloon, and, in order that the teacher would not take it away from them in the classroom, they tied it outside in a tree, the way Mary told her lamb to stay outside. But the lamb wouldn't stay outside, and neither would the red balloon football.

A window happened to be open, and all of a sudden the ball blew into the school, though it was still tied to the string on the tree branch. All the animal children in the hollow-stump school laughed and so did the teacher.

"What are you going to do with it?" asked the lady bug of Toodle and Noodle, when they told her about their balloon, and when the window had been shut so it couldn't come in again.

"Make a football of it," answered Toodle.

"Only we have to cover it with leather," said Noodle, "so it won't break."

"Oh, I'll do that for you," said the lady bug teacher, who liked boys. So that night she took the red balloon home with her and she made a leather cover for it, bringing it back next morning. Oh, it was a fine football then!

"Let's have a game!" cried Johnnie Bushy-tail, the squirrel boy, as he gave the new football

a kick that sent it away over the fence. It was so light you see—the football I mean, not the fence—that it flew all over.

“All right, we’ll have some fun!” cried Toodle, and then he and Noodle and Billie Bushy-tail and Sammie Littletail and all the animal boys, including Munchie Trot, the pony, played football in the school yard until it was time to go in.

Now, though the boys didn’t know it, there was hiding behind the fence the same old bear that had chased Toodle and Noodle and Crackie one day on the ice.

“I’ll just wait until one of those animal boys comes near this hole in the fence,” thought the bad bear, “then I’ll grab him and have a nice lunch.”

Well, Toodle was going to kick the football and Noodle got away over by the fence to grab it when it came down.

“Kick away!” called Noodle to Toodle.

“And now is my chance to get him,” thought the bear. Toodle kicked the balloon-football as hard as he could and just as Noodle was going to get it, the bear made a grab for him. But all of a sudden, the wind blew the football off to one side, and instead of Noodle getting it, that football hit the bear on the nose. Smacko! Cracko!

The football was so light and fluffy that it

tickled the bear and made him sneeze, and whenever a bear sneezes he can bite no one except his own tongue. That's what this bear did, and he was so angry that he gave three howls and part of another one, and then he ran home to his den where he belonged.

Then the football game went on until it was time to go into school and all the boy animals said they had had a fine time.

They thanked Toodle and Noodle for buying the balloon-football from the monkey-doodle and many times that winter, when it was not too cold, there were football games.

So no more just now, if you please, but in the next story, if the rocking chair doesn't step on the molasses jug's ear and make the popcorn balls cry to go to the moving pictures, I'll tell you about Crackie Flat-tail and Joie Kat.

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STORY XXVII

CRACKIE AND JOIE KAT

“Mamma, is Crackie going to school today?” asked Toodle Flat-tail, the little beaver boy, one morning, when it was almost time for the first bell to ring.

Mrs. Flat-tail looked out of the window of the beaver house in the pond behind the dam, and said:

“No, I think not. Her snuffle-snuffles are not much better today than they were yesterday. Besides, it is rather warm weather now, the pond is not frozen and it looks like snow. I think I shall keep her home until tomorrow, at least. Now run along, Toodle—you and Noodle. And be good boys.”

“We will,” promised Noodle, as he caught up the red balloon-football, covered with leather. He and his brother and the other animal boys thought they would have a fine game that day.

Crackie, the little beaver girl, felt very lonesome after her brothers had left her. She had not been going to school very long, and she was in the kindergarten, but still she liked her teacher and her schoolmates. However, when a beaver

girl has the snuffle-snuffles she can't very well go to school, for she sneezes all the time; and when the teacher asks how many three and two are she has to say:

"Ak-er-choo," which isn't the right answer at all.

So, as I say, Crackie felt a little lonesome. But her mamma let her help dry the breakfast dishes, and Crackie only dropped a saucer, which didn't break very much, only about half of it falling off.

"You are doing very well, Crackie," said Mrs. Flat-tail with a smile at the little beaver girl. "Soon we won't have to call you Crackie at all." You see Crackie had such an odd name because she used to be always dropping and cracking such things as dishes, and ice cream cones, and lollypops and all like that.

Well, after the dishes were dried Grandpa Whackum, the old beaver gentleman, said:

"I think I will go out and take a look at the dam. It may have some holes in it, where a bear or wolf tried to tear it down last night, and if the dam breaks, and all the water runs out of our pond, we will have a hard time, for it will not rain much more this year."

So Grandpa Whackum started out, but just as he was going to dive down through the front

door, which was under water so no bad animals could get in, the old beaver gentleman cried:

“Oh, dear me, suz dud! There’s a button off my overcoat right where it goes around my neck. I must have it sewed on, or the cold wind will come in, and I’ll have the epizootic, and the sniffle-snuffles, too.”

“I’ll sew it on for you, Grandpa Whackum,” said Crackie, kindly.

So sitting down on her tail, which was like a stool, you know, the little beaver girl used a thorn from the bramble briar bush for a needle, and some strong strings of dried grass for thread, and so she sewed the button on her grandpa’s coat.

Then he went out to look at the dam, that kept the water in the pond from running off—maybe to a moving picture show—and Mrs. Flat-tail said:

“Well, I do declare! It’s almost ten o’clock, and I promised I’d go over to Mrs. Wibble-wobble’s house, and show her how to make corn-meal fritters. Would you mind staying alone a little while, Crackie?”

“Oh, no, mamma, of course not,” answered the little beaver girl. “I’ll just make a new dress for my doll Anna Jane Huckelberry Puddingstick. She needs a new dress very badly.”

Mrs. Flat-tail went out and that left Crackie

all alone in the beaver house. But still she did not mind. She was sewing away, and wondering whether she should put a thing-a-ma-bob on the skirt, with three rows of lace inserted on the bias, or whether the dress would look nicer with some apple pie frosting, trimmed with cocoanut macaroons, on the what-you-may-call-it. She had just about decided to use the ice cream puffs on the sleeves, when, all of a sudden, Crackie heard a terrible noise outside.

Some one cried.

“Ha! Now I’ll get you! Now I have you! Oh, you can’t get away from me now.”

And then another voice said:

“Meaouw! Meaouw! Meaouw!”

Next there came a big thump on top of the beaver house that was built in the middle of the pond, and a voice cried out:

“Oh! whoever is in there please let me in! Toodle! Noodle! Please let me in!”

“My goodness!” cried Crackie, and she jumped up so suddenly that her rubber doll, who was asleep in her lap, fell to the floor. But it doesn’t hurt rubber dolls to fall, and this one went right on sleeping just as if nothing had happened. “What can that be?” thought Crackie, wishing her mamma would come back.

“Oh, please let me in!” cried the voice again, and there was a pounding on the roof of the

house. Outside, as though it came from the opposite bank of the beaver pond, another voice said:

“Oh, ho! You can’t get away from me that way. I’ll be there in a minute!”

There was a splashing in the water, and the voice on the beaver house roof begged once more:

“Oh, will no one let me in? Toodle! Noodle!”

“Who—who are you?” asked Crackie, thinking maybe it was a bad fox, trying to play a trick on her, and pretending to be some one in trouble. “Who are you, and what is the matter?” went on Crackie.

“Oh, I am Joie Kat, the brother of Tommie and Kittie Kat,” was the answer. “I was out walking in the woods, and a bad dog chased me. I ran up a tree and out on a limb that was high up in the air, right over your house. Then I slipped and fell, but the dog still kept after me. I fell on the roof of your house, where I am now, and if you don’t let me in that dog will soon swim over here from shore and grab me. Oh, please, let me in, whoever you are!”

“I’m Crackie Flat-tail,” said the little beaver girl. “I couldn’t go to school today because I have the snuffle-snuffles, but my brothers went, and I’m home all alone, and—”

“Oh, if you please,” meauowed Joie, “you can

tell me all that when I get in. The dog is coming—the dog is swimming to get me!”

And Crackie could hear the dog going: “Bow—wow—wow,” like anything; really she could.

“Of course, I’ll let you in,” said the little beaver girl, so she opened a window near the roof, and Joie Kat, being a very good climbing kitten boy, easily got in it, and so he was safe from the dog for a while, anyhow.

“Oh, ho!” growled the dog, when he saw what Joie had done. “You needn’t think you can get away from me. I’m going to stay here until you come out; that’s what I’ll do!”

“Will he?” asked Crackie.

“I—I’m afraid he will,” said Joie, sadly like.

“Just wait until my Grandpa Whackum comes back,” said Cracie. “He’ll attend to your case; you bad old dog!” and, leaning out of the window, Crackie threw the potato-masher at the growling—barking creature. But girls—even beaver girls—can’t throw very straight, so Crackie did not hit the dog.

“Ha! Ha! Ho! Ho!” laughed the dog. “You can’t scare me! I’m not afraid of you.”

“Oh, what shall I do?” asked Joie Kat, who was all in a tremble. “I wish I’d never climbed the big tree!”

“Oh, I’ll think of a way to save you,” said Crackie.

Just then along came Grandpa Whackum, the oldest beaver of them all. He saw the dog on shore, but, very wisely, Grandpa Whackum dived down under water and swam into the house without the dog seeing him. Then Crackie and Joie told the old beaver gentleman what had happened.

“Ha! I’ll fix that dog!” cried Grandpa Whackum. So he called all the other big beavers together under water and they slipped up on shore behind that dog, when he wasn’t looking, and when he was just thinking and wondering how he could get Joie, all the beavers threw mud with their tails all over that dog until he looked like a mud pie, or maybe a mud puddle.

“Oh, wow!” cried the dog, and then he had to run home and jump in the bath tub to get clean.

“Now he’s gone and you can safely go home, Joie,” said Crackie.

“Oh, but your house is in the middle of water and I can’t swim,” said the little kitten boy. “How can I get home?”

“I’ll tell you,” spoke Crackie. “We’ll get a wooden box and make a little boat of it and in that you can sail to shore, and go home without even getting your tail wet.”

And that’s what they did. Grandpa Whackum made the box boat and Crackie

helped Joie get into it through the outside upper window, for the front door of the beaver house was under water. Then Joie sailed safely home, and he never climbed tall trees again.

So no more now, but in the next story, if the clothes basket doesn't go to sleep out in the hammock and catch cold in its handles, I'll tell you about Toodle and Jimmie Wibblewobble.

STORY XXVIII

TOODLE AND JIMMIE

Toodle and Noodle Flat-tail, the little beaver boys, were playing on the bank of the pond in which their house was built. They had made a mud-slide, which was slippery with water, and down that they were coasting, having almost as much fun as if there was snow and ice on the ground and they had red sleds, with blue tops, to ride on down the long hill.

“Come on!” called Toodle, when he had slid down backward, just to see how it would feel, “let’s go down backward again, Noodle, and see who will slide the farthest.”

“All right,” agreed Noodle. “Wait until I get to the top, so we can both start even and at the same time.”

Up the mud slide, which was just a bank of dirt near an old stump, scrambled Toodle and Noodle and then they got ready to go down backward.

“Are you all ready?” asked Noodle.

“All ready!” cried Toodle.

“Then here we go!” shouted Noodle, and down the mud slide they went backward.

But, oh, dear me! something happened. Just as they got to the bottom of the little slippery hill, old Mr. Chunky-lunky, the biggest, fattest beaver gentleman in the pond, came walking along. He was so fat that he couldn't see his shoes when he stood up straight and his neck was so thick he couldn't bend it, so of course he did not see Toodle and Noodle sliding right toward him.

The first thing he knew his hind paws were knocked out from under him, and down he came — “ker-flummux!”

“Ugh!” grunted old Mr. Chunky-lunky, and that was all he could say just then, for the breath was knocked out of him. He nearly sat down on Toodle and Noodle, who had bumped into him without in the least meaning to, and, if old Mr. Chunky-lunky had sat down on either of the beaver boys he would have squashed him flatter than a pancake. But this did not happen, I'm glad to say.

“Why — er — what — er—what happened?” panted old Mr. Chunky-lunky as he got up and brushed the dirt out of his ears.

“I—I guess we happened,” said Toodle.

“You see, we were sliding down the mud-hill backward,” explained Noodle.

“No,” spoke Mr. Chunky-lunky, “I didn't

see—that was the trouble. But, never mind, boys, you didn't mean to do it, I'm sure."

"Oh, no, we wouldn't think of doing such a thing!" cried Noodle. "Would we, Toodle?"

"No, indeed!" answered Toodle, and then he picked up old Mr. Chunky-lunky's hat to hand to him. The hat was a little muddy, but just then along came Jimmie Wibblewobble, the boy duck, and with his wing feathers he dusted the dirt off the beaver gentleman's hat until it was as good as new.

"Now, boys, don't slide down any more hills backward," said old Mr. Chunky-lunky as he waddled away, with his head high in the air, because he was too fat to look down.

Well, Toodle and Noodle played on the mud-slide for some time longer, and then, all of a sudden—no, a big black bear did not jump out from behind a lolly-pop ice cream cone. I was going to put a bear in this story, but I've changed my mind about it.

So, all of a sudden, Mrs. Flat-tail called out from the front stoop:

"Hi, Noodle, Toodle! I want one of you to go to the store for me."

"Let Toodle go, ma!" cried Noodle.

"Oh, no, let Noodle go, ma!" cried Toodle.

"I went last time," said Noodle, sort of quick like.

“Well, I went with you, so it’s your turn to go now all alone,” spoke Toodle.

“Come, boys,” cried Mrs. Flat-tail. “I’m in a hurry. I want a cocoanut to make a cake.”

“Oh, I’ll go!” cried Toodle, before his brother could say anything. “I’ll go, mamma!”

“Ha!” laughed Jimmie Wibblewobble. “I guess I’ll go too, Toodle. I could help you carry the cocoanut if you happened to drop it.”

“Let’s all go!” suggested Noodle. “Because if the cocoanut does fall and break, some one would have to pick up the pieces, and if there were any very little ones it might be better to eat them instead of letting them go to waste. We’ll all go!”

So it was decided and the two beaver boys and Jimmie Wibblewobble, the duck, started out, Mrs. Flat-tail giving them the money for the cocoanut and also some for a cake of soap. But, of course, a cake of soap is not good to eat.

On and on the boy beavers and the duck went to the store, and soon they reached it. The store was kept by an old beaver gentleman named Skilly-scaly, because he was always weighing things on his scales. But he was no relation to the skillery-scalery alligator, with the humps on his tail.

Toodle and Noodle got what their mamma had sent them for and Toodle said:

“I’ll carry the cocoanut; you might drop it, Noodle.”

“So might you,” said his brother. “We can carry it between us and Jimmie will take the cake of soap. See, we will tie the cocoanut to a long pole and carry it between us.”

“That’s a good plan,” said the little duck boy.

So the round, brown, shaggy cocoanut was fixed up that way and slung on a pole between Toodle and Noodle, who carried it on their shoulders. Jimmie carried the soap on his back, where it would not get wet.

On the way home the beaver boys and the little duck chap came to a new pond of water. It had been built by some new beavers, who raised up a dam at one end, so the water could not run away, for they wanted to have their houses in the water, you see.

“Oh, let’s swim across this pond!” cried Noodle.

“I’m with you,” said Jimmie, who, being a duck, could swim very well, you know.

Of course, being a duck, Jimmie Wobblewobble could not swim under water as can beaver boys. But for all that Jimmie did very well.

“It won’t hurt the cocoanut to get wet,” said Toodle. “We can jump in the water and pull it after us like a boat.”

“To be sure,” said Noodle.

“And I can swim with the soap on my back, so that will not get wet and melt,” said Jimmie.

Into the water plunged the three friends, and Toodle and Noodle, pulling the cocoanut between them, watched the big beavers at work, and made up their minds that they would tell their papa and mamma about the new neighbors, so they could pay them a visit.

Well, everything was going along nicely, when, all of a sudden, as Jimmie was swimming close by an old log, he gave a sudden cry.

“Quack! Quack! Quackity-quack!” he yelled. “Oh, dear!”

“Why, what is the matter?” asked Toodle, quickly swimming up close to his friend.

“Oh, something has hold of my leg, down under water,” said the duck boy. “I think it is a bad water rat. Oh, dear!”

Jimmie pulled and tugged, trying to get loose, but he could not. He was held fast.

“Quick!” cried Toodle to his brother Noodle. “You swim home and get Grandpa Whackum. He’ll know what to do. I’ll stay by Jimmie!”

Off swam Noodle for help and Toodle stayed with the duck boy. And then the bad water rat, who had hold of Jimmie’s leg under water, began pulling him along to his den beneath the rushes.

“Oh, save me! Save me!” cried poor Jimmie.
“The rat is taking me away.”

“I’ll see if I can save you!” cried Toodle, and down under the water he dived. Surely enough, he saw the bad rat who had hold of Jimmie’s leg.

“Let go my friend!” cried Toodle, bravely.

“No, no!” snapped the rat. “I’m going to eat him!” and that rat showed his teeth under water, which made them look very big, and he growled at Toodle so that the little beaver boy was frightened.

Up he came out of the water. He did not know how to save Jimmie, until, all of a sudden, he saw the cake of soap on the duck’s back. It had not fallen off, very luckily.

“Ha!” cried Toodle. “I have it. I’ll make a lot of soapsuds in the water; it will get in the rat’s eyes, and he’ll have to let Jimmie go.

No sooner said than done. Holding the cake of soap in his paws, Toodle sozzled it around in the water until he had made a thick lather. Of course, none got in his eyes, or in Jimmie’s. But the bad rat’s eyes got full of soapsuds, and so did his mouth, and you know how badly soap tastes. So the rat let go of Jimmie’s leg and swam off to wash in some clean water, crying:

“Oh, dear! How my eyes hurt! Oh, that Toodle Flat-tail is too smart for me.”

And so Toodle saved Jimmie, and when Grandpa Whackum came swimming back with Noodle there was nothing for him to do. So the duck and the beavers swam home together, and Mrs. Flat-tail made a lovely cocoanut cake, without any soap in it, and gave them all some.

And next, if the cork doesn't pop out of the ink bottle and blacken the eye of the needle, when it tries to sew a button on the bean bag, I'll tell you about Noodle helping Uncle Wig-gily.

STORY XXIX

NOODLE HELPS UNCLE WIGGILY

Noodle and Toodle Flat-tail, the two little beaver boys, were in the hollow stump school, where Professor Rat and Miss Lady Bug taught and heard the lessons of the animal children. School had just begun, and the pupils were singing a little song that went something like this:

“We dearly love our teacher,
We love our nice school, too.
We love to sing about our flag,
The red, the white, the blue!

“We love to know our lessons,
And then, when school is out,
We laugh and sing like anything,
And skip and jump about.”

“Very good!” said Professor Rat, combing some cobwebs out of his whiskers with a piece of chalk. “Now, Miss Lady Bug and I will sing a song.”

So first Professor Rat sang this:



“It’s nice to be a pupil
In a hollow tree-stump school.
It’s nice to come in early,
And never break a rule.”

Then it was Miss Lady Bug’s turn, and, fluttering her wings, she sang:

“The school bell goes ‘ding-dong, ding-dong!’
That’s really half of this—my song.
The other half I now will sing:
The school bell goes ‘dong-ding, dong-ding!’ ”

Well, I wish you could have heard the animal boys and girls laugh at that. They laughed so much they could not study. Really, I wish you could have heard them. Oh, no, on second thought perhaps I don’t wish that.

No; if you had heard them you wouldn’t want to study your lessons, and then you might be kept in, and you’d blame me for telling you about it. I guess it’s better, after all, that you didn’t hear them.

Well, to go on with the story. I just wrote that first part while I was thinking up something else, just as the man in the circus goes hopping around on one leg, while he’s waiting for the elephant to get through eating peanuts so he can jump over his back.

I mean the man can jump over the elephant's back. Gracious! I hope you didn't think I meant that the elephant would leap over the man's back. No, indeed! Just supposing he should fall—I mean the elephant fall on the man. There wouldn't be anything left of him; would there? I mean anything left of the man.

Well, anyhow, now to go on with the story.

After the animal children got through laughing at Miss Lady Bug's funny little song, Professor Rat said:

“Noodle Flat-tail, you may stand up and read me the lesson in the book about the old lady hen finding a grain of corn, and planting it so that it grew up to be an orange tree with lemonade lollypops on it.”

Now all the children liked that story better than any other in the book, so Noodle, the little beaver boy, was very glad indeed to stand up before all the class and read it.

But when he looked among his books for his reader he could not find it. A queer look came over his funny face, and he said:

“Oh, teacher, I guess I forgot, and left my book at home.”

“You did?” cried Professor Rat, combing some more shavings out of his whiskers with one of the blackboard erasers.

“Left your book home?”

"I think I must have—my reading book isn't here," went on Noodle, sort of flustered like.

"Teacher! Teacher!" cried Joie Kat, snapping his paws like anything. "Teacher! Teacher!"

"Well, what is it?" asked Professor Rat.

"Maybe Noodle's book is under his tail—he may be sitting on it," said Joie, all excited like.

And this may have been so, for beavers have very broad, flat tails, you know, and something might easily have been hidden under Noodle's.

Noodle lifted his tail up, when Joie Kat said that, but no reader book was there.

"No, I must have left it home," said Noodle.

"Well, then you had better go home after it," said Professor Rat, though not at all crossly.

"Hurry along, Noodle, and you may read the lesson when you get back."

"Oh-o-o-o-o!" cried all the other animal girls and boys. And Billie Bushytail, the squirrel boy, said to his brother Johnnie, in a whisper, of course:

"Say, I'm going to leave all my books home tomorrow."

"So am I," spoke Johnnie, and Toodle Flat-tail said the same thing.

Noodle tried to look as if he didn't care when he left the school to go home after his reader book. But he was very glad to get out in the

fresh air and sunshine, for it was a nice, fall day, although it did look as if it might snow soon.

Well, Noodle reached his house all right, and got his book. His mamma was quite surprised to see him, and said he must not be so careless next time. Noodle said he would not.

The little beaver boy was going along through the woods on his way back to school, when all of a sudden, just ahead of him, he saw a fox sneaking along.

“Ah, ha!” thought Noodle. “I had better be careful. I will go around another way, I guess.”

Well, just as he was going to do this, and maybe find a canal of water, so he could swim in that to school (knowing quite well that the fox would not go in water), just as Noodle was going to do this, he saw Uncle Wiggily, the old rabbit gentleman, hopping along. And Uncle Wiggily hadn't noticed the bad old fox.

But the bad old fox saw Uncle Wiggily Long-ears, and before Noodle could call out, to warn the rabbit gentleman, the fox sprang out, and grabbed him. Yes, sir; that fox grabbed Uncle Wiggily by the ears, and started to take him off to his den.

“Oh, this must never be!” cried Noodle. “That fox must not eat Uncle Wiggily! How

can I stop him? In know. I'll run on ahead and hide behind a stump. Then, when the fox gets there, I'll jump out suddenly, and bark like old dog Percival. That will scare the fox so I hope he'll run away."

So brave Noodle Flat-tail hurried on ahead, and hid behind the stump. And when the fox came up, dragging poor Uncle Wiggily by the ears, the beaver boy cried:

"Boo! Bow-wow! Bur-r-r-r-r! Wuff! Skip out of here!"

And that fox was so frightened, thinking maybe a hunter and his dog were after him, that he dropped the rabbit gentleman and away he ran, without once looking back. If he had done so he'd have seen that it was only little Noodle. But he didn't.

"Oh, Noodle!" cried Uncle Wiggily. "You saved my life! But, oh dear! That fox broke my crutch when he jumped on me, and he scared me so that my rheumatism is worse than ever. I can't walk, and, if I stay here in the woods alone, the bad fox may come back and get me."

"Have no fears," said Noodle bravely, just as the boy always spoke in the reader book. "Have no fears, Uncle Wiggily, I will gnaw you out another crutch."

So Noodle did this, with his strong orange-colored teeth. But, even with the new crutch,

Uncle Wiggily Longears could not walk, and he said:

“Oh, Noodle, I don’t know what to do! I think perhaps you had better go get Nurse Jane Fuzzy-Wuzzy to come for me in a wheelbarrow, or my automobile, if she can run it.”

“But,” said Noodle, “if I go for Nurse Jane I shall have to leave you here alone, and the fox may come back.”

“That is so,” said Uncle Wiggily sadly.

“Ha! I know what I’ll do!” cried Noodle. “You shall sit on my broad, flat tail, and I can drag it along the ground with you on it, and that will give you as good a ride as in a wheelbarrow. Then the fox can’t get you.”

“Fine and dandy!” exclaimed the old gentleman rabbit.

So he managed to hop over on Noodle’s tail, where he sat down, and off the little beaver schoolboy started, drawing the old rabbit gentleman. And, though it was hard work, Noodle did very well. He took Uncle Wiggily to school, because he thought that was the best and safest place, and Nurse Jane Fuzzy-Wuzzy, the kind muskrat, could come there and get him.

“Ah, so that is what made you so long getting back, is it, Noodle?” asked Professor Rat. “You had to save Uncle Wiggily, while going home after your books.”

“Yes,” said Noodle, “I did.”

“And I am glad you did,” went on the rat gentleman. All the animal children were very glad to see Uncle Wiggily, whom they all loved, and Mr. Rat said the rabbit gentleman could tell a fairy story to the pupils while he was waiting for Nurse Jane. So Uncle Wiggily did, and everybody liked it.

Then, after Uncle Wiggily went away in his automobile with Nurse Jane, Noodle read his reading lesson, and soon it was recess time.

So that’s all to this story, which I hope you liked, and next, if the telephone doesn’t talk in its sleep, and wake up the player piano down in the coal bin, I’ll tell you about the beaver boys helping Mrs. Bushytail.

STORY XXX

TOODLE, NOODLE AND MRS. BUSHYTAIL

The next day after Noodle Flat-tail, the little beaver boy, forgot his reader book, and had to go home after it (when he saved Uncle Wiggily from the fox, you know) there were so many of the animal boys and girls who forgot their books, or their pencils, or something or other that Professor Rat, in the hollow stump school, said with a laugh:

“Oh, ho! I see how it is! You all think I will send you home, as I did Noodle, so you may have adventures. Not so! I will go get your books and things myself. Miss Lady Bug, the teacher, will go with me. You can't fool the old professor that way. Oh, no, indeed!”

So what did Mr. Rat do, but put on his tall hat, and take his silver-headed cane, and call to Miss Lady Bug, the teacher:

“Come! you and I will go around to the different houses of these forgetful animal children, and get their books for them. As for them, they may stay in school and try to study so they will remember better next time.”

Then combing some cracker dust out of his

whiskers with a bathroom sponge, Professor Rat started off, and the lady bug teacher went with him.

He had to go to the homes of Billie and Johnnie Bushytail, the squirrels, who had forgotten their arithmetics, and to the burrow where Sammie Littletail, the rabbit, lived; for Sammie, hoping he would himself be sent back for them, had left his pencils home. And Joie and Tommie Kat had forgotten their multiplication tables, thinking they would be sent home after them, as Noodle Flat-tail was sent to get his reading book.

“I’ll teach those forgetful boys and girls a lesson,” said Professor Rat to Miss Lady Bug as he walked along combing the ice cream cones out of his whiskers with the lawn mower.

“But, Professor Rat,” said Miss Lady Bug, politely fluttering her wings, “while you and I are out of school there can be no lessons. It is almost the same as if you let the children go home for their things themselves.”

“Dear me! Dear me!” exclaimed Professor Rat, snapping his paws. “I never thought of that. So it is, isn’t it? They won’t study while we’re away, and they can’t recite. Dear, dear me! How careless,” and he was so excited that he combed his whiskers out of the strawberry shortcake with the looking-glass.

“Oh, well. However, be that as it may,” went on Professor Rat, hunching up his shoulders like an old clothes man when he wants to buy a pair of rubber boots, “no matter! Since we have started, Miss Lady Bug, we will keep on, and go to the homes of the different animal children.

“It will be a little holiday for us, and, really, I am almost as tired of school as the children can possibly be. Come along. It is a beautiful day, the sun is shining, though winter will soon be here again. The leaves are very prettily colored, and everything is lovely. Come along and let us be happy.”

So he took Miss Lady Bug’s wing, and away they went, side by side, through the woods after the things the animal children had purposely forgotten and left at home.

And what was happening back there at the hollow stump school? Let us go and see, as they say in story books.

When Professor Rat and Miss Lady Bug started off, Toodle Flat-tail, who had forgotten to bring his geography book, sort of looked at his brother and said:

“Well, it seems to me that this is just as good as if we went home ourselves. We have no one to teach us—no lessons to say—come, let us be jolly! No one will mind!”

“That’s what I say!” cried Susie Littletail,

and then such fun as there was in the hollow stump school. And, really, have you the heart to blame those little animal children? I have not, at least.

Well, they were playing stump tag, and hide the hickory nut, and all games like that, including a new one called "Never put a Snowball on a Red Hot Stove," only, of course there was only a make believe stove and a make believe snowball, too. They were playing these games, when some one knocked on the school door.

All at once the animal children were as quiet as mice. They crept to their seats on tiptoes, and no one said anything. The knock came again.

"That can't be Professor Rat," whispered Toodle Flat-tail. "He would come right in."

Once more the knock.

"Come—come in," invited Noodle in a weak little voice, not at all like the one with which he shouted when he was playing ball.

The door opened and in came Mrs. Bushytail, the mother of Johnnie and Billie, the squirrels.

"Oh!" exclaimed Mrs. Bushytail, surprised-like. "Where is the teacher?"

"He's gone, ma," said Billie, "after our books and things. We forgot and he went to get them for us."

"Is anything the matter, ma?" asked Johnnie, anxiously.

“Oh, nothing much,” said Mrs. Bushytail. “I am cleaning house, that is all, and there is so much to do that I thought I would come and ask Profesor Rat to let you and Billie come home to help me. I want you to dust things with your fluffy tails, and I need some one to beat the rugs and carpets.”

“Were—were your rugs and carpets bad—that you want them beaten?” asked Crackie Flat-tail, sister of Toodle and Noodle, in a squeaky little voice that made all the others laugh.

“Oh, no, they were not bad,” said Mrs. Bushytail, “only we have to beat them to get the dust out. But as long as Profesor Rat is not here, there is no school, so you may come home with me, Billie and Johnnie, I will explain to the teacher when I see him.”

So Billie and Johnnie went home with their mamma to help her clean house. Then, as long as there was no one to hear their lessons, the other animal pupils thought they might as well go home also. So they went, and Toodle wrote all about it on the blackboard, so Profesor Rat could read about it when he and Miss Lady Bug came back to the hollow stump.

“Well, there’s no school; what shall we do?” asked Toodle of Noodle.

“Let’s go around and watch Billie and Johnnie help their mamma clean house,” said Noodle

to Toodle. So they went, taking Crackie with them.

Wasn't it odd to have the teacher go away from the school so the children had to go home? Do you wish that would happen?

Of course, you do not.

Well, Noodle and Toodle, with their sister Crackie, soon came to where the squirrel family lived. And, oh! how busy Mrs. Bushytail and her two boys were; to say nothing of little Jennie Chipmunk, who lived with them. They simply made the dust fly.

"Now," said Mrs. Bushytail, coming out with a big grass rug, "this is very dusty. Beat it well, boys. Get all the dirt out of it."

Johnnie and Billie tried, but they were not very strong, and the sticks they used were not very heavy, so they did not get much dust out of the rug.

"I'll tell you what it is," said Toodle, "you had better let Noodle and me beat that rug, with our big, broad, flat tails, Mrs. Bushytail."

"Oh, if you would be so kind!" exclaimed the squirrel lady. "You could do it quite nicely, I believe. There, Billie and Johnnie, put the rug on the grass. Toodle and Noodle will beat it for us."

And I wish you could have seen those beaver boys beat that rug! No, on second thought, I

am glad you were not there, for the dust was very thick. It made everybody sneeze, and if you have the epizootic, as a little girl I know up in Montclair has, the dust would set you to coughing like anything. Every once in a while Toodle and Noodle had to stop and go:

“Aker-choo! Aker-choo! A-ker-choo-o-o-o!”

Well, everything was going along nicely, and the housecleaning was almost over, when, all of a sudden, along came a hungry bear. He wanted something to eat—a beaver or a squirrel—he didn't much care which. And he was just going to grab up little Crackie Flat-tail, when, all at once, Toodle and Noodle saw him.

“Quick!” cried Noodle. “Beat the rug with all your might, Toodle!” And they did, and their tails made such a loud noise the bear thought it was a gun being fired at him, and he thought the dust was powder smoke, and away he ran as fast as his legs would carry him. So that's how Toodle and Noodle helped Mrs. Bushytail, and also saved their sister Crackie.

And then along came Professor Rat and Miss Lady Bug, to get Billie Bushytail's forgotten books and when the school teacher heard how all the children had left the school he laughed like anything, and said they did just right.

“But it must not happen again,” he said, and it did not.

So now I've got to stop, but next, in case the teakettle doesn't bite the nutmeg grater and stick the rolling pin in the pie, while they try to tag the sugar bowl, I'll tell you about Toodle and the singing bird.

STORY XXXI

TOODLE AND THE SINGING BIRD

“Children,” said Mrs. Flat-tail, the beaver lady, to Toodle, Noodle and their little sister, Crackie, one morning as they were starting for school, “I think you had better take your lunch, and not come home to dinner this noon; I am going to be very busy, canning sweet-flag root, and birch bark, so we will have something to eat this winter. I really wouldn’t have time to get you anything to eat.”

“Oh, it will be much more fun to take our lunch!” cried Crackie, as she accidentally dropped her pencil and cracked the point. That was why she was called Crackie—she so often dropped things. Once she dropped an egg—but there, I’ll tell you about that later.

“Yes, I thing it’ll be real jolly to take our lunch,” spoke Toodle, as he strapped his school books together so he could carry them in one paw.

“And we can go out in the woods, back of the hollow stump school, to eat it,” added Noodle, who was busy finishing the last of the red-apple pancakes his mother had made for breakfast.

Then the school bell rang: “Ding-dong!”

and also "Dong-ding!" and Grandpa Whackum, the oldest beaver gentleman in the pond, called out from where he was reading the morning paper near the fireplace:

"Come, children, hurry off, or you'll be late!"

So Mrs. Flat-tail, the beaver lady, put up a nice lunch for each of her children, wrapping birch bark sandwiches and hickory nut cake in clean leaves for them to take to school. Off they started, as three happy little beavers as you would meet if you walked a mile, or maybe a mile and a half, for all I know.

On the way they met Peetie and Jackie Bow Wow, the puppy dog boys.

"We're not going home to dinner today," said Toodle to Peetie.

"Why not? Isn't there anything to eat at your house?" asked Peetie.

"If there isn't," went on Jackie, very kindly, "you may come to our house. We have lots of things, and I'll give you a piece of my puppy-cake."

"Oh, that's not the reason," spoke Noodle quickly. "Thank you just the same. Our mamma is going to be so busy that she gave us our lunch to take to school."

Then Noodle and Toodle and Crackie showed their little bundles of lunch and Peetie and Jackie said:

“Oh, dear! We wish we could bring our lunch. We’ll do it tomorrow!”

“Then we’ll all have a regular picnic!” exclaimed Crackie.

So on the beaver children went to the hollow-stump school, and along the way they met more of their friends, all of whom thought it was just the finest idea in the world to carry a lunch, and they all said—from Sammie and Susie Little-tail, the rabbits, down to Jollie and Jillie Long-tail, the mousie boy and girl—they all said that, the next day, they were going to do as Toodle and Noodle and Crackie had done, and bring something to eat for the noon recess.

“Ding-dong!” went the last bell, and all the animal children scampered into the hollow stump and took their seats, while Miss Lady Bug, the teacher played on the tin-pan piano so they could sing the morning song.

Then Professor Rat heard the lessons, and some of the pupils went up head, and some went down foot, for there was not room at the head of the class for all of them, you see.

Well, when noon time came all the animal children, except Toodle and Noodle and Crackie hurried home to get their dinners. But the little beavers took their packages of lunch and went out in a small grove of trees back of the hollow stump school. There, sitting on their broad, flat

tails, which were like stools to them, with the brown leaves rustling all around, and a sweet, spicy smell coming up from the earth, they ate the lunches their mamma had put up for them.

And oh! How good everything tasted! Really twice as good as if they had gone home and had sat down to the table to eat.

Pretty soon Noodle said: "I'm going off in the woods a little way and see if I can find any chestnut trees. If I can, I'll tell Johnnie and Billie Bushytail, the squirrels, and after school they can climb up and get the nuts. Come on, Toodle."

"Oh, I don't want to," spoke the other little beaver boy. "I haven't quite finished my lunch yet."

"I'll go with you," said Crackie to Noodle. "I've finished eating and I'd like to look for chestnut trees."

"All right, come on, little sister," said Noodle, and taking Crackie's paw in his, so she wouldn't fall and break her nose, off they started. Mind, I'm not saying for sure that Crackie would have fallen and broken her nose, but it might have happened, mightn't it?

That left Toodle all alone eating his lunch there in the grove of trees. He was taking his time about it, and thinking that pretty soon he would be through, and could go off and meet his

sister and brother, when, all at once, he heard a bird singing in the tree over his head.

And it was such a sad song which the bird sang that Toodle felt the tears coming into his eyes, though he did not quite know why. The bird sang about how summer had gone, and all the pretty leaves were falling off the trees, and how soon it would be cold and icy, and nearly everyone would freeze. Brr-r-r-r!

“And I shall have to fly far, far away from here,” sang the bird, most sadly.

“Oh, dear me!” cried Toodle. “I wonder why I feel so badly?”

Then the bird, looking down, and seeing how sad Toode was, chirped once or twice and said:

“Oh, excuse me, Toodle, I did not mean to make you feel so badly. Wait, I will sing a different kind of song.”

Then the bird sang about how nice it is in winter, with no mosquitoes to bite you, and how lovely the snow looks as it sifts down, and what jolly fun it is to go sleigh riding and skating, and how much fun it is to make snow men, and then how, in the middle of the night, Santa Claus comes riding over the housetops with his reindeer and their jingling bells—and all that, until Toodle cried out:

“Oh, winter is the jolliest time of all! I’m glad winter is coming. And anyhow, Singing

Bird, you can come back here in the spring!"

"Yes, I suppose I can," said the bird. And then she suddenly cried out: "Oh, dear! I dropped it!"

"Dropped what?" asked Toodle, as he heard something fall.

"My pocketbook," answered the singing bird. "It had all my money in it, and my airship ticket to go down South. I had it in my claw, but I dropped it and it fell into that pond of water, and now I can't go away and I'll freeze to death. Oh, dear! My lost pocketbook!"

"Ha! So your pocketbook fell into the water, did it?" asked Toodle, looking at a little pond that was near where he had eaten his lunch. "Well, don't worry," he went on to the bird. "I am a good swimmer, and I just love to go into the water. I'll get your pocketbook back for you!"

With that into the pond he dived, and, reaching down under water with his front paws, Toodle brought up the singing bird's pocketbook.

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Then Toodle swam with it out on dry land, and the money was all safe and so was the airship ticket to go down South, and the bird was so thankful that she sang another song for Toodle.

And, just as it was about finished, what should happen but that out of the woods came a bad old wolf, sneaking along to get Toodle, who

was so interested in the bird's song that he never noticed the bad creature.

Nearer and nearer came the wolf, and then the bird saw him, and she knew he was after Toodle, and the bird cried out:

“Come, friends! Come, all you birds! Help save Toodle from the wolf!”

Then about a thousand birds that were going South to spend the winter where it was warm and sunny, came flying along, and they fluttered all about that wolf, and they pricked him and nipped him all over, from the tip of his nose to the tip of his tail, so that the wolf was glad enough to run back to his den and let Toodle alone.

Then the beaver boy thanked the birds very kindly, and they sang him a little good-by song, and away they flew to be gone until spring. Then Noodle and Crackie came back, having found a chestnut tree, and the noon recess was over, and all the animal children had to go back in school.

But they had lots of fun there, for Professor Water Rat told them some jolly stories, and Miss Lady Bug, the teacher, sang a little song, so that Toodle and Noodle Flat-tail, the beavers, were quite happy.

And so we will say good-by to them while they are having such a good time. For we have come to the end of this book. There is no more room in it for any more stories.

But I am going to make another book next year, and in that I am going to put some stories of little sheep, who had the most jolly times you can think of in the green meadow by the sparkling brook.

The new book will be called: "Bedtime Stories, Dottie and Willie Lambkin," and I hope you will like it. So, until I can get that book ready, I will say just what you said to Toodle and Noodle Flat-tail—and that is—"Good-bye!"

THE END

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