



Just a Little Bit of Baby.
 Just a little bit of baby,
 Twenty pounds and nothing more,—
 See him floor his giant daddy,
 Weight two hundred, six feet four.

Just a little bit of baby;
 Any beauty? not a trace,—
 See him stealing all the roses
 From his lovely mother's face.

Just a little bit of baby,
 Ignorant as he can be,—
 See him puzzle all the sages
 Of his learned family.

Just a little bit of baby,
 Walking? no; nor crawling, even,—
 See him lead a dozen grown-ups
 To the very gate of heaven!

—Amos B. Wells, in Good Housekeeping.

What I Saw the Toad Do.
 All my life from childhood to age has been favored with the pleasure of a garden's work and play. The living creatures were for us to pet, to love, but not to harm or treat with wanton cruelty. Among others the toad was a favorite study. In the terribly destructive days of the canker worms, I used to watch one big old toad, and could never see him get beyond swallowing a hundred worms, before he gave up his task.

Our garden was very full of toads; and I always picked up in the street the tiny little ones, which were liable to be trodden on, and put them in a safe place.

One day, when I came home from church, as dinner was not quite ready, I went into the garden, and under one of the cherry trees I saw a very odd-looking toad.

His coat was so dull, dusty and shabby, I wondered what ailed him, suddenly and instantly his skin cracked open from the tip of his head to the hindmost end of his body, in a straight line down the middle of his back, drawing itself away on each side, leaving the whole breadth clear. A bright, clean, beautiful new skin met my view. It was sprinkled with sparkling drops like dew, and finely mottled.

"Oh," I cried, "now I can get a toad's skin! How glad I am!"

I watched him eagerly. He began to undress on his left side. With his hind claw he pulled down and off the sleeve of his coat in a very careful way. Then he rested a little while.

Next he pulled off the sleeve of his right side with the same careful motions, and rested again. After a few minutes he resumed operations on his left side, and pushed down and off the leg of his trousers, keeping all the skin carefully rolled together. Then he took another rest.

"Oh," I exclaimed eagerly, "now I will get his skin in a moment."

I bent down in order to seize it at once.

Alas for my fond expectations! The toad drew off his skin; but, as he did so, he carefully rolled the whole into a little ball, which he instantly swallowed.

He winked his bright eyes at me, as much as to say, "You did not do it that time."

I soon turned away and left him in his beautiful new garments, and went scowling into the house.

That was more than 50 years ago, and with all my watching I have never again seen a toad shed his skin.—Caroline F. Orne, in the Christian Register.

Jakey and Joey.
 They are the best of friends, and they live so near that between the back yard where Jakey plays and the back yard where Joey plays is nothing but a high board fence. There was a time, not so very long ago, either, when they did not know each other. Indeed, they might never have been acquainted at all but for an introduction by a friendly knot hole.

Jakey had a fondness for pounding and hammering everything that came within his reach. Before he could talk, before he could walk, his hammering habits began. When Santa Claus brought him a toy hammer his cup of joy was full. He pounded everything and made so much noise they had to take the hammer away. Then he cried until they were glad to give it to him again to keep him quiet.

When he was old enough to play in the back yard his favorite amusement was to walk around its three sides, hammering the board fence as he went. He very soon knew all the boards, and even the spots where he was to strike them. It was in this way that he found a knot, although it was then nothing to him but a dark spot. But one day he discovered that there was going to be a hole right there, and immediately all other spots were as nothing. He hammered away at this one until the knot fell out on the other side.

Now, Joey, whose back yard was on the other side of the fence, was a most quiet-mannered boy, who knew the things in his back yard as well as Jakey knew those in his yard, but Joey made no noise. For days he had wondered what all the hammering in the next yard meant. When it finally continued in one spot, he was more curi-

ous than ever; and when he saw the plug or knot coming through on his side, his interest was intense. No sooner did it pop out than his eye was at the hole. So it happened that when Jakey got one of his large eyes up there and looked through, all he saw was a bright, inquiring eye looking at him from the other side. It was almost like looking into a mirror, only Joey's eye was blue, while Jakey's was black.

For a while neither spoke. They stood as if their cheeks and noses were glued to the fence. Then Jakey put his lips to the hole and said, "Hey!"

There was no reply. When he looked again, the blue eye was there still, eager as before. Again he put his lips to the hole, exclaiming, "What's your name?"

Still there was no answer, only the same bright blue eye when Jakey looked. It was rather trying, but Jakey kept his temper. His habit of hammering so much kept him from getting angry. Once more he placed his mouth at the hole and said, "My name is Jakey. What's yours?"

Then came a simple answer, in one word, "Joey."

When Jakey put his eye up again, he looked right into Joey's grin.

That is how the knot hole came to introduce Jakey and Joey.—New York Mail and Express.

The Little Brown Dog.
 One lovely morning in summer, Mr. and Mrs. Burdette drove to a city 12 miles from their country house to take some guests to an early train and to do some shopping. Their errands done, they returned to their carriage with their purchases, and, to their surprise, on the front seat sat a little brown dog. He might have been made of iron, he sat so still. Only a very bright pair of eyes showed any signs of life.

"He is so absurd and cunning," said Mrs. Burdette, "let's take him home."

"Peter won't like it," said Mr. Burdette, "but I am willing."

The dog never moved during the first few miles. They called him by every name they could think of, but he sat perfectly still. At last they passed a row of small cottages, and Mrs. Burdette said, "I intended to stop to see if Micky was better," when, lo and behold, the little brown dog wagged his short stub of a tail.

"Oh, ho!" said Mr. Burdette; "Micky is the name. Shake!" A shaggy brown paw was gravely raised and shaken. Then Micky resumed his look of stony indifference, as if to say: "There, you know my name, now don't say any more about it."

When they reached home he jumped down and followed Mrs. Burdette into the house. Giving the reins to the man, Mr. Burdette followed on to see what reception Peter would give the newcomer.

"Now, Peter," said Mrs. Burdette, to the bulldog, who walked slowly out to meet them, "here is a new friend for you. You must treat him well."

Peter made no hostile move, but the little brown dog began to show his teeth and growl! "R-r-r-r!" making a great fuss. Peter calmly laid him on his back as if to say, "Now, what are you going to do about it?" Micky waved his paws in the air and Peter walked away to his own corner, while the little brown dog looked pleased, as if to say, "Did you see me beat?"

It was always the same; Micky was always the under dog, but behaved as if he were the victor every time. He never showed affection for any one, and would disappear for days at a time. If Mrs. Burdette went out to visit a neighbor, she often met him going in an opposite direction. He never recognized her in any way, and after all the family had retired he would come and scratch at the door, and, being admitted, would march into his bed in the most dignified manner.

He had some very narrow escapes. Once he was nearly cut in two by a mowing machine because he would lie down in its path. He was several times run over by the carriage because he would not get out of the way. But his injuries were not serious, and he insisted on having his own way regardless of consequences. Finally, at the end of the summer, Mr. and Mrs. Burdette were getting ready to close their house, and what was to be done with the dogs? They could not be taken south.

"I will take Peter, gladly," said Mrs. Burdette's mother.

"Who speaks for Micky?" Hello! Micky was nowhere to be found, and from that day to this has never been seen or heard from.—New York Tribune.

He Meant the Bird.
 A man once received as a present from a sea captain a fine specimen of the bird known as the "laughing jackass."

As he was carrying it home he met a brawny Irish navvy, who stopped him:

"Phwat kind of a burrd is that, sorr?" asked the man.

"That's a laughing jackass," explained the owner, genially.

The Irishman, thinking he was being made fun of, was equal to the occasion, and responded, with a twinkle of the eye:

"It's not yerself—it's the burrd I mane, sorr!"—London Spare Moments.



SPRINGTIME HINTS.
 New Designs For Warm Weather Silks—Simple Tailor Gowns.

The moire and pompadour styles will be favored in silks for spring wear, and transparent woolen goods, such as grenadines and etamines, will be immensely popular. It is probable, too, that the open meshed goods will be made over silk of a different color, instead of the self-color that has been in use for a year or two.

Fancy silks are promised for entire gowns, as well as for waists. These will be generally of soft finish, and decided twill, rather than of taffeta. Printed Liberty's are expected to be particularly prominent, and Lyons goods are shown in a variety of effects. For linings nothing can take the place of taffeta, with its crispness and body. Silk warp goods also are becoming somewhat popular.

Extreme novelties in silk are printed peau de soie and armure and changeable grounds for fancy taffeta.

The double skirt persists in its effort to obtain recognition. This mode demands a fitted bodice reaching the waistline at the back, and extending to a point in front.

A new idea in trimming for cloth skirts is the use of two shaped flounces widening towards the back, on the edging of which is a narrow and full ruffle of bias velvet of the same shade.

Cloth suits for street wear are to be simply made for spring, relying for their distinction upon the fine quality of the material and the perfection of fit. The extremely light weight cloths, however, for calling and matinee gowns, will be made as decoratively as heretofore. A favored embellishment for these is embroidery, either of the color of the fabric, or in contrast. The color chosen for embroidery is carefully shaded from light to dark, and the effect is extremely good.

One by one the old styles revive. A late model, with the front breadth laid in narrow box pleats and the other gores finished by a flounce deep at the back and only about six inches where it meets the front, looks as if it might have been taken from a fashion book of at least twenty years ago. It is not likely to obtain great favor, however, as the bulkiness of the front is too great a contrast to the "straight front" teaching that has almost revolutionized the feminine figure and taste.

Equally objectionable, and for the same reason, was a costume seen at a reception lately, which was of blue crepe, "accordioned" at the top and with the fulness run on three cords at the knee, thence falling free. The gown was evidently new and expensive, but was almost dowdy in its puffy effect.—New York Tribune.

Being a Good Hostess.
 A woman may possess wealth untold, she may have the kindest of hearts and the brightest of minds, but unless she has absolute control of her feelings there will be some time in her career as hostess that she will display annoyance or flurry, and the contagion, spreading to her guests, will die out in an undisguised failure.

A model hostess must to all appearances be made of stone, so far as disagreeable happenings are concerned. Even though a guest or careless waiter inadvertently breaks a bit of china which can never be replaced, she must smile as though the loss of the whole set would but emphasize the pleasure of the evening. Her well-bred calm inspires her guests with a feeling of confidence, and, though in her heart she may be very dubious about certain important details of her dinner or dance, if she does not show her anxiety everything will pass off to a happy conclusion.

A flurried hostess or nervous host whose countenance but badly conceals the worry felt can do more toward making the guests uncomfortable than if the soup were served stone cold, and if the salad dressing was ruined by a too bountiful quantity of vinegar.

An imperturbable calm and a ready tact are the two important factors in the making of a model hostess. Secure these, by hook or crook, and you need never fear for the success of any of your entertainments.—Washington Star.

Every Bit of a Dead Bear is Good.
 One of the features of the Newcastle butchers' Christmas display was the carcass of a Russian brown bear, and those who would object to it as a comestible are unaware that the hams of a bear are delicious beyond all the hams ever smoked in Cumberland or Wiltshire; that the tongue is held to be more precious as a foodstuff than the tongue of any other beast that ever licked salt; that the liver is a King's dish; that the English gentlemen who planted Virginia preferred the flesh of bear to beef, veal, pork, or mutton, and that the Indians thereaway, in serving up the bear, were wont to roast it whole—entrails, skin and all, just as they would barbecue a hog. But the choicest morsels are the paws. The noblemen of Germany might eat the spareribs and the griskins of the bear and high bred ladies rashers from his flanks, but the bear's paws, salted and smoked, were reserved for the tables of the German Kings and Princes.—Newcastle (England) Journal.

Something of an Oriental effect is given to a muslin which has stripes of black in a conventional pattern, not solid, and between these other conventional designs in many colors.

One of the most attractive of the heavy cotton materials is the embroidered polka dot canvas of a very fine mesh. This is seen in shades of blue and in tan, with large black dots.

Most conspicuous among stockings is a pair of a violent flame red, having a large plain medallion of black over the instep, and upon this embroidered a few red flowers, a little less brilliant than the body of the stocking.

An elaborate and showy stocking has a long insert of lace extending from the toe well up above the instep, the design having a plume-like effect. Under several of the leaves of this design are set pieces of violet silk.

The new importations of stockings, like all other accessories of underclothing, are elaborate. Embroidered stockings are now deemed a trifle more modish than the open work variety. Black and white effects are very fashionable.

Slowly but surely the coilure is shifting its position from the top of the head to a point anywhere between the crown of the head and the nape of the neck. This tendency to lower the knot is especially noticeable at the fashionable dancing parties and wherever full evening dress prevails.

Guided by Himself.
 The father of Thomas Jefferson died in 1757, and the son's situation was touchingly described by him years afterward in a letter written to his eldest grandson when he was sent from home to school for the first time. It is given in "The True Thomas Jefferson," by William E. Curtis. The letter was as follows:

"When I recollect that at fourteen years of age the whole care and direction of myself was thrown on myself entirely, without a relative or friend qualified to advise or guide me, and recollect the various sorts of bad company with which I associated from time to time, I am astonished that I did not turn off with some of them, and become as worthless to society as they were."

"I had the good fortune to become acquainted very early in life with some characters of very high standing, and to feel the incessant wish that I could become as they were."

His father left instructions for his education, and especially enjoined upon the widow not to permit him to neglect "the exercise requisite for his body's development." This strong man knew the value of strength, and used to say that a person of weak body could not have an independent mind.

The Noiseless Machine Shop.
 The old-time machine shop was a place of incessant clatter and din and rattle, and the pounding of hammers, from which the casual visitor was glad to escape with the sense of hearing unimpaired. But in the modern shop you hear only a soft hum, like that of a sewing machine, with never a hammer stroke, in some of them, from top to bottom.

All this is due to the improvement in machine tools and in the method of work. In former times they chipped and filed all flat surfaces; now the metal planer does the work. Gear wheels, with beautifully cut teeth, do the work of the old cog wheels; turning on the lathe is done noiselessly by the screw, with hydraulic or steam power, and lifting is done by the power crane. The blacksmith used to do all cutting with sledges and chisels; now a cutting-off machine saws through a steel bar with less noise than a butcher makes on a ham bone.

The noise is being gradually eliminated from machine work, as it is from other everyday things.

Painting silk and satin for millinery and dress purposes is a fancy that pleases many women just now.

A dainty evening headdress is composed of very small ostrich feathers, with bright silver frosting decorating the tips at the extreme end.



Contrast.
 The man who entered politics
 Is often much surprised
 To find his virtues by his friends
 So strongly advertised.

And likewise it will surely make
 Him very sick and sad
 To find his foes can picture him
 So marvelously bad.

—Washington Star.

Guilty.
 Maud—"Gaskell thinks he is a regular lady-killer."
 Esther—"I shouldn't wonder. I had to talk with him last evening, and I really thought I should die, he wearied me so."—Boston Transcript.

Nettling.
 I was not successful in my attempt to eject the cook from the house. But what nettled me was the unruined demeanor of the woman.

"You might at least have the good breeding to act 'put out!'" I cried; and left the kitchen, slamming the door behind me.—Puck.

Distrustful.
 "If you should ever meet a man who seemed to be your ideal you would consent to marry him, wouldn't you?" asked the confidential girl.

"No, indeed," answered Miss Cayenne. "I should avoid him as much as possible, so as to keep the illusion from being dispelled."—Washington Star.

A Cinch.
 "Johnny," said Mrs. Smathers, "I want you to go out to Mrs. Bennett's. Do you know where she lives?"

"No'm," answered Johnny, dreamily folding the novel he had been reading and putting it in his pocket, "but I s'pose if I take Injun Joe along we kin pick up the trail."—Indianapolis Sun.

Wanted a Rest.
 "Yes, sir," said the landlady, "our boarding house is one of the best. We give you all the comforts of home."

"Ah!" exclaimed the erstwhile house-keeper, "but what we're looking for particularly is a place that has none of the discomforts of home."—Philadelphia Catholic Standard and Times.

A Protest.



Mrs. Bird—"I wish you'd quit shooting that gun off here! You've wakened the children!"—Judge.

Trying to Be Sociable.
 "I s'pose," said Johnny, who had been called upon to entertain the unexpected guest for a few minutes, "you have to—"

"Speak a little louder, my dear," said the caller.

"I s'pose," yelled Johnny, "you have to use an ear trumpet, 'cause your ear drum's busted."—Chicago Tribune.

A Bone of Contention.
 Mrs. Homer (in need of a cook)—"Have you a letter of recommendation from your last employer?"

Applicant—"No, ma'am."
 Mrs. Homer—"Why did you leave your last place?"

Applicant—"Because the husband and wife were always quarrelling."
 Mrs. Homer—"Indeed! And what were they always quarrelling about?"

Applicant—"About the way their meals were cooked."—Chicago News.

Where the Difference Lies.
 "Wherein lies the difference between photography and courtship?" he asked softly.

"I don't know," she replied.

"In photography," he exclaimed, "the negative is developed in the dark-room, while in courtship it is where the affirmative is developed."

She blushed, but made no answer.

"Let us," he suggested, "proceed to develop an affirmative."
 There being no objections, it was so ordered.—Chicago Post.

Her Criterion.
 A little girl from a crowded tenement house was delightedly telling a friend in the college settlement about her new teacher.

"She's just a perfect lady, that's what she is," said the child.