

Billy Bunny and Daddy Fox

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DOWN THROUGH THE CEILING DROPPED DADDY FOX.

Billy Bunny Books

BILLY BUNNY

AND

DADDY FOX

BY

DAVID CORY

AUTHOR OF "BILLY BUNNY AND UNCLE BULL FROG,"

"BILLY BUNNY AND THE FRIENDLY ELEPHANT,"

"BILLY BUNNY AND UNCLE LUCKY LEFTHINDFOOT"

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BILLY BUNNY BOOKS

BY DAVID CORY

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1. BILLY BUNNY AND THE FRIENDLY ELEPHANT.
2. BILLY BUNNY AND DADDY FOX.
3. BILLY BUNNY AND UNCLE BULL FROG.
4. BILLY BUNNY AND UNCLE LUCKY LEFTHINDFOOT.

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Billy Bunny and Daddy Fox

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STORY I—BILLY BUNNY AND THE JAIL HOUSE

Daddy Fox was very irregular in his habits about coming home, so, when the Bunny Boy Scouts captured him, after his escape from the Circus Cow Boy, and put him in the Jail House at Lettuceville, no one became uneasy for two or three days. After that time, Mrs. Fox said to Sly Boots and Bushy Tail, her two little sons: "Something has happened to your father. I know it, for he never stays away like this without telephoning or sending a message home. We'd better go out to-night and look for him."

So when the big, round, silver moon was shining in the middle of the sky and the twinkle, twinkle star was peeping into the bedroom windows of little boys and girls, who were sound asleep and dreaming of lollipops and ice cream cones and other things, Mrs. Fox put on her bonnet and started out with her two little foxes.

And by and by they came to the Jail House. And while they were walking around it, smelling here and there to find out where their Daddy Fox was, they heard him singing in a sorrowful voice:

"I wonder if my two little boys
Are thinking of Daddy Fox;
If mother would only find me here
She'd open this old jail box.
She'd find the key to the iron door,
Which is hid in the crack outside in the floor
Of the little porch, and she'd get me out.
Oh, dear, I wonder what they're about!"

And of course when Mrs. Fox heard that, she looked on the floor of the little porch; and, sure enough, there was the big iron key almost hidden from sight in a little, tiny crack.

Wasn't that lucky? Well, I guess it was, and in a jiffy and a half she unlocked the iron door and set Daddy Fox free.

My! But he was thin and miserable. They had shaved his head and put a striped suit of clothes on him and he didn't look anything like their dear, kind father, thought Sly Boots and Bushy Tail, although they didn't say so.

They just hugged him nearly to death, for they loved him, because he was their father, and they didn't know it was wicked to steal chickens, because all foxes do, and if you don't know a thing is wicked and then go and do it it's not nearly so bad as when you know a thing is wrong and then go and do it. So please remember this, for it's very important and will help you keep out of lots of trouble.

"Come home at once," said Mrs. Fox; "I have a nice stewed duck for supper, although it's past supper time." So Daddy Fox hurried as fast as he could so as not to let the duck stew get cooked too much, and by and by they came to their den.

And Mrs. Fox had the table set and the supper ready in less than a wink and everybody was happy as could be. And perhaps Daddy Fox will be good until the next time, that is if he doesn't see a chicken before the chicken sees him.

STORY II—BILLY BUNNY AND LADY HORNET

"Early to rise, early to rise, Will make little bunny boys win the first prize," sang Mrs. Bunny at the foot of the stairs. And then Billy Bunny lifted up his left hind leg and his right ear, and he wiggled his nose forty times less once, and after that he was wide awake.

And when he had washed his face and whiskers, and parted his hair down his back nice and smooth, he went down to eat his breakfast of carrot mush and raspberry juice which his kind mother had made from the fruit that grew in the old bramble patch. And then, oh yes, oh yes! he polished the brass knob on the front door, and after that he went down to the postoffice to see if a new spring mattress had come by parcel post.

But it hadn't, and the postmistress, who was a nice Lady Hornet, said it was

a bit early in the season for spring mattresses, but she thought by next month it would come along, that is, if the weather kept nice and warm.

Well, anyway, she had something for the little rabbit. It was a letter with two carrot cents postage due, which the little bunny paid.

And then he opened his letter, and what do you think he found inside? Why, a beautiful tinted photo of his circus elephant friend, and on the back was written in purple ink, "To Billy Bunny, from Elly, the circus elephant."

"Now, isn't that nice of him," said Billy Bunny. "I must send him mine right away," so he hopped away to the nearest photographer, who was a nice Crane and had his place in Rabbitville about 450 hops away.

By and by Billy Bunny reached the picture gallery, and after he had told the Crane photographer what he wanted he sat down on a little green mossy rock in front of a big canvas painted like the ocean with big green waves and white foam.

And all around the rock was sprinkled sand so that when the picture was taken it looked just as if the little bunny had been to Newport for the summer.

"How many do you want?" asked the Photographer Crane, who was certainly a splendid picture man, for his legs were just the right length so that he could look into the back of the camera without standing on a stool.

And, wasn't it funny, you couldn't tell his legs apart from the legs of the camera, only the camera had three and the Crane only two.

"I'll take seven," said the little rabbit. "That's my lucky number. I want to send one to Mr. Lucky Lefthindfoot; he's my Uncle Lucky."

"And one to my friend, the circus elephant, for he's my best friend. It will make Daddy Fox mad to think he wasn't here at the same time, for he's always trying to catch me."

And just then who should peep in through the window but Daddy Fox himself. And in the next story you shall hear what happened after that.

STORY III—BILLY BUNNY AND PHOTOGRAPHER CRANE

You remember in the last story Daddy Fox was peeping in through the window

just as Billy Bunny was having his picture taken, don't you?

Well, no sooner did the little rabbit see him than he hopped quicker than a lightning bug to the door and closed it, and the Photographer Crane pulled down the window shade to make it dark inside so that Daddy Fox couldn't see them.

After that he stuffed the fireplace full of sofa cushions for fear the crafty fox might slide down the chimney. But, oh dear me! he forgot all about the skylights—the windows in the roof, you know, and the next moment down through the ceiling dropped Daddy Fox.

Oh, my! What a scramble there was in that photo parlor. The Crane flew up on the mantelpiece and the little rabbit crept into the waste basket and pulled a photograph album on top of him.

And, of course, it was so dark that Daddy Fox didn't see them do all this, so he had to play hide-and-seek and there was nobody to call out, "You're getting hotter and hotter" when he stood near the mantelpiece, nor "You're burning up!" when he passed close to the waste paper basket, so after a while he sat down on a pincushion (excuse me, I mean a sofa cushion), and listened with both ears cocked up.

But the Crane never breathed and Billy Bunny held his breath, so by and by Daddy Fox started to hunt around the room again. First he pulled all the cushions out of the fireplace and then he pulled up the shades and unlocked the front door.

And this was very foolish of him, for he should have known that the Crane and the little rabbit hadn't had time to get out. Then he went out on the little porch and peeped into the woodbox, and while he was doing that the Crane flew down the mantelpiece and locked the door.

And then he pulled the strings to close the skylight and stuffed the cushions back into the fireplace, and lifted the album off the little rabbit, for it was so full of pictures of fat people that it was dreadfully heavy.

After this Billy Bunny opened his knapsack and took out his gun and peeked out through a hole in the window shade. And right there by the window stood the dreadful fox trying to open it. Bang! went the little rabbit's gun and the cork hit the fox on the tip of his nose and made him sneeze so badly that he had to run into the woods to find his handkerchief.

And he hunted all day long for it, and when evening came he remembered he had sent it to the laundry, so he had to go out and buy one at the three and one cent store.

Of course, Billy Bunny didn't have any more pictures taken that day. He hopped home as fast as he could, and the Crane telephoned down to the police station and told them to send up a man to guard the studio, and if the Twinkle Twinkle Star to-night sings me to sleep, I'll tell you another story of Billy Bunny and the sheep.

STORY IV—BILLY BUNNY AND THE ORGAN GRINDER

Well, the Twinkle Twinkle Star didn't sing me to sleep and so I can't tell you about Billy Bunny and the woolly sheep as I said I would in the last story, but I will tell you something else if you'll only wait five hundred short seconds. And this is what it's going to be about:

The organ grinder's monkey
Who wears a little cap,
Is always kept so busy
He cannot take a nap.

He's dancing to the music,
And picking up the dimes;
But oftener it's nickels.
And pennies most the times.

As soon as Billy Bunny heard the "Star-Spangled Banner," for that was the tune which the old organ grinder was playing, he pricked up his ears and hopped out of the Old Briar Patch, and by and by he came up to the monkey, who held out his little red cap.

"Here's a carrot cent for you," said the little rabbit, but the organ grinder scowled a deep, gloomy scowl and said:

"Me no lika da mun!" But what could Billy Bunny do? And as the organ grinder kept on scowling a deep, gloomy scowl, the little rabbit opened his knapsack and looked through it. And pretty soon he found an apple pie, and when the organ grinder saw it he stopped grinding the music and put out his hand.

And in a very few minutes there wasn't any pie to be seen anywhere around for miles and miles, and the organ grinder had a lovely smile on his face! And then he played that pretty song called "In this sweet pie and pie there are apples

fresh and dry,” and after that he swung the organ over his back and the monkey jumped on top and off they went to grind out more tunes for money.

But the little rabbit didn’t go with them. No, siree. For if he had to pay a whole apple pie for a tune he’d rather go another way, even if he couldn’t hear the lovely music, for you can’t grind out apple pies the way you can tunes.

Well, by and by, after a while, not so very long, he came to a river and he couldn’t get across, so he looked all about him to find a little horse; but there wasn’t any horse and there wasn’t any boat, so the little rabbit said, “Well, I guess I’ll have to float” So what did he do but find an old plank and then floated over on it to the other bank.

Now I don’t know what is the matter with my typewriter that it didn’t make a verse out of all these rhymes, but it didn’t—it just went along in a prosy way, and so you’ll have to make a poem out of them yourself, for I have no more room in this story.

STORY V—BILLY BUNNY AND MR. TOOTIE OWL

Let’s see, I left off in the last story just where Billy Bunny landed on the bank of the river. Well, now I’m going to tell you what happened after that.

“I was lucky to get across on that old board,” thought the little rabbit, as he hopped up the bank to look about him. The field was covered with daisies and in the distance a black cow stood flicking off the flies with her long tail.

“Helloa!” cried the little rabbit. “Why don’t you eat the flowers?” The black cow looked up and said:

“Why don’t you stand on your head?” And, would you believe it, Billy Bunny did. Yes, sir. He stood first on his right ear and then on his left ear, and then he turned two somersaults and a handspring backward, and this made the cow laugh so hard that she got her tail twisted around a fence rail and couldn’t get away.

“What shall I do?” she cried, anxiously. “It’s almost milking time, and when I don’t come home they’ll wonder where I am. Oh, dear! Oh, dear!”

“Don’t worry,” said Billy Bunny, and he opened his knapsack and took out

his little hatchet and chopped the tail—I mean the rail—off the fence so that she could get home, although, of course, she had to drag the rail all the way back to the farm, and the farmer scolded her for breaking down his fence, which was too bad, for she couldn't help it, you know.

Well, after that the little rabbit hopped away, and by and by, just as it was getting quite dark, he came to a big pile of wood. "Now this will be a good place for me to sleep," he said to himself, and looked about for a hole to squeeze into. But, oh dear me, and oh dear you!

A big owl flew out and hooted and tooted three times and a half, and then winked his eyes at the little rabbit until he was so scared he could hardly stand up.

"Oh, please, Mr. Owl, don't hooty-tooty me so. I don't mean any harm."

"What are you doing in my woodpile?" asked the blinky old bird fiercely. "Trying to steal my wood, eh?"

"Oh, no, Mr. Owl," cried Billy Bunny. "I was only looking for a place to sleep."

"I don't believe you," screeched the blinky winky bird, and he made a grab for the little rabbit with his hooked feet. And he would have caught Billy Bunny, too, and eaten him for supper that very night, I guess, if the little rabbit hadn't pulled his popgun out of his knapsack and hit the wicked owl on the tail with the cork bullet, which so scared the ugly old bird that he flew into the forest. After that Billy Bunny crept into the woodpile and went to sleep and dreamed that it caught on fire and the sparks flew up into the air and covered the whole sky with twinkling stars.

STORY VI—BILLY BUNNY AND BILLY GOAT

It was a bright and beautiful sunshiny morning as Billy Bunny hopped out of the woodpile where he had slept all night and started off on his journey of adventure.

He had only gone a little ways when all of a sudden from behind a bush out jumped a big Billy Goat. He had a long goatee and he looked very fierce, and when he lowered his head and pointed his horns at the little rabbit, how do you

suppose Billy Bunny felt?

Well, he felt just like a piece of paper all crinkled up, he was so scarified. And so would you, for that goat's horns were as sharp as needles.

"Stop! Stop!" cried the little rabbit. "Don't you know who I am? Billy Bunny's my name, from Old Brier Patch, Snake Fence Corner," and then he handed his card to the angry Billy Goat, who ate it up without even reading it. Wasn't that rude in him?

"I don't like your card a bit," said the Goat. "It tastes like peppermint." Of course it did, for the little rabbit carried his striped candy cane in his front paws, and some of the candy came off on them and got on to the card when he handed it to the Billy Goat.

"If you had read it you wouldn't have tasted the peppermint," said Billy Bunny politely, not wishing to make the Goat feel badly.

Well, by this time the Goat had raised his head and so his sharp horns didn't point at Billy Bunny, which made him feel lots better. Then he opened his knapsack and took out an apple-pie and gave it to the Goat, who ate it up in two and a half bites, and then asked for more.

"Sorry, but that's all I have," said the little rabbit. "Would you like a lolly-pop?" And when that was all gone, the little rabbit brought out a chocolate cake and the Goat ate that up just as fast.

"What else have you?" asked the Goat, wiping the crumbs from his goatee and peeking over Billy Bunny's shoulder.

"I've got a pair of rubber boots," said the little rabbit. And would you believe it, that Goat ate those rubber boots up too and then asked for more.

"Oh, dear! Oh, dear!" sighed Billy Bunny, and he hunted all through his knapsack again until he found a policeman's whistle. "That's all I've got left, Mr. Billy Goat."

"Well, I'll eat that for dessert," and the hungry, starving goat commenced to eat that whistle as though he hadn't tasted any kind of food for a year and five minutes. But would you believe me again? That whistle began to whistle and this so scared the Billy Goat that he ran away.

And if that whistle doesn't keep me awake all night so that I'll have to sleep all day tomorrow I'll tell you in the next story how Billy Bunny went to see his kind Uncle Lucky.

STORY VII—BILLY BUNNY AND

THE HEAD OF LETTUCE

Oh, it's dreadful to be lonely,
Even when you're not alone,
And you may be dreadful mournful
Though you have a happy tone.
And your lips may keep a-smiling
Though the tears are in your eyes.
Have you never seen it raining,
When the sun is in the skies?
If the one you want to be with
Isn't all the time with you,
There is nothing that will make you
Feel anything but blue.

And this was the way little Billy Bunny felt. You see, he hadn't seen his dear, kind Uncle Lucky for so long that the gold watch and chain which the old gentleman rabbit had given him needed winding.

So after the little rabbit had wound up the chain and put the watch back in his pocket, he started out to see his uncle, Mr. Lucky Lefthindfoot, who lived on Carrot street, near Lettuce Avenue, Bunnybridge, U. S. A.

Well, after Billy Bunny had hopped and hopped and then some more, he came to a cross road, and the sign on the post said, "5,281½ hops to Bunnybridge."

"Well, I'm glad I'm on the right road," said the little rabbit, and he took half a hop so as to start out even, you know, because he never did like fractions, and by and by he came to Lettuce avenue. But just then something happened. Something usually does happen when you least expect it, and that's what's going to happen now if my typewriter doesn't get balky and throw my hands off the keyboard.

Yes, sir! Just as that dear little bunny stepped on Lettuce avenue something big and soft hit him between his left ear and his left hind foot and knocked the breath right out of him. And so of course he couldn't say "Oh, dear; oh, dear!" so I'm going to make the typewriter say it for him.

And that will give him time to get his breath so that he can say it if he wants to. Well, after that he looked around to find out what had hit him, and what do you suppose it was that had knocked the "Oh, dear me!" out of him! I'll

tell you right away—a great big head of lettuce. There it lay on the ground. So the little rabbit picked it up and was just going to put it in his knapsack for his Uncle Lucky, when a cross voice called out:

“Don’t you touch that lettuce,
For it belongs to me,
And I am going to take it
Home with me for tea.”

“Who are you?” asked the little rabbit, dropping the lettuce and looking all around. But he couldn’t see anybody, and neither can I, so I’m going to let Billy Bunny look again. And this time he saw a Scarecrow in the field close by.

And if the old clothes man doesn’t throw another head of lettuce and hit my typewriter so it won’t talk to the paper I’ll tell you another story to-morrow.

STORY VIII—BILLY BUNNY AND THE SCARECROW

As soon as Billy Bunny saw the Scarecrow—who had thrown the head of lettuce at the little rabbit in the last story, but he shan’t do it again in this story! I’ll promise you that right now—the little rabbit said:

“Did you hit me just now between my left ear and my left hind leg with this lettuce?”

“I did,” replied the Scarecrow, in a sort of scarecrowey voice.

As soon as the little rabbit heard that he picked up that head of lettuce and threw it right at the head of that Scarecrow and knocked off his stovepipe hat. And when Billy Bunny looked at the hat he saw two gold letters pasted inside the crown, and what do you think they were? I don’t know why I asked you, for I’ve got to tell you, anyway. Well, they were the letters U. L.

“Uncle Lucky!” cried the little rabbit. “It’s Uncle Lucky’s wedding stovepipe hat! Oh, how glad he’ll be to get it back!” And Billy Bunny picked it up and put the lettuce inside and then hopped away as fast as he could for his kind old uncle’s house. And after he had gone for maybe three miles or less,

he came to the old gentleman rabbit's house. And there was dear, kind Uncle Lucky swinging in the hammock on the front porch. And when he saw his little nephew, he fell out—excuse me, I mean, he hopped out—of the hammock and opened the front gate and said:

“That looks like my old wedding stovepipe hat,” and the old gentleman rabbit put it on his head without even taking the head of lettuce out first, but that didn't matter, for there was plenty of room in that old stovepipe hat for two heads.

Well, as soon as Uncle Lucky got over his excitement, he asked his bunny nephew where he had found his hat, and when Billy Bunny told him, the old gentleman rabbit took it off and took out the head of lettuce and he and Billy Bunny ate it all up—not the hat, but the lettuce, you know—and some apple pie and carrot ice cream besides, for Uncle Lucky always had his pantry just full of the nicest things to eat you ever saw or ever heard of. And that's one reason why all the bunny boys and girls loved the old gentleman rabbit, for when they were coming home from school he would stand on his front porch and say:

“Come in and get some apple pie,
An ice cream cone or two;
A lollypop with jam on top,
Some sweet prunes à la stew,
Some lemonade—don't be afraid.
For I'm inviting you.”

And I hope with all my heart that if you ever pass by Uncle Lucky's house on Carrot street he'll ask you, too. And in the next story, if the pepper box doesn't fall into the ice cream freezer so that the little mouse in the pantry sneezes his head 'most off. I'll tell you another story to-morrow.

STORY IX—BILLY BUNNY AND MR. DRAKE

The next day after Billy Bunny arrived at Uncle Lucky's house the good, kind

old gentleman rabbit said: "Let's go out for a ride in the Luckymobile, for that was the name of Uncle Lucky's new car, you know."

So off they started, and this time you can well believe the old gentleman rabbit filled his lamps full of electricity oil, for he hadn't forgotten the time some million stories ago he had been caught without any lights on his automobile.

Well, as I was just going to say when my typewriter had to go and explain all about how poor Uncle Lucky had once been arrested for not having his lamps lit, they started off—not the lamps, but Billy Bunny and Uncle Lucky, and by and by they came across an old Drake.

And if you don't know what a Drake is, I'll tell you; he's the husband of a duck and spends most of his time swimming on the pond while she stays at home to look after the little ducks. Well, if Uncle Lucky hadn't stopped the automobile just where he did, Mrs. Duck would have been a widow.

"What do you mean by not seeing where you're going?" shouted Uncle Lucky, getting very red in the face.

"Why didn't you toot your horn?" said Mr. Drake with an angry quack, and then he waddled into the water and swam away.

"What can you expect from an old ferryboat like that?" laughed Uncle Lucky, watching Mr. Drake paddle away. "He's an old-fashioned side-wheeler. Let him go!" and the kind old gentleman rabbit leaned out of the automobile and handed a stick of candy to a little goose who had stood by listening with eye and bill wide open to all he had said.

Then the old gentleman rabbit took off his wedding stovepipe hat and bowed to Mrs. Duck, who stood in the doorway of her house, and tooted his horn and drove off.

And by and by Billy Bunny asked Uncle Lucky to let him run the automobile, so the old gentleman rabbit changed seats with his little nephew, and after that he fell asleep. For the road was very smooth and the wind was soft and warm, and Billy Bunny didn't talk all the time the way some boys do.

And as Billy Bunny didn't want to wake him up, he kept on going farther and farther away from home until after a while he found himself in a thick woods. And then the automobile came to a stop and Uncle Lucky, of course, woke up with a bump.

"Gracious me! Have I been asleep?" he exclaimed, rubbing his right eye with his left hind foot. And just then a little flower struck 4 o'clock, just like a little clock, and that's the reason they call this little flower "Four o'Clock" I guess. "Gracious me! I have been asleep!" cried Uncle Lucky, and then he took out the lunch basket and he and Billy Bunny ate a lot of nice things.

But, goodness me, it's so late that I must stop now, for there isn't time for the two little rabbits to get home. But I guess they'll cuddle up in the Luckymobile

and sleep until to-morrow morning.

STORY X—BILLY BUNNY AND THE FROG KING

Well, when Billy Bunny and good, kind Uncle Lucky woke up the next morning, for they had slept all night in the Luckymobile as I told you in the last story, they ate their breakfast and then they started off and by and by they had an adventure.

A gypsy camp stood close to the roadside and just as they came up, an old woman walked out of a tent and said, "Don't you want your fortunes told?" Well, as Billy Bunny had never had his fortune told and Uncle Lucky had forgotten whether he had or not, they got out of the automobile and sat down on a log while the old gypsy woman looked at their paws.

"You have a very long life line, Mr. Lucky Lefthindfoot, and lots of money," she said with a grin, "and you're going to have lots more."

"That's very nice," said the old gentleman rabbit, "for I want to build a library in Rabbitville where all the little bunnies can read nice stories and grow very wise."

"And you will grow up to be a great soldier," she said to Billy Bunny, and then Uncle Lucky gave her two carrot nickels and said good-by.

"I wonder where all that money is coming from," said the good, kind old gentleman rabbit, and then they heard a deep voice singing:

"Oh, I am king of the Bullfrog Pond,
Ker-plunk, ker-chunk, ker-plunk!

And I'll never stir a foot beyond,
Ker-plunk, ker-plunk, ker-plunk!

For it's cool and nice in the water here,
And the cat-tails wave in the atmosphere,
And this old dead log is a throne for me.
Oh yes, I'm as happy as I can be!"

Then Uncle Lucky stopped the automobile and he and Billy Bunny got out to make the acquaintance of this happy frog king. And weren't they surprised to find that he was the brother of Uncle Bullfrog, who lived in the Old Mill Pond. He had heard all about the two rabbits, and was delighted to see them.

"Sit down on the bank and I'll get you a watercress sandwich and some pond-lily milk," cried the Frog King, and he waved a bullrush wand up and down and whistled through his fingers, and then a dozen tadpoles swam up.

And then they swam off again and when they came back they had watercress sandwiches and pond-lily milk enough to go around and some besides to give to the Luckymobile, only automobiles don't drink anything but gasoline, so they gave what was left to a nice friendly duck who happened to pass by.

And then Uncle Lucky took off his stovepipe hat and bowed to the Frog King and Billy Bunny took a chocolate éclair out of his knapsack and said, "Give this to your Queen with my compliments," which tickled the Frog King so he fell off his log throne into the water with a terrible splash.

And if the lawn mower doesn't run over our white poodle dog and cut off all his hair, I'll tell you to-morrow another story about Billy Bunny and Uncle Lucky.

STORY XI—BILLY BUNNY AND THE TURKEY GOBLER

Well, as I was saying in the last story, Billy Bunny and his good, kind Uncle Lucky said good-by to the Frog King. And the frog was very sorry to see them go, for although he was a king, his kingdom was only a frog pond.

But then, when you come to think of it, he couldn't have his kingdom any place else, so of course he was contented, and that's the chief thing in life, whether you're a king or a poor man.

"Now what are we going to do?" said Uncle Lucky as he and his rabbit nephew rolled along as nicely as you please in the Luckymobile.

"Oh, just roll along," answered the little bunny, slipping his knapsack off his shoulder and laying his striped candy cane down on the bottom of the automobile, "I'm just glad to be riding with you, dear Uncle Luck."

And this so tickled the old gentleman rabbit that he turned to smile at Billy Bunny, and then of course he didn't see where he was going, and the first thing you know and the first thing he knew, the Luckymobile ran right into a baker's shop and knocked over the counter, which was full of pies and cakes.

"Oh, please excuse me!" cried kind Uncle Lucky to the bakerman, who was a big, red-faced Turkey Gobbler. But, oh, dear me! As soon as that Turkey Gobbler saw Uncle Lucky's red tie he made a rush at the old gentleman rabbit, for turkeys, you know, get terribly mad when they see anything red, and if Uncle Lucky hadn't jumped out of the way that Turkey Gobbler would have picked the diamond pin right out of the tie.

Yes, sir, I'm sure he would, and Uncle Lucky was very fond of his diamond pin because little Billy Bunny had given it to him, you remember, some seventeen or more stories ago.

Well, while the ugly red-faced turkey was chasing dear Uncle Lucky all around the back yard, Billy Bunny backed the automobile out of the bake shop, and after he had scraped custard pie off the cabaret and lemon pie off the left front wheel and squash pie off the right front wheel and a dozen other kinds of pie off the two front lights, Uncle Lucky came hopping around the corner of the bake shop with the ugly red-faced turkey gobbler baker close behind him.

[image]

*THE TADPOLE CAME BACK WITH WATERCRESS SANDWICHES
AND POND-LILY MILK.*

"Start her up! Start her up!" yelled the old gentleman rabbit. And Billy Bunny did, and Uncle Lucky jumped into the automobile just in time, too, for the Turkey Gobbler almost had him by the tail.

"Here's some money to pay for your pies," cried the honest old gentleman bunny, and he threw twenty or less carrot cents at the turkey gobbler, who gobbled them up, I mean picked them up, in a hurry for fear they might take root in the ground and grow into plain ordinary carrots if he let them lie there a minute.

And by this time of course the two rabbits were far away in their automobile, and if the next story has to be written to-night, as I know it must, I'll stop right here and wish you pleasant dreams and happy wakening.

STORY XII—BILLY BUNNY AND THE DONKEY

“That certainly was a lucky escape,” said Uncle Lucky to Billy Bunny as they sped away in their Luckymobile after overturning all the pies in the bake shop, as I told you in the last story.

“I shall be more careful the next time and see where I’m going,” and the old gentleman rabbit settled his stovepipe hat firmly on his head and held on tighter to the steering wheel, and then he honked the horn three times and a half to let everybody hear him coming before he ran over them; and then, all of a sudden, quicker than a lightning bug, a little gray donkey ran right in the middle of the road and kicked up his heels and brayed, which is the way a donkey talks, you know.

“Get out of the way!” yelled Uncle Lucky, and he put on the brake, but, oh dear me, and oh dear donkey! the brake wouldn’t work. It just got obstinate, I guess, when it saw that donkey’s heels, or else it thought the donkey would stop the automobile just as well, which he did, I’m sorry to say.

Yes, Siree, and Yes, Siree Man! That donkey kicked his shoes right off and the Luckymobile stopped and Uncle Lucky and Billy Bunny got out so quickly that they rolled over and over on the ground for maybe a block and a half and then they wouldn’t have stopped, only a policeman grabbed them.

But he let the little rabbits go just as soon as they told him what had happened.

“I’m getting tired of always having an accident,” said the old gentleman rabbit when they reached the Luckymobile.

“Don’t be a grumbler,” said the donkey.

“Well, then, don’t you be a kicker,” replied the old gentleman rabbit angrily, for Uncle Lucky had a temper, only he seldom used it because he was so kind and good. “If you hadn’t kicked, there would have been no accident, and as I said before, I’m getting sick and tired of accidents.”

Well, this made the donkey so ashamed he said he was sorry he had kicked

the Luckymobile, and then dear Uncle Lucky told him to climb in and he would take him down to the seashore to pick up pretty shells. So off they went again, the two little rabbits on the front seat and the donkey in the back, and by and by they came to the seashore.

“Let’s all go in bathing,” said Billy Bunny, so they went up to the bathing houses and put on bathing suits.

Well, after they were all dressed, I mean undressed, they hopped into the water and swam out to the raft. And Uncle Lucky stood on Billy Bunny’s shoulders and dived into the water and then the donkey stood on Uncle Lucky’s shoulders and slipped and fell onto the raft and sprained his tail, so that they all had to hurry out and get dressed and then go for the doctor.

And in the next story you shall hear how the doctor cured the donkey with a little sugar pill.

STORY XIII—BILLY BUNNY AND THE LITTLE SUGAR PILLS

I wonder if you remember where we left off in the last story? Well, in case you don’t, I’ll tell you. Billy Bunny and Uncle Lucky were taking the donkey to the doctor, for the donkey had sprained his tail while in bathing with the two little rabbits, you know.

Well, when they reached the doctor’s house he wasn’t in, but his wife was. So Uncle Lucky thought he’d tell her what was the matter with the donkey, for the donkey was feeling pretty miserable and wouldn’t get out of the automobile, but just sat there braying every once in a while in a mournful way.

“Why don’t you give him a sugar pill?” asked the kind doctor’s wife. “I haven’t got any sugar pills,” said Uncle Lucky, and neither had Billy Bunny, although he looked all through his knapsack and in the cabaret of the Luckymobile.

“I’ll get you some,” said the doctor’s wife, and presently she brought out a little round box just full of sugar pills.

“The directions are on the cover,” she said, handing the box to Billy Bunny, who ran back to the automobile to give some to the poor donkey, who was braying dreadfully just then.

Well, the little rabbit gave him one at once and then he read over the directions.

“One every minute until the patient feels worse and then one every second until the box is empty!”

“Gracious me!” exclaimed the little rabbit, “that’s enough to cure one of ever getting sick again,” and I guess you’d have thought the same thing if you had bitten one of those little sugar pills, for they were dreadfully bitter inside.

Well, Uncle Lucky and Billy Bunny took turns giving those pills to that obstinate braying donkey. Uncle Lucky held the watch and Billy Bunny held the donkey. You see, it took almost a minute to get a pill down that obstinate donkey so that as soon as one was down it was time to start with another, and as Uncle Lucky said it was dangerous not to follow directions exactly when giving medicine, it was just about all the two little rabbits could do to take care of that obstinate donkey.

“Oh, let me go, I humbly bray.
I’ll never be sick again, I say.
Don’t make me take another pill;
They’re only sugared on the sill.

“Inside they’re bitter as can be.
You’ll surely end in killing me.
Oh, let me go, I humbly bray,
I’ll never be sick again, I say.”

“Well, if you’ll promise,” said Uncle Lucky, “you may go.” And would you believe it, that donkey jumped out of the automobile and whisked his tail and started for home as fast as you please, just as though he had never been sick. Wasn’t that wonderful? And if I can get that pill box from Billy Bunny, I’ll tell you the name of those pills in the next story.

STORY XIV— BILLY BUNNY AND THE BILLY GOAT

I'm sorry, but Billy Bunny threw away the pill box after the donkey was cured, so I can't tell you the name of those little sugar coated pills, but if you call up Dr. Quack, one, two, three, down goes she, I'm sure he will prescribe for you over the wire, and perhaps then you won't have to take any medicine at all.

Well, it's time now to tell about Billy Bunny and Uncle Lucky Lefthindfoot, his dear, kind, generous rabbit uncle.

"I'm never going to give anybody any medicine as long as I live," said the old gentleman rabbit, taking out his blue polka-dot handkerchief and wiping his spectacles and then the back of his neck and the tip of his nose.

"You never even get thanked for it." And then Uncle Lucky put his handkerchief on his nose and his spectacles in his pocket. Oh, dear me! I mean he did just what I didn't say he did, and after that he climbed into the Luckymobile beside Billy Bunny and drove away.

"Hip hurrah! Hip hurray!
I'm going to join the colors to-day.
Maybe I'll be a soldier gay,
Or a sailor boy on the ocean spray.
It all depends what they're going to say
When I tell them I want to join the fray."

"Who's singing?" asked Uncle Lucky, holding his right paw behind his left ear and wiggling his nose up and down and sideways so fast that it made a little fly dizzy to look at it. And just then they came across a Billy Goat standing outside a tent dressed in khaki with a gun over his shoulder.

"Halt! Who goes there?" cried the sentry. "Halt!" and of course Uncle Lucky put on the brakes and made the Luckymobile stop right then and there.

"Friend or foe?" asked the sentry, looking into the automobile and lifting the cushions off the seats and opening the cabaret and lighting the lamps and honking the horn, and, oh, dear me! doing anything and everything he could to annoy good, kind Uncle Lucky.

"What do you think we are?" asked Billy Bunny. "We are U. S. A. Bunnies. Don't you make any mistake about that!"

"I beg your pardon," said the sentry, saluting the two rabbits most respectfully, "I only wanted to make sure. These are war times, you know, and we must be on the lookout every minute of the day and every second of the night!"

And then he saluted again and turned away. And then, all of a sudden, the band began playing, but it must have been off in the woods, somewhere, for the little bunnies couldn't see it.

Hurrah for Uncle Samuel,
King of the U. S. A.
Three cheers for the Blue,
And the Red and White, too,
And the Silver Stars, I say.
And here's to the sailor lad in blue
And the soldier boy in brown,
From the farm and the mine,
And the big steel mills,
Or the little old home town.

STORY XV—BILLY BUNNY AND MRS. BRUIN

In the last story I left off very suddenly while the band was playing, you remember, and I will tell you the reason why.

My typewriter got so excited over the song about the sailor lad in blue and the soldier boy in town, I mean in brown, that it began dancing to the music and of course then I couldn't write another word.

Well, anyway, you remember that Billy Bunny and his good, kind Uncle Lucky were just leaving the Billy Goat Sentry who had stopped them in their automobile, to continue their journey of adventure. So off they started down the road and by and by they came across a big black bear with two little cubs.

"Now there's going to be more trouble, I know it," said little Billy Bunny, but good, kind Uncle Lucky didn't think so. You see, he was always looking on the bright side of things, so he called out to Mrs. Bruin, which was the lady bear's name, I believe, "Won't you get into the Luckymobile and we'll take you to town?" and of course the little bears said yes right away, for they had never ridden in an automobile in all their lives.

Well, in they climbed and after Uncle Lucky had leaned over and closed the door, for the bears were so excited they had forgotten to do it, he started up the automobile and away they went to Rabbitville, for that was the nearest town.

And pretty soon the two little bears began to sing:

“Uncle Lucky is so kind
 To take us for a drive,
That we will get some honey
 From out the big beehive.
We’ll put it in a little box,
 To keep it clean and neat,
And then the flies won’t eat it
 Nor touch it with their feet.”

And after that Mrs. Bruin said: “Mr. Lucky Lefthindfoot, if you will stop at the next cross road I’ll get out and see if I can’t find the honey for you.” Well, when they came to the place, Mrs. Bruin climbed out and went into the woods. But before she left she told the two little bears not to move and not to annoy Uncle Lucky nor Billy Bunny, but to be quiet until she came back.

Well, I don’t know exactly what happened in the woods, but pretty soon Mrs. Bruin came tearing back with the whole swarm of bees after her. Some had got under her bonnet and were stinging her ears and some had crawled inside her silk mitts and were stinging her hands, and oh, dear me, it was just dreadful!

And when Uncle Lucky saw what was the matter he told her to hurry up and get into the automobile. And then he made it go so fast that one of the bees lost his stinger because he couldn’t keep up with it, and he didn’t have time to take it out of Mrs. Bruin’s ear.

Well, wasn’t it too bad? And in the next story I’ll tell you how Mrs. Bruin said good-by to Billy Bunny.

STORY XVI—BILLY BUNNY AND THE BEAR CUBS

You remember in the last story what a dreadful time Mrs. Bruin had to get away from the stinging bees, and how if it had not been for dear, kind Uncle Lucky she never would have gotten away?

Well, the bees were soon left far behind, for the automobile went very fast, and by and by they came to Mrs. Bruin's cave. So she invited the two little rabbits in, for by this time everybody was hungry, and the two little bears were almost starved.

Now, Mrs. Bruin had a big closet where she kept all sorts of nice things to eat and before long cake and milk and lettuce leaves and apple pie were on the table and the feast commenced.

And after that they wound up the graphophone and heard a lovely song, which I'm going to tell to you because it was so pretty. And this is the way the words went and you can make up any kind of music to go with it, if you wish:

By-o-by, little bear cub,
In your cave on the windy hill.
Safe in the care of dear mother bear
Cuddle up tight and be still.
Father is out in the woods, and soon he
Will be coming home safe to baby and me.
So cuddle up tight for the shadows of night
Are creeping o'er meadow and lea.

And do you know, those dear little Bear cubs went sound to sleep and were put to bed without waking up. Wasn't that nice? And that's the way little boys and girls should behave.

Never give mother a worry or care, but be good like a dear little fuzzy wool bear. Goodness me! I'm making up poetry myself only my typewriter didn't make the lines go just the way they should.

Well, after this Billy Bunny and Uncle Lucky got into the automobile and drove away, and by and by the stars came out and the big round moon, and they were still far from home. But they didn't care. No, sirreemam.

Billy Bunny hopped out and lighted the lamps, and Uncle Lucky turned up his coat collar for the night wind was chilly, and then they started off again. And by and by, not so very long, they came to a little hotel called "Cuddle Inn." "That's the place for your uncle," said the kind old gentleman rabbit. "Let's inquire," which means to find out, "if they will take us for the night."

So Billy Bunny hopped out and went into the hotel office, and the landlord, who was a nice-looking squirrel, with a beautiful gray bushy tail, said, "I have a nice room with two beds," and then he put the Luckymobile in the barn and the two little rabbits went to sleep before they took off their watches; they were so tired, and if the old cow doesn't blow her horn to wake me up before it's morn, I'll tell you in the next story what happened after that.

STORY XVII— BILLY BUNNY AND THE SQUIR- REL INNKEEPER

Wake up! Wake up! It's early morn,
 The cock is tooting his little tin horn.
 The morning wind is singing a tune
 About the roses that bloom in June.
 It's time to be up, for the day is here,
 And the sky is shining bright and clear.

So out of bed hopped Billy Bunny and Uncle Lucky, and then they wound their watches, for they were so tired the night before that they had gone to bed with them on, as I told you in the last story.

Well, when they got downstairs they found the squirrel who owned "Cuddle Inn" already up and dressed. A most delicious smell of hot coffee and rolls came from the kitchen, so the little rabbits went into the dining room and read the menu card.

And what do you think they ordered? Lettuce leaves, with cream all over them, and carrot candies, with maple syrup, and corn flake muffins and warm milk, and, let me see, oh, yes! oh, yes! apple pie! For Uncle Lucky loved apple pie, and Billy Bunny loved it just as much, although he couldn't eat as many as the old gentleman rabbit could, for the reason that he ate so many candy carrots!

"And now that we are through breakfast," cried little Billy Bunny, "let's go fishing, for I heard a boy say outside the window that the trout in the forest brook were nibbling at pieces of cheese, they were so hungry." Just think of that!

So the kind Squirrel Innkeeper got out two fishing poles and Billy Bunny and Uncle Lucky started off.

Well, by and by they came to the trout stream and commenced to fish, and

in a little while they had three big trout. Then they put them in a basket with nice wet leaves and after that they sat down for lunch. And then they fell asleep. And while they were dreaming that a big whale had swallowed both hooks and was pulling them into the water a tramp cat came by and stole the basket of trout.

Yes, sir! As soon as she smelt fish she walked right up and without making a sound lifted up the basket and tiptoed away, and of course when the two little rabbits woke up they couldn't find the basket of fish.

"Well, that's a nice howdy-do," exclaimed Uncle Lucky ruefully, which means even worse than sadly, you know. "What shall we tell the Squirrel Innkeeper? It's his basket, you know, although the fish belonged to us?"

And while they were wondering what to do, an old basket maker came by with a pack of baskets. So Uncle Lucky took out his purse and bought one, and then he and Billy Bunny began again to fish. But, oh, dear me! I guess the trout had all gone away, for they never got a bite, except from a mean old mosquito, who stung dear Uncle Lucky on the little left hind toe.

And in the next story, if the Tailor Bird doesn't sew up the bottoms of my trousers so that I can't get my collar on in the morning, I'll tell you more about Uncle Lucky Lefthindfoot and his little nephew, Billy Bunny.

STORY XVIII—BILLY BUNNY AND THE TAILOR BIRD

Well, the Tailor Bird didn't sew up the bottoms of my pantaloons so that I couldn't get on my collar, as I told you I was afraid he would in the last story.

But he did something else. He sent in his bill—I mean he pushed his bill in through the open window—and asked me if I was ready to try on my new spring suit. But I told him I didn't have time because I had to write a Billy Bunny story. So he flew away with his bill without another twitter.

And after he had flown for three hundred thousand short flutters he came to where Billy Bunny and Uncle Lucky were fishing.

"There's no use to fish any more, my friends," said the Tailor Bird, "for the trout have gone to a dance and they don't bite when they dance."

"That's very kind of you to tell us that," said Uncle Lucky, and he pulled his

hook out of the water. But would you believe it, he had a ten-dollar bill on the end of it! Yes, sir! He did.

And if I thought there were any more ten-dollar bills in that trout stream I'd go right off now without finishing this story and fish there for the rest of my life.

"Hip, hurray!" cried Billy Bunny, and then he pulled in his hook and line, and would you believe me again, even if I don't believe it myself, he had a twenty-dollar bill on his hook! Well, the little rabbit was so excited that he said "Hip, hurray!" three times and a half without stopping, and then he put the money in his pocket, and so did Uncle Lucky, and after that they said good-by to the Tailor Bird and went back to the hotel and told the Squirrel Innkeeper all about it. But he only laughed and said that was the best fish story he had ever heard.

"Well, then," said Uncle Lucky, "as long as you don't believe us, we'll be going." So he and Billy Bunny got into the Luckymobile and drove away, and by and by they came to a poor little mouse who had on a ragged skirt and a torn sunbonnet.

And what do you think dear, kind Uncle Lucky did? Why, he stopped the automobile and gave her his ten-dollar bill.

"Now run home to your mother," said the generous old gentleman rabbit, "and tell her to buy you a new dress and something for herself." And didn't she run!

That is, after she got over her surprise, for at first she could hardly believe her eyes, for I guess she'd never seen a ten-dollar bill before.

"The next poor person I see I'm going to give my twenty-dollar bill to," said Billy Bunny.

"Well, you'll have plenty of chances," said his Uncle, who of course had seen a good deal of the world and knew there were a few poor people left, although there were lots of money in banks and old stockings in farm-houses.

Now, I haven't room to-night to tell you who Billy Bunny gave his money to, but if you'll wait until to-morrow night you shall hear all about it—that is, unless some poor person sees Billy Bunny before I do.

STORY XIX—BILLY BUNNY AND ROBBIE REDBREAST

Well, it was two or three days before Billy Bunny came across a poor person to whom he might give his twenty-dollar bill, and then Uncle Lucky wouldn't let him. Wasn't that strange?

But the reason, you see, was because it was a tramp, and Uncle Lucky said: "A tramp is a man who hates work, and anybody who hates work is his own worst enemy."

And then he told Billy Bunny that if the tramp got the twenty dollars he'd hate work even more, so Billy Bunny put the money back into his pocket and later on he gave it to his dear mother. Which, I think, was the nicest thing he could have done.

"And now, my dear nephew," said the kind old gentleman rabbit, "let's go back to the Old Briar Patch, for I know your mother is lonely. You have been away so long."

And then they turned the automobile toward Old Snake Fence Corner and by and by they saw Mrs. Bunny hanging out the clothes on the line, for it was Monday morning, which is wash-day in Rabbitville, just as it is in Newport and Hoboken.

And when Mrs. Bunny saw them she was so excited that she pinned her thumb by mistake to the clothesline with a clothespin, and couldn't get away until Uncle Lucky pulled down the clothesline and Billy Bunny pulled off the clothespin.

"Where have you two been?" she asked when she had finished hugging her little bunny boy. But I won't tell you what Billy Bunny told her, for you know it already and, anyway, it would take maybe two hundred and forty-nine and a half stories to do it. So we'll leave Billy Bunny alone for a little while with his dear mother and go across the Pleasant Meadow to the Old Farm Yard to see how Cocky Ducky and Henny Jenny are.

And maybe we'll hear something nice about Ducky Doodles and Turkey Purky and Mrs. Cow, unless you've forgotten all about these old friends.

Well, it's strange how news travels. Robbie Redbreast had seen Billy Bunny and Uncle Lucky drive up to the Old Brier Patch, and had flown over to tell the Weathercock on the Old Barn, who told Cocky Ducky and then, of course, all the Barn Yard Folk knew that Billy Bunny was back again at the Old Brier Patch.

Then Ducky Doodle said he thought he'd go for a swim, and off he waddled to the Old Mill Pond. And as soon as he got there he told Uncle Bullfrog. But he didn't tell the Miller's Boy. No, siree! He didn't want him to know, you may be sure.

And then, pretty soon, not so very long, Robbie Redbreast flew into the Friendly Forest and told Old Mother Magpie the news, and after that everybody knew that Mr. William Bunny had returned home from his travels. And that

night the twinkle twinkle star shone right over the little rabbit's room and sang:

The twinkle twinkle star will peep
At Billy Bunny fast asleep,
And send to him a pretty dream
Of silver fishes in a stream.

STORY XX—BILLY BUNNY AND THE BABBLING BROOK

The next morning after Billy Bunny and Uncle Lucky had returned to the Old Brier Patch, as I told you in the last story, it rained and poured, and, of course, nobody could go out.

If it had been a gentle shower it wouldn't have made any difference, but it rained so hard that I really believe Billy Bunny would have been drowned if he had even hopped out of the front door and back again.

"Now the best thing for you to do," said Mrs. Bunny after breakfast, "is to go up into the garret and play with all your old toys. You've been away so long they'll all seem just like new."

So Billy Bunny hopped upstairs and Uncle Lucky sat down and read the Bunnyville "Bugle," and Mrs. Bunny washed up the breakfast dishes, and, of course, they all had a lovely time in spite of the rain.

Well, it turned out just as Mrs. Bunny had said. The toys in the garret all seemed just like new and some Billy Bunny had forgotten all about, so that he had a lovely time till lunch, and then the sun came out and dried up the wet places, and the Pleasant Meadow looked twice as green and lovely as before.

Now whenever it rained Uncle Lucky's leg hurt him—the leg you remember that was shot by the Miller's Boy—so he said to his little nephew, "You run out on the meadow and play and I'll stay home with your mother, for my leg hurts me and I don't want to do any hopping to-day."

Then the little rabbit hopped away by himself and by and by he came to the Babbling Brook. So he looked into the water and when he saw his face he

began to laugh.

For Billy Bunny hadn't looked at himself for so long he had forgotten how he looked, and, anyway, he had grown so large that he wouldn't have known himself if he hadn't been sure that there was nobody else looking into the water at the same time.

And while he was laughing Mrs. Cow came along, the little bell tinkling at her throat and making such pretty music it seemed to say to the little rabbit:

"I'm just a tiny tinkling bell,
But everywhere I go
The people say I am so gay,
They love to hear me so.
Tinkle, tinkle, dinkle, dell,
Oh, I'm a happy little bell!"

"Did you hear what the little bell was saying?" asked Billy Bunny, but Mrs. Cow shook her head.

"It didn't say anything but tinkle, tinkle, did it?" But the little rabbit felt sure it did say just what he thought it did, so he asked the little bell to tinkle again, and it did, and the tinkles said the same thing all over again, and this made Billy Bunny very happy, even if Mrs. Cow didn't understand.

And in the next story you shall hear how Billy Bunny made a call at the Old Farm.

STORY XXI—BILLY BUNNY AND MRS. WILDCAT

Well, after Billy Bunny had said good-by to Mrs. Cow he hopped across the Pleasant Meadow till he came to the Old Barn Yard. And as soon as the Weathercock saw him you should have heard him crow. Yes, sireemam.

He crowed like a regular old-fashioned everyday rooster, and this made all the hens and chickens look up, and then, of course, they saw Billy Bunny. And they were so glad to see the little rabbit they forgot to wonder how the

Weathercock could grow.

I guess the only person who wasn't glad to see little Billy Bunny was Mr. Sharptooth Rat. He peeked out of his hole and scowled, but the little rabbit didn't care, for nobody liked Mr. Sharptooth Rat, anyway.

Well, by and by, just as little Billy Bunny was looking in Henny Jenny's nest to see what a lot of lovely eggs she had, who should come along but the Miller's Boy, and as soon as he saw the little rabbit he gave a yell and tried to catch him.

The chickens tried to get in his way, and Cocky Docky even tried to trip him up, but the Miller's Boy didn't stumble a bit. No, siree! He almost caught Billy Bunny, but as long as he didn't it's all right, although he scared the little rabbit nearly to death.

If the Miller's Boy had had his gun with him, or even his dog, I'm afraid there would have been no more Billy Bunny stories.

"Oh, pshaw!" said the Miller's Boy, as the little rabbit squeezed through a hole in the hen-house and hopped away. "I should like to have caught that little rabbit!" Then Cocky Docky began to crow, he was so glad he hadn't.

But Billy Bunny didn't stop for anything, he was so scared, and pretty soon he found himself in the Friendly Forest under the tree where Parson Owl lived. It was a long time since Billy Bunny had seen the old gentleman owl, so he stopped and looked up into the branches.

But oh, dear me! Instead of seeing the blinky-winky friendly face of old Parson Owl he saw a pair of yellow eyes and a big red mouth with sharp teeth. And then down from the tree jumped a wildcat and meowed in a dreadful way.

"Oh, please, Mrs. Wildcat, let me go," cried the little rabbit, and he looked around for a hollow stump to hide in or a hole to crawl into, but there wasn't anything like that in sight. So he turned to the cruel wildcat and said, "Please don't bite me!" And then he opened his knapsack and took out a big, round doughnut, the kind with a big hole inside, you know, and gave it to the wildcat.

"Take it home to your wild kittens instead of me, won't you please, Mrs. Wildcat?" And would you believe it, she said she would, for it pleased her to think that little Billy Bunny would give her a doughnut for her kittens, for no one else had ever done that before, you see.

STORY XXII—BILLY BUNNY AT

WINDY CAVE

You remember in the last story that Billy Bunny gave the Wildcat a doughnut to take home to her little wild kittens, and that was why she didn't take the little rabbit.

Well, as she walked off with the doughnut, Billy Bunny said to himself, "I'll never, never be without a doughnut in my knapsack!" And I guess you would have said the same thing, too, if a doughnut had saved you from a wildcat!

After that the little rabbit hopped along through the Friendly Forest, and by and by he came to the Windy Cave. Now I know I've never told you about this cave before because Billy Bunny never happened to visit it, but now that he has I'll tell you that it was strange sort of a place.

If you stood at the opening you could hear the winds moan and groan, and every once in a while a great gust would come out of the mouth of the great cave and almost blow you off your feet.

[image]

DOWN FROM THE TREE JUMPED THE WILDCAT.

Well, sir, that's just what happened to Billy Bunny. He no sooner stood right in front of the cave than a great blast of air knocked him off his feet and rolled him over thirty-three times and a half, and he would have rolled over thirty-four times even if a big log hadn't been in the way.

And it was mighty lucky for the little rabbit that the log was there, for if it hadn't been he would have rolled right over the edge of the mountain. Just think of that!

And just then a voice began to sing:

Oh, I'm the king of the windy cave
 Where I have my windy throne.
 And there I rule where it's nice and cool
 'Mid the glitter of precious stone.
 And when the autumn days are come
 I come forth with a lusty shout,
 And strip the trees of their whispering leaves

And strew them all about.

And then all the trees began to shiver and shake, but the wind king only laughed, as he whispered to the little rabbit: "Don't be afraid, Billy Bunny. I won't hurt you. Come into my cave and I'll give you a present!"

"What kind of a present?" asked the little rabbit, for he wasn't going to be fooled, no sireemam!

"A big ruby pin!" said the wind king.

So the little bunny went inside the cave with the wind king, but he didn't go in very far, for he was afraid.

"What's the matter?" asked the wind king. "You're not frightened, are you?"

"Not exactly," said Billy Bunny, trying to keep his teeth from chattering. "I guess I'm cold!"

Then the king opened a door and, oh my! wasn't it beautiful inside! The sides of the cave were diamonds and rubies and emeralds, and little gold and silver bells swung back and forth making a sweet kind of music.

"The little breezes are ringing the bells," said the wind king, and then he took out of a moss cushion a beautiful ruby scarfpin and handed it to Billy Bunny. "Put it in your tie," said the king, "and don't you ever lose it."

And in the next story if the dogwood tree in our yard doesn't catch cold to-night and lose its bark, so it can't scare the the pussy cat when she tries to climb up and catch the little robin in the nest, I'll tell you about Billy Bunny and the Canary bird.

STORY XXIII— BILLY BUNNY AND THE WILD CANARY

Well, the Dogwood Tree in our yard was all right this morning. It hadn't taken cold, and it was covered with lovely flowers, so I'm going to tell you some more about Billy Bunny, as I promised to in the last story.

Well, as soon as the wind king placed the beautiful ruby scarfpin in the

little rabbit's cravat he opened the door of his cave and gave a big puff, and away went Billy Bunny just like a bullet from a gun.

But he didn't care, for he landed as nicely as you please on a mossy bank, and then he looked in the brook to see if the ruby scarfpin was still in his cravat, and then he looked around to see what he would do next. And just then a little wild canary began singing this song:

“I wouldn't live within a cage,
I'd rather be wild and free;
Wherever I roam I'm always at home,
In forest or grassy lea.”

“And so am I,” cried Billy Bunny. “I'm a traveler; yes, I am.” And then the little canary flew down from the tree and said to the little rabbit: “I have a little yellow brother who has always lived in a cage. But he can't get me to live with him. I love the trees and the tall grasses too much.”

“Where do you live?” asked the little rabbit.

“Come and see,” said the little canary, and he flew off, and by and by he pointed to his tiny nest.

“If I had a pair of wings,” laughed the little rabbit, “I'd be able to look inside and see what kind of furniture you have. But I'm only a four-footed little rabbit. Good-by!” and he hopped away, and by and by he came to a field of corn. But it was too early for the corn to be ripe, so the little rabbit opened his knapsack and took out an apple pie, for it was lunch time. And just as he was going to bite off a nice, big, juicy piece a big black crow flew down and snatched the pie away.

And this made Billy Bunny very angry. Oh, my, but he was mad. And then he opened his knapsack and took out his gun and before the thieving crow had flown off more than a mile he dropped that apple pie. Yes, sireemam. The cork bullet hit him right on the end of his bill, and then of course he couldn't hold on to the pie any longer. And before he could fly down to pick it up the little rabbit was there.

“Oh, ho! Mr. Crow,
Do you like apple pie?
If so, better go
And buy one by and by.”

And this made the crow so angry that he flew over to a colored man who did whitewashing and asked him to paint him white. And in the next story you shall hear how Billy Bunny was fooled by three little sparrows.

STORY XXIV—BILLY BUNNY AND THE LITTLE SPARROWS

Well, as soon as Billy Bunny finished eating the apple pie which he had just gotten away from the bad crow who had stolen it, as I told you in the last story, he shouldered his knapsack and picked up his striped candy cane and then he set off once more on his journey of adventure.

And by and by he came to a telegraph pole where three little sparrows were swinging back and forth. And when they saw the little rabbit they cried out all together: "Helloa, Billy Bunny!"

"Who's telephoning to me?" asked the little rabbit, for he hadn't looked up, you see, and, of course, didn't know that the little sparrows were sitting on the wires.

And when the three little birds saw that he didn't know who was talking to him, they thought they'd have some fun and make believe some one was telephoning to the little rabbit. So one little sparrow said, in a deep, far-away kind of voice:

"Helloa! Helloa! Is this Billy Bunny of Snake Fence Corner?"

"Yes, this is Billy Bunny," cried the little rabbit, getting all excited and wiggling his little pink nose so fast that one of the little sparrows got so dizzy looking at him that she had to hold on with her bill. Pretty soon he hopped up close to the telegraph pole and leaned his ear against it.

"Helloa! Helloa! Who's calling me?
Please give the name, for I cannot see.
Who's at the other end of the wire, please?
Excuse me a minute—I'm going to sneeze."

And then Billy Bunny almost sneezed his head off, for the telegraph pole trembled so that it tickled his ear. And when you tickle a rabbit's ear you are very likely to make him sneeze.

Just then the three little sparrows began to laugh and twitter, and this, of course, made the little rabbit look up. And when he saw them he knew, at once, they were playing a joke.

“So you were calling me on the telephone, were you?” he asked, trying not to get angry. For he was a very good-natured little bunny, as you well know by this time.

“Yes, we were,” said the littlest sparrow, “but please don’t feel badly about it. We were only in fun.”

“I thought perhaps it was my mother, that is all,” answered the little rabbit, “and I was worried for fear she might be anxious about me.”

“Oh, she isn’t worried,” said the largest sparrow. And the middling-sized sparrow—the one, you know, who hadn’t said a word as yet—spoke up:

“Your Uncle Lucky is, though. I was at his house this morning and the little sparrow who lives on his front porch told me that the old gentleman rabbit was wondering what had become of you.”

“Well, I’ll go right off now and make him a call,” said Billy Bunny. And in to-morrow night’s story I’ll tell you what happens next.

STORY XXV—BILLY BUNNY AND ROBIN REDBREAST

In the last story I left off just where Billy Bunny was setting out to make a call on his good kind Uncle Lucky, you remember, and if you have forgotten, please take my word for it, for I keep a scrapbook of all these little stories and I’m sure I’m right, for I just looked to see.

Well, as the little rabbit hopped along with his knapsack on his back and his striped candy cane in his right paw, he heard a robin redbreast singing in her nest, and this is what she sang:

“Some day you’ll be old enough
To leave the dear home nest,
But till that day just grow and say
I’ll try to do my best

To make my wings grow big and strong
And learn to sing the whole day long,
For some day when I'm big and free
I'll build a nest in an apple tree."

And then the robin flew down to the ground and pushed back the pink sunbonnet on her head so that she could see the little rabbit without standing up on her toes.

"Well, here is my dear little friend, Billy Bunny," she twittered. "How is he to-day?"

"Very well, thank you, ma'am," replied the little rabbit, opening his leather knapsack to give her a piece of sponge cake for her little birdies. "That won't hurt them a bit," said he, "for my mother made it and it's very simple."

And then the little robins peeped over their nest and cried, "Oh, hurry, mother dear, and give us the cake," for they were just as fond of sponge cake as Billy Bunny was of lollypops, and while they were eating the cake he took a lollypop out of his knapsack and ate it, for he was hungry too, for it was half-past noon, and that's the hungry hour for rabbits, I am told.

Well, after that he said good-by and started off again for Uncle Lucky's house. "I must get there before sundown," he said to himself, "for I don't want to sleep out of doors to-night if I can help it."

So he hopped along as fast as he was able, but Mr. Happy Sun was in a hurry, too, and pretty soon he went down behind the purple hills and it began to grow dark. "Oh, dear! oh, dear!" sighed the little rabbit, "where am I going to sleep if I don't get to Uncle Lucky's house pretty soon?" And just then a sleepy voice exclaimed:

"Under this bush is a soft pile of leaves,
Come and sleep on it if you please."

So Billy Bunny hopped under the bush and there he saw a little ruffed grouse, who is often called a quail and sometimes a pheasant. "Oh, thank you, Mrs. Quail," said Billy Bunny, "you are very kind," and then he made a soft bed for himself and went to sleep, and if he wakes up early enough in the morning I'll tell you in the next story how he reached dear kind Uncle Lucky's house.

STORY XXVI—BILLY BUNNY

AND MRS. QUAIL

“Get up, get up, you lazy folks,
 I’m shining in the sky.
 Awake, awake, your breakfast take,
 Before the noon is nigh.
 No time for lazy folks I think,
 So don’t lie still and blink and blink,
 But jump up with a laugh and smile
 And sing a little all the while.”

SO up jumped Billy Bunny from his bed of leaves where he had slept all night, as I told you in the last story, and after he had combed his fur with a little chip and dusted off his knapsack he opened it and took out his breakfast.

And what do you suppose he had? Well, first he ate some nice fresh lettuce leaves, with powdered sugar carrots, and then a piece of apple pie, and when kind Mrs. Quail saw what a nice breakfast he had, she said:

“I like pie, Mr. William Bunny.” Now the reason the little rabbit hadn’t offered her some was because he hadn’t seen her. You see, she had gone to sleep on the other side of the bush.

“Here is some pie,” said Billy Bunny, and he gave her a big piece and some cracker crumbs and some birdseed and then a drink of lemon soda. Pretty soon Mrs. Quail didn’t feel a bit hungry, and neither did the little rabbit.

And after that he buckled on his knapsack and started off to find his dear Uncle Lucky, but first he thanked Mrs. Quail for her kindness in letting him sleep under her bush all night and part of the early morning.

Well, sir, that little rabbit hopped along almost all day, and still he didn’t reach his Uncle Lucky’s house. “I wonder if I have lost the way?” he said aloud, and, all of a sudden, a voice answered: “I guess you have. Lots of people do,” and a kind-looking old mooley cow pushed her head over the fence and smiled at him. And, oh, my, she had a big, beautiful smile, and this made the little rabbit laugh and forget how tired he was.

“Do you know where my Uncle Lucky lives—Mr. Lucky Lefthindfoot?” he asked.

“To be sure,” replied the mooley cow. “He lives over yonder,” and she pointed across the meadow. “Hop under the fence, little rabbit, and then hop

across the meadow, over the daisies and buttercups, and you'll find the place, never fear."

So the little rabbit did as she told him, and when he came to the fence on the other side he saw his uncle's house not very far away. But, oh, dear me! The fence was not at all like the fence on the other side. There wasn't any room between the woven wires to crawl through, and so Billy Bunny didn't know what to do.

But he didn't wonder very long. No, sireemam. He started right in to dig a tunnel under that wire fence, and pretty soon he was on the other side, hopping away toward Uncle Lucky's house, and in about five hundred and a half hops, skips and jumps he came to the front gate.

And there on the porch sat the kind old gentleman rabbit, with the big diamond pin which his nephew had given him shining like a star in his red tie. And in to-morrow's story I'll tell you what a good time the little rabbit had at his uncle's house.

STORY XXVII—BILLY BUNNY AND THE THEATER PLAY

As Billy Bunny hopped up the steps of Uncle Lucky's house, the old gentleman rabbit, who was lying in the hammock, as I told you in the last story, jumped up and said, "I'm glad to see you. Where have you been all this time?"

And then when he saw the beautiful ruby scarfpin in the little rabbit's tie—the ruby pin which the King of the Windy Cave had given Billy Bunny, you remember—he said: "And where did you get that mag-nif-i-cent pin?"

And of course the little rabbit told the old gentleman rabbit all about it, and when he finished the story it was time for supper. So Uncle Lucky opened the screen door just a little so that the flies wouldn't get in, and he and Billy Bunny squeezed through the crack and went into the dining room.

Well, after supper was over, they decided to go down to the village and see if there was a show at the Opera House that night. And sure enough there was, and the name of the play was "The Tortoise and the Hare."

"That sounds interesting," said Uncle Lucky and he bought two box seats

for two carrot dollars, and he and his little nephew went inside.

“Mr. Hare is a first cousin,” he said to Billy Bunny as they sat down in the box and leaned over the railing to look at the people.

Well, pretty soon the music started and then the curtain went up and the play commenced. I suppose you all have read the fable—how the tortoise and the hare ran a race and the hare got so far ahead that he lay down to take a nap, but the slow old tortoise kept right on all the time, and when the hare woke up it was too late, for the tortoise had won the race.

Well, anyway, I’ve told you the story, but I haven’t told you what happened when the hare went to sleep. You see, he lay down near the box where Billy Bunny and kind Uncle Lucky were seated, and by and by, after he had been asleep for quite a long time, Uncle Lucky grew very nervous.

“My gracious!” he exclaimed to Billy Bunny, “if that silly cousin of ours does not wake up pretty soon he might as well sleep there all night, for the race will be won and the opera house closed up and we’ll be home in bed.”

And then Billy Bunny began to get very nervous, too, and he wiggled about in his seat and made funny little noises to wake up the hare. But the hare slept on, and I believe he even snored.

Well, sir, try as the two little rabbits might, they couldn’t wake him up, until, at last, Billy Bunny took the automobile horn, which he had brought in with him so that nobody could blow on it, and blew a dreadful loud blast.

And this woke up the hare and one of the ushers, who ran up to the box and begged Uncle Lucky not to let Billy Bunny blow on the horn again. “For,” said the usher, “it’s only a play and the hare mustn’t wake up until the tortoise wins the race.”

“Well, I won’t see my cousin beaten by an old tortoise,” said Uncle Lucky.

And he and Billy Bunny hopped out of the Opera House and went home.

STORY XXVIII—BILLY BUNNY AND MRS. WEASEL

As soon as Billy Bunny and Uncle Lucky got home after leaving the Opera House, as I told you in the last story, they heard a loud noise in the back yard.

“What’s that?” said Uncle Lucky, and he peeked around the corner of the porch while Billy Bunny took his popgun out of his knapsack so as to be ready in case it was a burglar.

“I don’t see anything,” whispered the old gentleman rabbit; “you take a look.” So Billy Bunny peeped around the corner and then he hopped backward, almost knocking Uncle Lucky head over tail.

And before you could say “Jack Rabbit!” Old Man Weasel jumped from behind the house and glared at the two rabbits with his wicked eyes.

“Good evening, Mr. Weasel,” said Uncle Lucky, pushing Billy Bunny behind him, for he was a brave old rabbit, was Uncle Lucky, and he was going to save his little nephew from being eaten up by the wicked weasel, if he could.

“Good evening, gentlemen,” replied Old Man Weasel, licking his lips and glaring at them with his fierce little eyes. “You look sweet and tender to me.”

“Your eyesight is pretty poor,” said Uncle Lucky bravely, “and I don’t feel very sweet just now, and I’m too old to be tender,” and he wriggled his nose so fast in the moonlight that it made Old Man Weasel dizzy to look at it, and he had to turn away, and while he wasn’t looking, Billy Bunny lifted his gun to his shoulder and pulled the trigger.

And when the cork hit the wicked weasel it made him jump right up into the air, and when he came down he sprained his right foot on a big stone so that he cried:

“Oh, dear! oh, dear! And woe is me!
I’ve sprained an ankle and a knee.
I cannot walk, I cannot run!
Plague take that little rabbit’s gun!
Oh, won’t you call an am-bu-lance,
My home is such a great dis-tance!”

“If you’ll promise not to come here again,” said kind Uncle Lucky, “I’ll call up the hospital. If you don’t promise I’ll call the Policeman Dog and ask him to tickle you with his club,” and the old gentleman rabbit hopped down to the front gate and pretended to call a policeman, which frightened Old Man Weasel nearly to death. He’d rather have a sprained knee than be tickled by a policeman’s club any day in the week.

“I’ll promise! I’ll promise!” he cried, and then Billy Bunny went to the telephone and called up the hospital and they sent an ambulance around. And the doctor—the man in white, you know, who sits on the back seat of the ambulance—tied up the weasel’s knee so he couldn’t bend it, and his ankle so he couldn’t wiggle it, and then he placed him in the ambulance, while the Policeman Dog

stood by to keep the crowds away, only of course there wasn't any crowds there, for it was midnight, you know.

And in the next story I will tell you more about the two little rabbits if they only get up in time, for they've stayed up pretty late to-night and may not hear the alarm clock in the morning.

STORY XXIX—BILLY BUNNY AND THE POLICEMAN DOG

"Well, that's a great relief," exclaimed Uncle Lucky, as the ambulance drove away with Old Man Weasel, who had tried to eat up Billy Bunny and his kind uncle in the story before this, and would have swallowed them both if the little rabbit hadn't hit him with a cork bullet from his popgun, you remember.

Of course, it was very kind of Billy Bunny to call up the ambulance to take away the wicked weasel, after he had sprained his ankle, but it was also very wise. For who wants a wicked weasel around, even if he has a sprained ankle and can't do you any harm?

Well, after everything was quiet and the Policeman Dog had taken a drink of cider and a cigar, the two little rabbits sat down on the front porch, for it was too late to go to bed, or maybe it was too early, for the first faint streaks of daylight were spreading over the sky, and by the time Uncle Lucky could unlace his shoes and untie his red cravat and wind his gold watch, it would be time to get dressed again.

So he and Billy Bunny sat down and waited for breakfast, and by and by the Japanese cook came out to sweep off the front porch, and when he saw Mr. Lucky Lefthindfoot and his nephew, Billy Bunny, sitting there, he ran back into the kitchen and dropped two eggs on the floor and put the tea into the coffee grinder and the salt into the sugar bowl, he was so excited because he thought it must be 'way past breakfast time.

And then the old gentleman rabbit began to sing:

"Never hurry—makes worry;

Worry makes you thin.
If you're clever you'll endeavor
Never to begin."

And I guess the Japanese cook heard him, for in a few minutes breakfast was ready, and this time the eggs were dropped on toast instead of the floor.

By and by, after Uncle Lucky had smoked his cigar, he and Billy Bunny went out to the garage and cranked up the Luckymobile and went for a ride. And when they had gone for a mile or less they came across their old friend the Circus Elephant.

But, oh, dear me! He was an awful sight. His left eye had a bandage over it and his trunk was rolled up in cotton and his left hind foot had an old carpet slipper on and his tail was done up in splints and he was weeping great big tears, for he felt dreadfully miserable.

"What is the matter?" asked Billy Bunny, as Uncle Lucky stopped the automobile.

"Oh, dear! Oh, dear!" sobbed the big animal. "I was in a Fourth of July celebration and the roman candles got mixed up with the sky-rockets and the cannon crackers with the pin wheels, and the first thing I knew I was hit in two million, nine hundred and a few dozen places, and if it hadn't been for a pink cross nurse I'd be a dead elephant by this time."

"Get into the automobile," said Uncle Lucky, "and we'll take you home with us," and in the next story, if the catbird doesn't scratch the dogfish, I'll tell you who broke the springs in the automobile, unless you guess who did before tomorrow night.

STORY XXX—BILLY BUNNY AND THE CIRCUS ELEPHANT

Let me see. I left off in the last story when the Circus Elephant stepped into the Luckymobile, didn't I? You remember he had been injured in a Fourth of July celebration, and good, kind Uncle Lucky offered to take him home.

Well as soon as he sat down the tires burst and then, of course, the automo-

bile wouldn't go, for the cabaret wouldn't work and the engine wouldn't whistle. So Billy Bunny got out the sticking plaster and fixed the tires and then he made the elephant blow them up with his trunk, but he wouldn't let him get in again.

No, sir. He said, "Now look here, Elly. You're too heavy for the Luckymobile, so you'll have to walk, but you can put your trunk in the back seat if that will help any." So the Circus Elephant lifted his trunk into the automobile and ran along behind until they came to Uncle Lucky's house.

And wasn't he tired when they reached the front gate! He was so tired that he lay down in the hammock and went sound to sleep and snored so loud that everybody thought the janitor had put on the steam, although it was July.

"Goodness me!" exclaimed the kind old gentleman rabbit, "that elephant makes so much noise that nobody will be able to sleep to-night!" And Uncle Lucky scratched his left ear with his right hind leg and tried to think what was best to do, for he just hated to wake up that poor tired elephant.

Well, just then, who should come along but a man with a piano organ, and as soon as Uncle Lucky saw him he asked him to play the loudest tune and play it just as fast as he could.

Of course the poor, tired Circus Elephant woke up, and when he saw that organ man, he jumped out of the hammock and ran down the front walk and grabbed the piano and threw it clear across the road into a pond.

And when the organ man saw that he started off as fast as he could and never came back, for he had always been dreadfully afraid of elephants, because when he was a boy he had given one a piece of chewing gum instead of a peanut, and he never forgot what the elephant did to him when he found it out.

"Look here, Elly," said Uncle Lucky, "if you'll promise not to snore I'll let you sleep in my bed to-night; but if you don't, you'll have to sleep out in the field, for nobody can stand the noise you make."

"Well, I can't stay all night, anyway," said the elephant, "for the circus comes to town to-day and I'll be in the performance this evening. Thank you, just the same." And then he said good-by to Billy Bunny and Uncle Lucky and walked down the road, but before he left he gave them each two tickets with his compliments.

And if the trolley car doesn't swim across the river and splash the conductor so that he can't ring up the fares, I'll tell you next time whether Uncle Lucky and Billy Bunny went to the circus.

STORY XXXI—BILLY BUNNY AND THE CHEERFUL LITTLE BIRD

You remember in the last story that the Circus Elephant gave Uncle Lucky and Billy Bunny tickets to go to the show. Well, I'm awfully sorry to tell you they didn't go, and the reason was because the tent caught fire, and before the firemen in Bunnytown could put out the flames the spangles were all burnt off the circus queen's dress and the ice cream cones were all melted and the peanuts roasted blacker than a coal, and the lemonade boiled over and burnt the alligator's tail so that he wouldn't stand on his head.

And oh, dear me! The circus folk all had to sleep with the animals, and the fat lady couldn't get into the monkey cage, so she had to lie down on the grass underneath for the night, and she caught an awful cold and almost had the chickenpox.

Of course Billy Bunny and his good, kind uncle were dreadfully disappointed, and when they got home they played on the victrola a new song called: "If you want to borrow money don't you ever come to me," and after that they went to bed, and when they woke up they heard the little sparrow singing on the front porch:

Sing a song of summer,
And the happy flowers;
Sing a song of sunshine
Through the golden hours

Always sing of gladness
Through the live-long year
Even in December,
When it's cold and drear.

"I'm going to take some crumbs out to that cheerful little bird," and kind Uncle Lucky sprinkled sponge cake crumbs all over the porch, and the sparrow and her little birdies had a scrumptious feast.

And after that the telephone rang and Mrs. Bunny called up to find out how Billy Bunny was. And when Uncle Lucky said he was very well she said she was glad, because if he had been sick she would have wanted him brought home im-me-die-ate-ly.

But as long as he wasn't she wanted him back anyway, because she was so lonely without him. And then of course the little rabbit had to say good-by to his dear kind uncle and start right off for the Old Brier Patch.

Well, sir! He hadn't gone for more than a million hops, and maybe a few skips and jumps, when he came across his old friend the Brown Horse. "Hello, there!" said the good-natured animal; "how is your Bunny Highness?"

"I'm all right," said the little rabbit, "but what are you doing here in the woods?"

"Ssh!" whispered the Brown Horse. "I ran away to-day and I'm afraid the policeman will catch me for exceeding the speed limit."

"So I'm hiding here." And just then they heard a whistle, but you'll have to wait to find out whether it's a policeman or a locomotive engine until the next story, for I've no more room in this one.

STORY XXXII—BILLY BUNNY AND THE MILLER'S BOY

As soon as the Brown Horse heard that whistle which I mentioned in the last story, but couldn't tell you what kind of a whistle it was because I had no more room, he jumped clear across the brook which was close by and never stopped running until he found himself once more in his own stable.

And then before Billy Bunny could even say "Call me up on the telephone," or "Won't you lunch with me to-morrow," of course the Brown Horse was out of sight. So the little rabbit waited a minute to see if he could hear the strange whistle again, and sure enough he did, and it was right close to him this time, and when he looked around there stood the Miller's Boy.

And before Billy Bunny could hop away something hard hit him on the head and he rolled over on the ground and didn't wake up until he found himself rolled up in the Miller Boy's jacket, and oh, dear me! The Miller's Boy was walking home as fast as he could and there was our dear little Billy Bunny wrapped up like a Christmas present so that he couldn't even wiggle his left ear.

"Oh, mercy me!" cried the little rabbit, "I'm a goner now as sure as Monday comes after Sunday and sunshine after rain and a stomach ache after eating green apples!"

And then he tried to squirm about, but the Miller's Boy squeezed all the harder, so Billy Funny decided to keep quiet, for he didn't want to have all his breath squeezed out of him, you know.

Well, by and by, as the Miller's Boy walked along, the jacket slipped a little under his arm, and then Billy Bunny saw a little light through the arm sleeve. And before you could say "Jumping cats!" he pushed through the sleeve and down to the ground and hopped away, free as a bird in the air or a fish in the ocean.

And I'm so glad that I'm going to say "Hip, hip, hurrah!" just as loud as I can, for if there is anybody I hate it is that Miller's Boy. Ever since I started to tell you about Billy Bunny he has been trying to catch this dear little rabbit and this time I certainly thought he had. And now that Billy Bunny is safe I'm so happy I could shout again.

Go home you horrid Miller's Boy,
Who's always trying to annoy
The Friendly Little Forest Folk
By trying every kind of joke.
Go home and tie the bags of meal
And never try again to steal
A little rabbit on his way,
Who's always cheerful all the day.

Well, after the little rabbit had hopped for maybe a mile or three, he thought he was safe, and so he stopped to rest, and I would tell you right now what he did, only I must stop so as to get this story in the paper in time for tonight, so pleasant dreams and happy wakening.

STORY XXXIII—BILLY BUNNY AND OLD MOTHER MAGPIE

As I told you in the last story, little Billy Bunny stopped to rest after escaping from the Miller's Boy, and while he stood on his hind legs and looked around, who should fly down from a tree but Old Mother Magpie. And the very first thing she said to the little rabbit was, "My goodness, what a dirty little bunny you are."

And this of course made Billy Bunny very angry, for he didn't think he was dirty. So he opened his knapsack and took out a little mirror which a lady bunny had dropped one day in the Friendly Forest and looked at himself, and sure enough there was a great black smudge right across his face.

"Ha! Ha!" laughed Old Mother Magpie. "You wouldn't believe me, would you?" And then she laughed again.

"No, I wouldn't believe anything you said," answered the little rabbit, "for you've told more untruths about people than anybody I know, and that's the reason they call you 'Old Mother Mischief.'"

Well, sir! This made her so mad that she flew at the little rabbit, and maybe she would have pecked his eyes out if he hadn't put on a pair of goggles that belonged to his dear, kind Uncle Lucky.

"Please go 'way," said the little rabbit, "I can't help being rude to you because you're so rude to other people," and he hopped away as fast as he could before she could say another unkind word, and by and by he came across Squirrel Nutcracker.

Now the old gentleman squirrel had grown pretty old and was very hard of hearing, and when Billy Bunny said "Good morning" he never heard him at all, but just sat there on the old log and ate a peanut which he had saved from the last circus.

So Billy Bunny hopped up behind him and leaned over and called out quite loud right in his left ear, "Good morning!" And this so startled Old Squirrel Nutcracker that he swallowed the peanut shell, and then he began to choke until he got black and blue in the face.

And, of course, this frightened the little rabbit, too, for he felt it was his fault, so he patted Old Squirrel Nutcracker on the back, and by and by the old gentleman squirrel stopped coughing, although he was dreadfully mad to think that he had swallowed the circus peanut without even tasting it.

“Look here, young rabbit,” he said with a scowl, “don’t you ever again shout in my ear! If you do I’ll pin back both your ears with a pine needle and send you home to your mother!” Wasn’t that a dreadful thing for him to say?

Well, sir, after that Billy Bunny thought it was time to be going, so he bowed to the old squirrel and hopped away, and after maybe a million hops, skips and jumps, he reached the Old Brier Patch, where he found his dear mother standing in the doorway of her little house waiting for her bunny boy.

And that’s a good place to leave him for to-night, don’t you think so? For we’ll know he’s safe and sound with his own dear mother, so go to sleep and to-morrow I’ll tell you another story; yes, I will, if you are good.

STORY XXXIV—BILLY BUNNY AND DICKEY MEADOW MOUSE

Ting-a-ling! went the rising bell, and Billy Bunny opened his left eye and twinkled his nose and stretched his right hind leg, and then he was wide awake.

But before he got out of bed he pulled out his gold watch and chain, the watch which his kind Uncle Lucky Lefthindfoot had given him, you remember, from under his pillow, for he was so sleepy he wondered if his mother hadn’t made a mistake. But, no, she hadn’t.

It was half past fourteen o’clock and Mr. Happy Sun was laughing through the little window. So up jumped Billy Bunny and combed his fur and parted it in the middle down his back, and after that he was almost ready for breakfast, except to brush his teeth with a new toothbrush which he had bought at the Three-in-one-cent store.

After breakfast he started right out to play on the Pleasant Meadow, and the first person he saw was little Dickey Meadow Mouse. He had just come out of his little grass ball house and was looking around to see what he would do.

“Good morning,” said Billy Bunny, “how are you this lovely day?”

And of course Dickey Meadow Mouse said he was well, for the little people of the Pleasant Meadow are never ill unless some enemy injures them, for they know how to take very good care of themselves, you know, and kind Mother Nature always provides them with enough to eat, and sometimes more.

And while they stood there laughing and talking Tommy Turtle passed by with his little shell house on his back, which always goes with him, rain or shine. Isn't it nice not to have to move out of your house, but always have it go with you?

"Come with me, Billy Bunny," cried Tommy Turtle, "I'm going down to the Old Mill Pond for a swim." So the little rabbit said good-by to Dickey Meadow Mouse and went with Tommy Turtle, and by and by they came to the pond where Old Uncle Bullfrog sat all day on his log and caught flies until he grew so fat that his white waistcoat bulged out till the buttons nearly popped off.

"Kerchunk! Kerchunk! Kerplunk! Kerplunk!
I'm king of this Old Mill Pond.
I never care to go anywhere,
Not even a foot beyond.

For I'm contented to stay right here
Where the cattails wave in the at-mos-phere,
And the Darning Needles and Bottle Flies
Dart and skim 'neath the summer skies."

And then the old frog blinked his eyes and swallowed a foolish fly that came too near.

"Top of the morning to you, Uncle Bullfrog," said little Billy Bunny. "Does the Miller's Boy throw stones at you nowadays?"

"Sometimes," said the old gentleman frog, "but not so often of late, for his father is away and he doesn't have the time. He has to look after the Old Mill, you know."

And just then a stone splashed in the water, but I'll let you guess who threw it until the next story.

STORY XXXV—BILLY BUNNY

AND BIG BROWN BEAR

If you haven't guessed who threw the stone at Old Uncle Bullfrog in the last story, I'll tell you right now. It was that bad Miller's Boy.

Yes, siree. There he stood, not very far away, and he was just going to throw another, when the old gentleman frog thought it was time to take a dive and the little rabbit thought it was time to take a hop, and Tommy Turtle to take a swim and soon Uncle Bullfrog was deep down on the muddy bottom where he ate his breakfast without a thought of the Miller's Boy.

Well, after a few short hops Billy Bunny found himself in the Friendly Forest close to Timmy Chipmunk's little store, where he sold candy carrots and lettuce sandwiches and lemon soda.

So the little rabbit opened his knapsack and took out a handful of carrot pennies and bought a lovely apple pie, which the little chipmunk's mother had baked that very morning. And as soon as the pie was all gone Billy Bunny hopped away and by and by he came to the cave where the Big Brown Bear sold honey.

Now Mr. Bear was very cross this particular morning, for the day before while he was looking over a bees' nest some of the bees had been very rude and had stung him on the nose.

And now it was all swollen up so that he couldn't find a pocket handkerchief big enough to tickle it with, and so of course he was very miserable.

"I don't feel at all sociable," which means friendly, you know, he said to the little rabbit. "So you had better be on your way and leave a crusty old bear to himself." But do you think Billy Bunny did this? No siree, and a no sireemam.

He just opened his knapsack and took out some lettuce cold cream and rubbed it gently over the bear's nose and pretty soon it felt so well that Mr. Bear said, "Come with me, Billy Bunny, and we'll go down to the Three-and-one-cent store to buy a handkerchief, for now that my nose is well again, I don't care if I spend all my money to buy a handkerchief."

So off they started, and when they reached the store the bear forgot all about his nose and bought a little blue tin whistle instead. Wasn't that fine, for it's lots more fun to blow on a whistle than on a handkerchief, don't you think so?

"Well, now that you are happy again," said the little rabbit, "I'll go my way, for I'm seeking adventures, you know, and I want to see the wide, wide world so as to grow up a learned rabbit," and he hopped off down the Friendly Forest trail.

And in the next story, if the ink-well on my desk doesn't stub my quill pen

when I sign my name to this story, I'll tell you more about little Billy Bunny.

STORY XXXVI—BILLY BUNNY AND PROFESSOR CROW

Let me see. I left off in the last story just as little Billy Bunny was hopping down the Friendly Forest path. Well, he hadn't gone very far when he saw old Professor Crow.

Now, the professor wasn't very busy, you know, for school was over and there were no little people to teach how to crow—I mean how to read and write—so he had plenty of time to himself, and as soon as he saw the little rabbit he flew down from the tree and began to talk. "I'm sorry to have to tell you," he began, "that my little boy, Blackie Crow, has the measles."

And you know that's a dreadfully uncomfortable kind of a thing to have, for you have to be so careful of your eyes. Now, when an owl gets the measles it doesn't make so much difference, for they don't want to go out in the sunlight, but with a crow, oh dear me and oh dear you! it's the hardest thing in the world to keep in the dark, and Professor Crow gave a tremendous sigh and looked very sad.

"I'm very sorry for Blackie Crow," said the little rabbit. "Won't you tell him I'm sorry?" and then the generous little rabbit took a lollypop out of his knapsack and told Professor Crow to take it home to his little boy.

Wasn't that nice? I think I know a little boy who would be glad to have the measles every day if he could get a lollypop.

And after that Billy Bunny shut up his knapsack and swung it over his shoulder and hopped away, and by and by, not so very long, he heard a little bird singing:

"Up in my nest I've five little birds,
Waiting for mother to feed them.
What would I do if I should lose two?
I'd be too unhappy to heed them.
So that is the reason I look everywhere

When I fly from my nest in the bright morning air.”

And then she looked down at little Billy Bunny with his striped candy cane in his right paw and his knapsack over his shoulder.

And then she laughed out loud, and her laugh sounded just like music, for it was a mother bird’s laugh, you know, and that always has the music of love in it.

“Good morning, Mrs. Bird,” said the little rabbit. “I won’t hurt your little ones.”

“I know that,” said the mother bird, “for you are a kind little rabbit. But there are lots of four-footed little animals who are very unkind to birds, so that is the reason I sing this song to let them know that I am always watching over my nest.”

And after that Billy Bunny hopped away, but before he went he left a big piece of chocolate cake on a clean white stone for Mrs. Bird to crumble up for her little ones. Wasn’t that nice of the little rabbit, for he was very fond of chocolate cake, I know, for he once told me so.

STORY XXXVII—BILLY BUNNY AND MRS. GROUSE

Well, before I go any further, I’ll tell you that the little birds were so delighted with the chocolate cake which the little rabbit left for them on the clean white stone, as I told you in the last story, that they went right to sleep after eating it and dreamed of a little white candy bunny and a big birthday cake with seven pink candles in it.

And after that little Billy Bunny hopped away, lippity, lip, clippity clip, and by and by he came to the Old Brush Heap where Cousin Cottontail lived before she moved next door to his mother in the Old Brier Patch at Snake Fence Corner.

And just as he reached the little patch that led into the Old Brush Heap he met Mrs. Grouse with her brood of little brown birdies.

“Good morning, Billy Bunny,” she said, while her small brood hid them-

selves in the dry leaves that strewed the ground. "Come here, children," she called, "Billy Bunny won't hurt you. He's a friend." So the little brown birds came out from their hiding places and stood in a row and bowed as nicely as you please, and the little rabbit opened his knapsack and gave them each a candy carrot.

Wasn't that kind of him? And after that he said a little poem, and how I came to hear it was because a little wild canary, who was sitting close by, told it to me.

And this is the way it went:

"I am Billy Bunny from Old Snake
Fence Corner Town,
So don't be worried, don't be hurried,
Little birds of brown.
Mother knows I will not harm you;
I'm no cruel snake to charm you,
So be merry; here's a cherry
From the Circus Clown."

And then he gave them a big red cherry, a candy cherry, you know, which his friend the Clown at the circus had given him a long time ago.

"Well, I must be hopping along," said the little rabbit after the little birds had picked the cherry candy all to pieces until there was nothing left but the stone.

So away he went again to seek more adventures, and after a little while, not so very long ago, he came to the railroad bridge where you remember he and his brother, Bobby Tail, had taken a ride one day, oh, so long ago, maybe one hundred stories back, in a big empty freight car. And just then a train came by, and when the engineer saw Billy Bunny he stopped the train, for I suppose he thought the little rabbit wanted to get aboard.

And the brakeman helped him on and away went the train, over the rails that went clunkity, clunk, clunkity clunk, while the smoke from the engine trailed out behind, like a long gray feather. And the train didn't stop until the brakeman called out Lettuceville, where a thousand little rabbits raised lovely green lettuce in a big field.

And in the next story you shall hear how the little rabbit scratched his ear and had some lettuce salad, too, all covered o'er with sugar dew.

STORY XXXVIII—BILLY BUNNY AND THE CARLOAD OF LET- TUCE LEAVES

You remember in the last story I left off just as Billy Bunny got out of the train at Lettuceville, where there was a big family of rabbits who raised lettuce leaves for all the bunnies in the big U. S. A.

And the first person he saw was an old gray-haired rabbit, who said: "Glad to see you, Mr. William Bunny. Do you want to buy a car-load of lettuce leaves?"

"How much?" asked the little rabbit.

"Five million carrot cents," replied the old gentleman bunny, "and that's very cheap, for the leaves are big and juicy and will keep all winter if you put them in the ice house."

[image]

*THE RABBITS JUMPED INTO THE CUPBOARD AND CLOSED
THE DOOR.*

Well, sir, this was a very cheap price, don't you think so? And Billy Bunny thought so, too, for he opened his knapsack and took out five million carrot cents and gave them to the old gray-haired bunny, and after that all the farmer bunnies loaded a big freight car just full of lettuce leaves and marked on the outside in chalk:

"MR. WILLIAM BUNNY,
Brier Patch, Old Snake Fence Corner, U. S. A."

"RUSH! Fast Freight."

And then it was time for lunch, so the old rabbit said to his new customer, which

was Billy Bunny, of course:

“Come with me to my home and we’ll have something to eat.” And as Billy Bunny had a great big appetite by this time, and I might say right here that rabbits always are hungry, he hopped away with the lettuce rabbit farmer, and by and by they came to a little green house in a raspberry patch with a lovely clover field on one side and a peach orchard on the other.

“I’ve brought my friend, Billy Bunny, home to lunch,” said the old gray-haired bunny to a nice-looking lady rabbit whose gray hair was parted in the middle and held down on each side by two red coral combs.

“Why, it’s Billy Bunny,” she said. “I know his mother and his cousin, Mrs. Cottontail.” And she led them into the little green house. After they had eaten all they wanted she made the pianola play this song:

“The clover patch is in full bloom
With juicy red-topped clover.
Across the lea the honey bee
Looks like a golden rover.”

And it might have kept on playing some more, only just then who should look into the door but Daddy Fox. As soon as the pianola saw him it stopped right then and there, and the rabbits jumped into the cupboard and closed the door and turned the key on the inside before you could say “Jack Rabbit.”

“Ha! ha!” laughed Daddy Fox. “I’ll stay here till you get so tired of that cupboard prison that you’ll come out. And when you do, you know what will happen, for I don’t like lettuce leaves and I just love rabbits.”

Wasn’t that a dreadful thing to hear? But, never mind. I’m not going to let that wicked fox get the best of Billy Bunny and his friends. No, sir. Not if I have to go there myself to-morrow and scare him away with a gun.

But this book won’t hold any more, and I’ll have to tell what happened further to our animal friends in the next one, which is entitled “Billy Bunny and Uncle Bull Frog.”

THE END

[image]

[image]

*** END OF THIS PROJECT GUTENBERG EBOOK BILLY BUNNY AND DADDY
FOX ***

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