

Paine Albert Bigelow

**Making Up with Mr. Dog.
Hollow Tree Stories**



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Making Up with Mr.

Dog Hollow Tree Stories

THE HOLLOW TREE INN

THE THREE FRIENDS

GO INTO BUSINESS

ONE rainy day when the 'Coon and 'Possum and Old Black Crow, who lived together in three big hollow limbs of a Big Hollow Tree, were rummaging about their house, they found that above each of their rooms was a good deal of room that nobody ever used. That set them to thinking, and pretty soon Mr. 'Possum said it was too bad to let all that good room go to waste, and Mr. 'Coon said yes, it was, and that their house was big enough for a hotel.

Of course he didn't think what he was saying at the time, but it set Mr. Crow to thinking and walking up and down, whistling, and pretty soon he stopped still and looked at the 'Coon and 'Possum.

"I'll do the cookin'," he said, "if you'll get the things to cook."
And right then and there they made up their minds to do it, and

early the next morning, while the Old Black Crow was hurrying about inside, getting things ready for business, the 'Coon and the 'Possum nailed up a sign outside, and this is what was on it: —

THE HOLLOW TREE INN

BOARD BY THE DAY OR WEEK

Then they went inside to help Mr. Crow get ready, and by and by they all sat down and waited for people to come. Mr. 'Coon and Mr. 'Possum felt pretty well, too, for they thought they would have the easiest time. You see, they had always depended on Mr. Crow a good deal, for, besides being a good cook, he was a great hand to provide, and knew more about where to get the best things, and the best time of day or night to get them, than both of the others put together. So he didn't say anything, but dressed up nice and spruce in a clean apron and cooking cap and leaned out of the window, as cooks always do, with his arms folded. By and by along came Mr. Jack Rabbit.

"Hello!" he said. "What's this?"

Then he read the sign over and looked at Mr. Crow and asked him if it was a joke. And Mr. Crow said: —

"Not much! Come up and see."

So then Mr. Rabbit went up stairs, and Mr. 'Coon and Mr.

'Possum showed him through, and Jack Rabbit said that he didn't feel very well this summer, anyway, and he believed he'd just shut up his house and come and board awhile for a change. He said he guessed he'd take the room above Mr. 'Coon's, because it had a nice south window and a tall looking glass, and that he'd pack up a few things that he needed and come over right away. Then he went home and the 'Coon and 'Possum and the Old Black Crow all shook hands and danced around in a circle to think how well they were going to do, for if Mr. Jack Rabbit came they were sure of having as many others as their house would hold.

And while they were dancing, along came Mr. Robin. He read the sign, too, and laughed, and then knocked at the door till Mr. 'Coon came down and let him in. He thought it was a joke at first, like the Rabbit, but when he heard that Jack Rabbit was coming to board he spoke up just as quick as anything and said he'd come, too, and that he'd have his things there before supper time. He took the room over Mr. Crow, because he said he didn't mind the smell of the cooking, and then maybe he'd learn some new receipts. You see, Mr. Crow and Mr. Robin are sort of kinsfolk, and when they have time they often get together and trace back to find out just what relation they are to each other, and that makes them good friends.

Well, Mr. Robin hadn't more'n got out of the house when who should walk in but Mr. Squirrel.

"What's all this about boarders?" said Mr. Squirrel. "I'm looking for a place to spend a month or two myself."

So then they showed him the room above Mr. 'Possum's, and he was so pleased with the view and everything that he paid a week's board in advance to be sure of keeping anybody else from getting it. When he was gone the 'Coon and 'Possum and the Old Black Crow did another dance, and kept saying over and over how rich they'd be and what they would do with all the money. Then they heard somebody laughing outside, and when they looked out there was Mr. Turtle laughing and reading the sign.

"Hello!" he said. "This isn't the first of April."

"No," said Mr. Crow, "it's a boarding house, and a good one. All the best people in the country stop here. Mr. Rabbit, Mr. Robin, and Mr. Squirrel. Sorry, Mr. Turtle, but our rooms are all full."

Then Mr. Turtle did look cheap, for he thought he couldn't be in the crowd, and it was the very crowd he liked to associate with. But just then Mr. 'Coon happened to think that they might fit up the big room below the other big room where they all gathered to eat and talk, and Mr. Turtle said that would suit him exactly, because he was large and heavy and didn't care much about climbing anyway. So he hurried off after his things, too, and he wasn't out of sight before here comes Mr. Dog!

Mr. 'Coon and Mr. 'Possum were both looking out the window when he came up, and they jumped back like lightning. You see, they didn't like Mr. Dog worth a cent. Then Mr. Crow came and looked out the window and talked to him. Mr. Dog was just as

polite as a basket of chips, and of course that's the politest thing in the world.

"I've just seen Mr. Robin," said Mr. Dog, "and I came to get a room, too."

"Awfully sorry, Mr. Dog, but our rooms are all full," said Mr. Crow.

"Why don't you take down your sign, then?" said Mr. Dog.

"Hotels never take down their signs," said Mr. Crow.

"Hotels are never too full for one more, either," said Mr. Dog.

"If you don't let me come in I think I'll wait around here and make a vacancy."

THE HOLLOW TREE INN

(*Continued*)

WHAT HAPPENS TO MR. DOG

NOW, when Mr. 'Possum and Mr. 'Coon heard that their hair stood up straight, for they knew very well that there'd be two vacant rooms anyway if Mr. Dog ever got inside, and two if he stayed where he was, for they happened to think that Mr. Rabbit would be coming along presently, and Mr. Squirrel wouldn't be far behind. So they hurried to the back window and looked out, and sure enough, there was Mr. Rabbit coming with his trunk on his shoulder and almost there. At first they were frightened 'most to death for Mr. Rabbit, and then the 'Coon slipped over and whispered to the Crow to keep Mr. Dog talking as hard as he could, so he wouldn't notice anything. All the time he was doing this the 'Possum was motioning to Jack Rabbit to slip up easy-like with his trunk.

So Mr. Rabbit slipped up softly on the other side of the house from Mr. Dog and set his trunk down, and the 'Possum let out a long rope with a hook on it. Jack Rabbit stood up on his trunk and grabbed the hook as soon as he could reach it and hooked it under his arms. Then the 'Coon and the 'Possum pulled and pulled and up he came, and as soon as he was safe they let down the rope and caught the hook in the trunk handle. That was a load

for all three of them, and even then they couldn't get it up, and called across to the Crow to come quick and help. So he had to leave Mr. Dog a minute, and when he did that Mr. Dog walked around the tree, and there was the trunk just a few feet from the ground, going up very slowly. That was enough for Mr. Dog. He knew then he'd been fooled, and he was so mad he didn't know what to do.

He took one look at that trunk and made up his mind he wouldn't stand it. So he stepped back a little and made a short run and gave a jump for the trunk, just as high as ever he could.

But Mr. Dog wasn't very lucky, for instead of landing on the trunk he landed his nose right against one corner of it, and that made him madder than ever. He ran and jumped again harder than before, but this time the trunk was a little higher and Mr. Dog didn't quite hit it. There was a strap hanging down, though, and he caught it as he went by. He caught it with his teeth, and two of his teeth went right through two of the holes where the buckle catches, and there they stayed. He had the trunk all right enough, but the trunk had him, too.

There he was. His feet didn't quite touch the ground, and he couldn't get up any higher either. Then all at once the people up stairs saw how it was, and they commenced to laugh in spite of themselves, and hitched the rope around a peg under the sill so they could rest a minute. That was fun for them, but it wasn't for Mr. Dog, by a good deal. He couldn't laugh, and he couldn't rest, either. And just then Mr. Squirrel came with his trunk, and

Mr. Robin with his satchel and a hand bag, and Mr. Turtle with his things in a big sack. Mr. 'Coon ran down and let them all in and locked the door. Then he ran back to the window where Mr. Dog was.

"If we'll let you down will you go home and not come around this hotel interfering with our business?" says Mr. 'Possum.

"Yes; will you promise not to try to get any of our guests away from us?" says Mr. 'Coon.

Mr. Dog couldn't talk much in the fix he was in, but he did the best he could, and promised yes to everything, so pretty soon they let the trunk down till his feet touched the ground and he could get his teeth out of the strap. Then he put out for home just about as fast as he could go, without so much as thanking them for letting him down, and up went Mr. Rabbit's trunk pretty quick, now that there were plenty to help.

Then the guests all hurried to their rooms to unpack, and Mr. Crow bustled around to get supper with what he had in the house, for Mr. 'Possum and Mr. 'Coon hadn't time yet to bring in anything. It was a pretty good supper, though, and all the guests said so, and said they knew what a good cook Mr. Crow was if he had things to work with, and the Crow said he guessed he could do his part if the 'Coon and 'Possum would do theirs.

Well, it makes a good deal of difference whether you're company at a house or a boarder. They all felt a good deal like company at first, but by the next evening at supper time they felt different. Mr. 'Coon and Mr. 'Possum had been out all day

bringing in things, too, and Mr. Crow had been cooking harder than ever. Mr. Robin was first to make remarks. He said the cherries were canned, and not very good at that.

"That's what I said," put in Mr. 'Coon, "but Mr. 'Possum said you wouldn't know the difference."

"Oh, he did, did he?" says Mr. Robin. "Well, I've got better cherries than these at home," and he got up from the table with a disgusted air.

Then Mr. Squirrel picked up some roasted nuts that the Crow had just brought in.

"Where'd you get these nuts?" he says, after he'd cracked one or two of them.

"Down on the slope of Green Bushes," says Mr. 'Coon. "Why, aren't they good ones?"

"I suppose they were once," says Mr. Squirrel – "two or three years ago. Nuts have to be fresh to be good."

"That's what I told him," says Mr. 'Possum, "but he said you wouldn't know the difference."

"Oh, he did, did he?" says Mr. Squirrel. "Well, I've got better nuts than these at home," and Mr. Squirrel *he* got up and left the table.

Then Jack Rabbit began.

"Where'd you get this salad?" he says, turning up his nose.

"Out by Mr. Man's back gate," says Mr. 'Possum. "Why, isn't it good?"

"Might have been once," says Mr. Rabbit. "I s'pose it's some

Mr. Man threw out because it was wilted."

"That's what I told him," says Mr. 'Coon, "but he said you wouldn't know the difference."

"Oh, he did, did he? Well, I've got better salad than this at home," and Jack Rabbit *he* got up and he left the table.

And then, pretty soon, Mr. Turtle made a face over the fish because they were salt mackerel and not nice fresh fish, such as he was used to at home. So he got up and left the table, too, and there sat the 'Coon and 'Possum and the Old Black Crow all by themselves and looking cheap enough to fall through the floor. Mr. Crow said it wasn't his fault, and then Mr. 'Coon and Mr. 'Possum commenced to blame it on each other, and nearly got into a fight. They were just about to fight when Mr. Crow happened to think of something. Mr. Crow always did think of things.

"I'll tell you!" he says. "We'll just rent rooms."

"Do what?" says Mr. 'Possum and Mr. 'Coon together.

"Why, just rent each of our guests his room and let him take his meals out. Then we won't have any work."

"Whoop-ee!" says Mr. 'Possum and Mr. 'Coon both together, as loud as ever they could. That made all the guests come running back, and when they heard the new plan they all said it was just the thing.

So then Mr. 'Possum went down and got the sign and brought it up and changed it to read: —

THE HOLLOW TREE INN

FURNISHED ROOMS ONLY

And that was how business began at last in the Hollow Tree.

A DEEP WOODS FISHING PARTY AN ADVENTURE WITH MR. DOG AND A VERY LARGE FISH

ONE warm, still June morning (this, of course, was before the Hollow Tree Inn started) Mr. Jack Rabbit looked out of the window while he was dressing and thought to himself that it would be just the very morning for fish to bite.

Jack Rabbit liked to fish better than anything, almost, so right after breakfast he took an empty tomato can and went out in the back yard and turned over boards till he had the can about half full of bait, with a little dirt thrown on top. Then he reached up under the eaves of the smoke-house and pulled out a long cane pole with a line and hook and floater on it, all rigged up ready, and flung it over his shoulder and started.

Mr. Rabbit walked pretty fast – even lazy folks do that when they go fishing, and Mr. Jack Rabbit wasn't lazy, by a good deal. So pretty soon he came to the Hollow Tree, and there, looking out of an up-stairs window, he saw the 'Coon, the 'Possum, and the Old Black Crow.

"Hello, up there!" he said. "Don't you fellows want to go fishing?"

Mr. 'Possum said he thought fish would bite well on such a morning, and that he'd like to go first rate. Mr. 'Coon said he

knew a place where you could pull them out as fast as you could throw in your hook, and he went on and told how he caught a fish there last year that would weigh more than four pounds, and lost him just as he got him to the top of the water. Mr. Crow said he'd always noticed that Mr. 'Coon's four-pound fish never got any nearer to him than the top of the water, and that for his part he didn't care much about fishing. He said, though, that if the 'Coon and the 'Possum wanted to go he'd stay at home and get dinner while they were gone, so's to have it ready when they all came home hungry. He told them that he had some nice canned salmon in the cupboard that he could catch 'most any time, and that if they really wanted fish for dinner he s'posed he might as well open it. Then they all laughed, and in about a minute down came Mr. 'Coon and Mr. 'Possum with their fishing things. Jack Rabbit said he had plenty of bait, so away they went. Mr. Crow sat up in the window and watched them off, and Mr. Robin, who happened along just then, laughed and called after them that he'd take a few pounds of nice bass when they got home. The Robin just said that to plague them, of course, and Mr. 'Coon called back that they'd fool him this time, and then he went on to remark that he'd never in his life seen a finer day for fishing.

Jack Rabbit said yes, that it was fine, and that it was a fine day for Mr. Dog to be out gallivanting over the country, too, and that they'd better hurry up and get to the lake and out in his boat before anything happened. That made Mr. 'Possum take a good deal livelier step, though he commenced to whistle and said he

wasn't afraid of Mr. Dog, anyway. Mr. 'Coon said he'd always noticed that a fellow mostly whistled when he wasn't afraid, but for his part he couldn't get to that boat any too soon. And pretty soon they did get to it, and Mr. 'Possum was the first one to pile in, though Mr. Dog wasn't anywhere in sight.

Well, they pushed off, and Jack Rabbit took one oar and Mr. 'Coon the other, while the 'Possum sat on the back seat and baited his hook so's to catch the first fish. Then, when they got out to where Mr. 'Coon said the good place was, they all went to fishing, and Mr. 'Possum did get the first bite, but he didn't get anything else when he pulled. Mr. 'Coon told him he pulled too quick, and Jack Rabbit told him he didn't pull quick enough, and asked him if he expected the fish to climb out on his pole. Then Mr. Rabbit had a bite himself, and pulled and didn't get anything, either. Of course, that made Mr. 'Possum laugh, and then, all at once, the 'Coon had a great big bite that took his float away down out of sight the first grab.

Mr. 'Coon let him go for a minute and then gave a hard pull and commenced to call out that he had him this time and that he'd show Mr. Crow now about only getting fish to the top of the water and having canned salmon for dinner. Then he stood up in the boat and pulled as hard as ever he could till all of a sudden his line broke, and down he went backward, right on top of Mr. 'Possum, while the Rabbit swung his hook over where the 'Coon's hook had been and the big fish grabbed it before you could say Jack Robinson.

That was too bad for the 'Coon and the 'Possum, of course, and it wasn't as much fun for Jack Rabbit as you might suppose, for he couldn't get the big fish out to save his life, and he had to hold on to the boat to keep from being pulled into the lake. Then he called to the others to help him, and they both got up and took hold of the pole and hauled it in hand over hand till they got to the line, and that was as far as they could get. So Mr. Rabbit gave the line a twist or two around the iron ring in the front of his boat, and the big fish started straight for shore, dragging the boat and everybody in it behind him, just as hard as ever he could go. Then Mr. 'Coon and Jack Rabbit commenced to quarrel about whose fish it was, and Mr. 'Possum said he didn't care whose it was, he was getting a free ride, and he laid back and laughed and looked at the shore, when all of a sudden he happened to spy there, sitting on the end of a log, fishing and waiting for them, nobody but Mr. Dog himself.

That wasn't very much, of course, but it was plenty for Mr. 'Possum. He quit laughing and tumbled down in the bottom of the boat and laid there calling for Jack Rabbit to cut that fish line or they'd all be chops and steaks and carried home in a basket in less than five minutes. Jack Rabbit did try to cut the line, too, but he was so excited he dropped his knife overboard, and Mr. 'Coon couldn't find his, and Mr. 'Possum didn't have any. So there they were, and there was Mr. Dog! Then Mr. Rabbit tried to bite the line off with his teeth, but he couldn't do that, either, for it was a big, strong line that he'd made himself, specially for large fish.

And all the time they were getting closer and closer to the shore, and Mr. Dog had lifted his line out of the water so it wouldn't be in his way, and was sitting there waiting, and smiling to see them come.

Then Jack Rabbit knew that something had to be done, and there was no time to lose. He was just about as scared as he could be, but he knew it wouldn't do any good to let on, so he sat up straight and smiled some, too, and looked at Mr. Dog and called out, big and friendly like: —

"Hello, Mr. Dog! Here we come! Here we come with a nice dinner, Mr. Dog!"

Then Mr. Dog laughed and called back: —

"That's right, Mr. Rabbit. There's a sure enough nice dinner coming this time! Fish for the first course, Mr. Rabbit!"

When Mr. 'Possum heard that he began to groan, and Jack Rabbit and Mr. 'Coon began to shiver, for each thought he knew pretty well what the next courses of Mr. Dog's dinner would be. But Mr. Rabbit didn't stop smiling or let on that he knew, and he called out again to Mr. Dog, quick: —

"You'll have to help us if we have fish, Mr. Dog! He's a big one and you'll have to help us catch him!"

And Mr. Dog called back again: —

"Don't worry, Mr. Rabbit! I won't leave! I'll be on hand when you get here, Mr. Rabbit!"

Then he rolled up his trousers a little and waded out into the shallow water, thinking he would nab Mr. Fish first and drag him

out on shore, and then pull the boat right in after him.

Of course, that was a pretty good plan for Mr. Dog, only like some other good plans, it didn't work just as he expected it to. You see, he didn't quite know how big the fish was, nor how hard a big fish is to handle in shallow water. He made a quick grab at it when it got to him and then, right away, he had his hands full of business. That fish gave a flop with his tail that laid Mr. Dog over on his back and then another flop that set him on his feet again, and a side flop that smacked him against the water first one way and then the other, and made him breathe hard and choke and try to let go.

But Mr. Dog couldn't let go, for he'd got the fish line some way tangled in his teeth. So he began to snap and paw and swallow water, and fall down and get up again, and sprawl about in the swamp grass, trying to get back to shore.

And while all this was going on Jack Rabbit and his friends had jumped out into the shallow water and took a little roundin's to shore, keeping out of Mr. Dog's way, and made tracks for the top of a hill, where they would be out of danger and see the fun at the same time. Then they all stood up there and watched the fight between Mr. Dog and the big fish, and Jack Rabbit sang out, as loud as ever he could: —

"Don't leave, Mr. Dog! Stay with him, Mr. Dog! Hold him to it, Mr. Dog; you've got him! First course, Mr. Dog!"

And Mr. Dog heard Jack Rabbit and got madder and madder every minute, till all of a sudden he got a lick on the side of the

head from Mr. Fish's tail that made him see stars and broke the line. And away went the big fish out into deep water, while Mr. Dog crawled back to shore, wet and bruised from head to foot, and 'most dead.

Then Mr. 'Coon and Mr. 'Possum and Jack Rabbit, standing on top of the hill, gave a great big laugh, all together, and Mr. Rabbit called out: —

"How did you like the first course, Mr. Dog?"

That made them all laugh again, and then Mr. 'Coon called out: —

"Are you ready for the second course, Mr. Dog?"

And pretty soon Mr. 'Possum he called out: —

"Are you ready for a nice roast now, Mr. Dog?"

And that, of course, made them all laugh very loud, for Mr. 'Possum used slang now and then and meant by a "roast" that people would all make fun of Mr. Dog wherever he went; which they did, for a long time.

Even Mr. Robin, who was good friends with Mr. Dog, couldn't help calling out to him, now and then, as he went by: —

"Are you ready for the next course, Mr. Dog?"

And Mr. Dog would pretend not to hear and go hurrying by very fast, as if he were out on special and important business for Mr. Man.

MR. RABBIT EXPLAINS AN EASTER STORY

"WHY do we always have rabbits at Easter?" asked the Little Lady. "Is that a story, too?"

The Story Teller lit his pipe, thinking all the time, and pretty soon he said: "Why, yes, there is a story about that, and it goes this way": —

One afternoon in the early spring Mr. Jack Rabbit and his friends were out for an airing. The Hollow Tree people were along, and Mr. Turtle, as usual. By and by they came to a log under a big tree and sat down for a smoke and talk. They talked about the weather at first and other things, till somebody mentioned Easter. Then they all had something to say about that.

"What I object to," says Mr. Rabbit, when it came his time to talk, "is this thing of people always saying that the Easter eggs belong to me."

"Oh, but that's just a joke," says Mr. 'Coon, laughing.

"I know it's just a joke, of course, but it's a pretty old joke, and I'm tired of it," says Jack Rabbit.

"How did it get started anyway?" asked Mr. 'Possum.

Then Mr. Rabbit took his pipe out of his mouth and leaned forward a little, so he could talk better.

"I tell you how it got started," he says, "and after that I don't

want to hear any more of it. This is how it happened: —

"Once upon a time, as much as twenty grandmothers back, I should think, there was a very nice family of Rabbits that lived in a grassy place on a hillside back of a big farmyard. There was quite a hole in the ground there, and they had a cozy home in it, and a soft bed for their little folk.

"Now, every bright morning, Father and Mother Rabbit used to take the children out for a walk, and for a few lessons in running and hiding from Mr. Dog, who bothered about a good deal, and one day as they were coming home they heard a great cackling, and when they got to their house there was a nice fresh egg lying right in the children's bed. Some old hen from the farmyard had slipped in and laid it while they were gone. A good many hens, especially old hens, like to hide their nests that way, and this was one of that kind.

"Well, of course all the young Rabbits claimed it, and Mother Rabbit at last gave it to the smallest and weakest one of the children, a little girl, who was always painting things with the juice of flower petals. And the very first thing that little girl did was to stain that egg all over with violet juice, not thinking what trouble it was going to cause our family forever after.

"It was a nice blue egg when she got through with it, and the next day, when they all came back from their walk again there was another white egg right by it. The old hen had been there again and laid another while they were gone. The second little girl claimed that egg, of course, and she painted it a bright yellow

with buttercup juice. Then the next day there was another egg, and the next day there was another egg, and the next day there was another egg, until there was one apiece for every one of the children, and some over.

"And they all painted them. Some painted theirs pink or red with rose leaves or japonica, some painted them yellow with buttercups, and some blue or purple with violets, as the first little girl had done. They had so many at last that it crowded them out of their bed and they had to sleep on the floor.

"And then, one Sunday, and it must have been Easter Sunday, they all went out walking again, and when they came back every one of those beautiful colored eggs was gone. The children cried and made a great fuss, but it was no use. Some of Mr. Man's boys out hunting hens' nests had found them and taken them all home with them.

"And of course all those colored eggs set Mr. Man to wondering, and he came with his boys to the place where they had found them; and when they looked in out jumped the whole Rabbit family, helter skelter in every direction.

"And right then," said Mr. Rabbit, leaning over to light his pipe from Mr. 'Possum's, "right then Mr. Man declared those colored eggs were rabbit eggs, and he's kept on saying so ever since, though he knows better, and he knows I don't like it. He takes eggs and colors them himself now, and makes believe they're mine, and he puts my picture all over things about Easter time. I suppose he thinks I don't care, but I do, and I wish that

little Miss Rabbit twenty grandmothers back had left that old hen's egg white as she found it."

"It's too bad," says Mr. Crow. "It's like that story they tell about the fox making me drop the cheese."

"Or like Mr. Man making believe that the combs he uses are really made out of my shell," says Mr. Turtle.

Mr. 'Coon and Mr. 'Possum shook their heads. They had their troubles, too.

THE HOLLOW TREE POETRY CLUB HOW MR. DOG CAME TO A POETRY CLUB, AND WHAT HAPPENED

ONCE upon a time, when it was getting along toward fall in the Hollow Tree, when Jack Rabbit and Mr. Robin and the others had come to live with the 'Coon and 'Possum and the Old Black Crow, there began to be long evenings, and the Hollow Tree people used to think of new ways to pass the time. They tried games at first, and sleight-of-hand tricks. Then they tried doing things, and Mr. Turtle carried them all together twice around the big parlor room on his back. But even that wasn't so funny after the first evening, and Mr. Crow, who did most of the thinking, had to scratch his head and think pretty hard what to do next.

All at once he happened to remember that Jack Rabbit, who was the big man of the party, was also a first rate poet, and liked to read his own poetry better than anything. So, when he thought of that, he said: —

"I'll tell you. We'll have a poetry club."

And of course that made Mr. Rabbit wake up right away.

"What's that?" he said. "What kind of a thing is a poetry

club?"

"Why," said Mr. Crow, "it's a place where the members each write a poem and read it at the next meeting. You're the only real, sure enough poet, of course, and will be president, and write the best poem, but the rest of us can try, and you can tell us our mistakes. I've heard that Mr. Man has clubs, and they're ever so much fun."

Jack Rabbit thought so, too, and all the others liked the plan. So they elected Mr. Rabbit president and then went to work on their poems. They couldn't have the first meeting very soon, for it took longer to write poems in those days than it does now, so before they got half ready the news got out some way, and even Mr. Dog had heard of it.

Poor Mr. Dog! It made him really quite ill to think he wasn't on very good terms with the Hollow Tree people, for he thought he could write pretty nice poetry, too, and he wanted to belong to that club worse than anything he could think of. He wanted to so bad that at last he told Mr. Robin that if they'd just let him come he'd promise anything they asked.

They didn't want to let him, though, until Mr. Crow, who always felt kind of sorry for Mr. Dog, said he didn't see why Mr. Dog shouldn't come and look in through the window shutters, and that they could nail a seat for him on a limb just outside. They could pull him up to it with a rope and he could sit there and listen and applaud the poems all through without being able to do any damage to the poets, and he would be glad enough to

be let down by the time they got done reciting.

So they sent him an invitation, and Mr. Dog was as happy as a king. He went right to work on his poem, and he worked all night and walked up and down the yard all day trying to think up rhymes for "joyful" and "meeting," and a lot of other nice words. Even when he was asleep he dreamed about it, and said over some of the lines out loud and jerked his paws about as if he were reciting it and making motions. You see, Mr. Dog hadn't always done just right by the Hollow Tree people, and he was anxious to make a good impression and fix up things. He fixed himself all up, too, when the night came for the meeting, and took his poem under his arm and lit a cigar that he'd borrowed of Mr. Man for the occasion, and away he went.

The Hollow Tree people were on the look-out for him and had the rope down and ready. So Mr. Dog tied it around under his arms, and they pulled and pulled, and up he came. Then, when he got pretty close to the window, they closed the shutter and put the rope through and pulled him up still a little higher, so that he could reach the seat on the limb, which was fixed just right for him to sit there and lean on the window sill while he listened and looked in.

Of course, Mr. Dog wished he was inside, like the others, but he knew why he wasn't, and he was glad enough to be there at all. He peeked through the slats at the big room and smiled and said some nice things about how pretty the room looked, till they all got real sociable with him. Then Jack Rabbit called the meeting

to order and made a few remarks.

He said the duties of his office had kept him from writing quite as long and as good a poem as he would have liked to write, but that he hoped they might be willing to hear what he had done. Then they all shouted, "Yes, yes!" and "Hear, hear!" and Mr. Rabbit bowed first to the ones inside and then to Mr. Dog outside, and began: —

THE JOYS OF POETRY

BY J. RABBIT

Oh, sweet the joys of poetry
In the merry days of spring,
When the dew is on the meadow
And the duck is on the wing!
For 'tis then, from Dan to Dover,
I'm a rover 'mid the clover,
Seeking rhymes the country over
With a ring, sing, swing —
With a ding, dong, ding,
And a ting a ling a ling —
For I'm the rhyming rover of the spring.

Oh, sweet the joys of poetry

In the pleasant summer time!
For 'tis then I have no trouble
To compose my gentle rhyme;
In a nooklet by the brooklet
I can think up quite a booklet,
As with fishing line and hooklet
I assist the fish to climb
To the music of my chime,
For with rollick and with rhyme
I'm the poet of the pleasant summer time.

Oh, sweet the joys of poetry
When any days have come,
When the autumn zephyrs whisper
Or the winter breezes hum!
For 'tis then my thoughts unfurling,
While the smoke goes upward curling,
Come a whirling, swirling, twirling,
With a rumty, tumty, tum,
Come a twirling, swirling, whirling,
Like a rattle of a drum.
Come a whirling, come a swirling;
For in spring or in the summer,
In the autumn or the winter
I'm the rumty, tumty, tummer
That rejoices in the seasons as they come.

Well, when Mr. Rabbit got through everybody sat still for a minute, till Mr. Dog called out for somebody to come and unwind

him so he could get his breath again. Then they all commenced to laugh and shout and pound on the table. And Mr. Rabbit coughed and looked pleased and said it was easy enough to do when you knew how.

Then Mr. 'Possum, who was next on the program, said he hoped they'd let him off this time because he could only think of four lines, and that he was a better hand at the dinner table than he was at poetry, anyway. But they wouldn't do it, so he got up and looked foolish and swallowed two or three times before he could get started.

WHAT I LOVE

BY A. PUFFINGTON 'POSSUM

I love the fragrant chicken pie
That blooms in early spring;
I love a chicken stew or fry,
Or any old thing.

Mr. 'Possum's poem was short, but it went right to the spot, and the way they applauded almost made Jack Rabbit jealous. He said that it was 'most too true to be good poetry, but that it was good for a first effort, and that being short helped it. Then

Mr. Robin spoke his piece: —

MOTHER AND ME

BY C. ROBIN

When the bud breaks out on the maple bough
Mother and me we build our nest —
A twig from the yard and a wisp from the mow
And four blue eggs 'neath the mother breast.
Up in the tree, mother and me,
Happy and blithe and contented are we.

When the daisies fall and the roses die,
An empty nest in the boughs to swing —
Four young robins that learn to fly
And a sweet adieu till another spring.
Then up in the tree, mother and me,
Happy once more and contented we'll be.

The applause wasn't so loud after Mr. Robin's poem, but they all said it was very pretty, and Mr. 'Possum even wiped his eyes with his handkerchief, because it made him remember something sad. Mr. Rabbit said that it ought to be "Mother and I," but that it didn't make much difference, he supposed, about

grammar, so long as it rhymed and sounded nice. Then Mr. Crow got up.

JUST NOTHING

BY J. CROW

While others may sing of the pleasures of spring,
Or winter or summer or fall,
I'll sing not of these, because, if you please,
I'll sing of just nothing at all.
Just nothing at all, because, oh, ho!
I'll sing of myself, an old black crow.

As black as a coal and as homely as sin —
What more can I tell you, I pray?
For when you have nothing to sing of, why, then,
Of course there is nothing to say.
Nothing to say at all, oh, ho!
Except good-by to the old black crow —
The rollicking old black crow!

They made a good deal of fuss over Mr. Crow's poem. They applauded, of course, but they said it wasn't so at all, and that Mr. Crow was a good deal more than "just nothing." They said that

it was he who had got up this party, and that he was the best man to plan and cook anywhere. Mr. 'Possum said he even liked Mr. Crow's April fool chicken pies, and then they all remembered and laughed, even to Mr. Crow himself. After that it was Mr. Squirrel's turn. Mr. Squirrel coughed twice and straightened his vest before he began, so they knew his poem wasn't to be funny.

THE FOOLISH LITTLE LAD

BY MR. GRAY SQUIRREL

Once on a time, the story goes,
A silly squirrel lad
One summer day did run away —
Which made his ma feel bad.

She hunted for him up and down
And round and round she ran —
Alas, that foolish squirrel boy
Was caught by Mr. Man.

For he had tried to climb a tree
As Mr. Man came past.
"I'll make you climb!" said Mr. Man,
And walked home pretty fast.

When he got there a boy came out
As Mr. Man went in.
That silly squirrel soon was put
Into a house of tin.

"Now you can climb!" said Mr. Man,
But when he did he found
That nice tin house, so bright and new,
Turned round and round and round.

And there he climbs and climbs all day
And never seems to stop,
And I have heard my mother say
He'll never reach the top.

When Mr. Squirrel sat down there wasn't a dry eye in the room, and even Mr. Dog outside was affected. He said he'd seen that poor little squirrel at Mr. Man's house turning and turning away in his tin wheel, and felt so sorry for him that two or three times he'd tried to get him out. He said, though, that Mr. Man had always caught him at it and that then they didn't get on well for a day or two. He was so tender hearted, though, he said, that he couldn't help pitying the little fellow, climbing and climbing all day long and never getting anywhere. Mr. 'Possum shivered, and said it reminded him of bad dreams he'd had sometimes, when he'd eaten too much supper, and dreamed of climbing the rainbow. Then they all sat still and waited for Mr. Turtle, who

came next.

MY SNUG HOUSE

BY D'LAND TURTLE

Oh, what do I care for your houses of wood,
Your houses of brick or of stone,
When I have a house that is cozy and good —
A beautiful house of my own?
And the doors will not sag and the roof will not crack
Of the house that I carry about on my back.

It is never too large and 'tis never too small,
It is with me wherever I roam.
In spring or in summer, in winter or fall,
I always can find my way home.
For it isn't so hard to remember the track
To the house that you carry about on your back.

Well, of course, everybody applauded that, and then it was Mr. 'Coon's time. Mr. 'Coon said he was like Mr. 'Possum. He wasn't much on poetry, and only had four lines. He said they were some like Mr. 'Possum's too.

THE BEST THINGS

BY Z. 'COON

I like the spring, I like the fall,
I like the cold and heat,
And poems, too, but best of all
I like good things to eat.

That brought the house down, and the Hollow Tree people thought the entertainment was over. They were going to have supper right away, but Mr. Dog called out to wait a minute. He said he had a little poem himself that he wanted to read. So out of politeness they all sat still, though they didn't expect very much. Then Mr. Dog unrolled his poem and leaned over close to the blinds and commenced to read.

MY FOREST FRIENDS

BY MR. DOG

Oh, dear to me my forest friends,
Especially Mr. Rabbit —
I love his poetry very much,
And every gentle habit.

And dear to me is Mr. 'Coon,
And also Mr. 'Possum;
I hope to win their friendship soon —
'Twill be a precious blossom.

And Mr. Crow and Robin, too,
With fancy sweet and fertile,
And Mr. Squirrel, kind and true,
And likewise Mr. Turtle.

Oh, dear to me my forest friends,
Especially Mr. Rabbit —
I love his poetry very much,
And every gentle habit.

Before Mr. Dog was half through reading the Hollow Tree people had gathered around the window to listen. By the time he got to the end of the third stanza he had to stop for them to cheer, and when he read the last one, Jack Rabbit pounded on the shutter with his fist and shouted, "Hurrah for Mr. Dog! Hurrah for Mr. Dog!" just as loud as ever he could, while all the others crowded up and shouted and tried to pound, too.

Well, maybe the shutter wasn't very strong, or maybe they

crowded and pounded too hard in their excitement over Mr. Dog's nice poem, for all at once there was a loud crack and the shutter flew open and out went Mr. Rabbit right smack into the arms of Mr. Dog!

I tell you that was pretty sudden and Mr. Rabbit was scared. So were all the others, and they were going to grab the shutter and close it again and leave Mr. Rabbit out there. But Jack Rabbit thinks quick.

"Oh, Mr. Dog," he said, "that was the nicest poem I ever heard. Let me embrace you, Mr. Dog, and be your friend for ever after!"

Then he hugged Mr. Dog just as tight as he could, and Mr. Dog hugged him, too, and shed tears, he was that happy. He had been wanting to make up with the forest people for a long time, but he hadn't expected this. Then the others all saw how it was and they shouted, "Hurrah for Mr. Dog!" again and invited him in. And Mr. Dog went in and they had the biggest supper and the biggest time that ever was known in the Hollow Tree.

And that's how Mr. Dog got to be friends with all the Hollow Tree people at last. And he stayed friends with them ever and ever so long – and longer – just as long as he lived, for the Mr. Dog that isn't good friends with them now isn't the same Mr. Dog. And he isn't as smart, either, for he can't write poetry, and he's never even been able to find the Hollow Tree where the 'Coon and 'Possum and the Old Black Crow live together and every summer keep open house for their friends.

MR. RABBIT'S UNWELCOME COMPANY MR. POLECAT MAKES A MORNING CALL AND MR. DOG DROPS IN

I THINK I shall have to tell you about Mr. Polecat, said the Story Teller, and about his visit to Mr. Rabbit.

"Who's Mr. Polecat?" said the Little Lady. "You never told me about him before."

Well, no, because you see Mr. Polecat is so queer in some of his ways that people even don't talk about him a great deal. He is really quite a nice gentleman, though, when he doesn't get excited. But when he does he loses friends.

The trouble is with the sort of perfumery he uses when he gets excited, just as some people use a smelling-bottle, and nobody seems to like the sort Mr. Polecat uses except himself. I suppose he must like it or he wouldn't be so free with it. But other people go away when he uses it – mostly in the direction the wind's blowing from – and in a hurry, as if they were afraid they'd miss a train. Even Mr. Dog doesn't stop to argue with Mr. Polecat. Nobody does, and all the other Deep Woods people do their best to make him happy and to keep him in a good humor whenever

he comes about, and give him their nicest things to eat and a lot to carry home with him, so he'll start just as soon as possible.

But, more than anything, they try to keep him from saying anything about Mr. Dog, or hinting or even thinking about Mr. Dog, for when he does any of these things he's apt to get excited, and then sometimes he opens up that perfume of his, and his friends fall over each other to get out of reach. They're never very happy to see him coming, and they're always glad to see him go, even when he's had a quiet visit and goes pretty soon, which is just what didn't happen one time when he came to call on Jack Rabbit, and it's that time I'm going to tell about. This was before Mr. Dog made up with the Hollow Tree people; I don't know exactly how long before, but a good while.

Mr. Rabbit looked out his door one morning and there was Mr. Polecat, all dressed up, coming to see him. He wasn't very far off, either, and Mr. Rabbit hardly had time to jerk down a crayon picture of Mr. Dog that he'd made the day before, just for practice. He pushed it under the bed quick, and when Mr. Polecat came up he bowed and smiled, and said what a nice day it was, and that he'd bring a chair outside if Mr. Polecat would like to sit there instead of coming in where it wasn't so pleasant.

But Mr. Polecat said he guessed he'd come in, as it was a little chilly and he didn't feel very well anyway. So he came inside, and Jack Rabbit gave him his best chair and brought out a little table and put a lot of nice things on it that Mr. Polecat likes, and began right away to pack a basket for him to take home.

But Mr. Polecat didn't seem to be in any hurry to go. He ate some of the nice things, and then leaned back to talk and smoke, and told Mr. Rabbit all the news he'd heard as he came along, and Mr. Rabbit got more and more worried, for he knew that just as likely as not Mr. Polecat had heard something about Mr. Dog and would begin to tell it pretty soon, and then no knowing what would happen. So Jack Rabbit just said "Yes" and "No" and began to talk about Mr. Robin, because Mr. Robin was a good friend of everybody and nobody could get excited just talking about Mr. Robin. But Mr. Polecat says: —

"Oh, yes, I saw Mr. Robin as I came along, and he called to me that Mr. Dog —"

And then Jack Rabbit changed the subject as quick as he could and spoke about Mr. Squirrel, and Mr. Polecat says: —

"Oh, did you hear how Mr. Squirrel went over to Mr. Man's house and saw Mr. Dog there —"

And then poor Mr. Rabbit had to think quick and change the subject again to the Hollow Tree people, and Mr. Polecat said: —

"Oh, yes. I stopped by that way as I came along, and they called out to me from up stairs how you were practising drawing, and that you gave Mr. Dog some dancing lessons the other day, and then made a fine picture of him just as he looked when he danced into the hot coals, so I hurried right over here for just to see that picture."

Poor Mr. Rabbit! He didn't know what to do. He knew right away that the Hollow Tree people had told about the picture to

get rid of Mr. Polecat, and he made up his mind that he'd get even with them some day for getting him in such a fix. But some day was a long ways off and Mr. Polecat was right there under his nose, so Mr. Rabbit said, just as quick as he could say it, that the Hollow Tree people were always making jokes, and that the picture was just as poor as it could be, and that he'd be ashamed to show it to anybody, much more to a talented gentleman like Mr. Polecat. But that made Mr. Polecat all the more anxious to see it, for he was sure Mr. Rabbit was only modest, and pretty soon he happened to spy the edge of the picture frame under Mr. Rabbit's bed, and just reached under and pulled it out, before Mr. Rabbit could help himself.

Well, he picked up that picture and looked at it a minute, and Jack Rabbit began to back off toward the door and say a few soothing words, when all at once Mr. Polecat leaned back and commenced to laugh and laugh at the funny picture Mr. Dog made where Mr. Rabbit called to him, "Dance! Mr. Dog; dance!" And then, of course, Mr. Rabbit felt better, for if his company thought it was funny and laughed there wasn't so much danger.

"Why," said Mr. Polecat, "it's the best thing I ever saw! You could almost imagine that Mr. Dog himself was right here, howling and barking and dancing."

"Oh, no, hardly that," said Mr. Rabbit. "Of course I suppose it is a little like him, but it's not at all as if he were here, you know – not at all – and he's ever so far off, I'm sure, and won't come again for a long time. You know, he's – "

"Oh, yes, it is!" declared Mr. Polecat. "It's just as if he were right here. And I can just hear him howl and bark, and – "

And right there Mr. Polecat stopped and Mr. Rabbit stopped, and both of them held their breath and listened, for sure enough they did hear Mr. Dog howling and barking and coming toward the house as straight as he could come.

Jack Rabbit gave a jump right up in the air, and hollered, "Run! Mr. Polecat, run! and go the back way!" But Mr. Polecat never runs from anybody – he doesn't have to – he just opens up that perfume of his and the other people do the running. So Mr. Rabbit gave one more jump, and this time he jumped straight up the chimney, and didn't stop till he got to the roof, where he found a loose board and put it over the chimney quick and sat down on it. Then he called to Mr. Dog, who was coming lickety split through the woods: —

"Why, how are you, Mr. Dog? Glad to see you! Walk right in. There's company down stairs; just make yourself at home till I come down." You see there was no use to stop him now, because Mr. Rabbit could tell by what was coming up the chimney that it was too late, and he wanted Mr. Dog to get a good dose of it as well as himself.

And Mr. Dog did come just as hard as he could tear, for the wind was blowing toward the house and he couldn't detect anything wrong until he gave a great big jump into Mr. Rabbit's sitting room and right into the midst of the most awful smell that was ever turned loose in the Big Deep Woods.

Well, it took Mr. Dog so suddenly that he almost fainted away. Then he gave a howl, as if a wagon had run over his tail, and tumbled out of that sitting room and set out for home without once stopping to look behind him. Then Mr. Rabbit laughed and laughed, and called: —

"Come back, Mr. Dog! Come back and stay with us. Mr. Polecat's going to spend a week with me. Come back and have a good time."

But Mr. Dog didn't stop, and he didn't seem to hear, and by and by Mr. Polecat called up that he was going home and that Mr. Rabbit could come down now, for Mr. Dog was gone and wouldn't come back, he guessed. But Mr. Rabbit said no, he didn't feel very well yet, and guessed he'd stay where he was for the present, and that if Mr. Polecat was going he might leave both doors open and let the wind draw through the house, because he always liked to air his house after Mr. Dog had been to see him. Then Mr. Polecat took his basket and went, and Jack Rabbit didn't come down for a long time, and when he did he couldn't stay in his house for the awful smell. So he went over to stay a week with the Hollow Tree people, and his clothes didn't smell nice, either, but they had to stand it, and Mr. Rabbit said it served them right for getting him into such a fix. It was over a week before he could go back to his house again, and even then it wasn't just as he wanted it to be, and he aired it every day for a long time.

But there was one thing that made him laugh, and that was when he heard from Mr. Robin how Mr. Dog got home and Mr.

Man wouldn't have him about the house or even in the yard, but made him stay out in the woods for as much as ten days, until he had got rid of every bit of Mr. Polecat's nice perfumery.

MR. 'POSSUM EXPLAINS HOW UNCLE SILAS TRIED TO PLEASE AUNT MELISSY

WELL, you remember that the Hollow Tree people took four of their friends to live with them and called it the Hollow Tree Inn. Mr. Robin came, and Mr. Turtle, also Jack Rabbit and Mr. Squirrel, and they made a jolly crowd after they got settled and knew about each getting his own things to eat, because the Hollow Tree people – the 'Coon and 'Possum and the Old Black Crow – found they couldn't suit their guests exactly when it came to a steady diet. So they all kept house together, and used to go out days (and nights, too, sometimes) and get nice things. Then they'd bring them in and fix them to suit themselves, and have them all on the big table down stairs, nice and comfortable, where they could sit and talk as long as they pleased.

It was a good deal like a big family when they were all together that way, and they used to say how nice it was, and once Mr. 'Possum said he always did think a big family was nice, anyway. Then Jack Rabbit laughed and said he should think Mr. 'Possum was just the kind of a man for a big family, being fond of good things to eat and not very fond of getting them for himself, and mostly fat and sleepy like. He said if there was just a nice, spry Mrs. 'Possum, now, to keep house and look after things he should

think it would be ever so much better than living in bachelor quarters, or, rather, thirds, with Mr. 'Coon and Mr. Crow, and not having things very orderly. Of course, with himself, Jack Rabbit said, it was different, but even at his house it got lonesome, too, now and then.

Well, Mr. 'Possum thought a minute, and then he said that there was such a thing as folks being too spry, and that it was because he had always been afraid of getting that kind that he had been pretty well satisfied to live in the Hollow Tree just as he was. He said that he had once had an uncle that something happened to in that line, and whenever he thought about poor Uncle Lovejoy he didn't seem to care much about trying anything he wasn't used to. Then they all wanted him to tell about Uncle Lovejoy and what happened to him. So Mr. 'Possum did tell, and it went this way: —

"Once upon a time," he said, "Uncle Lovejoy — we always called him Uncle Silas then — he was uncle on my mother's side, and lived with Aunt Melissy in a nice place just beyond the Wide Paw-paw Hollows — once upon a time, as I was saying, he had to go to town on some business, and that was something that never happened to Uncle Lovejoy before.

"Well, Aunt Melissy was always a spry woman, as I said, and stirring — very stirring, and primpy, too. But she was never as stirring and spry and primpy as she was the day that Uncle Silas started for town. She dressed him all up neat and proper in his very best things, and tied his tie for him, and while she was tying

it she says: —

"'Now, Silas,' she says, 'when you get to town you buy a few little articles right away and put them on. You don't want folks to see that you come from the country, you know, and you don't want Cousin Glenwood to be ashamed of you before folks. Cousin Glen will know just what things you need and where to get them.' Then she told him not to get run over by anything, or blow out the gas, or let anybody see that he wasn't used to things, because, you see, Aunt Melissy was proud, being a Glenwood herself. Then Uncle Lovejoy promised all those things, and that he would use his napkin and not eat pie out of his hand or drink out of his finger bowl, and a lot more things that Aunt Melissy remembered at the last minute. So you see by the time he got on the train he had a good deal to think about, and he kept thinking about it until by the time he got to the city he'd made up his mind he'd try to do for once everything she told him to and give her a pleasant surprise with the way he had fixed up and improved his manners when he got back. Uncle Lovejoy was good natured, and always anxious to please folks, especially Aunt Melissy.

"Well, Cousin Glenwood met him at the station, and about the first thing Uncle Silas said was to ask him where he got his clothes, and to tell him that Aunt Melissy had said he was to fix up, so's folks wouldn't think he came from the country, which, of course, she had. That just suited Cousin Glenwood, for he liked to spend money and show off what he knew about the city; so he took Uncle Lovejoy 'most everywhere, and told him to buy 'most

everything he saw. And of course Uncle Silas did it, because he wanted to surprise Aunt Melissy when he got back, and make her feel happy for once in her life.

"Cousin Glen took Uncle Lovejoy to the stores first, and then to a good many different kinds of places afterward, and every place where there was a mirror Uncle Lovejoy would stand before it and admire himself and wonder what Aunt Melissy would say when he got home. He kept buying new things every day, because every day he'd see somebody with something on or carrying or leading something, and when he remembered what Aunt Melissy said, he made up his mind he'd have to have all the things to please her, and he got them as far as he could. Even Cousin Glenwood had to commence buying things pretty soon to keep up, and before long people used to stop on the street and look at them when they went by. Uncle Silas didn't want to go home, either, when the time came, but of course he had to, and he put on his best clothes for the trip, and took a young man he'd hired to wait on him, and started.

"He didn't tell Aunt Melissy just what time he'd be there, so it was a surprise sure enough. He walked right into the yard, and behind was the young man he'd hired, carrying his things. Aunt Melissy was getting dinner, and had just come to the door a minute to see what time it was by the sun, when all of a sudden, as she looked up, there he was! He had his hat in one hand and a cane in the other, and was leading a game chicken by a string. All his boxes and bundles and the young man were behind him.

Uncle Lovejoy wore an eyeglass, too, and smoked a paper thing he said was a cigarette. My little cousins, who were there, told me afterward that their pa had never looked so fine in his life before or since. They didn't know him at all, and neither did Aunt Melissy. She thought he was somebody with something to sell at first, and when he said, 'Aw, there, Melissah!' she threw up her hands and was about to call for help, when just that minute she saw it was Uncle Silas.

"Poor Uncle Silas! He meant to surprise her, and he did it sure enough. He meant to please her, though, and he didn't do that worth a cent. It seemed funny, but she was mad. That's just the trouble about women folks; you never know when you're going to please them. My little cousins said they never saw their ma so mad before or since. She made Uncle Lovejoy take off all his nice clothes, and the young man, too, and she cooked the game chicken for dinner. Then, right after dinner, she picked up a bag of shinney sticks that Uncle Lovejoy had brought home, and she says to him and the young man: —

"Now you get out in the garden,' she says, 'both of you, and try to earn back some of this money you've been spending.' And Uncle Lovejoy didn't feel very much like it, but he went, and so did the young man. So did Aunt Melissy, and she used up most of those shinney sticks on Uncle Silas and the young man before fall, and Uncle Silas never saw any of his nice clothes again, though they had the best garden they ever did have, so my little cousins said.

"And that," said Mr. 'Possum, leaning back in his chair to smoke, "that's why I've always been afraid to try family life. It's easier to please one than two, especially when the other one is a spry, stirring person like Aunt Melissy Lovejoy."

"What became of all the good clothes?" asked Jack Rabbit, who was always very stylish.

"Why, I've heard," said Mr. 'Possum, "that Aunt Melissy made some of them over for my little cousins, and that she traded off the rest of them to a pedler for patent medicine to give Uncle Silas for a weak mind, and I think he needed it some myself for trying to please her in the first place."

Mr. Rabbit nodded.

"It takes all kinds of people to make a world," he said.

Mr. 'Coon yawned and rubbed his eyes. The others were fast asleep.

AROUND THE WORLD AND BACK AGAIN

ONCE upon a time, when Mr. Dog was over spending the evening with the Hollow Tree people, he told them that Mr. Man had said the world was round, like a ball. Of course this was after Mr. Dog got to be good friends with the 'Possum and the 'Coon and the Old Black Crow, and he often used to come over to the Hollow Tree, where they lived, for a quiet talk and smoke, and to tell the things that Mr. Man said and did, and what he had on his table for dinner.

The Hollow Tree people liked to hear about Mr. Man, too; but when they heard what he said about the world being round they thought there must be some mistake in the way Mr. Dog had understood it. Mr. 'Coon said that it couldn't be so, for the edge of the world was just beyond the last trees of the Big Deep Woods, and that he'd often sat there and hung his feet over and watched the moon come up. Mr. 'Possum said so, too; and Mr. Crow said that the other edge was over along the Wide Blue Water, where Mr. Turtle lived, and that of course the water was flat, as everybody could see. Anyway, it would spill out if it wasn't.

But Mr. Dog stuck to it that Mr. Man had said just what Mr. Dog had said he said, and that, what was more, Mr. Man had said that the world turned over every day, and that the sun and

moon and stars all went round it. And Mr. Man had said, too, that people sometimes went around the world, and didn't turn over or fall off into the sky when they were underneath, but kept on, and came up on the other side, right back to the very place they started from.

Well, that made them all wonder a good deal more than ever; and Mr. Jack Rabbit, who came in just then for the evening, said he shouldn't be a bit surprised if it were true, for he'd often noticed how the seasons went round and round, and he thought, now, they must travel around the world some way, too. He said he'd composed some poetry on Spring as he came along, and that now he understood some lines of it better than he had at the start; for, of course, when poetry just comes to anybody, as it does to Mr. Rabbit, it isn't expected that even the poet himself will understand it very well at first.

Then they all wanted to hear Jack Rabbit's poem, and Mr. Rabbit said that it really wasn't just as he wanted it yet, but that if they wouldn't expect too much, he'd let them hear how it went, anyway.

WHICH WAY, SPRING?

BY J. RABBIT

O Spring,
Ho, Spring!
Whither do you go, Spring?
If I did but know, Spring,
I would go there, too.
Pray, Spring,
Say, Spring,
Whither and away, Spring?
I would start to-day, Spring,
If I go with you.

And Spring answers: —

Why, sir,
I, sir,
Just go tripping by, sir —
If you did but try, sir,
You could go with me.
Follow,
Follow,
Over hill and hollow —
Where the bluebirds call, O,
I am sure to be.

Well, everybody applauded that, of course; and Mr. 'Coon said that for his part he was tired of cold weather, and that if to-morrow was a bright day, and anybody'd go with him, he'd start out at sunrise and follow Spring clear around the world. Then

Mr. 'Possum said he'd go just to see whether Mr. Man was right or not, and Mr. Crow said he'd go, too. Mr. Rabbit wanted to go to prove some things in his poem, but he had to make a garden if it was a good day, and Mr. Dog had an engagement to dig moles for Mr. Man.

So the next morning, bright and early, the three Hollow Tree people got up and started. They packed some lunch in a basket, so they wouldn't get hungry, in case they were gone all day, and set out in high spirits; for it was a beautiful morning in April, and they knew Spring had come at last.

They saw a bluebird up in a tree not far away, and they remembered what Mr. Rabbit's poem had said about following him over hill and hollow; so they went along in that direction, talking and whistling and singing, because they felt so good in the fresh morning sunlight.

And Mr. Bluebird hopped and whistled and flew along ahead, until, by and by, they came to where Mr. Fox lived.

"Where are you fellows going so early?" called Mr. Fox.

"We're following Spring around the world," called back Mr. Crow; and then they told him all that Mr. Dog had said.

Then Mr. Fox looked very wise, for he didn't know if Mr. Dog was playing a trick on them, or if it were really true that the world was round and he hadn't heard of it. Anyway, he wasn't going to let on, so he said: —

"Why, of course! I knew that all the time. You just keep right on until you come to that big elm over yonder, and turn to the

right. Anybody over there can show you the way." Then Mr. Fox coughed and went back into the house, but he made up his mind he wouldn't laugh until he had seen Mr. Dog and was sure it was all a joke. And the Hollow Tree people kept on to the elm tree, and, sure enough, there was Mr. Bluebird, hopping and whistling and flying on ahead, for he'd been listening to what Mr. Fox had told them.

So they hurried right along after him till they came to Mr. Wolf's place. Mr. Wolf was looking out of his door as they came by.

"Hello, you early birds!" he called. "Whose hen roost you been after?"

Then they told him they weren't thinking of such things as that on a beautiful morning like this, but that they were following Spring around the world. And they told him all that Mr. Man had said to Mr. Dog, and what Mr. Fox had said, and about Jack Rabbit's poem. Mr. Wolf thought he'd better be wise, too, until he found out just how things were, so he said: —

"Sure enough! That's a good plan. I'd go along if I had time. I know the way well. You just keep on till you come to that creek yonder, then cross and turn to the right, and after that any one can show you the way."

So away went the Hollow Tree people, and when they got to the creek, and crossed, and turned to the right, there was the bluebird again, hopping and whistling and dancing on ahead, just in the direction that Mr. Wolf had said to go. Then, pretty soon,

Mr. 'Possum said he was hungry, so they sat down on some moss and ate their lunch, and Mr. Bluebird came up close and sang to them till Mr. 'Possum went to sleep in the sun and took a little nap, while the 'Coon and the Crow put what was left back into the basket and got ready to go. Then Mr. 'Possum woke up and said he was sure they must be nearly around the world, for he'd just had a dream about catching a chicken with four legs and two heads, and he knew that must mean something good. So then they went on and the bluebird went ahead, until they came to a fine, big cave, where Mr. Bear lived.

Now, Mr. Bear is very big and wise – at least he thinks he is – and he knew right away that Mr. Dog was just playing a joke on them, or at least he thought he did, so he said: —

"Well, well! I supposed you fellows knew all that long ago. You don't mean to say, do you, that this is really your first time round? Why, I go round the world every spring and fall, and buy most of my things on the other side. You just follow this path till you come to a big black rock, and then turn to the right and keep straight ahead. You can't miss the way."

Then Mr. Bear went back in his cave, and laid down and rolled over and laughed to think what a big joke everybody was playing on the Hollow Tree people. But the Hollow Tree people kept right on, for they saw Mr. Bluebird still whistling and dancing on ahead; and by and by they came to the big black rock that Mr. Bear had mentioned, and turned to the right again as he had told them to do. Then they walked and walked, and Mr. Bluebird

hopped and skipped and whistled, until at last, just as they were all getting very tired and it was 'most night, they came to a big hollow tree in a deep woods; and Mr. 'Possum looked up and says: —

"Why," he says, "this tree looks a good deal like our tree!"

And Mr. 'Coon, he says: —

"Why, it's just like our tree!"

And Mr. Crow, he says: —

"Why, it *is* our tree!" for of course they'd turned to the right three times, which brought them right back where they started from, though they did not know it.

So then all at once they commenced to laugh and shout: —

"We've done it! We've done it!"

"We've followed Spring around the world,

According to the plan!

Hurrah for Mr. Rabbit!

And hurrah for Mr. Man!"

And the bluebird up in the branches whistled and danced and shouted, too; and Jack Rabbit and Mr. Dog came over pretty soon to see if they'd got home yet. And of course Mr. Rabbit was proud about the way his poem had turned out; and Mr. Dog he was proud, too, on Mr. Man's account. Then they all had a big supper, to celebrate, and by and by Mr. Rabbit and Mr. Dog went away arm in arm, singing Mr. Rabbit's poem to the moon; while the 'Coon and 'Possum and the Old Black Crow went to

bed happy because they had followed Spring clear around the world, and hadn't got lost or tumbled off into the sky, but were home again safe and sound in the Hollow Tree.