NO QUARRELLING TO-DAY!

There were once two quarrelsome children called Ned and Alice. If Ned didn’t start a quarrel, Alice did, and if Alice didn’t, Ned did.

Their mother was quite in despair about them for all day long from the nursery there came the sound of shouts and smacks. It was dreadful.

“Can’t you possibly stop them quarrelling?” said their father.

“Well, I’ve tried smacking them and begging them and taking no notice of them,” said their mother. “But nothing seems to make any difference.”

“Well, I’ll try,” said their father, and he marched into the nursery, where Alice was screaming at
Tales After Supper

Ned and Ned was yelling at Alice. They took no notice of their father at all.

He stamped on the floor and they heard him. They stopped quarrelling and looked at him in surprise. Usually any stamping was done by them, and not by anyone else.

"Now listen to me," said their father. "I am going straight out to the shops, and I am going to buy you, Alice, the loveliest doll I can see, and you, Ned, the finest railway train."

The children were so astonished that they couldn't say a word. Their father went on talking to them.

"I shall bring the doll back and sit her on this shelf here. And I shall bring the railway train back and put it on the mantelpiece where you can see how lovely it is. And if, at the end of the day, you can tell me that you haven't quarrelled once, you shall have the doll and the train for yourselves."

He went out of the room. In half an hour's time he was back, carrying the loveliest doll that Alice had ever seen, and a box containing the finest railway train that Ned had ever imagined! The train went up on the mantelpiece and the doll on the shelf.
No Quarrelling To-day!

"There!" said their father. "Now see what wonderful rewards you will have for not quarrelling. I just want to see if it is possible for you to stop for one day."

"We shan't quarrel," said Ned.

"Of course not," said Alice.

Their father went out of the room. The children went to look at the new toys.

"I like my doll much better than your train," said Alice, wishing she could cuddle the lovely blue-eyed doll.

"You would say a thing like that," said Ned, scornfully. "Just like a girl—liking a doll better than a train! Silly, blue-eyed creature—look at her stupid smile!"

"Well, your train can't open and shut its eyes!" said Alice, getting cross.

"You're quarrelling," said Ned.

"I'm not," said Alice, fiercely. "If I were really quarrelling, I'd give you a hard smack."

"Well, you'd get one back," said Ned, at once. "Like this!" And he smacked the blue-eyed doll hard. Alice gave a squeal.

"Oh, you cruel, horrid boy, smacking my new doll like that! You're quarrelling, you're quarrelling! You won't get your train."
Tales After Supper

“I’m not quarrelling with you—I’m just smacking your silly doll,” said Ned. “And anyway, it takes two to make a quarrel, so if I’m quarrelling, you are, too! And you won’t get your doll!”

“I tell you, I AM NOT QUARRELLING!” said Alice, so loudly that Ned pretended she quite deafened him.

“Don’t make me deaf,” he said. “I think it’s wonderful the way you shout in a rage like that and yet think you’re not quarrelling! You wait till Daddy hears you. He'll say you’re quarrelling!”

“He will not!” squealed Alice. “He’ll say you are and you won’t get your silly train.”

“It isn’t silly,” said Ned.

“It is silly,” said Alice. “Why, look—if you want to put any passengers into the carriages, you’ve got to slide the roofs off! Whoever heard of doing that in a real train?”

“You don’t have to slide the roofs off,” said Ned.

“You do,” said Alice. “I’ll show you,” She went over to the train, but Ned stopped her.

“You’re not to touch my train,” he said.

“Well, you touched my doll so I’m going to
touch your train,” said Alice. She made a grab at a carriage and the whole train of engine and trucks fell off the mantelpiece with a bump. The engine’s funnel was bent. Some wheels fell off the carriages, for the train fell with a big bang.

“You wicked girl! You’ve broken my train!” cried Ned almost in tears. “I’ll smack your doll again.” He ran to the doll and dragged it down from the shelf. Alice ran to rescue her. She caught hold of the legs, and Ned had the head. They pulled hard.

“Don’t quarrel, you bad girl, don’t quarrel!” said Ned.
Tales After Supper

"I'm not quarrelling, I'm not!" shouted Alice. "Give me my doll!"

There was a horrid tearing noise. The doll's head came off—and at the same moment the nursery door opened and in came their father! He had heard the shouting and yelling. He came in just in time to see the doll torn in half. Then he saw the broken train in the fender.

"We're not quarrelling, Daddy, really, we're not!" said Ned.

"We're good friends," said Alice. "Really we are!"

"Oh—well, if you break one another's toys when you are not quarrelling but are good friends, what ever must you do when you really do quarrel?" said their father, sternly "It seems as if I can't stop bad temper by offering you a reward. Off to bed, both of you, and we'll see what a good spanking will do!"

Well, it did a lot—and when the two children saw the broken doll and train the next day they felt very sad indeed. Their father had them mended and gave them to the gardener's two children, who were delighted with them.

"It's rather dreadful to think that we couldn't stop ourselves from quarrelling even when we
No Quarrelling To-day!
really wanted to,” said Ned. “In fact, part of the time we were yelling out that we weren’t quarrelling. I think we’re silly, as well as quarrelsome.”

“So do I,” said Alice, looking sadly out of the window and seeing the gardener’s little girl wheeling the lovely blue-eyed doll out in her pram for a walk. “Let’s really try to be nice.”

So they are trying. They won’t find it easy though, will they?
THE LITTLE STRAY CAT

There was once a little stray cat without a name. She had once belonged to a family, but they had moved away, and hadn’t taken her with them. So after she had stayed around the empty house for some time, she left it, and went to the woods.

She was sad, because she had liked belonging to a family. It was nice to lap milk from her own blue saucer. It was lovely to nibble at a fish-head, put down in her dish. It was delicious to wash herself in front of the warm kitchen fire,
The Little Stray Cat

and it was fun to curl up in her own basket, and to feel somebody stroking her.

Now she had nobody. She lived in the woods and looked after herself. She made herself a kind of hidey-hole in a tree, and at night-time she came out to hunt rats and mice and rabbits.

But it was very lonely without anyone to love her. Sometimes the little stray used to listen for the children who came picknicking in the woods. Then she would pop her head out of the hole in the tree and wonder if she should jump down and go to them. Perhaps one of them might take her home and love her! But she never liked to jump down in case one of the children had a dog.

One day a little boy called Bob came through the woods alone. He was looking for toadstools to take to school, because the teacher was going to give a lesson on them.

The little boy looked up into the tree where the stray cat had her hole. He saw a queer fungus growing out of the trunk, shaped like a saddle. “Well, that’s not a toadstool, but I’m sure it belongs to the same family,” said Bob, and he climbed up to get it. When he came near to the hole in the tree, he stared in surprise.
Tales After Supper

Two big green eyes were looking up at him out of the hole!

Then there came a soft purring noise, and Bob smiled. "A stray cat! Poor thing! It's living in a tree!"

He put down his hand and stroked the stray cat. She purred more loudly, and came right out.

"Oh, you're a tabby!" said Bob. "I like tabbies. What a nice soft little thing you are!"

He stroked the stray and made such a fuss of her that she quite lost her heart to Bob. When he climbed down the tree, she climbed down too. When he ran through the wood, she ran behind him. When he turned to go home, she went with him.

She went right to the door of his home. His mother was surprised to see the little tabby.

"Mother, it's a stray cat. I found her in a hole in a tree," said Bob. "She came all the way home with me. Can we keep her?"

"Oh, no, dear," said his mother. "I don't want a cat. Give her some milk and let her go."

Bob put her down a saucer of milk and the tabby lapped it up eagerly. She hadn't tasted milk for weeks! It was delicious.

"Now you must go," said Bob's mother and
The Little Stray Cat

shooed the tabby away. She ran down the path, and looked back. What a pity she couldn’t live with that nice boy, and belong to him!

She made up her mind that she would live near him. She wouldn’t go back to the woods again. She would find a hole in a tree, quite near the house, and she would live there. She could catch mice and rats for her dinner. Perhaps just sometimes the boy would give her a little milk to drink.

The tabby hunted around for a good hole in a tree. Soon she found one in a big ash tree near the house. The tree was hollow inside, though it looked good enough outside. The cat made itself a comfortable hidey-hole and slept there whenever it wanted to.

It watched for Bob all the time. As soon as he appeared at the door, ready to go to school, the tabby jumped down from her tree and ran to him. She rubbed herself against his legs and purred loudly. It was so nice to have someone to love. What was the use of living if you couldn’t love someone and have someone love you?

Bob loved the little cat and wished and wished that his mother would let him have her. But she
shook her head every time he asked her, and at last got cross.

"You know quite well that when I say no, I mean no," she said. "Don't ask me again. please. It's quite a nice little cat, but I wish it wouldn't hang about the house so much. I hope it isn't a thief. If I catch it stealing the fish or the milk I shall give it such a smacking that it will never come near again!"

"Mother, the tabby isn't a thief," said Bob. "I think she's a great help, because she catches so many rats and mice."

Each night Bob slept in his little bedroom, and each night the tabby slept in her hole in the big ash tree that overlooked the window. Some-
times, when she popped her head out, she could see Bob standing at his window.

One night the wind got up and a terrible gale blew. It howled in the wood and bent the trees almost in half. It shouted round the house, and blew a chimney-pot off down the road. It blew the clouds to rags in the sky.

Bob was asleep—but the tabby cat wasn’t. She was uneasy, but she didn’t know why. Her ash tree began to swing and sway rather alarmingly. The tabby was afraid.

Then there came a loud creaking noise. The little cat sprang from her hole in fright. The tree was going to fall! It was, it was! Once before in the wood the tabby had seen a tree
blown down in the wind, and had heard the creaking that came before the crash.

The cat stood on a branch and looked towards Bob's house. The ash tree was being blown towards it. Suppose it fell? It would fall right on to Bob's bedroom! He would be hurt and frightened!

The tabby sprang from the creaking, swaying tree and ran to the house. She climbed up the creeper swiftly and came to Bob's window. She slipped inside and jumped on to the sleeping boy's bed.

"Miaow!" she said loudly, and put her whiskery head close against his face. "Miaow!" She licked him with her rough little tongue and he awoke with a jump. He sat up, astonished.

"Why, it's you, little tabby! Why have you come to see me in the middle of the night? My word, what a wind! What's that creaking noise?"

He went to the window, and saw the great ash tree swaying alarmingly in the gale. It creaked even more loudly—it swayed towards the house—it fell!

Bob gave a shriek! "It's going to fall on the house! Mother! Daddy! Quick!"

He picked up the cat and rushed into his
The Little Stray Cat

parent’s bedroom. Just as he got there, there came a loud crash, and a noise of tiles clattering to the ground. The ash tree had fallen on the house, and had smashed in the roof of Bob’s jutting-out bedroom! Tiles fell on to his empty bed, and a great dust filled the room.

“Bob! Darling Bob! You are safe!” cried his mother. “Oh, my dear, thank goodness you woke up in time! You might have been killed.”

“I didn’t wake myself up; the tabby woke me, Mother,” said Bob. “She sleeps in that tree, you know. She must have known it was going to fall and came to warn me. She saved my life, Mother.”

“Good little tabby,” said his mother, and picked up the surprised little cat. “Well, you shall have a reward. You shall be our cat now, not a stray any longer. You shall be Bob’s own pet, and he will love you and give you a basket of your own.”

You should have heard the tabby purr! She hadn’t expected any reward at all—but this was the best she could ever have thought of! She jumped up on to Bob’s knee and rubbed her head against him.

“You’d better cuddle into bed with us to-
Tales After Supper

might,” said his mother to Bob. “Your bedroom won’t be safe till the roof is mended.”

So Bob cuddled into his mother’s bed—and, dear me, the tabby slept on top of them both. I don’t know which was happier, she or Bob?
THE DETERMINED DUSTBIN

There was once quite an ordinary dustbin that stood in Mrs. Snoodle’s backyard. It was big and round and had two handles and a nice big lid that fitted exactly on its top.

This dustbin had big ideas. It wanted to see the world. It didn’t want to stay in Mrs. Snoodle’s backyard all its life.

“After all, what can I see here?” said the dustbin to itself twenty times a day. “Nothing at all except the back door, the cat, the dog, the fence, and a few flowers—and Mrs. Snoodle when she comes out to feed me.”

You may think it queer that a dustbin should
be fed, but, you see, when Mrs. Snoodle took off its lid and emptied potato peel, cabbage stalks, cinders, and other rubbish into the dustbin, the dustbin really thought it was being fed. It was always very much annoyed when the dustman came on Thursdays and took away everything it had inside it.

But no matter how much the dustbin wanted to see the world, it couldn't, because it had no legs and couldn't move an inch. So it just had to stand in the yard and watch the cat washing itself and the dog scratching itself. It was very tired of that. Once the cat tried to get the dustbin lid off to get at some kipper-heads inside, and the dustbin was very angry. It made its lid fall down with such a clatter that the cat was frightened and sprang right over the fence into the next-door garden.

And then one day a simply wonderful thing happened to the dustbin. Mrs.' Snoodle took off the lid and crammed into the dustbin a pair of old shoes. And in the shoes was a get-about spell!

Now Mrs. Snoodle was half a brownie, because her mother had been one of the fairy folk. When her feet had got old and tired she had made a get-about spell to put inside her shoes to help her to
**The Determined Dustbin**

get about. The spell had been very helpful indeed and Mrs. Snoodle had run about the house as easily as a kitten.

But now her shoes were old and she didn’t want to wear them any more. So into the dustbin they went—and Mrs. Snoodle forgot all about the get-about spell in the toes!

The spell fell out and wriggled down to the bottom of the dustbin. And there, of course, it began to do its work!

The dustbin found that it could move by itself. How marvellous! It hadn’t any legs so it could only move by little hops and jumps. But it soon got along all right.

“I’ll go down the passage and up to the front gate,” thought the dustbin joyfully. “I shall go across the road and look in at the toy-shop. I shall like that.”

So hoppity-skip it went over the yard and up the passage. It was soon at the front gate, and there it stood enjoying itself for a minute or two.

It could see such a lovely lot from there! A bus went by and two cars. Three children raced along shouting. Two dogs chased one another, and a man came by with a barrow. My goodness, the dustbin was seeing the world that afternoon!
Tales After Supper

It thought it would cross the road to look into the toy-shop. So it hoppity-skipped to the kerb—but just as it hopped off the kerb into the road a lorry came by and almost ran over it. The dustbin hopped back again very quickly, and trembled so much that all the cinders inside it shook and rattled.

“Well, I really thought that dustbin was hopping along by itself!” said the lorry-driver in surprise, and he looked back to see what was happening. But the dustbin was now standing by the front gate, not daring to move into the road again.

In a little while Mrs. Snoodle came out with some dead flowers to put into the dustbin. But the dustbin was not in the backyard. Mrs. Snoodle was most surprised. She looked all round the little yard, but no, she couldn’t see a single sign of the dustbin. It was most peculiar.

“Have you seen my dustbin?” she asked the cat. “Where in the world is it? Nobody would steal a dustbin, surely, and no dustbin walks away by itself!”

“Yours does,” said the cat, with a mew. “It walked to your front gate and there it is now!”

Mrs. Snoodle understood cat-language because
The Determined Dustbin

she was half a brownie. She stared at the cat in astonishment. "Well, I've never known you tell me a story before!" she said. "Really, Tibbles, I'm surprised at you."

"Well, go and look by the front gate," said the cat. So Mrs. Snoodle went to look. And there, sure enough, was the dustbin, watching a man selling carrots off a barrow, and really enjoying itself.

"Now how did you get there?" said Mrs.
Tales After Supper

Snoodle, hardly believing her eyes. "I suppose one of those bad boys in the next street put you there just to tease me. Well, back you come!"

And back to the yard she dragged the dustbin. It was very angry. It tried its best to hop away, but Mrs. Snoodle was strong. Soon it was standing in its old place in the backyard. Mrs. Snoodle put the dead flowers inside it and went indoors.

In just about two minutes the dustbin had hoppity-skipped to the front gate again, and this time it went a little way down the road, much to the surprise of two children passing by.

"Did you see that dustbin move?" said one child to another. "Ooh, it's queer. Let's go home!"

The dustbin settled itself down and watched the cars go by. 'It was having a perfectly marvellous time. It stayed there for a whole hour till a policeman came by and saw it. He was astonished to see a dustbin out on the pavement all by itself, and he went to knock at Mrs. Snoodle's door to tell her she must take it in. She stared at him in amazement.

"What! That dustbin out in the front again!" she cried. "I can't understand it! I'll take it in
The Determined Dustbin

at once.” So out she went again and dragged it in. “I can’t think how you get out there!” she said. “Now just you stay where you are put.”

The dustbin was cross. It stayed in the back-yard till it was dark. “Now Mrs. Snoodle can’t see me,” it thought. “I’ll hop to the front gate again.”

So away it hopped up the passage and out of the gate. But it was so dark that it really couldn’t see anything interesting. So it thought it would do a little hopping down the road and enjoy a walk.

Off it went, hoppity-skipping. It bumped into old Mr. Spink, who was very angry indeed. He thought the dustbin was a fat round person, and he spoke sternly to it.

“I don’t know who you are, madam or sir, but let me tell you this—if you don’t look where you are going you will get into trouble.”

He went on his way and the dustbin hopped along again. The newspaper man came along and walked straight into it. The dustbin stopped at once. The newspaper man put out his hand and felt all round the dustbin.

“How queer!” he said. “It feels like a dustbin—and yet it walked into me. Goodness gracious!
Tales After Supper

Am I dreaming? Surely walking dustbins only come in dreams?"

The newspaper man felt the dustbin again and the dustbin gave a little hop and a giggle. That was too much for the newspaper man. He gave a squeal and raced down the street as fast as he could go! He told his wife all about the walking dustbin and she didn’t believe a word of it. He was very offended.

The next person who came along was the policeman again. When he walked—bang—! into the dustbin, he was most astonished. He flashed his lantern on to the dustbin and stared in amazement.

"You again!" he said. "Well, I must say you are a most determined dustbin! I can’t believe that you walk down the road by yourself, and yet, if not, how did you get here? Well, anyway back you go!"

And back the dustbin went, carried on the policeman’s broad back. It was in a great rage, but it didn’t like to do anything.

Bump! The policeman stood the dustbin down in Mrs. Snoodle’s backyard and then went to tell her that he had found it out in the street again.

"Bless us all!" cried Mrs. Snoodle in the
The Determined Dustbin

greatest surprise. "I simply don't understand it! Dustbins can't walk, can they? I will tell you what I will do, policeman. I will put a rope round the dustbin and tie it to the fence so that it can't possibly move!"

Out she went and did this—and how she scolded the poor dustbin as she tied it up! It was sad and sorry, and rattled its lid very miserably when Mrs. Snoodle went indoors.

Now that night a bad robber stole into Mrs. Snoodle's backyard to steal the onions out of her shed. The dustbin heard him coming and tried its hardest to get to him. But it was tied up with the rope and could hardly move a step.

It pulled and tugged at the rope—and the rope broke with a SNAP! The dustbin fell over. Its lid flew off and struck down the robber—and he fell just at the same moment as the dustbin did! the dustbin fell on top of him—and there was the robber, nicely caught inside the big dustbin, shouting in fright because he thought that a big dog had got him!

Out came Mrs. Snoodle and up ran the policeman, who wasn't very far away. So the robber was nicely caught, and the dustbin was stood upright again.
Tales After Supper

“Well, I never did!” said Mrs. Snoodle in great surprise, when she saw how the dustbin had broken its rope and fallen neatly over the robber to catch him. “You are a most determined and surprising dustbin. I shall paint you red and yellow and tell everyone how marvellous you are! But please, please don’t walk away any more!”

Mrs. Snoodle kept her word. She painted the dustbin red and yellow, and it does look so grand. It feels grand too, because the cat and the dog have told all the other cats and dogs about how it caught the robber, and so the dustbin has visitors all day long.

It never hoppity-skips away now—and do you know why? It is because the get-about spell fell out when the dustbin tumbled over! Goodness knows where it went. Wouldn’t I like to know!
GRUMBLING GRACE

Do you know anyone who grumbles? I know plenty of people! When it rains they say, "Oh dear! How I wish it wouldn't rain!" And when the sun shines they say, "What a nuisance, it's so hot to-day!"

The grumblers are very tiresome—and the funny thing is, they always begin when they are children. I am sure you know a few grumblers—maybe you are one yourself, though I hope not!
Tales After Supper

This is the tale of Grumbling Grace, and how her mother cured her.

Grace was nine years old, and she had grumbled about things ever since she could speak. So she was a marvellous grumbler by the time she was nine.

She grumbled about getting up. She grumbled about going to bed. She grumbled because there was ginger cake for tea instead of chocolate cake. And when there was chocolate cake she grumbled because there wasn’t ginger!

She grumbled because she wasn’t at the top of her class. She grumbled because she didn’t get a prize. She grumbled because Fanny had a new frock and she hadn’t, and she grumbled because John had a bigger pencil-box than she had.

So, as you can imagine, she was grumbling all day long! Her mother was so used to it that she didn’t notice it, and it wasn’t until her Aunt Joan came to stay for a few days that anyone tried to stop Grace from grumbling.

“Goodness me! How that child grumbles!” cried Aunt Joan. “I never heard anything like it. Why don’t you stop her?”

“Well, really, I haven’t noticed it,” said
Grumbling Grace

Grace’s mother, in surprise. “I suppose Grace has done it so long that I am used to it and don’t bother.”

“Well, my dear, you must bother,” said Aunt Joan firmly. “That child will grow up into a most unpleasant woman. When she is married she will grumble at her poor husband and children. No one will love her. You really must cure her, or she will be unhappy when she grows up.”

“Yes—I suppose I must,” said Grace’s mother. “I’ll think of some way to cure her. I don’t think Grace herself knows how she grumbles.”

“I’m sure she doesn’t,” said Aunt Joan. “She can’t open her mouth without grumbling, poor child. She wastes such a lot of breath! No wonder she isn’t top of her class. No wonder children don’t ask her out to tea. No wonder she always looks miserable and discontented! Grumblers are always like that.”

Aunt Joan left soon after that. Grace was glad. She hadn’t dared to grumble quite so much when her aunt was there, because Aunt Joan always noticed a grumble, and her mother didn’t. But now Mother was going to notice too!

“Grace, your Aunt Joan was quite right,”
said Mother. "I have counted your grumbles to-day—and there have already been sixteen!"

"Oh no, Mother, surely not," said Grace, going red. "I don’t really grumble, you know, really I don’t."

"Well—we’ll see what your next grumble is," said her mother. "And if you can’t stop grumbling, we’ll make some plan that will show you exactly how much or how little you do grumble!"

Well, five minutes later Grace began to grumble, of course. She had a beautiful little bedroom of her own, with a nice white chest-of-drawers, a comfortable little bed, two green rugs, a bookcase, a chair, a looking-glass with flowers round it, a clock, and a stool.

And will you believe it, she began to grumble about her bedroom. She was talking about Jane and Freda, who were sisters and shared a room together.

"I do wish I had a sister," she said. "It’s so dull alone. Freda and Jane share a room together. I don’t like having a bedroom all to myself. I wish I could share it with someone."

"Oh, Grace! You have such a beautiful little bedroom!" said her mother, vexed. "I tried to make it so nice for you!"
Grumbling Grace

"Well, it's not so nice as Freda's and Jane's," said Grace in her usual grumbling tone.

"Now, Grace—this is a great big grumble," said her mother. "And it's told me what to do with you to show you how much and how often you grumble. Listen! Every time you grumble I shall go to your nice little bedroom and take something out of it. If you grumble at your bedroom you don't deserve to have so many nice things in it—and you will lose them one by one!"

Grace stared at her mother in dismay. "No, please don't do that, Mother," she said. "I shouldn't like it at all. And anyway, it wouldn't be any good—because I don't really grumble as much as Aunt Joan said I did."

"Well, we'll see," said her mother. "Now remember, Grace—every grumble loses you something out of your bedroom!"

Grace thought it was a silly idea. She didn't say anything for a long time. She remembered not to grumble, and her mother was pleased. But after dinner, when her mother told her to take a book and rest until schooltime, she was cross.

"I don't see why I can't go into the garden," she grumbled. "I wish I..."
Tales After Supper

Her mother looked at Grace—and then she ran upstairs. She took the stool out of the bedroom and put it into the spare-room. Grace missed it when she went to brush her hair. Bother! She liked that little stool.

She went downstairs and began to grumble again. "Mother, I do wish you hadn't taken that stool," she began. "I do think it's...."

Her mother went upstairs again. This time she took out the chair. Now Grace had nowhere to sit!

Grace went to school, sulking. When she came home she wondered what jam there was for tea. She lifted up the lid of the jam-pot.

"Oh, plum jam," she grumbled. "Mother, why couldn't I have strawberry jam? I do wish..."

Her mother slipped upstairs at once and took away the clock from Grace's bedroom. Grace felt cross. She sat down to tea and spread some plum jam on her bread-and-butter.

"How did you get on at school this afternoon, Grace?" asked her mother.

"Well, I would have done my writing nicely if only John hadn't jogged my arm," grumbled Grace. "And we had such a lot of arithmetic,
Mother. I think we have too much. I wish. . . ."

Her mother left the table as soon as Grace began grumbling and went upstairs. She moved the dressing-table out of the room! Good gracious—the room began to look very bare indeed.

Grace didn’t stop grumbling. She grumbled because it was raining and she couldn’t go out after tea. She grumbled because she had some spelling to learn. She grumbled because her mother sent her to wash her jammy hands.

And every time she grumbled her mother went upstairs and took something out of Grace’s dear little bedroom. Her looking-glass went. Her pictures went. Her bookcase full of books went—and her two green rugs! Would you
believe that anyone could grumble quite so much. It was simply astonishing.

“Well, I had no idea that Grace was such a terrible grumbler!” thought her mother sadly.

“How wrong I have been to let her get so bad. I am afraid it is going to be very difficult to cure her after all these years.”

Grace went up to her room to fetch a book. She opened the door—and then stood staring in alarm and surprise. Only her bed was left in the room! There was nothing else at all—no chair—no rugs on the floor—no pictures on the wall! It was dreadful!

“Mother! What have you done with all my things?” cried Grace. “There’s only the bed left!”

“Yes—it is very shocking, Grace?” said her mother. “You have grumbled almost every time you opened your mouth and I have had to go upstairs very often and take something away. Now for goodness’ sake don’t make one single grumble more, or your bed will go! And you don’t want to sleep on the floor, do you?”

“No,” said Grace, in horror. Goodness. Had she really grumbled so much as to lose every-
Grumbling Grace

thing but her bed? She must be very, very bad. Well, she wasn’t going to lose her bed—she wouldn’t grumble once more that night.

And she didn’t. Not once. It showed that she could stop herself if she liked. Her mother smiled a little secret smile and was pleased. Grace would learn to stop grumbling sooner than she had hoped.

The next day Grace’s mother spoke to her at breakfast-time. “To-day, Grace, you will lose a toy for every grumble. Now it isn’t very nice to have a bedroom with only a bed in it, is it? Well, it will not be at all nice to have a toy-cupboard with not a single toy in. So be careful won’t you?”

“Oh, Mother! It isn’t fair!” cried Grace. “I do wish...”

“There goes your first doll, Grace,” said her mother, and she got up from the table. “That was a grumble, you know. Now do be careful.”

It was Saturday and Grace was at home all day. She was cross. She was sulky. She grumbled without ceasing, and very soon she had lost her golliwog, three dolls, her jigsaw puzzle, four books, her teddy-bear, and her tea-set. It was dreadful!
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“You know, Grace, I thought last night you would soon learn not to grumble,” said her mother sadly. “But I was wrong. You are worse than ever to-day.”

“Only because I am cross, so I’m not trying,” said Grace. “If I tried I wouldn’t grumble once!”

“I don’t believe that,” said her mother. So Grace set out to show her mother that what she said was true. And until bedtime came the little girl did not grumble once! It was so nice to be with her—she was cheerful and merry, and her mother hardly knew her.

“Grace! If you only knew how sweet you are when you don’t grumble!” cried her mother. “I love you ten times more!”

“Well—I like myself much better too,” said Grace, astonished that she felt so happy. “Mother, give me back my toys and my bedroom things. I won’t grumble any more. I promise!”

“Very well. I’ll believe you and trust you,” said her mother. She put back all the bedroom things and all the toys. Grace was very happy.

And now, does she grumble? Never! It was
Grumbling Grace

such a shock to lose all her things that it really did show her what a grumbler she was. I hope your mother doesn’t try the same trick with you, if you grumble! I shouldn’t like to hear that you had to sleep on the floor.
THE LITTLE BOY WHO PLAYED ALONE

There was once a boy called Alec, who was rather shy. So he always played by himself, and didn’t want other children. He lived in a big house with a big garden, so he had plenty of room to play all kinds of pretend games.

Sometimes he was a pirate. Sometimes he was a policeman. Often he was a fairy King with a wand made of a stick wound round with silver paper.

"Why don’t you ask Johnny in to play with you?" said Mother. "He’s such a jolly little boy.  

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He would love to play policeman and burglars with you."

"No, I don't want him," said Alec, who didn't like jolly little boys. "He would always be the policeman and I would always have to be the burglar."

But what Alec would really and truly have liked would have been a fairy or a pixie to play with! Fairies and pixies were not rough and strong. They wouldn't push him over and shout in his ear and make him do things that he didn't really want to do, as other children would.

So every day he looked out for a fairy or a pixie, or even a kind little goblin with big ears and green eyes. But he never saw one—not even the shadow of one, which was very sad.

One day the wind was very strong and Alec thought he would fly his kite.* So he went indoors and fetched it. It was a big red one, with a smiling face, and it had a very long tail. Alec unwound the tail, shook it out and took his kite into the garden. The string was wound round and round a flat stick. Alec unwound a little, and then threw the kite up into the air.

It was a very windy afternoon indeed and the kite bobbed up at once, pulling hard at the string.
It waggled its long tail joyfully, and smiled down at Alec. It tugged at the string as if to say, "Let me go! Just set me free for a while and watch me fly like a bird through the clouds!"

But Alec wasn't going to do that! No—he held on for all he was worth, letting out more and more string.

And then, just as the kite had got up nice and high, over the tops of the trees at the end of the garden, the string broke! How pleased the kite was! It darted away at once, bobbing and jerking its long tail.

"Oh!" cried Alec in dismay, "Come back, you bad kite!"

But, of course, the kite didn't come back. It sailed away, suddenly dipped down, and vanished behind the trees.

Alec was very upset. He sat down on the grass and tried to blink the tears out of his eyes. He knew it was babyish to cry, and after all, he was nearly eight.

"Now, if only there were any fairies or pixies about they would come and bring me my kite," said Alec to himself after a while. "That's what happens in stories anyway. But it never happens to me. Still, you never know—if I stood up and
shouted that my kite was gone and asked the Little Folk to bring it back, my kite might come back!"

So he stood up and shouted. "Ho, there, Little Folk! My kite has gone. Please bring it back!"

And do you know, no sooner had he said that than a fairy girl came between the trees at the end of the garden, carrying his kite. She danced up to Alec, who was far too astonished to say a single word, and held out his kite.

"This fell just by me in the next garden," she said. "Is it yours, little boy?"

"Yes," said Alec, staring at her as if he couldn't believe his eyes. "I say—are you really a fairy?"
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"Don't I look like one?" said the fairy girl, and she danced on the very tips of her toes all round Alec, laughing at his astonished face. "See my silver crown. See my frilly frock! See my wand—and my silver wings!"

"Where do you live?" asked Alec.

"In the garden next door," laughed the fairy girl, "I must go back now because they have a party there, and I am joining in it."

"Please come and play with me to-morrow," said Alec. "Oh, please do."

"But I thought you were the boy who liked to play all alone," said the fairy girl.

"Not now I've seen you," said Alec. "I'd love to play with a laughing, smiling person like you."

"All right. I'll come to-morrow," said the fairy girl. "Now I must go. Good-bye."

She ran off down the garden, and disappeared between the trees. Alec was disappointed that she didn't fly. He sat and thought and thought about the fairy girl. How marvellous! How wonderful! Now he really would have someone to play with. And she had brought back his kite too. She must be very kind indeed.

Alec could hardly sleep that night, thinking
of the fun he would have the next day. As soon after breakfast as he could he ran down the garden. He waited for a long time—and then he saw somebody coming between the trees.

But it wasn’t the fairy girl, dressed in a frilly frock and with wings and a crown. It was a little girl dressed in a blue overall, with a red ribbon in her curly golden hair. She smiled at Alec.

“I’ve come,” she said.

“But you’re not a fairy any more!” cried Alec.

“Does it matter?” said the little girl. “I’m the same person, aren’t I, even if I’m not wearing wings and a crown and a fairy·frock? Was it those you liked and not me? I will go back again if you don’t want to play with me.”

Alec stared at her. Yes—it·was the same person. There was no doubt about that. The fairy had had curly golden hair and laughing blue eyes and a funny dimple that went in and out of her cheek when she smiled. And this little girl had, too.

She held out her hand to Alec and looked at all the toys he had brought from his nursery. He had meant to show them to the fairy.
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"Oh, what lovely toys," she said. "Far better than mine. Show me them."

So Alec showed her how his sailor-doll danced the hornpipe dance. He set out his railway lines and let her wind up his train. He even let her spin his big humming-top, and he didn’t like anyone else to do that.

They had a lovely morning together. When Mother came out to give him a biscuit she was surprised and pleased to see two children instead of one.

"Hallo, Susan!" she said, and gave her a biscuit too. When Mother had gone, Alec stared at Susan.

"Susan’s a funny name for a fairy," he said. "I thought they had names like Cherry Blossom and Peronel and Chinky."

"Don’t you like Susan for a name?" asked the little girl in a disappointed voice. Her mouth went down and her eyes didn’t smile any more.

"Of course I do!" said Alec at once. He was afraid this fairy was going to cry. "Don’t be silly."

"I’m not silly," said Susan, and she smiled again, so that her dimple suddenly came in her
The Little Boy Who Played Alone

left cheek. Alec thought it must be a bit of magic that made a little hole go in and out of a person’s cheek.

“I shouldn’t have thought fairies liked biscuits,” said Alec, watching Susan munch hers very fast indeed. “I thought they liked honey and dew and things like that.”

Susan stopped munching and stared at Alec. “Alec, do you really think I’m a proper fairy?” she said.

“Well, of course I do,” said Alec. “Didn’t you come dancing into my garden yesterday, bringing my kite, just after I had shouted to the fairy folk to bring it!”

“Alec, please don’t be very disappointed,” said Susan, in rather a small voice. “But I’m only a little girl who lives in the house at the bottom of your garden, not a fairy at all.”

Alec looked hard at Susan. He couldn’t make it out at all. She wasn’t a fairy? Well then—how was it she had worn a fairy’s frilly frock, a crown, and wings?

Susan knew what Alec was thinking. She smiled at him and her eyes shone very blue.

“You know, my sister was having a fancy-dress party for her birthday yesterday,” she said. “And
I was a fairy! We were dancing on the lawn all of us, when your kite came bobbing down out of the sky. I guessed it was yours, so I picked it up, squeezed through the hole in the hedge and brought it to you. And you thought I was a real fairy! Oh, how lovely of you! Did I really look like one?"

"Just exactly," said Alec. "Especially when you danced all round me. But I did wonder why you didn't fly out of the garden instead of running."

"I'm sorry I'm not a real fairy," said Susan after a bit. "I know you're very disappointed, Alec. But after all, a real fairy wouldn't be bothered to play trains and wind up dolls, you know. So I might really be more fun."

"Oh, Susan, I'm most awfully glad you're a
The Little Boy Who Played Alone

little girl and not a fairy!” cried Alec. “We’ve had such fun together this morning. I want you to be a little girl, just like you are. Come and play with me every day!”

“No—not everyday. First I’ll come and play with you, and then you must come and play with me and my sister and brother,” said Susan. “You’ll like them. They are so jolly.”

Now, as you know, Alec had always thought that he didn’t like jolly children. But he felt sure he would like anyone belonging to Susan. So, to his mother’s great surprise and wonder he asked if he could go and play with Susan, Dick, and Joan the next day.

“I could squeeze through the hole in the hedge,” he said. “May I go, Mother?”

And now Alec doesn’t play alone any more. Like you, he knows it is much more fun to share jokes and games, laughter and toys, with other people. But in his secret mind he never thinks of Susan as just Susan. He always calls her “the little fairy girl” to himself. I’d like to have seen her dancing into his garden dressed like a fairy, wouldn’t you?
THE TINY CHRISTMAS TREE

There was once a very small Christmas tree. It lived in the woods among all the other Christmas trees that were grown for Christmas-time.

You should have seen those Christmas trees. They were all planted in straight rows, and they were fine sturdy trees.

There were rows of trees about three feet high, just big enough for a small nursery. Then there were rows of bigger trees, whose branches could take quite a lot of toys and ornaments. Then there were bigger trees still for parties—the kind of Christmas trees that almost touch the ceiling of the drawing-room, and look simply wonderful when they have candles lighted.
The Tiny Christmas Tree

And largest of all were the trees that were sold for school-parties—the sort that tower right up high, and hold hundreds of presents, and sparkle like magic. Oh, you would have loved to see all the green Christmas trees growing in rows, waiting for someone to come and buy them for Christmas!

"I shall be sold this Christmas, I am sure," said one tree, whispering to its neighbour. "I am sturdy and straight and strong. I am a fine tree. They will dress me in silvery frost and glittering ornaments and shining candles, and they will hang me with marvellous toys,"

"I shall be sold too," said a tree in the next row. "I am sure I shall have a fairy-doll put right at the top. I have a straight little spike there that a doll could be tied to. How marvellous I shall look!"

"And how the children will clap their hands and shout for joy when they see me," said the biggest tree of all. "My goodness—I shall look grand, I can tell you. I’ve been sold already. Somebody bought me yesterday. Did you see her coming round and looking at all the trees? She said to the tree-grower, ‘I will have that tree for Christmas. Mark it for me, please. It
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is a magnificent tree and will stand nicely in my great hall when I give a Christmas party to all the children in the village.' Think of that! I shall be so proud."

Now the very small Christmas tree felt sad. Nobody had ever thought of buying it. It really was so very small. The trees in the row it grew in were all much bigger. It could not understand why it had not grown.

"I wonder if I shall ever be bought," said the little fir tree sadly. "I don't think I shall ever be much use. I have hardly grown since I was two years old. All the others have put out new spikes and branches at the top, and have grown higher and higher. But I stay small all the time."

The other trees teased the small Christmas tree. "Why don't you grow?" they said. "You are a little dwarf tree, a toy tree, a tree that should stand in a child's garden, because you are so small. Funny little tree!"

When Christmas week came, many people walked among the rows of Christmas trees, choosing their trees for the parties. All the trees that were in the tiny tree's row were bought, and they were full of glee.
"We shall be dug up this week, put into pots, and travel away to our great adventure!" they cried. "Oh, how grand we shall be! How we shall love all the children who dance round us!"

Only the tiny tree was sad. Nobody had bought it. Some of the people had laughed at it.

"What a funny little tree!" they said. "Why do you keep it? Why don't you dig it up and throw it away?"

That made the little tree shiver with fright. It was very unhappy when the man came to dig up all its friends and put them into fine red pots.

"Good-bye, good-bye," said the little tree to
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each one. "Have a good time. Be beautiful and grand, and give joy to hundreds of children. Good-bye!"

There were very few trees left when the day before Christmas came. There were none near the little fir tree at all. The cold wind blew all round him and he trembled in the frost. He was sad and lonely.

Then a little boy and girl came running towards the trees. They stopped beside the tiny tree.

"This one would do beautifully," said the little girl.

"It's just about the right size," said the boy.

"Let's ask if we may have it."

So they went to the tree-grower and he came out with them. He looked at the tiny tree.

"You can have it for nothing," he said. "It's no use to me, because it won't grow. I was going to dig it up and throw it away. Something is the matter with it."

"Well, we shall love to have it," said the boy, and he and the girl dug up the tiny tree. They fetched a small pot for it, put it into the boy's barrow, and wheeled it away to a house down the road.
The Tiny Christmas Tree

The fir tree was most excited.

“What is going to happen to me?” it wondered.

“Surely, surely, I can’t be going to be a real dressed-up Christmas tree after all?”

Then it caught sight of a big tree it knew! It was a fir tree out of the row that had been next to the tiny tree. “Hallo!” said the big tree, in surprise. It was standing in the yard in a fine big pot. “Hallo! Fancy seeing you! What have you come here for?”

“Well, I was just hoping I might be a real Christmas tree after all,” said the small tree.

“Well, you won’t,” said the big tree. “I’m here to be dressed up for the Christmas parties. The children told me so. Goodness knows what they want you for!”

The little tree was sad. It stood in the yard beside the big tree and wondered why it had been brought here.

Soon the children came out. They began to hang silver threads of frost on the branches of the little tree. They hung six ornaments on it too—a red one, a green one, a yellow one, and three blue ones. They did look lovely. The little tree felt very grand.

“Well, I must be going to be a Christmas tree!”
it said to itself. "I wonder if the children will hang toys on me next."

But they didn’t. They hung some rather strange things! They took a coco-nut and broke it into bits. They made holes in the middle of the bits and threaded them with string. Then they tied the bits of coco-nut to the branches, just as if they were toys! The little tree was really astonished.

Then the children brought out some bits of bacon-rind and they hung those on the tree too. They brought out a bone and tied that to one of the strongest branches! The tree was more and more surprised.

"Are they making fun of me?" he wondered, when he heard the big tree laughing at him. "I don’t understand this at all!"

Then the children tied crusts of bread and biscuits on to the tree, and then three fine sprays of the millet-seeds that the birds love so much.

"There! It’s finished!" said the boy. "Now help me to carry it to the bird-table, Janet. Doesn’t it look lovely?"

The bird-table was in the front garden. The children put the little tree right in the middle of it and then stepped back to look at it.
The Tiny Christmas Tree

"Isn't our birds' Christmas tree beautiful?" they cried. "Mummy, come and look! We were lucky to get this little tiny tree. It's just the right size for the bird-table! We've put everything on it that the birds like, and we have made it pretty with frosty threads and shining ornaments! It looks just as lovely as the big tree will look!"

The tiny tree shook with pride. So it was a real Christmas tree after all! A birds' Christmas tree! Could anything be nicer? The little fir tree loved the birds that hopped in the trees.
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and sang—now it was going to give them pleasure and feed them all day long. It was so happy that it wished it could sing like a blackbird.

The birds soon came to it. The tits pecked at the coco-nut. The starlings took the fat. The chaffinches pecked the sprays of millet. The sparrows and the robins loved the biscuits. There was something for everybody.

All day long the little fir tree felt the tiny cold feet of the birds in its branches. There is nothing that a tree loves more than that, except the wind that blows through it. The passers-by stopped to look at the tree on the bird-table and they loved it.

"Look!" they said. "Look! A birds' Christmas tree! Isn't that a good idea? Let's have one ourselves next winter! How lovely it looks with all the birds on it!"

When Christmas was over, the tiny tree was not thrown away. Oh no! The children planted it out in the garden carefully.

"We'll dig you up next winter again," they said. "Grow a little bit, and we can hang more things on you. And when you are too big for a birds' Christmas tree, we'll have you for our own
The Tiny Christmas Tree

Christmas tree and put candles on you and toys. You are such a dear little tree!"

The tree is very happy now. It grows next to a big lilac and some gooseberry bushes, and it tells them all about how it was a birds' Christmas tree last Christmas.

I wonder if you'd like to have a little tree like that, too, and put it out for the birds at Christmas time? Buy a little tiny one, if you can, and dress it up for the birds. You'll have such a lot of fun watching the sparrows, the robins, the chaffinches, and the tits pecking at the things you have hung on their own special tree!
Lucy had a kitten called Cuddle. You can guess why she called it Cuddle—because it was so cuddlesome! It was black all over except for a white shirt-front which Cuddle kept very, very clean.

"In fact, you keep it so clean, Cuddle, that I almost believe you send it to the laundry!" said Lucy, hugging her kitten.

Cuddle was pretty and loving—but oh, so naughty! She pulled all the flowers out of the vases. She knocked over the milk-jug on the table. She broke a lamp when she chased a fly, and she sent all the fire-irons clattering down when she tried to get her ball from the fireplace.

"I hope that kitten will soon settle down and be good," said Lucy's mother. "It really is very
The Big Bad Dog

naughty, and if it breaks any more things I shall get cross with it."

"Well, Mummy, it isn't so naughty as the big bad dog next door," said Lucy.

"No—I suppose it isn't," said Mummy. "It is really a very bad dog. It broke Daddy's Michaelmas daisies down yesterday—and it up-rooted all the bulbs he planted."

Daniel was certainly a very bad dog. He was a Great Dane. He was almost as big as Lucy. Lucy liked him for although he was naughty, he was gentle and sweet with her, and never rough. But his great big feet spoilt the garden when they tramped on it, and Mummy had to see that there was no meat, fish or cakes left about if he came in, for he put his great paws up on table or shelf and gobbled everything!

Daniel lived next door. There was wire between the gardens so that he could not get through—but there was one place where he could jump right over, and that was how he came in. He was fond of Lucy and often came to find her.

"What with that naughty little kitten and that big bad dog I really am worried to death!" said Mummy, shooing Daniel out of the kitchen. "Shoo, Daniel, shoo! Will you please stop sniffing
at the larder door. Your dinner is NOT in there!"

Daniel shooed. He leapt over the wire and trotted back to his own house. Then Cuddle the kitten, who had hidden behind a chair when Daniel walked in, came out to look round. Cuddle was afraid of the big dog. It seemed like an elephant to her.

Cuddle spied a bowl of goldfish on the dining-room book-case when she wandered into that room. She climbed up and looked down into the bowl. What was this bright red thing that glided in and out so quickly? She put in her paw and tried to catch the fish.

But when she took her paw out, it was wet and cold. Cuddle didn’t like it. She tried to jump over the bowl to get down the way she
The Big Bad Dog

got up—but she hit the bowl and it fell over! Down, down, down it went—and crash, splash, it was on the floor, broken and spilt! The goldfish wriggled and gasped.

Mummy and Lucy ran in. They put the goldfish into a dish of water and cleared up the mess. “That was very, very naughty of you, Cuddle,” said Mummy crossly.

Cuddle went into a corner and licked her wet paw. Then she thought she would see what was up the chimney. So she went to the empty fireplace and peeped up. She gave a spring and began to scramble up. Down came a whole pile of soot on to the hearth!

Cuddle fell with it—and, goodness me, she had no white shirt-front now! She was covered with black soot! She ran to the sofa, jumped up on to a cushion, and began to wash herself.

What a mess there was when Mummy came into the room! Soot all over the place—and the sofa and cushion quite black where Cuddle had walked and sat and washed. Mummy called Lucy.

“Now look, Lucy,” she said, “your kitten has been very tiresome again. You must think of somebody else to give it to. I really can’t have
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it behaving like this. If it would only do a good thing sometimes instead of being so bad—but it never does. It's just naughty, naughty, naughty all day long!"

Lucy began to cry. She loved Cuddle. "Oh, Mummy, let me keep Cuddle," she begged. "I am sure she will be good soon."

But Mummy said no, Cuddle must go to some other home. She really was too naughty to keep.

Now that night Mummy was going to have Uncle Jim, Auntie Jane, and Granny to supper, so she had quite a lot of cooking to do. She had two nice chickens roasting, potatoes, cauliflower and bread sauce, and a big trifle. Lucy thought it all looked lovely. She wasn't going to stay up to supper, but she wanted to see everything on the table.

Supper was at a quarter to eight. It was Granny's birthday, which was why there was to be a party. Mummy was very anxious that everything should be nice for Granny. She made Lucy shut Cuddle up in her bedroom in case the kitten tripped her up as she was carrying dishes into the dining-room.

Granny and Uncle Jim and Auntie Jane arrived.
The Big Bad Dog

They sat in the drawing-room talking to Daddy, whilst Mummy got the supper ready. She carried the roast chickens to the table. She went out to get the vegetables, and Lucy went to help her.

Now Cuddle smelt the dinner cooking and she badly wanted to go and see what was happening. She scraped at the door but it wouldn’t open. So she went to the window. It was open at the top. It didn’t take Cuddle long to jump up to the top, slide down the glass, spring to the window-sill, get down the tree outside and go into the dining-room, where a delicious smell hung about.

“Whatever is making that glorious smell?” wondered Cuddle. She jumped up on to the table and saw the chickens—and just at that very moment who should walk in at the dining-room door but the very big bad dog, Daniel!

He too had smelt the good smell, and had at once jumped over the wire to come and see what it was. He had trotted in at the garden door unseen—and here he was in the dining-room!

Cuddle stared at him in fright. Whatever was she to do? How could she escape? If she jumped
off the table the big bad dog would get her! And he would get her if she stayed there too—for already he had put his enormous paws up on the tablecloth and was sniff-sniff-sniffing as hard as ever he could.

Now hanging down over the table was the bell-pull. When Mummy had a maid she would ring this bell for the maid to come and clear the table. The bell-pull hung on a long cream wire, and when it was tugged, the bell rang loudly in the kitchen. Well, poor little Cuddle saw this bell-pull and thought that perhaps if she jumped up on it she would be safe from that hungry-looking dog.

If she had only known it, Daniel wasn't sniffing for her at all! He was sniffing at the two roast chickens. He had never smelt anything so good in his life! He put his nose as near as he could to them, meaning to lick them, and then to pick them up and run off with them. Cuddle gave a howl of fright. She jumped straight up to the bell-pull and hung there, clutching with all her claws at the cream wire. The bell at once rang loudly in the kitchen. Jingle-jang-jang, jingle-jang-jang!

Daniel got a shock when the kitten jumped
high like that. He stared at her swinging on the bell-pull and then began to sniff at the chickens again.

Cuddle hung on the bell-pull and swung to and fro. The bell went on ringing loudly in the kitchen—jingle-jang-jang, jingle-jang-jang, jingle-jang-jang!

Mummy and Lucy were most astonished. "Somebody's ringing and ringing the dining-room bell—quick, who is it?" cried Mummy, and she and Lucy rushed into the dining-room.

And there they saw Daniel just about to take a roast chicken in his enormous mouth, and
Cuddle the kitten hanging valiantly on to the bell-pull, whilst it rang and rang and rang!

“Bad dog, bad dog!” cried Mummy, and she rushed at Daniel who ran straight out of the door, jumped over the wire and went home! Cuddle dropped down to the table and mewed pitifully. She was very frightened.

“Oh, you clever little kitten! You saw that that big bad dog was going to steal the supper, and you rang the bell to warn us!” cried Lucy, picking Cuddle up and hugging her. “Mummy isn’t she clever? She saved the chickens!”

Everyone came in to see what all the excitement was about—and when Granny heard about it, she said, “Well, well, what a clever kitten! Surely, surely you won’t give it away now, will you? After all, it isn’t every kitten that can do a thing like that! As it is my birthday I shall ask a birthday wish—please let Lucy keep that clever little kitten!”

“Very well,” said Mother, laughing. “I must grant your birthday wish, Granny. But I just wonder whether Cuddle was as clever as we think!”

“Oh of course she was!” said Granny. “Come along, kitty dear—you shall be on my knee at
supper-time and have a bit of chicken for a reward!”

So Cuddle had a fine time—and the funny thing was that she turned over a new leaf after that, and was never very naughty again. As for Daniel, the wire was made higher still, and now he can’t possibly jump over it. So the big bad dog doesn’t come into the garden any more, and Cuddle is very pleased!
MOLLIE’S MOTOR-CAR

Mollie had a red motor-car that she could ride in. It was big enough for her and just one passenger. It went quite fast because there were pedals for Mollie’s feet, and when she pressed them down and up they turned the wheels, and the car went along.

Mollie was the only child with a fine motor-car like that. The other children thought it was wonderful. They longed to ride in it, but Mollie never would let them. She was a selfish little girl, and she did not want to share her toys with anyone.

“You might just take us for passengers sometimes,” said Harry. “You only take your dolls. You might just as well give us a treat sometimes.”

But Mollie wouldn’t. “You are mean,” said Lucy. “We share our sweets with you and let
Mollie's Motor-Car

you play with our marbles, but you won't ever let us ride in your motor-car. We don't like you."

One day Mollie rode in her red car to the sweet shop. Mother had said she might buy a bar of chocolate. She parked her car outside the shop, which stood at the top of the hill, and went in to choose her chocolate.

When she came out again the car wasn't there! It had completely disappeared. Mollie stared round in alarm. What had happened? Who had taken it? Was it one of the children?

She saw Harry coming out of his house next door and she shouted to him.

"Did you take my car? I believe you did!"

"Don't be silly," said Harry. "Of course I didn't."

Doris came up and Lucy. "Have you taken my motor-car?" said Mollie, looking very angry. They shook their heads.

"No. How can you think we would? We wouldn't even touch it! You are so mean with it that we don't want anything to do with either you or your car."

John came running up to buy some sweets. He didn't like Mollie at all. She turned to him.

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feeling certain that he had taken her car away and hidden it.

“You’ve taken my motor-car and hidden it, just to be spiteful!” she cried. “You’re a horrid boy! You don’t like me so you’ve done this to be mean to me.”

“Certainly I don’t like you,” said John at once. “But I haven’t taken your car. Even if I don’t like people I don’t do mean things to them.”

Mollie burst into tears. The children stood round and stared at her. The big policeman who belonged to the village came up to the little group and spoke to Mollie.
Mollie's Motor-Car

"What's the matter, little girl? Have you lost something?"

"Yes," wept Mollie. "These horrid children have stolen my motor-car! I just went into the shop to buy some chocolate and left my car outside, and when I came back it was gone. And I know one of these children has taken it."

"Dear me," said the policeman, taking out a big black notebook. "This is rather serious. What kind was your car?"

"A red one," said Mollie.

"What's your name?" asked the policeman. Mollie told him. The policeman looked round at the listening children. "I want all your names and addresses, too," he said.

The children felt frightened. They all liked big Jim, the policeman, and knew him well. But somehow he sounded rather old and stern now. Lucy tried to run away, but the policeman called her back.

"Now, now," he said, "there's no need to run away. If you haven't done anything wrong you may be able to help me. If you have done something wrong, now is the time to own up and put it right. But you should never run away,
you know, never. Always stay and face up to things, wrong or right!"

So Lucy stayed. Mollie gazed round at the quiet children, all looking rather scared. She dried her eyes and felt spiteful. She was glad they were frightened. That would serve them right for not liking her. And anyway, one of them must have taken her lovely red car.

"Now," said the policeman at last, shutting his book. "I must go to each of your homes and report this missing car and see if by any chance one of you has been foolish enough to take it there. Mollie, you go home. I'll bring the car to you when it is found."

Mollie and the others went down the hill. Mollie walked by herself, for none of the others would walk with her. They came to the bottom of the hill, where a little stream ran.

And then Mollie saw her car! It was in the stream, standing on its nose, its back wheels in the air! Good gracious me, how surprising! Mollie and the others stared at it in amazement. And Mollie at once knew what had happened!

She hadn't left the brake on outside the sweet-shop. She had left the car there—and it had run
Mollie’s Motor-Car

quietly down the hill by itself, when she was in the shop, and fallen into the little stream.

Mollie went very red. She felt dreadful. So not one of the children had stolen it! She had been quite wrong. And even now the policeman was going round the different houses trying to find her car for her.

“Please help me to get my car out of the stream,” said Mollie to Harry. But he shook his head, and so did all the others. Mollie must get it out herself. They were kindly children, but they all knew that Mollie must be punished for accusing them wrongly.

So they went home, looking disgusted, and Mollie had to wade into the stream and get her
car out by herself. She was very unhappy. She wept tears down her cheeks all the time and they fell with a splash into the stream. She got the car out at last. It wasn’t hurt in any way, except that one wing was bent. Mollie set it on the pavement and got into it. She was still crying. “I’ve been horrid! I’ve been simply dreadful. I might have known that none of the children would be so mean. I’m the mean one. First I wouldn’t let them ride my car, and then I accused them of stealing it when they hadn’t. What am I to do? I’m a horrid mean person, and I don’t like myself a bit.”

She thought there was really only one thing to do, and that was to ride up the hill and try to find Jim, the policeman. She would stop him from going round the children’s houses. So off she went, pedalling slowly up the hill. She met Jim halfway up and he stared in surprise to see her in her car.

“Where did you find it?” he asked.

“Oh, big Jim, it was in the stream,” said Mollie, beginning to cry again. “I left the brake off outside the sweet-shop, and it must have run down the hill and toppled into the stream. Nobody stole it—but I said they did.”
Mollie’s Motor-Car

“Ah, that was a bad thing to do,” said the policeman, looking very stern. “You ought to know better than to accuse anyone of stealing something unless you know they have actually done it. That was bad, very bad.”

“I know,” said Mollie. “None of the children like me, and now I don’t like myself either. I wish I wasn’t myself. I wish I was someone nice and kind like Lucy. Everyone likes her. Oh I wish I wasn’t my own nasty horrid self.”

“Well, dear me, you needn’t be,” said the policeman. “Why not be your own nice kind self that everyone likes? You could be if you wanted to. Why not start by going round and saying you are sorry to all the children, and letting them have a ride in your car?”

“I think I will,” said Mollie, and off she went. She felt sure the children would laugh at her. She was certain they would jeer and say they didn’t want to ride in her horrid old car.

But they didn’t. They were nice. They listened when she said she was sorry. They believed her when she said she wanted to be nice. They shouted with joy when she offered to let them ride in her car.

“Why, Mollie! Who ever would have thought
you were nice enough to come and say all this?” cried Lucy, slipping her arm into Mollie’s. “We were wrong about you.”

“No, you weren’t,” said Mollie, happily. “You were right. I was horrid, but I didn’t know it till I began to dislike myself—now I want to like myself and you can help me. Who wants a ride first?”

If you know Mollie you must have had a ride in her car already. She is always lending it round and the children like her very much.

“It was a good thing my car ran away that day!” she often thinks to herself. And it was, wasn’t it?