

VARIOUS

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AMONG THE ROCKS
BY MARGARET E. HAYS

The tide was low, and a dark line of rocks showed up clearly in the still water.

"I wonder what those rocks are really like," said Toby rising slowly from his seat.

"It looks almost as if we could paddle out to them," said his twin sister Nancy, as she pushed her red curls under her sun-bonnet.

"I vote we try!" exclaimed Toby, seizing her by the arm. "We can go out a long way at low tide—it's all so flat."

"I'm sure lots of ships must have been wrecked on the rocks," added Nancy. "Perhaps we shall find some treasure."

The next moment they were hurrying off.

On and on they paddled, till the water was well above their knees. Then a few minutes more, and Toby laid his hand on a rock.

"I don't see any sign of wrecks!" said Nancy, looking about.

For a few minutes they stood, then Nancy caught sight of the boat.

"Oh, there's the wreck! Why, it's only a little boat."

"Of course it is! What else did you think? It's really some life boat that has been put off from a wreck, and it may be full of treasures!"

Cautiously they worked their way to it, panting with excitement. What were they about to discover?

"See," said Toby breathlessly, "the anchor rope had broken and caught among the rocks! I wonder we never saw the boat here at high tide—it would be visible then!"

"I hope—oh!" Nancy's voice was full of disappointment.

"What?"

"Why, it's only Rowan's old Lily! It isn't a wreck at all! It was on the beach this morning!"

The children stood looking blankly at the boat.

"There's something moving!"

There was something queer about the "wreck" after all!

Half-frightened, and hanging on to Toby's arm, Nancy peeped over into the boat, and the next moment she shrieked in alarm, and something sprang out of the locker and clung to her neck!

"Oh—h!" Nancy pulled at the clinging creature in terror, but Toby was bent with laughter!

"Stop it, Nan! It's only a kitten!" he cried, as soon as he could speak.

It was true! A poor, shivering little tabby kitten was cuddling into Nancy's neck, mewling with terror!

"Oh, the little darling!" she exclaimed. "How frightened it must have been! I wonder whose kitten it is?"

"If we can't find out I should think we might keep it ourselves."

"Wouldn't it be lovely to have a kittie of our own?"

"I'm afraid we ought to ask a few people first," said Toby sadly. "There's old Rowan. Shall we go and tell him about the boat?"

Old Rowan was looking gloomily out to sea, and never noticed the twins till they stood before him.

"Please, Mr. Rowan," said Toby, "we've found your boat."

"Found my boat?" asked the old man absently.

"Yes, the Lily. She's out there among the rocks."

"Is she? Ay, she got adrift at high tide. I'd better go after her at once." But Rowan didn't seem much interested in his boat!

"Me—ew!" A furry ball suddenly sprang onto the fishermen's shoulder, purring delightedly!

"Hullo!" Rowan was now quite wide awake, and stared around him. "Where did you come from, Bunch?"

"We found her in the boat—do you know whose she is?" asked Nancy, and even Toby looked anxious.

"Ay, that I do! My little grandchild has been breaking her heart all day over Bunch. She's a cripple, you see. Miss, and the kitten's company for her. It must have followed me to the shore this morning and gone to sleep on the nets. Matty will glad to

find it!"

"Shall we take Bunch home to her?" asked Nancy, sighing at the thought of parting with her treasure-trove.

"It would be real kind. Miss."

She was glad she had offered, when she saw poor Matty's face beam at the sight of her only playmate.

A QUEER SNAKE.

BY MARY E.Q. BRUSH

It was the Dalton children's first year in Florida. They enjoyed the sunshine, the balmy air and fragrant flowers very much. There was only one thing to mar their pleasure and that was their dread of snakes.

Tilly, the little colored girl who used to play with them sometimes, had big stories to tell.

"Dar's rattlers in de pine woods, hidin' on de sunny sides of stumps: and dar's a pow'ful sight o' moccasins down amonst de water-hyacinths near de bayou. Youse bettah look out, honey, or dey'll cotch youalls, shuah!"

Mabel, Tom, Hetty and Charlie talked the matter over very seriously, almost solemnly.

"Do you s'pose they'll crawl into the house?" Hetty said, her eyes large and round with fearful anticipations.

Tom shook his head gravely.

"No telling! I heard a missionary from India say once how those awful cobras in that country used to drop right down from the ceiling."

Mabel drew a long breath.

"My stars! I'd hate to wake up in the morning and find a snake near my pillow!"

"Guess we'd better keep a good lookout," was Charlie's emphatic suggestion.

One day when papa and mamma and little Hal went in the launch across the river to see the new orange grove, and the children were left alone save for old Uncle Pomp who was hoeing in the truck patch, something happened that made quite a scare. Hetty went into mamma's room for a spool of white thread, and when she came out there was a frightened look on her face.

"Oh, there's a snake on mamma's bed!" she exclaimed.

Tom and Charlie sprang up so suddenly from their game of parchesi that counters and disks fell to the floor.

Then all four children hurried to the door of mamma's room and peeped cautiously in. It was not very light in the room for the window shades had been pulled partly down to shut out the glare of the noonday sun, but sure enough, it could be seen very plainly that there was something on the bed—a half-coiled, bluish-green snake with brown stripes.

Mabel uttered a scream.

"It squirms—I saw it!" she cried.

"No you didn't either," said Tom. "You just thought so, because you're so scared. But it is a snake, sure enough and it's asleep. Guess we'd better not arouse it."

"Somebody ought to kill it," Hetty whispered, her teeth chattering. "One of yon boys'd better get Uncle Pomp; have him bring his hoe or something."

"I'll go," said Charlie quickly.

"Let's all go," suggested Mabel.

Tom hesitated a little. He was the bravest of the lot, though the youngest.

"Say, somebody ought to stay and watch that snake; if it crawls down, we want to know where he goes to. I'll stay—only get Uncle Pomp soon's you can."

But the children couldn't find the old darkey. So the children came trooping back to the house. But when they peeped into mamma's room again, there was no snake on the bed! Nor was there any Tom to be seen!

Конец ознакомительного фрагмента.

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