

VARIOUS

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A SYPUR-CAN MOTHER

BY MARY GILBERT

Dorothy Deane and her little brother Laurence were standing by the window watching for papa.

"There he comes!" cried Dorothy at last, and the children raced toward the corner as fast as their chubby little legs would carry them.

"Careful now!" said papa warningly, as the two hurrying little figures reached him. "Don't hit against my dinner pail!"

"What is in it?" asked Dorothy and Laurence in one breath, as they stood on tiptoe, trying to peep inside the cover.

"Guess!" said papa, laughing. "A nickel to the one who guesses right!"

"Candy!" cried Laurence.

"Oranges!" said Dorothy.

Papa shook his head at both these guesses, and at all the others

that followed, until they had reached the house.

"Now let mamma have a turn," he said, holding the dinner pail up to her ear.

"Why, it isn't—" mamma began, with a look of greatest surprise.

"Yes, it is!" papa declared. Then he took off the cover and tipped the pail gently over in the middle of the kitchen table and out came ten of the fluffiest, downiest little chickens that any of them had ever seen.

"Oh, oh, oh!" cried the children delightedly. "Are they really ours? Where did you get them?"

"They are power-house chickens," papa replied, smiling at their enthusiasm—"hatched right in the engine room!"

"What do you mean?" asked mamma in astonishment, gazing at the pretty little creatures.

"Just what I say," replied papa, who was an engineer in the big power house down town: "they were hatched on a shelf in the engine room."

"It was just this way," he explained, hanging up his hat. "Tom Morgan brought me a dozen eggs from his new hennery about three weeks ago. I put them on the shelf, intending to bring them home that night, but never thought of them until this morning, when there seemed to be something stirring up there. I looked, and, sure enough, there was a fine brood of chickens, just picking their way out of their shells!"

"But how did it ever happen?" asked mamma in a puzzled

tone.

"Because the engine, running night and day, gave the eggs just as much heat as they would have found under a hen's wings," papa replied: "and they thought that they were put up there to hatch."

"Oh, aren't they darlings!" cried Dorothy, clapping her hands as the chickens began to eat the crumbs. "They are the nicest pets that we ever had in all our lives."

While papa was making a nice coop out of a wooden box, mamma found an empty tin can that had once held a gallon of maple syrup. She filled this full of boiling water, screwed the cover on tight, and then wrapped it up in pieces of flannel.

"There," she exclaimed triumphantly, fastening the last strip, "let us see how the chickens like this for a mother!"

Setting the can carefully in the center of the coop, she put the little chickens close by it. Finding it soft and warm, they cuddled up against the flannel cover, and began to chirp as contentedly as if it were a mother hen. Then she pinned a square of flannel to the upper side of the can, letting it spread either way like a mother hen's wings, and leaving the ends open for the chickens to go in and out.

"We will fill the can with hot water every night," said mamma, "and it will keep the chickens warm."

And here they lived quite happily with their syrup-can mother, until papa declared that they were large enough to go to roost in the barn.

PRINCE GOODHEART'S DAUGHTERS

BY ZELIA MARGARET WALTERS

Prince Goodheart had twin daughters about eight years old, named Myrtle and Violet. He had a number of other daughters, and sons too, for this was a large family. But to-day's story is about the twins.

When the nurse was getting them ready for bed at night she always told a story, and one night her story was about the good-luck plant. She told how the seeds of it had been scattered about over all the earth, and here and there the good-luck plant came up. Then she told about a child that had found one, and of all the pleasant things that happened to her. The little princesses listened with wide open eyes, and hoped they, too, would find a leaf of that marvelous plant some day.

The next morning Myrtle and Violet were out in the garden early.

"I'm going outside of the gate," said Myrtle. "I mean to find the good-luck plant to-day."

"But we haven't permission to go out," said Violet.

"I'm not going to ask," said Myrtle. "They'll all be glad when

I come back with the plant. You'd better come with me."

"But I must get my lessons, and finish the hemming mother gave me to do, and afterward I promised to weed one of the flower beds for mother. I must do those things first."

"Oh, well, I can find it by myself," said Myrtle, and out she ran.

She didn't have as fine a time as she expected. She got tired and cross. She looked for the plant by the roadside, and in the park, and on the lawns. Whenever anyone spoke to her she answered crossly. When the sun set, and warned her that it was time to go home, she hadn't seen a thing that looked like the good-luck plant. She shed a few tears as she ran home.

At the castle gate she heard a pleasant noise of laughter and happy voices in the garden. "Could they have had a party without me?" she cried.

She darted in. "Oh, Myrtle!" called her little brothers and sisters. "What do you think! Violet has found the good-luck plant, and she let us all hold it awhile, and we've had such a lovely time since lessons are done."

Myrtle's face flushed. "You are a deceitful girl," she said to her twin. "You said you meant to stay home."

"So I did," said Violet. She looked so happy and sweet that even cross Myrtle stopped frowning. "I found it while I was weeding mother's flower bed. There it was among the pansies. I knew it at once by the horseshoe shape on the leaves."

THE QUEER BLACK CALF

BY MATTIE W. BAKER

"Please tell us a story, grandpa," said Arthur.

"A story about papa when he was a boy," added Willie.

"Well, I'll tell you what your papa did, right over there, when he was only four years old."

"We had a very gentle old horse that we called Jenny. When I came home from any place, and was going to turn her into the pasture, your papa always wanted to do it himself, so I would give him the end of the halter, and let him lead her through the lane to the bars. He could drop down the ends of the bars, for they were only poles, and then Jenny would hold her head so that he could slip off the halter.

Конец ознакомительного фрагмента.

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