



FRECKLES

By
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field mice, moles and young rabbits of their chosen location. He saw them crossing the trail every day as the heat grew intense. The rattlers were sadly forgetting their manners, for they struck on no provocation whatever and didn't even remember to rattle afterward. Daily Freckles was compelled to drive big black-snakes and blue racers from the nests of his chickens. Often the terrified squalls of the parent birds would reach him far down the line, and he would run to the rescue of the babies.

He saw the angel when the carriage turned from the corduroy into the clearing. They stopped at the west entrance to the swamp, waiting for him to precede them down the trail, as he had told them it was safest for the horse that he should do so. They followed the east line to a point opposite the big chickens' tree, and Freckles carried in the camera and showed the Bird Woman a path he had cleared to the log.

They arranged that Freckles should drive the carriage into the east entrance in the shade and then take the horse around toward the north to a better place he knew. Then he was to entertain the angel at his study or on the line until the Bird Woman finished her work and came to them.

Freckles trod on air, for his dream had come true so soon. He was going down the timberline and the angel was following him. He asked to be excused for going first, because he wanted to be sure the trail was safe for her. She laughed at his fears, telling him that it was the polite thing for him to do anyway.

"Oh," said Freckles, "so you was after knowing that? Well, I didn't s'pose you did, and I was afraid you'd think me wanting in respect to be preceding you!"

The astonished angel looked at him, caught the irrepressible gleam of Irish fun in his eyes, and they laughed together.

Freckles did not realize how he was talking that morning. He showed her many of the beautiful nests and eggs of the line. She could identify a number of them, but of some she was ignorant, so they made notes of the number and color of the eggs, material and construction of nest, color, size and shape of the birds and went on to look them up in the book.

At his room, when Freckles had lifted the overhanging bushes and stepped back for her to enter, his heart was all out of time and place. The angel drew a deep breath and stood staring, first at one side, then at another, then far off down the cathedral aisle. "It's just fairyland!" she cried ecstatically. Then she turned and stared at Freckles exactly as she had at his handiwork.

"What are you planning to be?" she asked slowly.

"Whatever Mr. McLean wants me to," he replied.

"What do you do most?" she asked.

"Watch me lines."

"I don't mean work!"

"Oh! In my spare time I keep me room and study in me books."

"Do you work on the room or the books most?"

"On the room just what it takes to keep it up and the rest of the time on me books."

The angel eyed him sharply. "Well, maybe you are going to be a great scholar," she said, "but you don't look it. Your face isn't right for that, but it's got something big in it—something just great. I must find out what it is and then you must go to work on it. Your father is expecting you to do something. You can tell by the way he talks. You ought to begin right away. You've wasted too much time already."

Poor Freckles hung his head. He had never wasted an hour in his life. There had never been one that was his to waste.

The angel, studying him intently, read his thought in his face. "Oh, I don't mean that!" she cried, with the frank dismay of sixteen. "Of course you're not lazy! Nobody would ever think that from your looks. It's this I mean: There is something fine, strong and full of power in your face. There is something you are to do in this world, and no matter how hard you work at all these other things nor how successfully you do them it is all wasted until you find the one thing that you can do best. If you could go anywhere you please and do anything you want, what would you do?"

"I'd go to Chicago and sing in the First Episcopal choir," answered Freckles promptly.

The angel dropped back on a seat; the hat she had taken off and held in her fingers rolled to her feet. "There," she exclaimed vehemently, "you can see what I'm going to be. Nothing, absolutely nothing! You can sing? Of course you can sing! It is written all over you."

"Anybody with half wit could have seen he could sing without having to be told," she thought. "It's in the slenderness of his fingers and his

quick, nervous touch. It is in the brightness of his hair, the fire of his eyes, the breadth of his chest, the muscles of his throat and neck and, above all, it's in every tone of his voice."

"Will you do something for me?" she asked.

"I'll do anything in the world you want me to," said Freckles largely, "and if I can't do what you want I'll go to work at once and I'll try till I can."

"Good," said the angel. "Go over there and stand before that bank and sing something—anything you think of first."

It was a children's song that he had led for the little folks at the home many times.

To fairy land we go,
With a song of joy, high-o!
In dreams we'll stand upon that shore
And all the realm behold.
We'll see the sights so grand
That belong to fairy land.
Its mysteries we will explore,
Its beauties will unfold.
Oh, tra, la, la, oh, ha, ha, ha! We're happy now as we can be.
Our welcome song we will prolong and greet you with our melody.
O fairy land, sweet fairy land, we love to sing—

Nothing could have given the intense sweetness and rollicking quality of



"THEN GO FLYING," SAID THE BIRD WOMAN.

Freckles' voice better scope. He forgot everything but pride in his work with the sound of his voice. He was on the chorus, and the angel was shivering in ecstasy when ellp, ellp, came the shaggy beating feet of a swiftly ridden horse down the trail from the north. They both sprang toward the entrance.

"Freckles, Freckles!" called the voice of the Bird Woman.

They were at the trail on the instant.

"Both those revolvers loaded?" she asked.

"Yes," said Freckles.

"Is there a way you can cut across the swamp and get to the chicken tree in a few minutes and with little noise?"

"Yes."

"Then go flying," said the Bird Woman. "Give the angel a lift up behind me, and we will ride the horse back to where you left him and wait for you. I finished Little Chicken in no time and put him back. His mother came so close. I felt sure she would enter the log. The light was fine, so I set and focused the camera and covered it with branches, attached the long hose and went away off over 100 feet and hid in some bushes to wait. A short, thick man and a tall, dark one passed me so closely I could almost have reached out and touched them. They carried a big saw on their shoulders. They said they could work until about noon, and then they must lay off until you passed and then try to load and get out at night. They went on—not entirely out of sight—and began cutting a tree. Mr. McLean told me the other day what was likely to happen there, and if they get that tree down he loses his wager on you. Keep to the east and north and hustle. We'll meet you at the carriage. I am always armed. We will separate and creep up on them from different sides and give them a fusillade that will send them flying. You hurry, now!"

She gathered up the reins and started briskly down the trail. The angel, hatless and with sparkling eyes, was clinging about her waist.

Freckles worked his way with great care, dodging limbs and bushes with noiseless tread and cutting as close to where he thought the men were as he felt that he dared if he were to remain unseen. As he ran he tried to think. It was Wessner, burning for his revenge, aided by the bully of the locality, that he was going to meet.

He must follow the Bird Woman's plan and meet them at the carriage, but if they really did mean to try to help him he must not allow it. Let the angel try to handle a revolver in his defense? Never! Not for all the trees in the Limberlost! She might shoot herself. She might forget to watch sharply and run across a snake that was not particularly well behaved that morning. Freckles permitted himself a grim smile as he went speeding on.

When he reached the carriage the Bird Woman and the angel had the horse hitched to it, the outfit packed and were calmly waiting.

"Give babe one of your revolvers,



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One black horse, 10 years old, weight 1,650.

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One hay rack.

One Deering binder, eight-foot cut.

One sawing outfit, four-horse engine.

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Robt. Wilkinson, Auctioneer.
R. F. Patterson, Clerk.

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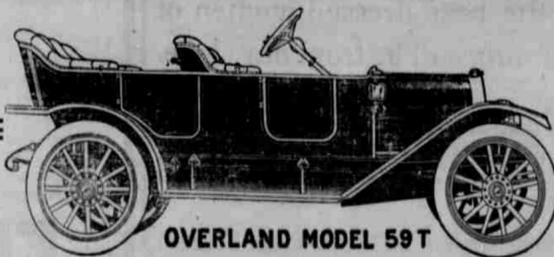
Considerable doubt existed in the minds of those from Louisville who went to Talmage last week as to the identity of the wrestler with whom Schmardeker battled for a three-hours' draw. This man was said to be Frank Viox, son of a Talmage hotel proprietor. It now seems that this is not the case, but that on the contrary he is one Azbel of the state of Missouri, said to be champion of that state and a man who has thrown the well known Dr. Roller. This reflects no credit on the Talmage bunch and only serves to add to the satisfaction of the local enthusiasts in the ability Schmardeker displayed in holding his own, and in fact that the Cass county champion would no doubt have thrown this man if he had not tried to do it within a twenty-minute time-limit.—Louisville Courier.

Gets a Finger Pinched.

Jack Brittan of the Burlington freight car repair force had the misfortune to get one of his fingers badly pinched yesterday afternoon. The company surgeon soon had it dressed, and although quite painful, it will not keep Jack off duty long.

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