Mr. Rabbit—Mr. Thimblefinger.

More Stories of Mrs. Meadows and Her Queer Friends.
By Joel Chandler Harris.

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"I reckon that's so about the monkeys," remarked Mrs. Meadows. "They used to be in the country next door, and now they are no longer there."

"Yes," said Mr. Rabbit, "it's just like I tell you; they were there once, but now they are not there any more. But in the world next door everybody has his ups and downs especially his downs. I've heard my great grandfather tell many a time how our family used to live close to the Moon. So I don't make any brag about the way the monkeys had to take to the bushes. I remember about my own family, and then I feel like hanging my head down and saying nothing. It is a very funny feeling, too. When I think we used to live close to the Moon, and that we now live in the ground and have to crawl there like snails, I sometimes feel like crying, and I tell you right now if I was to begin to boohoo you'd be astonished."

Buster John and Sweetest Susan looked very serious, but Drusilla showed a desire to laugh.

"You say you used to live close to the Moon?" asked Buster John, with more curiosity than usual.

"Why, certainly," replied Mr. Rabbit; "I don't say that I did, but I'm certain that my family did. I've heard my great grandfather tell about it a hundred times. I've heard that it was a better country up there than it is where you live, even better than it is down here, a good deal more fun and fiddling, and not half so much looking around for something to eat. That is the great trouble. If we didn't have to scuffle around and get something to eat we'd be lots better off.

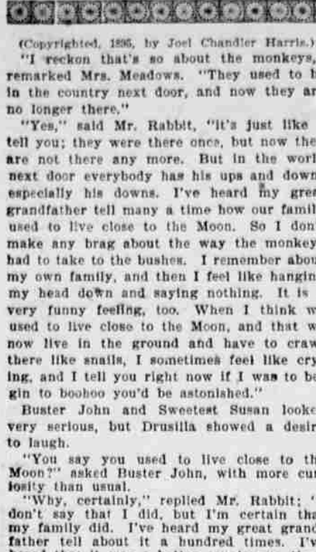
"It's mighty funny. If you let well enough alone you are all right; but the minute you try to better it everything goes wrong."

"Dat wuz de way wid ol' man Adam," remarked Drusilla.

"Why, of course," said Mr. Rabbit, "and it was the way with all the Rabbits and everybody and everything else."

"But how did they live up there by the Moon?" asked Sweetest Susan. "How did they keep from falling off?"

Mr. Rabbit scratched his head a little before replying. "Well," said he, after a while "they got along just as we do down here—heads up and feet down. But one time, as I've heard my great grandfather say, the Moon got into a sort of fidget, and was mighty restless for quite a while. At last one of our family, the oldest of all, made bold to look over the fence and ask the Moon what the trouble was. He noticed,



THE MAN SCRATCHED HIS HEAD.

too, that the Moon had shrunk considerably, and seemed to be in a very bad way. It could hardly hold up its head.

"But the Moon managed to look up when it heard the fuss at the fence, and in a very shaky voice told the oldest of the Rabbits howdy.

"'What is the trouble?' says the oldest Rabbit. Says he, 'Can I do anything to help you?'

"'I'm afraid not,' says the Moon. 'You are not nimble enough.'

"'Maybe I'm nimbler than you think,' says the oldest Rabbit.

"'Well,' says the Moon, 'I'll tell you what the trouble is. I want to get a message to Mr. Man, who lives in the world down yonder. I've been shining on him at night, and I've caught a bad cold by being out after dark. My health is breaking down, and if I don't put out my lights for awhile and take a rest I'll have to go out altogether. Now, it's like this: I've been shining on Mr. Man so long that if I don't send him some word he'll think something serious has happened. I must take a rest, but I want to send him a message telling him that I won't be gone long.'

"'Well,' says the oldest Rabbit,' I don't mind going if you'll show me the way, and tell me what to say.'

"So the Moon pointed out the way, and showed him how to put his fingers in his ears and hold his breath when he took the long jump. Then it gave him this message:

'I'm growing weak to gather strength;
I go into the shadows to gather light.'

"The oldest Rabbit said this message over to himself many times, and then he got ready for the journey. Everything went well until he came to the long jump. But he braced himself and shut his eyes, and put his fingers in his ears, and held his breath. Now, the jump was a long one, sure enough. It was so long that the oldest Rabbit opened one eye, and then got the notion that he was falling instead of jumping, and he opened both eyes so wide that they have been that way ever since. This scared him terribly, and by the time he landed on the world he had forgotten what he came for. He wasn't hurt a bit, but he was badly scared.

"He sat on the ground and tried to remember, and then he got up and walked about. Finally, he looked up and saw the Moon winking one eye at him. Then he thought about the message, and he ran off to Mr. Man's house and knocked at the door. Mr. Man had gone to bed, but he got up and opened the door, and asked what was wanted.

"'Well,' says the oldest Rabbit, 'I've just come from the Moon with a message for you.'

"'What is it?' says Mr. Man.

"'The Moon told me to tell you this:

I'm growing weak and have no strength.
I'm going off where the shadows are dark.

Mr. Man scratched his head. He couldn't make the message out. Then he said, 'Take this message back:

Seldom seen and soon forgot;
When a moon dies her feet get cold.

"The oldest Rabbit bowed politely and started back home. He came to the jumping off place, and then he took the long jump. He was soon at home, and went at once to the Moon's house, and gave the message that Mr. Man had sent. This made the Moon very mad. It declared that the oldest Rabbit had carried the wrong message. Then it grabbed the shovel and struck him in the face. This made the oldest Rabbit very mad, and he jumped at the Moon and used his claws. The fight was a hard one, and you can see the marks of it to this day. All the Rabbits have their upper lips split, and the Moon still has the marks on its face where the oldest Rabbit clawed it.

"The way of it was this," continued Mr. Rabbit, seeing that the children had hardly caught the drift of the story: "The Moon had been shining constantly for many years and was growing weak. It wanted to take a rest, and it was afraid Mr. Man would get scared when he failed to see it at night. Since that time the Moon has been taking a rest about every two weeks. At least it used to be that way. I never bother about it now."

AMERICAN CRICKETERS.

A Popular Game Among Boys When Base Ball is Prohibited.

The crushing defeats administered to the English cricketers during their recent visit to this country have been the means of giving the national pastime of the British Isles an impetus amoung American sportsmen; yet it is highly improbable that the game will ever attain here anything like the popularity it has in England.

There are several great drawbacks to the popularity of cricket in this country. In America everything is done with a rush. An intercollegiate foot ball game on Manhattan field where half a dozen legs are broken is greatly enjoyed by the sport-loving public.

Cricket is voted slow because three days with seven hours' play a day are required to finish a cricket match. Consequently the game can only be played by men of leisure and wealth. In America the matches have been condensed into one and sometimes two days. Another drawback to the sport is that it requires an absolutely level turf which requires constant attention and considerable outlay of money in bats, balls, leg guards and gloves. The balls consist of a wooden center tightly wrapped, weighing five ounces. They are all imported and cost about $5 each. Bats may be purchased for about $8.

The introduction of cricket into this country has been rather difficult, too, on account of the popularity of base ball, the accessories of which may be purchased for a small sum, and which may be played on almost any old place.

A match cricket game is played between two sides of eleven players each, unless otherwise agreed to.

Each side has two innings, taken alternately, except in the case that one side has scored eighty runs less than the opposite side, when they follow their inning.

The wickets are stationed opposite and parallel to each other at a distance of twenty-two yards. Each wicket is eight inches in width and consists of three stumps, or sticks, with two bails on top. The stumps are placed close enough together to prevent the ball from going between. A batsman stands at each wicket, and the bowler of the opposite side, who corresponds to a base ball pitcher, bowls the ball to a batsman. The game, roughly stating it, is for the batsman to protect the wicket and to make as many runs as possible over the other wicket and back. The striker is out if he be caught out; if the wicket is bowled down, or if he be out of his ground and the wicket keeper put down the wicket with the ball, with his hand or arm, in that case the striker is "stumped" out. The rules are, on the whole, simple, and the game may be learned easily.

Philadelphia is the cradle of cricket in this country, and the crack player of America is G. S. Patterson, who plays with the Gentlemen of Philadelphia.

Among the best clubs in America are the Philadelphia, Germantown, Belmont, Merion and Haverford, of Philadelphia; the New York, Staten Island, New Jersey Athletic club, Manhattan and Brooklyn, of New York. There are also good clubs in Chicago, Baltimore, Detroit, Milwaukee, Pittsburg, San Francisco, and in most New England states.

A great many of the American cricketers are young fellows who came originally from England, Scotland and Ireland. One of the most enthusiastic cricketers in New York is Archie Gunn, the well known artist and illustrator. Cricet matches are the occasion for a great turnout of society folk. Twenty thousand of Philadelphia's "swagger" citizens witnessed the recent match with the Englishmen when the University of Pennsylvania defeated them by 100 runs. A number of boys' schools, notably St. Paul's, Concord, N. H., and St. Austin's, Staten Island, are constantly turning out young cricketers. At these institutions base ball is prohibited and cricket is commended to the youthful mind as being a healthier game.

Small Talk.

Bess' mother is a young and attractive widow, and a young minister was much interested in her spiritual welfare, relates the Chicago Tribune. Bess did not admire him much, owing to his habit of taking her to task occasionally for some little fib. One day he came to call and encountered Bess on the front porch. He presented her with a box of caramels, and, being quite sure her mother was in hearing distance, though out of sight behind the parlor curtains, he took occasion to indulge in a few affecting remarks concerning the happiness of being allowed to minister to the fatherless babes. Bess had heard "Chimmie Fadden" read and quoted quite frequently, and, looking up into the minister's face with her wide, innocent eyes, she remarked: "What t'ell?"

"Huh—what did you say?" stammered the astonished man.

"What t'ell?" repeated Bessie.

He gazed at her for a few minutes in blank amazement, and then the sound of smothered merriment coming from the parlor windows recalled him to his senses, and, after a wild look around, as for a refuge, he left.

Ethel is the only child of a college professor, and was left without a mother, so her training has been rather different from other children, and she is very old and thoughtful in her ways. One night her father was hearing her say her prayers before she went to bed. She had gotten to her own little petitions and the "God bless everybodys," and her father had gotten just a little inattentive, when he was startled by hearing her say: "And God bless the devil, 'cause nobody cares 'bout him at all."

"Why, Ethel," he exclaimed, "what are you praying for the devil for?"

"Well, father, the preacher always tells how horrid bad he is and everybody hates him so, I thought I'd better ask God to be good to him."

Ethel's mother had positively forbidden her to play in the creek, and to make sure she was obeyed said: "Now, if you do go to the creek the Lord will see you and he will tell me. You know he is everywhere and sees you all the time."

One day Ethel came in and her mother had reason to suspect that she had been to the creek, so she asked her: "Ethel, were you at the creek?"

"Nome," responded Ethel confidently.

"Now, remember what I told you the other day, the Lord will tell me."

"Nome, I wasn't there," declared Ethel.

Pretty soon she came back and said: "I just wanted to see if the Lord would be mean enough to tell you. I was down at the creek and he didn't tell you, after all. I didn't think he'd be so mean as to go and tell on me."

PRATTLE OF THE YOUNGSTERS.

The Boston Journal says that Johnny and Willie, aged respectively 6 and 4 years, were engaged in a hot discussion as to their ages. Willie, of course, claimed to be the elder of the two, whereupon Johnny replied: "You ain't either, the oldest, 'cause when I was born you wasn't nuffin' but dust layin' round up in heaven."

"Dear papa," wrote the little girl, "I sent you a kiss last week by the express man. I hope he gave it to you all right. Hereafter I'll send 'em by mail, because the express man is very homely and I don't like giving them to him, and neither mamma nor nurse will do it for me."

"Jennie," said little Mabel to her big sister at breakfast, "did you tell papa?" "Tell papa what?" asked Jennie. "Why, you told Mr. Buster last night if he did it again you'd tell papa—and he did it again. I sor him!" And then papa looked at Jennie over his glasses.

A little girl we know does not understand encores, and so found fault with the audience at a recent children's concert, in which she helped to sing a chorus. "I know we didn't make one mistake," she exclaimed on her way home, "and yet they made us come out and sing it all over again."

Tommy—Say, ma, don't it make your hands warm when you smack me? His Mother—Why, yes, Tommy, it does. Tommy—Then wouldn't it do just as well if you held them over the gas stove?

"O, mamma!" exclaimed Kitty, who had just tried her soft-boiled egg with her fork, "it's a-bleedin'!"

Mother—Oh, Neddie, look at those trousers! Neddie—Yeth'm; I thet down on the grass, an' thum o' the paint tomed off!