How Mother Nature Cares For Her Children Through Winter Months

COMFORTABLY housed in well heated homes, snug and secure from the winter's cold, few people think of the condition of the birds and beasts and other creatures, provision for whose welfare and comfort rests entirely with nature.

As you go to and from your business, wrapped in fur and woolen garments, do you ever pause to look at some bit of animal life; a chickadee or a brown creeper, perhaps, a midget of feathers no larger than the end of your thumb?

How do they manage to keep from freezing when the thermometer registers 10 or 20 degrees below zero?

Nature has two chief ways of providing for her furred and feathered children in winter. Some of the mammals she puts to bed and to sleep as soon as cold weather sets in, and they slumber until spring. Most of the birds she sends to warm, southern climates where there is an abundance of food. Why she favors some of her charges and allows others to suffer from cold and hunger is a secret of her own.

As a rule the mammals are better housed than the birds, for most of them seek refuge from storms and cold in hollow tree trunks or burrow in the ground, and many of them use these places as permanent hibernating homes. The woodchuck, the gray squirrel, the chipmunk and many of the mice hibernate as soon as it begins to get cold, though they sometimes come out during prolonged spells of warm weather.

BOB WHITE, LEAVING COVER ON A WINTER'S MORNING

READY TO BE MADE UP INTO MUSKRAT FUR AUTOMOBILE COATS.

JIM CROW WONDERS WHEN HE CAN GET A BREAKFAST.

A MUCH TRAVELED MUSKRAT TRAIL.

COTTON-TAIL RABBIT TAKING A SUN BATH.

MUSKRAT WINTER HOUSE IN A POND.

MEADOW MOUSE NEST LEFT EXPOSED BY FARMER'S PLOW.

What the Woodchuck Chucks.

The woodchuck pushes out a partition of dirt in front of his nest of dried leaves and grass, thus making a snug little room in which to sleep. Not infrequently a roaming skunk or a rabbit will resort to the same burrow for a time, and there, divided by a thin partition of loose dirt, only a few inches apart, live the two furry neighbors, each one utterly ignorant of the other's proximity.

It can hardly be said that the rabbit or the skunk hibernates. They use the shelters only when the weather is extremely cold. The rabbit is far more active than the skunk.

A single day of warm weather will induce him to come out and feed, as many tracks and the gnawed roots and bark of trees testify. On warm days you will find him sunning himself by the side of a stump or a log or under a brush pile, but he returns to his burrow again when the mercury reaches zero.

The skunk, too, often changes his quarters. When a week of mild weather favors Mr. Woodchuck you will find deep furrows in the snow where he has plowed his clumsy way from one burrow to another.

Of all the mammals that brave the winter, depending on what they can pick up, the muskrat has the hardest time. Nature does not provide him with a blanket of fat on which to subsist, as it does the woodchuck and the skunk, so he has to get out and hunt his food.

Has to Dodge the Hunters.

He is a slow moving fellow and dares not travel far from his burrow in a stream or pond's bank or the chamber of the round-topped home of dirt clots and rubbish that he has built in the early fall. After a snowstorm you can follow his tracks to the orchard or to some particular oak tree of which he knows, and here you find where he has dug in the snow for decayed apples or sweet acorns. You can always identify his tracks because he drags his tail, and as the days go by the continued travel over the same route makes a well worn path to and from his feeding ground.

Nature gave him a soft, thick, warm fur, but in doing so it created a demand for his skin, and this demand has grown to such an extent that it may be a matter of only a few years before he will have been exterminated in the eastern states. He is extremely easy to catch and his fur wears the best and is the warmest of all cheap furs, but the time is coming when the muskrat automobile coats will be among the costliest of furs.

The fox is another animal that has to hunt his living from day to day. During storms of several days' duration he goes hungry, for then grouse, rabbits, mice, squirrels [illegible] keep close to their shelters.

No sooner does the storm cease than you find Bre'r Fox's tracks wandering about the country for miles and miles. Few animals travel as much as he does, probably because few have the fleetness and ability to take care of themselves that he possesses.

Bre'r Fox and His Breakfast.

Here you will see where he has caught a meadow mouse, after digging into the snow and chasing it out of its snug little nest of grass. Again, in a swamp at the foot of a hill giving shelter from the wind, he has followed the tracks of a ruffed grouse and finally pounced upon it as it slept under the roots of an upturned tree. When day finally dawns Bre'r Fox takes himself to a thicketed lowland and, curling up by a log or stump, sleeps the sleep of the well-fed.

The little meadow mouse is well protected so far as warmth is concerned, for when there is no snow he lives in a nest of dried grass, in a hole in the ground, under a stump, log, pile of stones or boards. As soon as a deep snow has fallen he begins to build a neat little nest of dried grass blades, using the coarse material for the covering and the finer for the lining.

In this hollow ball of grass, the size of a hat crown, there is a single opening where the owner enters. Tunnels in the snow lead to and from the nest in all directions, and here a meadow mouse resides until the melting of the snow leaves the nest exposed to view. Then he takes up his abode in his former habitation.

His little stomach is often empty, for while he sometimes lays by a store of grain and seeds, that is when he lives near a grain field. Those of his relatives who inhabit the lowlands and outskirts of fields and brush lots eat the bark of trees, some times doing great damage to pear trees, apple trees and berry bushes. Sumach heads he dearly loves and dock seeds also help to keep him alive.

How the Deer Live.

In the Adirondack mountains the deer herd together and make yards in the snow. From these yards they make excursions through the forests and crop off the ends of twigs, returning to the yard at night.

Their coat is now thicker and heavier than the red summer coat, and unless the snows become so exceedingly deep that they cannot travel enough to get food, they pass a comparatively comfortable winter. Caribou, elk and moose winter in much the same manner, but the elk and caribou paw away the snow and eat the grass, the moss and the lichens.

Partridges and Quail Suffer.

The ruffed grouse or partridge is found in the heavy timber and thick brush lots. In winter you can track them back and forth through the forests, and here and there at the foot of a tree, by a log or a stump, or under the drooping boughs of a spruce, are depressios in the snow where they have snuggled.

In deep snow they tunnel for several rods and sleep in these burrows, covered completely by snow. As you walk along the snow suddenly upheaves before you and with a loud whirring of wings the partridge darts off through the tree trunks.

If you are careful and go slowly you can track the bird under a log or a stump, and there you see him snuggling comfortably. After he has flown out, sometimes almost into your face, you put your hand into the cavity and find that it is warm and perfectly sheltered from the wind. At this time of the year the ruffed grouse live on the buds of birch, poplar, maple and pear trees, and they pass the night in the beds just described or roost on a limb of a pine, spruce or hemlock tree, well sheltered by a hill or a ravine.

Poor little Bob White (or quail) often has a hard time in winter. His habits are such that when a storm comes he and his flock of friends seek shelter under a stump, a hollow log, in a woodchuck burrow and the like.

If the snow is light he has no trouble about digging himself out, but should it sleet or rain and then freeze the white mantle is covered with a hard crust, which holds poor Bob White a captive, and in the spring, after the snow has melted, you find a bunch of quail feathers where once a flock of quail took shelter from a storm.

Bob White is a grain and seed eater in winter, so buckwheat and wheat stubbles are his chief feeding grounds. But hunger often drives him to the farmer's barnyard or haystack to pick up the chaff that has been scattered.

Jim Crow's Winter Way.

Jim Crow, too, is sometimes forced to put discretion aside and seek the habitat of his old enemy, the farmer, hoping that he can pick up a bit of food that has been cast aside. Or, winging his way in the teeth of a cutting wind, he flies to the orchards and eats the decayed apples that still cling to the branches.

In the field he tears to pieces any meadow mouse nest that may be exposed, hoping, no doubt, that the owner will be at home. This fellow, too, roosts in the thick pine, spruce and hemlock timber.

The few ducks and gulls that choose to remain in the north all winter seem better fitted for the weather than any other of the birds. Cold weather seems to have little effect on them.

If the lakes freeze over they seek open water on the rivers, and there the sheldrakes and whistle wings sport as cheerfully as though it were the warmest day of spring. When one dives and comes up with a fish the others attempt to take it from him, and the gulls, too, try their best to rob their feathered neighbors, even deliberately lying in wait for them and attacking one as soon as he appears on the surface.

But what of the little chickadee, the brown creeper, the white-breasted nuthatch and the downy woodpecker? One might suppose that with the thermometer registering 20 degrees below zero every one of these little creatures would be frozen in a single night.

But no. The following morning the chickadees are as jolly and lively as ever, hanging by their feet head down and climbing about the limbs like miniature acrobats. Not a second of time are they quiet, but as soon as they have found a cocoon, torn it open and robbed it of the butterfly or moth chrysalid that is inside they begin searching for another.

The lives of the brown creeper, the nuthatch and the woodpecker are similar, for while the chickadee is busy looking over the branches proper these other birds are creeping about the bark, and with bills that are better adapted for chiselling than that of the chickadee they peck their way into some crevice and pull from its hiding place the larva of an insect.

At night these birds seek the shelters of hollow trees and limbs, and the woodpecker has been known to excavate a nest for a sleeping place only.

Reptiles Bury Themselves.

Snakes seek the shelter of burrows and places of similar character below frost line, and there remain in torpid state all winter. At the approach of winter the turtles, frogs and salamanders burrow in the mud at the bottom of some river, stream or lake, and there remain until the coming spring. It is not unusual to find a frog or a salamander deep among the leaves below frost line, in a woodchuck burrow or other hole in the ground, and in springs the frog remains active all winter.

The insects, the butterflies and the moths nearly all pass the winter as eggs, or in the larval state or the pupal stage. Tear off a piece of bark from a rotten forest tree on the coldest day of winter and you will find grubs, worms and spiders hidden there. As soon as you take them into a warm room they begin to show signs of life and in a short time become quite active.

Attached to the limbs of trees and bushes, under the eaves of buildings and in old sheds and barns you find the cocoons of butterflies and moths. In these woven cases sleep the creatures, waiting for the warmth of spring to transform them into the last stage of their lives, beautiful moths or butterflies.

BALLINGER SURPLUS FUND

Gentleman George Draws Another Card and Smithers Moralizes.

"FOR what we are about to deceive," said Jarge, with an up'ard glimp', "may we be july t'ankful."

And he pulled a card from the box containin' the dub'us and dejicted claims of the Charakter Surety company.

It was short and to the p'int, like a Dutchman enj'yin' his flagon, and read in manner follerin':

The "Hazardous" people are also after Ezra Menedict, who wants to be bonded in $50,000 as treasurer of Palisade county. Let them have him. He may be all right, but the Ballinger surplus moneys will come into his hands along with other court funds. In other words, if he chooses to go wrong he has the greatest possible chance with the least possible risk.

"A wise decision not to insure a tirrible tempattun," reflicted Gentleman George. "I know somethin' about the Ballinger funn.

"There are two brothers, Marcus and Tull'us, fummerly in business togedder, but now hatin' each odder like poison and fightin' toot and nails. The big Ballinger block they owned was sold troo some fool litigatun, and a cool million paid fust into coort and thin into the county trisurer's office, there to remain until a hull calendar of soots have been tried, appealed, revussed and thin tried again.

"I say, too, Menedict may be all right, but if he don't realize his opportunities, thin he orter be taut."

"By Prof George Ringgold and his talented assistant, William Smithers, two wits?" I ast.

"By those silf-same prides of the curric'ium. You see, Smithers, it is time we branched out.

"We've got a tidy bit in hand from our last coop. We must use it to put ourselves in money's way, to woo fortun' with fortun'. The county seat is a pretty live town, a little off the main lines, where we are still unknown to fame.

"What's the mater with our blossomin' out there as two gintlemen from the golding west with independent means and p'liantropic inds."

"I twig,' says I, with me finger to me nose.

And I fort'with fetched from the closet the unclaimed package I had bought at the expriss auctuun. It consisted of the charter, articles of incorporation and blank stock certificates of the One-Two-Three Mining company, shipped by Noah Munsey, the prisident, from Saphorn, at the time whin the great boom there was at its height; and teachin' town arter the boom had collapsed into splinters. Consekently, it had been unclaimed by Secritary Abel Pinch, the consignee, who had not cared to carry anny dead weight in his skip for the unknown.

"We'll make a start tomorrer, Pinch," said Jarge, as he sorted the perspictusses like a deck of cards.

"All right, Mr. Prisident Munsey," I replied, as I folded the scrip with the gold seal out.

Bot' pretty and live the county town proved with a big summer hotel in its center, not bad to winter in. We inskonced ourslives in it, and havin' sent a few sheers to the editor of the weekly, follered the example of our mine by awaitin' devilopmints.

They came like a decidedly green bay tree. From the leadin' tailor troo the mayor and the council, up to the pastor of the swell church, the hull town tunned out to pay us its respicts—a spontan'us tribute, which cud not fail to increase wan's fait' in the brudderhood of man.

Incidentally I may add that the weekly's currant issue contained this item:

"An evidence of the cosmis reputation of our beloved burg as a center of culture and a source of health is the pregnant fact that Messrs. Noah Munsey and Abel Pinch, joint owners of the famous One-Two-Three mine, are now enjoying for a few weeks the luxurious care of mine host of the Inn, far from the madding crowd. The O. T. T. has just declared its thirty-fifth semi-monthly 3 per cent dividend, and not a share of it has yet been marketed by these genial proprietors of this modern Pactolus. We wish we stood in your boots, gentlemen both."

Ezra Menedict came also, a meager man yearnin' for fat in all its infinite vari'ty. Jarge relaxed his rule in his case and talked finance; and it was wonderful the pipe dreams he devolved over the cigars.

"But Mr. Munsey," at length pleaded Menedict, "if you should decide to enter active operatuns, along these lines so promisin', would it not be prudent to dispose of some of your holdings in the O. T. T. for spot cash, mind, and to wan who wud be proud to make your will his law?"

"Hum," reflicted Jarge, flickin' off the ash; "I might; purely as an act of frindship."

II.

While our piscator'al diversh'un was progrissun so favorably that there was ivery prospict of a greedy bite, I noted a tindency in Jarge to wander from the line with a faraway look in his eyes, which I cudn't mistake. Somethin' or somebody had roused the sintimintal ilemint of his natur'.

If I didn't watch out he wud be up in the saddle and off at full tilt, rescuin' distrissed maidens, yieldin' to ivery ginerous and rheumantic impulse, rightin' wrongs, in a wud, instid of wronging rights.

Jarge, thin, was not depindable. Whin his hand was to the plow he was apt not only to look back but to wave his handkercher. Nor was this all.

A responsive flutter seemed to shake his puppose and dispuss his cold common sinse. It is allus the way; the harder the real self, the softer the ideel self. Vanity maketh the strong man weak; and thus supplies the main motive for love's scramin' farces and horrid tragedies.

I follered Jarge all unbeknownst wan day into the gall'ry of the swell church, of all t'ings, where he set smoothin' his mustache and sindin' miltin' glances over his hand at a partic'lar pew below.

I watched him in the vistabule as the school passed out; the sheep to the front and rear, the lambs in the middle, two be two, like celist'al critturs from a hivenly ark—a garland of posies, with a few rank weeds at eeder ind. It was cliverly done, but more by the black-eyed girl with the red cheeks and mischievous smiles than by him.

She was near the ind of the line in the spi'cul charge, so it seemed, of a beshawled slab of a spinster, whose vine'ry countenance med me wish for false teet'. All of a sudden the slab tripped—cud it be that a trim little bottine had slipped deftly between its supports?—it wud have fallen but for Jarge's hilpin' hand.

"I thank you, sir," said Tarragon, within wan degree of the congealin' point.

"It is I that am grateful," returned Jarge, with his eyes casht down, "for bein' able to serve the sliven Cadogan vuttues to onct."

And order bein' restored, the long line wound down the street, a rigular Fust of May percessun, includin' the pole.

"I seen that little witch palm you a note, Jarge," I said, comin' on him unexpectedly, as he stud in the porch in a riv'ry, milancholy yit delicshus.

"Isn't she the darlin'!" he cried. "Come, Smithers, where we can have the privacy of the club interspussed with the comforts of hum."

"It is this way," he explained, arter the sicond round. "Fate t'rew me in the way of this little Ethel Ballinger—it was love at fust sight, impassened, irresistible. Love, too, found the way for me to woo, for her to be won, though Miss Niggles, the Harpy perciptrise, has an eye and a clutch on her that wud tunn Cerb'rus hisilf into a yaller cur be comparison."

"Ballinger?" I exclaimed. "Kin she be anny kin to the barbarous brudders of Ballinger Block? My, that's a hive of 'em."

"The darter of Marcus," Jarge ansered. "And be the same mark, whether it is he fears that Tull'us may kidnap her, or has tunned Roman like his name and designs her for the conventunal life, the fact is that he pays Miss Niggles tribble terms to keep double watch and ward.

"She can't write a letter, she can't see a frind, she can't go out alone; as yit, you know me, Smithers, be the help of us three this very night she will gain puffict freedom t'roo puffict union with me."

"The t'ree of us?" I repeated, lookin' around. "Tell me, Jarge, 's he absent in body or am I absent in mind."

"It's her brother, Edgar Ballinger," he replied, "from whom her cruie father separated her so absolutely that until I wrote him he didn't even know where she was. She is a proper girl, Smithers, for all her spirits, and wudn't hear to an elopmint until I deranged to have her brother prisent to give her away. He comes on from collidge, this arternoon."

"What day is this?" I ast arter a moment's refliction.

"Friday, you fool."

"I t'ought I deticted somethin' fishy."

And thin Jarge wint off on his high hoss, cussin' and b'ratin me for a false and weak hearted pal, of a nigative mind and a capt'us timperature, until I was glad to follow implicity his plans.

"But in holdin' on to this string to the Ballinger mill'uns are you goin' to let go of the odder?" I ventured.

"Not at all," declared Jarge with a mighty oat'. "I expict Menedict to supply the funns for the honeymoon."

III.

Niver were expictatuns founded fummer on rocks. At our meetin' with Menedict that arternoon a cas'al glimp at the gold sealed scrip seemed to set him wild. With tears in his eyes he begged to have the high priv'lege, and it suttenly did come high, of taking one-half our capital stock and paytn' $500,000 spot cash for it be noon the next day.

But Jarge took exciptuns to this, t'inkin' wisely enough that any such draft on the Ballinger funns wud excite commint. So it was finally agreed that the stock shud remain in escrow in my hands, and thet he shud make five payments of $100,000 each upon it, five years apart, beginnin' at next day noon. And away wint Menedict to make the derangemints, snappin' his fingers and talkin' to hisilf arter the fashun of the balloon chaser univussal.

"And now, Jarge," said I, "for the difficulties of the night."

They didn't seem much from his tellin'. It was planned that he, young Ballinger and me should perceed to the school by a bvway which let into the grounds at the side about midnight, whin the girl felt confident she cud slip from the dummitory without bein' noticed. Thin the t'ree of thim was to drive to a country squire, alriddy primed, and loop the loop, while I retarned to our bachelor quarters for wan.

It was apparent to me that in lettin' me in on the plan Jarge had made a vuttue out of its commonest mater'al—meanin', of coorse, neciasity. Nor was I at all assured that otherwise he wudn't have left me out of his deal with Menedict, skippin' with bot' the girl and the dollars.

But honor among thieves is a nisible quantity, because there is either too little of the wan or too many of the odder. Besides, I didn't have time for more of a reproof than a chastened smile; for a hall boy prisintly denounced Mr. Edgar Ballinger, who follered immijitly arter in his own proper pusson.

A proper pusson, indeed; quite the ideel of the smooth faced, clean limbed young at'lete, with the supor'or gaze and the protubrint chin. He lost no time in showin' that he considered hisself his sister's keeper by quistuning Jarge clus as to his means of livlehood—approprit term, that. "Ively."

"I shall have to defer you to my esteemed associate, Mr. Pinch," replied Jarge, sidesteppin' mudestly.

And I, without namin' names, showed the gold sealed stock in escrow, and explained the conditions on which it was to pass.

So much so good. Young Ballinger nodded a grave approval, and thin ast for the details of the elopment.

"It won't do," he declared with an emp'atic bang whin Jarge had explained his ideas. "I must meet Ethel at the door, not you.

"Remember, I haven't seen her for years; I haven't heard from her except by the hurried note which implored me to take a part in this mad scheme. It is unly famly ixigincies which destrain me to consint, but before I do I must hav a wud with her, siparately and apart.

"A young girl, even if she has a mind, is apt to change it so often that she can hardly recognize it hersilf. There is to be no undoo influence in this case, Mr. Munsey."

"But Miss Niggles is most alert and vig'lant," Jarge objicted. "She is apt to hear Ethel, follow her, and give the alarm. At least, I shud go on the porch wid you; so that in such a case wan of us cud neck the old pelican into silence, while the odder cud hurry my darlin' away."

Young Ballinger seemed struck by this observation. I t'ought the endearin' term hit him hard, too.

"Very well," he said at lengt' arter he had swallered onct or twict like the preacher and the fly. "There can be no objectun to your fri'nd Mr. Pinch goin' with me. Ethel doesn't know him; he cud work no spell. Let him tackle the old dame if she prowls. If he's cort, it will make no differince to us."

And so it was agreed and so it transpired, much to the chilliness of me backbone. Young Ballinger and I left Jarge with the spankin' team in the side-cut. We crep' t'roo the darkness to the silent and shadowy porch.

The shine of the front door faded; somethin' white slipped out like a ghost. It was Ethel. In an instant she was in her brudder's arm—for an instant unly, and yit long enough for him to breathe, for her to ketch a vital wud.

"Oh," she peeped in an agonizin' whisper. "She heard me—Miss Niggles, she is comin' down the stairs to the alarm. Stop her, stop her, or we are lost!"

"Pinch," murmured Ballinger, stunnly, "reminder your task; do your sheer. We await you in the woods." And off they put, hand in hand, like birds in the night.

I did walt, to the trimble of my backbone, listenin' for the carpet slippers; but they came not. There was not a sound; there was not a sign that Ethel's absince had been noted.

At lengt' I hurried back to the carriage. There sat Jarge with the spankin' team, invintun strange cusses. Where, oh, where were the brother and sister?

IV.

We didn't know, the next marnin', whin, warn and tarn be rage and chagrin, we hobbled back to town. In a sinse, which will prisintly appear, we niver did know.

Unly wan clue had rewarded our anx'us sarch. A carriage had been observed, standin' late on the main road, near the school, and thin drivin' furiously away. Had Ballinger found reason to suspict? Thin we must be up, doin' and off.

"We'll land that fust hundrid t'ousand at all events," snarled Jarge between his bitten lips.

And sure enought, promptly at twilve Menedict arrived, with an anx'us smile and a lumpy inside pocket, which med us beam full as greedy.

"Yis," he said, in answer to our looks, "I've got it in there in t'ousands."

And I cud hardly count out the scrip, me fingers were that adrip.

"There you are," said Jarge, his eyes like elictric bulbs; "the first installmint right and tight, and sure to dooble in vally in t'irty days. We'll trooble you for its equivalent, Mr. Menedict."

The County Trisurer raised his palsied hand—he was fumblin' with the top button—whin there were sturdy steps without, a sturdier ray on the door; and the sturdiest pair of old boys I iver seen entered in a brudder act and stood, all aglow, side by side.

"Most sorry, we're sure," began wan, "to disturb gintlemin of sech statun, but the clerk said Menedict was here—"

"And our business can't wait, as you will all admit," finished the other.

"How do you dare—who are these men?" demanded Jarge.

"The Ballinger brudders," gasped poor Menedict, shrinking into a carner and tryin' to pull clusser togedder his buttoned cut. "The Ballinger brudders, Marcus and Tull'us—and oh, my God, frindly, jolly, reunited!"

Right you are, Menedict. We don't blame you for bein' knocked silly," cried the two good old boys amid apoplectic chuckles.

"You will state your business, and be short about it!" threatened Jarge.

"Tut, tut, Mr. Munsey," said Marcus, while Tull'us nodded assint to ivery wud, "we want you to shire our joys, not git mad.

"The fact is that his young scapegrace of a son, Edgar, has run off and married my young madcap of a daughter Ethel. What's done can't be undone. We've buried the hatchet and sint bygones after bygones.

"And now we want to tunn over the surplus funns to the happy pair, and to do it quick, too. Come in, you rascals, and git your dowry from the county trisurer."

They came in reluctant, yet not abashed; a comely, likely pair of yout'ful lovers, sindin' somethin' warm to the innermost parts of me chist; and while Ethel glanced just onct roguishly at Jarge, Edgar lanced that super'or gaze stidily at him.

"This is my place of business, and it is not the county trisurer's office," said Jarge, with a sort of deadly, despairin' politeness. "With all possible wishes for the young people"—Lord, what wishes! You cud fairly hear them frizzle—"I must insist on your withdrawin' thither—"

"Yis," thundered young Ballinger, his pertubrint chin in excilsis; "yis, we will go, but that cowering thing over there goes with us, and without unbuttoning his coat either. I saw him come out of this room yisterday; you, yourslves, told me of a deal to be consummated today for those chromoes on the table. Do you want a police investigatun—"

But without a wud or a look, Mr. Menedict went out between the jolly Ballinger brudders, and with the happy pair as a rear guard; leavin' me to reflict with me old frind Johnsing on the vanity of human wishes, and Jarge to chew a fresh place in his bleeding lips.

Nonsense Rhyme

Once there was a little boylet
Who had got a brand new toylet.
But it was so mean and poor
Boylet threw it on the floor,
Saying, "You I will destroylet!"

M. W.

Jokelet.

"Grandpa, what's the difference between rheumatism and gout?" asked Willie, who knew his grandfather was a sufferer from both these painful diseases.

"Well, sonny," answered grandpa, "you put your thumb in a vice and turn it till you can't bear the pain any longer and that's like rheumatism; then give the vice a couple of extra turns and you'll get a faint inkling of what gout is."

And Willie knew his grandfather was suffering from gout that day.

Two Little Girls.

I'm twins, I guess, 'cause my ma says
I'm two little girls. An' one o' me
Is Good little girl; an' the other 'n' she
Is Bad little girl as she can be.
An' ma says so, 'most ever' day,
An' she's the funniest ma, 'cause when
Wy men my ma she sob an' sigh,
An' doll won't mind, an' I 'lat cry,
An' say, "Dear Good little girl, goodbye!
Bad little girl's come'd here again!"

Last time 'at ma act' that a-way
I cried all to myself awhile
Out on the steps, an' nen I smile,
An' get my doll all fix in style,
An' go in where ma's at, an' say:
"Morning to you, mommy dear!
Where's that Bad little girl wux here?
Bad little girl's goned clean away,
An' Good little girl's comed back to stay."

—James Whitcomb Riley.