

## Excerpts from an Old Primer

### The Bird Nest

“Come here, Rose. Look down into this bush.”

“O Bill! a bird’s nest! What pretty little eggs! Do you think we can take it and show it to mother?”

“What would the old bird do, Rose, if she came back and not find her nest?”

“But we would bring it right back, Bill!”

“Yes, but we could not put it in its place again. If the wind blows it over, the eggs would get broken.”

“How does the bird make the nest so strong, Bill?”

“The mother bird has her bill and her claws to work with, but she wouldn’t know how to make the nest if God didn’t teach her. Do you see what it is made of?”



“I see some some dry grass. The bird must have worked hard to find it all, and make them into such a pretty, round nest.”

“Should we take the nest, Rose?”

“Oh no, Bill. I don’t think we should. But let’s come and look at it again some time.”

The Eggs Have Hatched

“Bill, I was feeding the birds just now, and a little brown bird flew away with something.

“With what?” Bill asked.

“It had a crumb in its bill,” Rose said.

“Where did it go?”

“I don’t know. Away off, somewhere.”

“I can guess where, Rose. Don’t you know the nest we saw some days ago? What do you think is in it now?”

“O Bill, I know! Some little brown birds. Let’s go and see them.”

“All right. But we better not go too near. There! I just saw the old bird fly out of the bush. Stand here, Rose. Can you see?”

Rose looked at the nest with an open mouth. “The eggs were pretty. But the little things that came out weren’t so

pretty. They have such big mouths. And look! They don't have any feathers!"

"Keep still, Rose. Here comes the old bird with a worm in her bill. How hard she must work to feed them all!"



### The Willow Whistle

One day, when Mary was taking a walk down the lane, trying to sing her doll to sleep, she met Frank with his basket.

Frank was a poor little boy. His father and mother had died. His dear, old grandmom took care of him and tried to make him happy.

Every day Mary's mother filled Frank's basket with bread and meat and a little tea for his grandmom.

"Hi, Frank," Mary said quietly.

Frank said, "Why are you whispering, Mary?"

"Sh. Don't make a noise. My doll is going to sleep. It's just a little sick today."

Frank smiled. "Well, then, let's whistle it to sleep."

Frank took a willow whistle out of his pocket and blew a long note.

"Oh, how sweet!" cried Mary. "Let me try."

"Here, Mary." Frank gave her the whistle.



“Thank you very much, Frank. You’re so kind.”

Frank said, “No. You are the one who is kind. You are so good to me and my grandma.”

Mary blew and blew a long time. “I can’t make it whistle,” she said.

“Sometimes they whistle, and sometimes they won’t,” said Frank. “Try again.”

She tried once more, and the whistle made a low, sweet sound. “It whistles!” she cried. In her joy, she turned the doll’s face down. Its eyes shut tight, as if it had gone to sleep.

“There!” Frank cried, “I told you the way to put a doll to sleep is to whistle to it.”

“So it is,” said Mary. “Dear, little thing. It must be put in its bed now.”

They went into the house. Frank’s basket was soon filled, and he went home happy.<sup>1</sup>

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