

The Happy Sun-Bird

By N. V. M. GONZALES

ONE clear, bright morning, a red-breasted Sun-Bird was singing from a tree.

A Gumamela Flower which stood there in the sunshine noticed him and said,

"Oh hello, Mr. Sun-Bird! You seem very happy to-day!"

"Well, yes, I am," said the Sun-Bird. "The day is fine, as you know, and from here at my tree-top I can see a good deal of the beautiful world."

And he sang more and more.

His voice was rich and beautiful. A gentle wind fanned the branches of the tree, so it was cool where the happy Sun-Bird sat.

When noon came, a Grasshopper hopped into the shade under the tree where the happy Sun-Bird was, and the Grasshopper said,

"Is that you, Mr. Sun-Bird? You seem very happy to-day."

"Well, yes," said the Sun-Bird to the Grasshopper. "I am very happy, because the day is so fine as I see it here where I sit and watch the world."

And he sang more and more.

Then the Grasshopper hopped back into the grassy lawn where he had come from. On the way he met the Gumamela Flower. The Gumamela was smiling at him very kindly, and was saying,

"Ah, you have come from under the Sun-Bird's tree!"

"Why, yes," replied the Grasshopper.

"The Sun-Bird seems very happy there," said the Gumamela Flower.

"The day is so fine, he said to me," explained the Grasshopper. "And from where he sits he could see the whole, beautiful world."

And so saying, the Grasshopper hopped away further on to the edge of the lawn. He wondered about the Sun-Bird, and even when he had reached the edge of the lawn he could still hear the singing from the top of the tree.

The Gumamela also wondered why the Sun-Bird kept singing up the tree.

In the afternoon the school bells rang, and little boys and girls ran out to the playground. At the edge of the lawn the Grasshopper was unnoticed, creeping low among the grass blades. On the shrubs the sunlight had turned away and no more did the Gumamela bloom there, for a shadow of a leaf had fallen upon it and its red petals became unattractive.

The school children playing around left the Grasshopper and the Gumamela Flower alone, but when they heard the Sun-Bird singing from the top of the tree they were very happy.

"Aren't we just happy and lucky to-day?" some one said.

"Look, there's a bird up there!"

"Oh, he has a nest up there!"

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THE HEALTH FAIRIES'

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TUBERCLE BACILLUS. Aha! I want to get at that baby. He is so pretty and fat that he will be a fine meal for me. I'll call my servants to help. Come on, Flies.

CLEANLINESS FAIRY. Who are you? Why do you come here?

TUBERCLE BACILLUS. Oh. I am a germ. My name is Tubercle Bacillus and I go every where.

CLEANLINESS FAIRY. What an ugly name!

TUBERCLE BACILLUS. Do you think so? Well, I can't help having an ugly name. It belongs to our family.

PAY FAIRY. Do you have any brothers and sisters?

TUBERCLE BACILLUS. Millions of them. You see, we germs are so very small that people can not see us. I'm not really as big as I look. If you were not a fairy, you could not see me now.

FRESH AIR FAIRY. Where do you live?

TUBERCLE BACILLUS. Most of my family live in the lungs (*hits his chest*) of sick people. We make them sick. We make them feel tired and make them cough. When they cough, some of us jump out of the sick person's nose and mouth. I came from the mouth of the baby's mother.

FRESH AIR FAIRY. How did you get here?

TUBERCLE BACILLUS. Oh, a fly carried me here on his feet. Some of my brothers came on a dirty drinking cup and some on a little boy's fingers.

CHEERFULNESS FAIRY. Go away! We don't want you! We don't want any of your family, Tubercle Bacillus. You shall not touch the baby. We are its friends.

PLAY FAIRY. You are an ene-

my of all children. You shall not come near our baby.

CLEANLINESS FAIRY. Come, Fairies, let us kill his servants, the flies.

TUBERCLE BACILLUS. Oh no, please don't! What shall I do to find a new house? I shall die if I have no servants.

SLEEP FAIRY. Go on and die. We do not care. You want to make the baby sick.

TUBERCLE BACILLUS. Never mind. I have more servants. I'll get in the baby's food.

CLEANLINESS FAIRY. Oh, no, you won't. I am watching that.

TUBERCLE BACILLUS. Then I'll come in the bad air.

FRESH AIR FAIRY. No, indeed, you shall not. I am watching.

TUBERCLE BACILLUS. Then I'll get on the baby's lips when his mother kisses him.

PLAY FAIRY. Ah but his sick mother does not kiss him. We have told her.

TUBERCLE BACILLUS. Then, I am afraid that I and my brothers and sisters cannot get him. Never mind, we can find many other children who are not guarded by fairies. Come away, brothers. Let us catch the little boy who does not wash his hands before he eats. He has no fairies to keep us away. (*Goes out slowly.*)

All fairies join hands and dance around the bed. They cry. He's gone! He's gone! Our baby is saved.

Then they sing softly:

Sleep my little one,
Sleep my pretty one,
Sleep.

(or another lullaby).

(CURTAIN)

THE HAPPY SUN-BIRD

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"Come, let us climb for the eggs!"

The boys started to climb for the eggs. They were clever little boys and good at climbing but when they reached the top of the tree they could not find the happy Sun-Bird there. He had hopped upwards and hidden himself among the thickest cluster of leaves at the topmost branches of the tree. And there he kept on singing and singing.

"Oh, I am so happy. From here, I have indeed a good view of the world!" he kept on thinking to himself.

The school boys were angry because they could not find any nest. They could hear the Sun-Bird singing still but did not know where he was. They were very clever boys, but they could not find the Sun-bird at all. At last they decided to stone him and drive him away from the tree. So they stoned him and tried to drive him from the tree.

But even then, the happy Sun-Bird would not be driven away from the tree. The boys who were trying to be cruel to him got tired and when twilight fell they all ran home.

At last it was night. The stars appeared one by one, and then the moon rose, clear and bright above the hills bordering the town.

"Oh," said the Sun-Bird to himself, "how I wish the Grasshopper and the Gumamela Flower were here now, for the night is so beautiful! Oh, how beautiful the world is!"

red-breasted edge
noticed lawn
grassy unattractive
further on thickest
bordering