

STORY XXII

SAMMIE COLORED SKY-BLUE-PINK

SUSIE LITTLETAIL was out on a green, grassy place in front of the underground house, jumping her grapevine rope, and having a very good time, indeed. She had gotten all over the fright caused by the bad hawk trying to grab her, and felt quite happy.

Sammie Littletail had been searching for the hawk, to have him arrested for being so cruel to his little rabbit sister, but Sammie could not find the big bird, so he had come back to watch Susie jump. You see it was Easter week, and there was no school. The Lady Mouse Teacher of the Hollow Tree School was very glad of it, too, for she had more time to sleep and doze in the sun.

As Sammie watched Susie finish doing her "three slow, pepper rope jumping," Nurse Jane Fuzzy-Wuzzy came to the door of the burrow and called:

"Sammie, your mamma wants you."

"What does she want?" he asked politely.

"She wants you to go to the drug store and get some dye to color the Easter eggs with. Hurry, please, because she has lots to do," said Nurse Jane.

"May we help color them?" asked Susie, hanging up her grapevine rope on a low bush.

"I think so," answered the muskrat nurse. "Now, hurry, Sammie; your mamma wants to get all the eggs colored before your papa comes home from the carrot factory to-night."

"All right," answered the little boy rabbit. "I guess I can help color the eggs, too," and he hurried off to the drug store, that was near Dr. Possum's house.

Now pretty soon—in fact, almost immediately—something is going to happen to Sammie Littletail, so I want you all to sit quietly, and not wiggle so that you'll make the couch squeak, or I can't go on. That's better.

Well, then, Sammie went through the woods, and, on his way, he felt so happy that he sang this little song, which he had heard the kindergarten children singing at the Hollow Tree School a few days before. This is the song, but of course I can't sing it very well. Please don't laugh. I'll do the best I can, although, perhaps, I shan't get the words just right:

"Soldier boy, soldier boy, where are you going,
Waving so proudly your red, white and
blue?"

'I'm going to the war to fight for my country,
And if you'll be a soldier boy, you may come
too.'

That's the way Sammie sang it, anyhow, and just as he finished he reached the drug store.

"Who was that singing?" asked Dr. Possum, who happened to be in the store just then.

"I was," said Sammie.

"Oh, indeed; I didn't know you sang," went on Dr. Possum. "That is very good indeed. I could not do better myself. Will you kindly sing it again?" So Sammie sang it again, and then he got the colors for his mamma to put on the Easter eggs.

"Now, children," said Mamma Littletail, when Sammie reached home, "get the eggs that Mrs. Cluck-Cluck gave you the other day, and we will color them."

"Oh, won't we have fun!" cried Susie.

"Indeed we will!" said Sammie.

So they first boiled the eggs good and hard, so that if they happened to drop one it wouldn't splash and plop over the floor. You know how unpleasant it is, to say the least, when an egg

drops, and skidoodles over the floor. Isn't it, really? Well, they boiled the eggs hard, and then Mamma Littletail made the dye ready.

Well, you should have seen all the colors she had! There was red and blue and yellow and green and purple and pink and old rose and crushed strawberry and ashes of roses and magenta and Alice blue and Johnnie red and Froggie green and toadstool brown and skilligimink. That last, the druggist told Sammie, was a new color, and very scarce. As there isn't any more of it at the drug store, I can't just tell you what it looked like, except that it was a very fine color indeed. Oh, yes!

Well, Sammie and Susie helped their mamma dip the eggs in the dye and stained them all sorts of pretty colors. Some were all one shade, and some were half one tint and half another, and then there were some all speckled with different colors, and these were very hard to make. Then, after they were all dry, Nurse Jane Fuzzy-Wuzzy, with her sharp teeth, just like chisels that a carpenter uses, drew pretty designs on the eggs; pictures of trees and birds and mountains and flowers and fairy castles and lakes and hills, and all sorts of things. Oh, they were the prettiest Easter eggs you ever saw!

"Here is the last egg," said Sammie. "May I dip this one in, mamma?"

"Yes," answered Mrs. Littletail, but she never would have let Sammie do it if she had known what was going to happen.

"I'll make this egg a skilligimink color," said Sammie, and he stood over the pot. Then, what do you think occurred? Why, Sammie leaned too far over and he fell right into that pot of skilligimink color; he and the egg together. And oh, dear me! what a time there was.

Sammie splashed around and splattered the skilligimink color all over the kitchen, and when his mamma and Susie fished him out of the pot he was dyed the most beautiful sky-blue-pink you ever saw! Oh, but he was a sight! The skilligimink color made him look like a piece of the rainbow.

"Oh, Sammie!" cried Susie, "how funny you look!"

And Sammie grunted:

"Huh! I guess it's nothing to laugh at!"

So they dried him with a towel, but the color didn't come off for ever so long, honest it didn't. But they had a lovely lot of Easter eggs, anyhow, so Sammie didn't mind much. Now, how about Hot Cross Buns next? Oh, of course, I mean a story about them.

Well you shall have it if the alarm clock will stop ringing its bell and making the back steps run to the front door.