

Dinty, 2nd,
One of the Fretful Race of Rodents

Wild children are not of much importance to the world in general, but to me who has had one or another of them coming to the door for many, many years for a handout of bread, meat, an apple, or a bottle of warm milk, it is more than a passing fancy or a temporary amusement. Whether their faces are lovely or ugly, their natures gentle or testy, I have found them infallably loyal to the ones they learn to trust and stand by them in a time of need,

Dinty, 2nd is of the porcupine family, clumsy and prickly of form, doubtful of temper, and you would say a poor subject for a family pet. He was dropped on our doorstep some eight months ago when he was but a few hours old, in great need of a friend. He proved to be worth his "board and keep" so he has staid, with consequent enjoyable experiences and adventures.

When he arrived, he became the center of suspicious eyes, unconcernedly waddling about the study on his short elbows like a teddy bear. He sniffed at strange objects, chair legs- and others- book cases, and the woodlift. Finally he crawled in among the sticks, took a few bites of bark. This received especial attention. After smelling and rubbing against all the other reachable articles, he returned to the woodlift. Finally he crawled in among the sticks, took a few bites of bark, turned his round back on the world and went sound asleep. He seemed as contented as if he were out in the woods, or in the wild expanse of rolling sagebrush, which should have been his natural home. This was his introduction to a human home.

National Association of Audubon Societies

[FOUNDED 1901. INCORPORATED 1905]

For the Protection of Wild Birds and Animals



Map showing (shaded) States that have organizations affiliated with this Association

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Map showing (shaded) States that have adopted the Audubon Law protecting the non-game birds

Jennings Lodge, Oregon

I sit alone ⁱⁿ by the dim firelight ⁱⁿ the study, and ~~feel~~ ^{feel} lonesome. ~~xxxx~~
while the dusk outside darkened into night,
For some time I have been waiting, ^{knocks} listening for someone to come, ^{disaster} someone who
usually comes ^{to} the study door about this time almost every night. It's been
several evenings now since I've heard the sound of his footsteps, ~~at the door~~. Could
something have happened to him on these dark and blustery nights? Or has some-
thing else happened to him to make him forget these quiet evenings with me in
front of my warm fire? If so, I shall miss him more than he does me. Perhaps
the need is ended.

As I sit expectant while the radio plays ~~some~~ soft music, I ponder about
this thing of losing your children when they become of a certain age; when the
time is ripe, as they say. It's a comfort to know that needs are not ended nor
ties broken so abruptly as all this. He will come again to the door and ask
things of me. But the visits will become more casual and less frequent. ^{best} He will
not come tonight, - nor again till the thrill of freedom and night ecstasy is gone
for a spell.

Wild children are not of much importance to the world in general, but
one or another of them
to me who has had ~~xxxx~~ coming to the door for many, many years for a piece of
bread, or meat, an apple, or a bottle of warm milk, it is more than a passing
fancy or a ~~plaything~~ a temporary amusement. Whether their faces ^{are} were ugly or
lovely, their natures testy or gentle, they are infallibly loyal to the ones they
learn to trust who have furnished them with warm beds, regular food, and sym-
thetic treatment.

Dinty, 2nd, is of the porcupine family, clumsy and prickly as to form,
doubtful as to temper, and you would say a poor subject for a family pet. He was
dropped on our doorstep some eight months ago when he was but a few hours old, in
great need of a friend. He proved to be worth his "board and keep" so he has staid, ^{with}
^{consequent experiences and adventures.}
When he arrived he became the center of doubtful eyes, unconcernedly waddling-- etc.

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DINTY, 2nd.

One of the Fretful Race of Rodents.

"Don't let him come near! He'll throw his quills at me!" whined a fluffy, hysterical person as she flounced away from a round, hairy ball with a blunt, velvety nose and small black eyes. He was merely another waif that had come to live with us. But he didn't look much like an orphan. He was not lean or hungry, and he certainly had no inferiority complex.

Begin
At the time he was the center of the household eyes, unconcernedly waddling about the study on his short elbows like an infant teddy bear. He sniffed at strange objects, chair legs- and others- book cases, and the woodlift. This received especial attention. After smelling and rubbing against all the other reachable articles, he returned to the woodlift. Finally he crawled in among the sticks, took a few bites of bark, turned his round back on the world and went sound asleep. He seemed as contented as if he were out in the woods, or in the wild expanse of rolling sagebrush, which should have been his natural home. And this, some eight months ago, was Dinty, 2nd's introduction to his human home.

So much for infant adaptation, which characterizes all the woods children as well as human ones. Of course, Dinty had never known the semi-desert, alkali region east of the Cascades where he was born, for he had barely opened his eyes when a Biological Survey hunter found him and shipped him to Portland. He had hardly got acquainted with his own mother, a bulky, ungainly personage with an ugly visage and an outer coat of long gray hair concealing a panoply of spines. For Dinty, is a scion of the porcupine family, called the "fretful" race of rodents. *Erithizon* is his scientific name.

Like all free souls out-of-doors, the whole world belongs to Dinty. He roams through the woods of his home grounds during the day, and as he grows older ventures across the neighbors' boundary lines more and more, nibbling their green foliage as if it was a favor to them. He had not been with us very long

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Jennings Lodge, Oregon

when we got the first reaction, which was not entirely unexpected. The traditional chaff about porcupines' "throwing their quills" does still persist in some kinds of heads. One morning a wrathful neighbor stamped into our yard.

"Where's that nuisance of a hedgehog that you harbor over here?" he demanded. "Come over and see what he's done to my cow!"

We followed him up the hill to the upper end of his pasture. There stood Bossy, a young Jersey heifer, still touchy from her night's escapade. She had met Dinty all right. Her soft nose bristled with black porcupine quills, stuck as thick as needles in a pincushion. By thrashing around and trying to rub them off, she had driven them in further. It certainly looked like trouble ahead.

We talked carefully to the neighbor, trying to tell him that a porcupine does not throw his quills, and that the heifer must have run onto Dinty foraging for food among the ferns and grass and poked her nose against her back. No sir! That darned little beast must have thrown a barrage of arrows at his cow. It didn't make him feel any better when we tried to help pull out the quills, which are barbed at the tips. Every one of them hung tighter than a driven peg as we pulled with the pinchers. It took a good hour's work and patience to clean up Bossy's nose and mollify her owner. And we couldn't refute the argument that cows are more valuable than porcupines. Anyway, we were to keep him on our own place.

But how were we to do it? Dinty didn't understand at all about boundary lines or pasture fences. We didn't want to put him in a cage, for confinement takes the spirit out of an animal as it does a human being, and almost surely makes him surly and an unnatural creature. All summer long we lived in expectation of a repetition of the episode with the cow, or with a friendly dog on our opposite border.

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Dinty is not reticent with dogs, or with anyone else, for that matter. He is a boon companion of our own dog, a curly, black spaniel, and accepts him as another member of the family. In fact, he feels more comfortable for having another animal around. Many a time the little dog helps to bridge the gap between the wild animal and his human friends. Dinty and Blackie eat bread and milk out of the same pan, the dog gobbling rapidly with a slanted eye on the other fellow, Dinty eating deliberately and steadily. But there is no back-biting. Each has his own rights. Bread and milk is the only common ground of competition, for by nature Dinty lives on greens and lettuce, cabbage, carrots, and other garden stuff. And most of his meals are taken in the still hours of the dark, for that is his day. In the day time he curls up at the foot of a tree in the dim woods and sleeps the sleep of the dead. If hunted up or disturbed then, he is likely to be "fretful." But as he grows older with the hermit temperament of the porcupine tribe, he forgets the house on the hill.

As with the world at large, a bottle of something holds the key to his behavior. One thing eventually brings him home. Even though at the age ^{and size} where he should be shame-faced to admit it, a bottle of warm milk ^{finally} brings him lumbering slowly up the path, around to the study door. His clock doesn't work accurately, however, for many a night when he arrives late to find darkened windows and no response at the door, he can be heard shuffling softly around the house, droning in a lonesome and martyred voice. When luck is better and hunger lures him up at dusk, he scratches at the door and is let into the lighted study with the family about the fireplace. Then he comes across to the human realm. He becomes coy and self-conscious; stretches his mouth with a comical grin, showing his long yellow teeth.

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