

# STORIES FOR BOYS AND GIRLS



## CALIFORNIA'S BIG TREES.

Very few of our boy and girl readers have ever seen California's big trees. These trees are probably the largest and oldest in the world and too tall and big for any boy to climb.

When we consider the shortness of human life it seems almost impossible to believe that there are still in existence on this earth living things that were alive and growing for centuries before the birth of Christ, and that many of the most momentous events of history transpire during the life of two species of trees still hale and hearty in the valleys of California.

The redwood, and its near relative, the big tree (scientifically called Sequoia), are the survivors of a genus which was once widely distributed over the earth. Fossil specimens of Sequoia have been found in Greenland and in northern Europe, but since glacial times the redwood has existed only in a narrow strip along the Pacific Coast and the big trees have been confined to a few groves in the California Sierras.

These trees are wonderful apart from their great age, for the great, towering trunks, majestic in their strength and resistance, are as beautiful as the human mind can conceive. The storms of centuries have beat in vain upon their outstretched limbs, and the forest fires that consumed their lesser brothers have been unable to quench the life from the sturdy trunks. Long before the white man came the Indians found shelter in their midst, and long before the Indian the same shade was available for the wild beasts that roamed about.

The big tree, or Sequoia, is of no great commercial importance, and most of the groves have been set aside as public playgrounds, to preserve these oldest living things for tourists of the future. The wood of the big tree is lighter and more brittle than that of the coast redwood, to which it is inferior in practically every respect except durability. Big tree is cut into lumber to some extent, but its chief value is for posts, shakes and stakes for vineyards. From one tree, 12 feet in diameter, there was cut 12,000 grape stakes, 6,500 posts and 15,000 shakes.

While the California redwoods are not as large nor as old as the big tree, they are next in importance for size and age, and, in addition, they are of great commercial value, for the lumber made from redwood has many qualities not possessed by other species.

The redwoods grow to a gigantic height, ranging from 200 to 300 feet, and some reaching 400 feet. The diameter averages from 12 to 15 feet, with an occasional one reaching 28 feet. In old age the trunk rises to a great height bare of boughs, while on the upper part of the branches are short and irregular. The bark is red, deeply furrowed, with the ridges often much curved and twisted. When young the trees are very graceful, the stem rises straight and tapering, with somewhat irregular whorls of drooping branches, the lower ones sweeping the ground. The twigs are densely clothed with flat spreading linear leaves of a fine glossy green. It is a valuable tree for lumber, as its great size and clear grain makes it possible to secure any dimensions required. It splits readily and evenly and planes and polishes well.

Groves of giant redwoods are scattered along the coast of California, within the fog belt. They seem to require the ocean fogs to aid their growth. One of the most beautiful and accessible groves is found in the Muir Woods in Marion County and within six miles of San Francisco.

Whether we consider the redwoods from the viewpoint of their age and size and measure their value from an esthetic standpoint, or judge them for their commercial importance to the lumber industry, they loom up as a species of wonderful characteristics and value, and well worth their conservation and preservation for future generations.

## THE FIRST LEAD PENCIL.

Our boys and girls who use lead pencils each day in school, and find them so important in their tablet work, should know something of the history of the pencil. The first lead pencil was made back in the days of Queen Elizabeth. As you no doubt know, lead pencils are made from a mineral known as graphite. This mineral gets its name from a Greek word "Grapho," meaning "I write."

At first the graphite was sawed into sheets and then cut into little sticks, which were protected by little bits of wood. Through the digging and cutting, a great deal of the graphite was broken and thus wasted. At last, in 1795, a Frenchman named Conte, discovered that powdered graphite could be mixed with binding clay and the pencils we use today are mainly manufactured in this manner. It was not, however, until the year of 1860 that lead pencils were made in the United States, but since that time our country has led in the lead pencil industry of the world. In fact, you may go in any part of the world today and buy American-made pencils.

Geologists report beds of graphite in Texas, outcropping of this mineral having been found by them in several West Texas counties. It is now a very valuable mineral because of the

fact that there is a growing scarcity of graphite throughout the world.

## HOW THE WILD TURKEY MOTHER PROTECTS HER YOUNG.

During the callow period of the turkey hen's brood, the mother turkey constantly watches for and instantly warns her chicks against another ruthless foe. This is the chicken hawk.

It is wonderful how the hen turkey detects the coming of the hawk. She discovers it nearly as soon as the hawk, in his soaring place almost among the clouds, has got his eye on her and her brood. While the hawk is dropping down upon them, the old turkey utters a sharp and peculiar cry, and instantly every chick either scampers to a hiding-place or falls over on the ground and simulates death as perfectly as the possum ever did.

The preying chicken hawk will dine on nothing but what he captures alive and kills. How the young turkeys know that is more than any one can say, but it is evident that they do know it. If they are true to their instinct, and remain as they fall until the mother gives them the signal that the danger is over, the hawk, seeing nothing but dead game on the ground, as he supposes, will sail away again.

The mother will not give the signal to her brood that all is well until the hawk is out of sight, and then, at her call, up will jump every "possum-playing" chick.

It sometimes happens that a chick is impatient, and attempts to run things itself, coming to life before it gets the word from its mother. The chick that does so is lost, for the hovering hawk will have its talons on it instantly, although the impudent chick has quickly obeyed a second order from its mother in the bushes, and pretended to be dead again.

## NOTHING TO DO.

There seems almost no excuse for a girl, or a boy, either, to say "I have nothing to do." As a matter of fact, there are so many things for them to do that it is a wonder they find enough hours in the day in which to do them.

The boys, for instance, have their workshops in which to make all sorts of things for themselves or the house. Then they have their experiments in chemistry and electricity; all the fascinating things in nature to study about; their collections of stamps, butterflies or whatever they may be interested in to arrange and classify; as well as books and newspapers to read and amuse themselves with.

The girls have all of these and a few others in addition, for needlework offers great possibilities to those who complain that they have nothing to do for amusement.

Girls always like pretty things to wear, and there are so many dainty bits of underwear they can make for themselves if they are at all clever with their needle. If they do not wish to embroider them they can be finished with a simple hemstitch or featherstitch which will be just as pretty and effective.

Then there was never a girl who did not like an attractive room. For it she can make nice covers for bureau or dressing table. These, too, do not have to be elaborately embroidered, for hemstitching is again effective for the hem and the rest can be without ornament or with a small corner design that would not take long to do.

For her writing table she could make runners of crash with a bit of colored embroidery at the ends, or if she likes to paint she can have the pleasure of stenciling them.

Stenciling is very quick work and lots of fun if the person is a careful worker and does it properly. The process is so very simple that many who try it think that it does not require any skill at all, and consequently go at it so carelessly that the results are far from satisfactory. But if a little care is taken, the work is quickly done and very effective.

Stenciling can also be done at the bottom of window curtains, or along a couch cover, so a girl who can do it can decorate many things for her room.

Getting away from the stenciling idea and back to needlework, girls all enjoy having dainty guest towels to offer their friends when they come to visit them. These should not be too elaborately embroidered, and should be done in white thread or they will find their guests very reluctant to use them for they will feel that they are hastening the destruction of the pretty colors.

For girls who do not care for any kind of handwork, the scrapbook offers amusement for idle hours. If they are fond of reading they might like to collect photographs and articles, short and long, about their favorite authors. If they read the good books by standard authors they will always be running across material for their scrapbooks. Take Robert Louis Stevenson and Louisa M. Alcott, for instance. There are many interesting things published from time to time about their lives, their books, the places in which they lived, or how they happened to write certain books or stories.

They could have scrapbooks on historical houses or events or on any subject under the sun that interested them. The magazines and papers would have fresh interest for them, for they would always be on the lookout for material for their books.

## CARE OF SMALL CHICKS.

Don't feed chicks of several different sizes together. The smaller ones will be overrun and stunted. One sick chick soon infects the whole flock. Remove the chick at the first sign of illness. Cleanliness and proper care are great disease preventives.

## FT. WORTH WOOL AND HIDE MARKET.

Market weak, dull, prices lower. The following prices were paid for hides, wool, etc. by Fort Worth Hide & Wool Company at Fort Worth, Texas, February 28, 1920.

Green hides by express	1.15
Green salt hides by freight	1.17
BULLS AND DAMAGED USUAL REDUCTION.	
Dry flint hides	.80
Dry salt hides	.77
BULLS AND DAMAGED USUAL REDUCTION.	
Green salted horse hides, large, each	6.00
Green salted horse hides, medium, each	5.00
HORSES AND DAMAGED, HALF PRICE	
Green salted horse skins, each	.30 to .80
Sheep pelts, each	.50 to 1.50
Shearing sheep, small pelts, kids and damaged pelts usual reduction.	
Furs according to grade.	
Wool according to grade.	

## THINKS TEXAS CRUDE OIL MAY HAVE FURTHER ADVANCE.

"The consensus of opinion among oil operators that a \$4.00 price for Texas crude oil will prevail before the year is over," according to a statement recently made by Gilbert Johnson, Fort Worth Oil Operator and Broker, upon his return from the California oil fields where he controls large interests. "It is a fact," says Mr. Johnson, "that the price of crude oil in the many fields of the United States depends upon the current price of Pennsylvania crude, that has but recently jumped to \$5.50 per barrel, establishing the highest price for crude thus far on record."

As shown by the late U. S. Geological report the total oil consumption for the year 1919 amounted to 436,000,000 barrels, and taking this as a comparative basis, it is computed that the oil consumption during the coming year will increase at least 20 per cent. Texas crude oil has advanced to \$3.25 in the Somerset field. The situation is mainly one of production and consumption, with the future of the oil industry resting in the hands of the consumer as to whether or not the high price of crude oil will be paid as an inducement to the oil producer in further drilling of oil territory.

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**More Good News**  
11 — WELLS — 11 are now drilling on our valuable holdings.

One-fourth of all the oil produced on 1,800 acres in the Cartwright leases, located in Parker County. Well now drilling on this tract.

One-sixteenth of all oil produced on the six-acre Hawk lease. One well is producing over 500 barrels and another is drilling on this tract. The Perkins, Norwood and Fulson wells are all near this tract.

One twenty-fourth of the ROYALTY on the 87-acre Howard tract. Six wells are drilling on this tract and other locations are being made. A 2,000-barrel well is just west of this tract.

One-fourth of all the oil produced from the eight-acre O'Rear lease. This tract is in the Desdemona field. A rig is up and is ready to spud in.

One twenty-sixth of all the oil produced from the six-acre Nabors lease. This tract is in the Desdemona field and has a well on it that is now producing more than 125 barrels daily.

One-sixteenth of all the oil produced on the five-acre Tidwell lease. This is also in the Desdemona field. The rig is up and drilling begun.

We believe that these SIX tracts hold SIX GOLDEN OPPORTUNITIES for the conservative investor. Now is your chance to secure this stock at par—\$1.00 per share.

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