

EPAMINONDAS

Traditional

Epaminondas had a good kind granny who cooked at “the big house.” Epaminondas liked to go to see her for she always gave him something to take home with him.

One day when Epaminondas went to see Granny she was baking a cake, and she gave Epaminondas a piece to eat. As he was leaving, Granny said, “Epaminondas, you may take a slice home to your mammy.”

Epaminondas took it in his little hands and squeezing it just as tight as he could ran all the way home. When his mammy saw him, she said, “What’s that, Epaminondas?”

“Cake, Mammy. Granny sent it to you.”

“Cake!” cried his mammy. “Epaminondas, don’t you know that’s no way to carry cake? When your granny gives you cake, put it in your hat; then put your hat on your head and come home. You hear me, Epaminondas?”

“Yes, Mammy.”

The next time Epaminondas went to see his granny, she was churning, and she gave

him a pat of fresh butter to carry to his mammy.

Epaminondas said to himself, “What was it Mammy said? Oh, yes! I know. She said, ‘Put it in your hat, and put the hat on your head, and come home.’ I’ll do just what she told me.”

Epaminondas put the pat of butter in his hat, put his hat on his head, and went home.

It was a hot day, and soon the butter began to melt.

Drip, drip, drip, it went into his ears. Drip, drip, drip, it went into his eyes. Drip, drip, drip, it went down his back. When Epaminondas reached home he had no butter in his hat. It was all on him.

Looking at him hard, his mammy said, “Epaminondas, what in the world is that dripping from your hat?”

“Butter, Mammy. Granny sent it to you.”

“Butter!” cried his mammy. “Oh, Epaminondas! Don’t you know how to carry butter?”

You must wrap it in a cabbage leaf, and take it to the spring. Then you must cool it in the water, and cool it in the water, and cool it in the water. When you have done



this, take the butter in your hands and come home. You hear me, Epaminondas?"

"Yes, Mammy."

The next time Epaminondas went to see his granny, she wasn't baking cake and she wasn't churning. She was sitting in chair knitting.

She said, "Epaminondas, look in the woodshed, and you'll see something you like."

Epaminondas looked in the woodshed, and there he found four little puppies. He played with them all the afternoon, and when he started home, his granny gave him one.

Epaminondas remembered what his mammy had told him. He wrapped the puppy in a big cabbage leaf, and took it to the spring. He cooled it in the water, and cooled it in the water, and cooled it in the water. Then he took it in his hands, and went home.

When his mammy saw him, she said, "Epaminondas, what is that in your hands?"

"A puppy dog, Mammy."

"A puppy dog!" cried his mammy.

"Oh, Epaminondas! What makes you act so foolish? That's no way to carry a puppy. The way to carry a puppy is to tie a string around his neck and put him on the ground. Then you take the other end of the string in your hand and come along home. You hear me, Epaminondas?"

"Yes, Mammy."

Epaminondas was going to be right the next time. He got a piece of string and put it in his pocket to have it ready.

The next day company came to see Epaminondas's mammy, and she had no bread for dinner. She called Epaminondas and said, "Run to 'the big house' and ask your granny to send me a loaf of bread for dinner."

"Yes, Mammy," said Epaminondas. And off he ran.

Granny gave him a loaf just from the oven—a nice, brown, crusty loaf. This time Epaminondas was certainly going to do what mammy had told him.

He proudly got out his string and tied it to the loaf. Then he put the loaf on the ground, and taking the other end of the string in his hand, he went along home.

When he reached home, his mammy gave one look at the thing tied to the end of the string.

"What have you brought, Epaminondas?" she cried.

"Bread, Mammy. Granny sent it to you."

"Oh, Epaminondas! Epaminondas! How could you be so foolish?" cried his mammy. "Now I have no bread for dinner. I'll have to go and get some myself."

She went into the house and got her bonnet. When she came out, she said, "Epaminondas, do you see those three mince pies I've put on the doorstep to cool. Well, now, you hear me, Epaminondas. You be careful how you step on those pies!"

"Yes, Mammy."

His mammy went off down the road. Epaminondas went to the door and looked

out. “Mammy told me to be careful how I step on those mince pies,” he said, “so I must be careful how I do it. I’ll step right in the middle of every one.”

And he did!

When his mammy came home, there were no pies for dinner.

Now she was angry all over, and something happened. I don’t know, and you don’t know, but we can guess. Poor Epaminondas.