

LITTLE CROWLING BIRD AND FENNY YELLOW HAIR IN WINTERLAND



WAUBUH-NING-GOO-SEE- LITTLE SNOW-BIRD, OUTSIDE! I WANT TO SPEAK TO YOU!

KAYGET-YES! THAT BEST WY! THERE MUKOONS AT DOOR! WHAT WANT LITTLE BEAR?

NOKOMIS SHOWED ME HOW TO MAKE CORN CAKE! WILL WE BAKE IT IN THE ASHES?

I BELIEVE I HEAR BIRDS CHIRPING SOMEWHERE!



SPEAK UP SNOWBIRD DON'T BE AFRAID!

YOUR FRIEND PE-NAY THE PARTRIDGE IS BURIED UNDER THE SNOW CRUST AND CAN'T GET OUT!

THIS IS FINE AND WARM!

OH LOOK AT THE WHITE BIRDS WYARMING THEMSELVES AT OUR CHIMNEY!

One day Little Crowling Bird and Fenny Yellow Hair thought they would try something special in the way of cooking in their nice Snow Playhouse. Yellow Hair had often helped Nokomis make Indian bread—a kind of cornmeal cake baked in the ashes—and was sure she could bake some herself. So Crowling Bird brought a fresh supply of corn and borrowed the wooden corn mill from Nokomis with which to crush the hard grains. Now, in those days, the Indians did not have any "grinding" machines; instead, they pounded the corn in a "mortar" made by cutting a section from the trunk of a hardwood tree and hollowing it out about half its length. A few handfuls of corn were then thrown in the hollow, and another piece of hard wood was used to pound the grains into a meal. This mortar they called "Poo-tah-gun," which means "The hand mill for making meal."

While Crowling Bird pounded the corn in the "Poo-tah-gun" Yellow Hair mixed water and salt with the meal and kneaded it on a flat board. While they were working away Aundak suddenly cocked his head and listened. "I hear birds chirping!" he said. "Surely it can't be spring!" Just then Mukoons, the Little Black Bear, popped his head through the entrance and cried: "Hey, there, Crowling Bird! There's a little white bird on the roof who wants to speak to you!" The children ran outside at once to see what he wanted. Gathered around the chimney of their Snow House was a small flock of little white birds warming themselves. They were "snowbirds," and Waubuh-nin-goo-ah, their chief, hopped forward and chirped: "Your friend, Peenay, the Partridge, is buried under the snow crust. Won't you please bring your snow shovel and dig him out?"

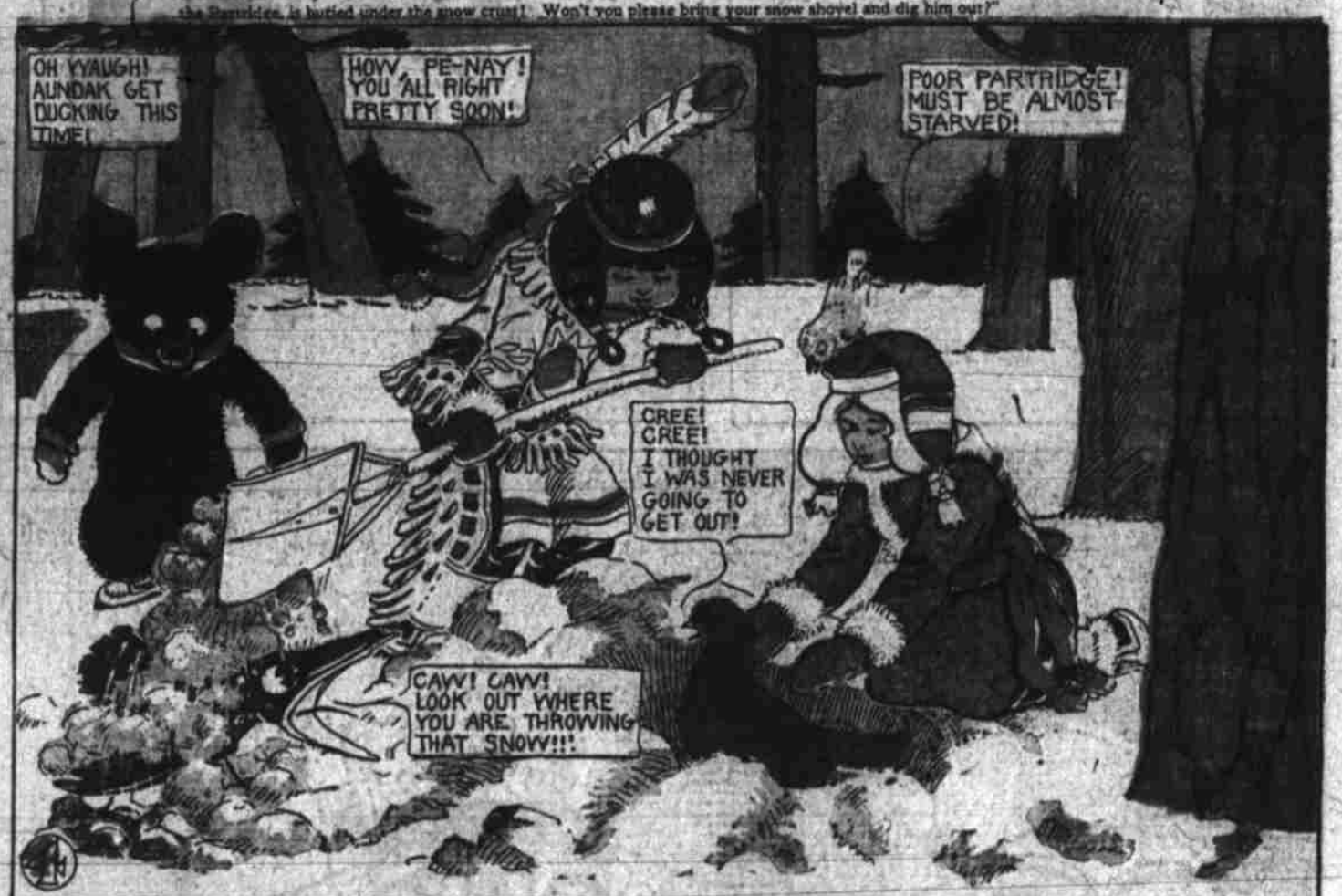


WHAT! HUNGRY ALREADY?

MEBBE YOU CAN SMELL PLACE WHERE PE-NAY IS BURIED?

RIGHT UNDER THE BIG PINE IS WHERE WE SAW PARTRIDGE DROP INTO THE SNOW!

WON'T THE CORN CAKE BURN UP WHILE WE ARE AWAY?



OH YEAH! AUNDAK GET DUCKING THIS TIME!

HOW, PE-NAY! YOU ALL RIGHT PRETTY SOON!

POOR PARTRIDGE! MUST BE ALMOST STARVED!

CREE! CREE! I THOUGHT I WAS NEVER GOING TO GET OUT!

CAVI! CAVI! LOOK OUT WHERE YOU ARE THROWING THAT SNOW!!!

As soon as Crowling Bird heard what had befallen his friend Peenay, the Partridge, he seized his snow shovel and cried: "How! Mah-jah-dah, dush!"—"Come! Let us start!" Off they ran on top of the hard snow crust. Snowbird perched himself on Yellow Hair's hand, and, as they went along, began to tell her the legend of the Snowbird People. "Long ago, in the Beginning of Things," said Snowbird, "my ancestors belonged to the Finch family. There are many different branches to our family tree, but I am descended from the Gray Finches. Once, when Neebin, the Summer, had gone South on a visit, Pe-boon, the Winter, came out of his ice-cave in the North and roamed all over the land. He carried a bag of Reindeer skin in which he kept Koon, the Snow Spirit, who was always trying to get out to breathe the fresh air and look around."

"When Pe-boon at last let him out he amused himself blowing his breath, like a cloud of steam, away up into the sky. Soon Ke-way-din, the North Wind, came howling around and from Koon's breath into millions of little white snowflakes. Most of the birds when they saw this flew away to the South—to find Neebin, the Summer. But Owl and Partridge—and a few others—stayed behind. My ancestor, the Gray Finch, was so frightened that he flew right into the open mouth of the bag of Reindeer skin. Then Koon quickly made friends with the little bird, and, breathing on him, turned his plumage to a beautiful white! He named him "Waubuh-nin-goo-ah," the Snowbird. And ever since our people and Koon have been the best of friends!" In a little while the children came to the place where Partridge was imprisoned and dug him out in a jiffy!



CORN CAKE WILL BE DONE MEBBE WHEN WE GET BACK!

WE'LL GIVE PARTRIDGE AND THE LITTLE WHITE BIRDS ALL THEY CAN EAT, WYON'T WE?

ARE YOU HUNGRY PARTRIDGE?

I HAVEN'T EATEN FOR THREE DAYS AND NIGHTS!

HURRY UP! THE CAKE MAY BE BURNED!



UMBAY NEEJE!—COME, MY BROTHER—EAT WYTH PE-NAY! AUNDAK NO GET JEALOUS, MEBBE?

PRETTY SNOW BIRDS YOU MUST ALL COME AGAIN SOON TO SEE US!

WHY DOESN'T YOUR YELLOW HAIR TURN WHITE IN WINTER LIKE MY FEATHERS DO?

CAVI! CAVI! WYAT A FUSS OVER SUCH STUPID BIRDS! CATCH ME GETTING STUCK UNDER A LITTLE BIT OF SNOW-CRUST!

PEEP!

UM, UM!

Partridge was mighty glad to be rescued, and told the children on the way back to the Snow Lodge how he happened to get into such a fix. "The other evening," said Peenay, "I was going to sleep among the branches of a big pine tree, when I thought I heard an odd hooting! Owl can see in the dark, and I was afraid he'd find me before morning and EAT me! So I folded my wings tight and dropped straight down, plump, into a big snowdrift. I knew Owl couldn't see me there, and went to sleep quite comfortably. It had thawed during the day, but at night the wind blew cold and a hard crust formed. When I woke up I knew by the light it was morning, but, although I pecked and pecked away at the hard crust, I couldn't break through. I must have starved there if Snowbird hadn't heard me. I'm so glad you came," said Partridge, "because I'M TERRIBLY HUNGRY!"

When they got back to the Snow Lodge they invited all the other snowbirds inside to get something to eat. (They had stayed beside the warm chimney all the time.) The corn-cakes was soon baked, and some more corn parched, and then they had a regular playhouse dinner party! Every one enjoyed it except, perhaps, Aundak, who was a wee bit jealous because the children made so much of Partridge and the Snowbird People. Some cold winter day you may see a flock of the little white snowbirds sitting about, and if you listen very carefully you may hear them chirping: "Peo-depo! Peo-depo!"—which, in their language, means "THERE IS A SNOWSTORM COMING! Then you may get your sled ready, because they are the pets of Koon, and know just when to expect him!" A. T. C.