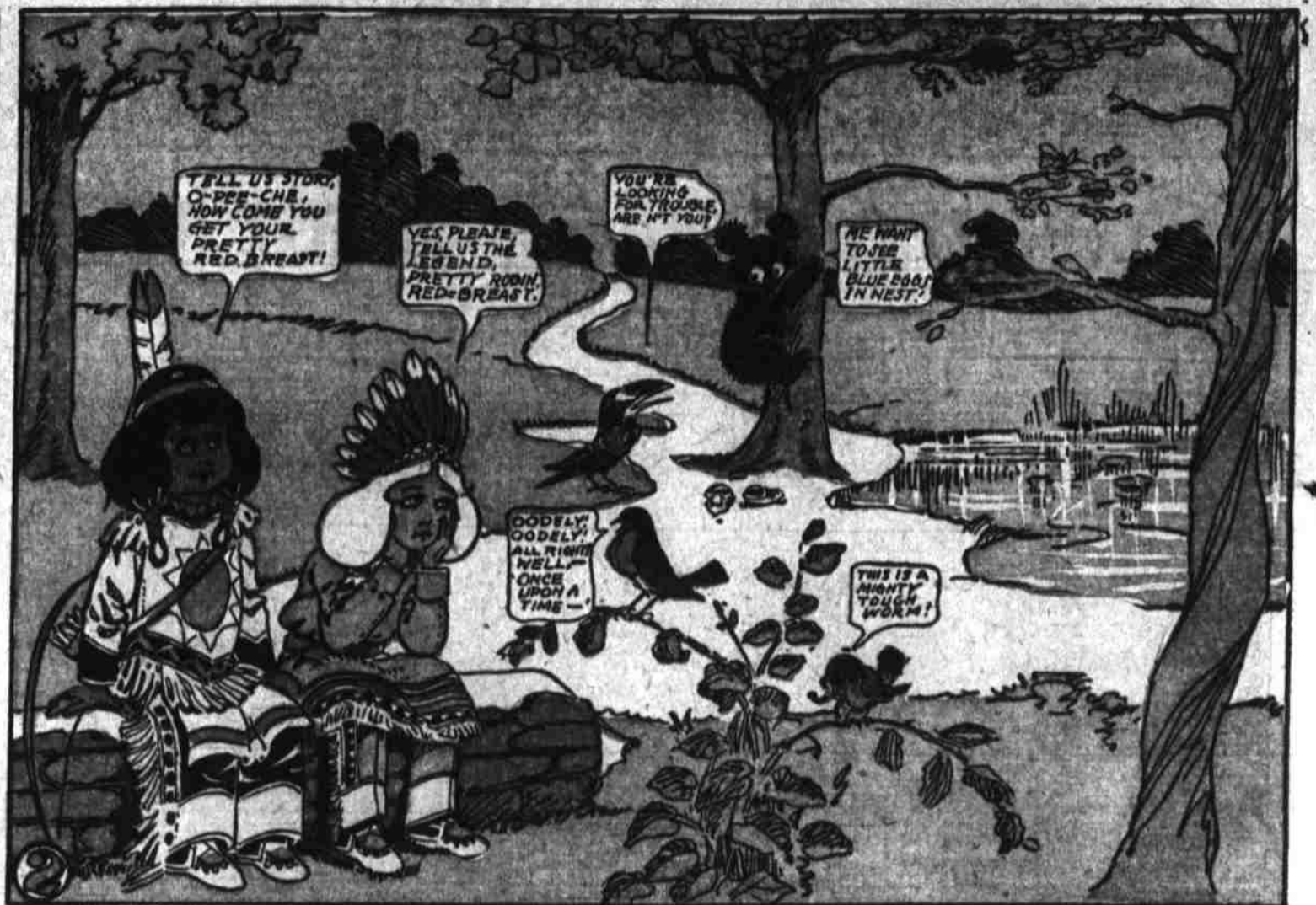


LITTLE GROWLING BIRD IN WINDEGO LAND



One day the children and Little Bear and Aundak, the Crow, were playing under some maple trees near a shallow pool of water. There was a Robin's nest on a limb of one of the trees, and, on a branch of another, O-pee-chee, the Robin, himself, was singing: "Oodely, oodely, oodely! We've-got-four-nice-blue-eggs-in-our-nest! Oodely, oodely, oodely!" But the Mother Robin was not wasting her time in singing. She was trying to pull a long, tough worm out of the ground! Zhegon-ah-wis, the Earthworm, did not want to come out and be eaten! He held on with his tail as long as he could, but Mother Robin tugged until she dragged him out. Then she flew to a briar bush and began to eat him. The Robin People, because they are "soft-billed" birds, cannot eat hard food—like corn. Instead, they live on harmful worms and grubs, and are very useful, indeed.



Yellow Hair admired Robin's song and asked him to tell them how he came to have such a pretty red breast. Mr. Robin flew down and perched on a spray of the briar bush, while the children seated themselves on a fallen log to hear his story: "Long, long ago," began Robin, "my people, the O-pee-chee-wug, had speckled breasts like the other Thrushes. One day Nanna-boshoo was hunting the Naked Bear—who was a very wicked Magician that devoured little children, and even little birds, but was not related in any way to the Brown or Black Bears—and the Wicked One hid himself in a hollow tree beside the trail. Now, the day before, Naked Bear had robbed the nest of my Ancestors and eaten the young ones in that very same tree! So when Nanna-boshoo came along the trail Naked Bear sprang out of his hiding-place to seize him unawares, BUT—



"My Ancestor bravely came to the rescue! He screamed to Nanna-boshoo to jump aside, and quickly launched himself right in the face of the savage beast, blinding him for a moment, so that he failed to seize the Hunter. Then Nanna-boshoo smote and slew him with one mighty blow of Pugn-ah-gun, his Magic War-Club! Then he dipped his finger in the blood of Naked Bear and painted RED the breast of my Ancestor, saying: 'Hereafter the O-pee-chee-wug, or Robin People, shall wear a red stain on their breasts as a sign that their Great Ancestor helped Nanna-boshoo slay the Wicked One, Naked Bear!'" While the story was telling, Little Bear, being curious to see the eggs that Mr. Robin sang about, had taken off his moccasins, climbed the tree and was now sniffing at the nest! Mother Robin saw him first and, chirping loudly, darted off to guard it.



Mr. Robin, too, soon joined his mate, and, between them, they filled the air with their cries! When Growling Bird and Yellow Hair saw what Little Bear was about they were surprised and grieved. They ran to the tree, and Growling Bird fired an arrow to his bow, calling out to Little Bear that he would shoot if he did not come down at ONCE! Aundak took no part in this bad action; in fact, he warned Little Bear that there would be trouble if he meddled with the nest. But Mukook, the stubborn Little Bear, gave no heed; he wanted to handle the pretty blue eggs, and SMELL them! Yellow Hair cried, "SHAME!" but, at the same time, she begged Growling Bird not to shoot, because the arrow might make him hop and fall off the limb and, maybe, break his neck. So—



Little Growling Bird laid down his bow and quiver of arrows and started to climb the tree, intending to catch hold of Little Bear and make him come down. Now the Mother Robin lays just FOUR blue eggs in her nest, and, when the young Robins are hatched out, they are ALWAYS hungry, and they grow so fast that they fill the nest right to the brim. It keeps the parent birds busy hunting worms and grubs to fill the four gaping mouths of the hungry brood. But Little Bear thought the old Robins would not miss it if he "hooked" just ONE egg! So he picked out one and held it in his paw so that Yellow Hair could see it. Then he popped it in his mouth to keep it from breaking as he slid down the tree-trunk. Just then SOMETHING HAPPENED!—



The small branch on which Little Bear was standing SNAPPED suddenly and down he tumbled—SPLASH—into the pool of water below! Yellow Hair was afraid he would drown—but then she didn't know that ALL the Bear People can swim and float like Ducks! But the water was cold, and Little Bear got a great fright, and a good cold souping, besides! And ever since then (you may read it in any of the story-books, if you like), whenever Little Bears, or little boys, climb trees to rob a bird's nest the branch nearly always breaks! And if there should be no pool of water to fall into, beneath, it often happens that there are broken LIMBS, as well as broken BRANCHES! NEXT WEEK you shall see how Growling Bird punished the naughty Little Bear for robbing the nest of O-pee-chee, the Robin!