

LITTLE GROWLING BIRD IN WINDEGO LAND



Last week you were told how Little Bear's curiosity to see the eggs of O-pee-chee, the Robin, got him into trouble, and how he climbed the tree and took one of the pretty blue eggs out of the nest and popped it in his mouth to keep it from breaking while he crawled down the tree, backward. But he came down by a shorter road! The branch on which he stood broke—and down he fell, SPLASH, into the water below!

Now, in the picture above, you may see him wading out of the shallow pool and dropping the little blue egg (which he had kept safe in his mouth all the time) into his fat little paws. Yellow Hair coaxed him to give it to her so it could be returned to the nest. But Growing Bird was very angry with Little Bear. He unsprung his bow to punish him severely.



As soon as Little Bear gave the egg to Yellow Hair, Growing Bird grabbed him by the scruff of his neck and gripped the Black Rascal's head between his knees. Holding him there so tight he could not get away, Growing Bird whaled away at him with the bow, knocking the water out of his fur at a great rate! Now the fur of all the Bear People is very thick, and the hide very tough, so that a beating on the head or on the back does not hurt them a little bit! But Yellow Hair thought that Growing Bird was laying it on too heavy, and begged him to stop. She said that Little Bear had been punished enough, and that she was sure he was now very sorry for what he had done. But when Aundak asked him how he felt, he giggled, and said: "Growing Bird, he only TICKLING ME!" Well—



When the punishment was over, Growing Bird took the Robin's egg from Yellow Hair and, after wiping it carefully, put it in his mouth—which is the safest place to carry such delicate things as bird's eggs—and climbed the tree. When he gently placed the little blue egg back in the nest the O-pee-chees went wild with delight! They thanked him very much, because, when Little Bear fell from the tree they gave up all hope of ever seeing that egg again! They were sure it had been smashed; but no; there it was, still warm, and as sound as ever! Because the whipping had not hurt Little Bear in the least, he thought he'd "show off" a bit. He danced the Bear Dance, grinning and grunting. "Hi-yah! Hi-yah! Growing Bird no good; he no can whip to hurt like Big Bear!" Now this was very foolish talk, because—



When Growing Bird came down from the tree and heard Little Bear laughing and making fun of the punishment, as if the whole affair was a sort of joke, he determined to give him something that he would remember for a while. Nokomis had often told the little boy that children were punished for wrong-doing while they were still very young, because it is much easier to cure them of bad habits then than when they have grown older; and Growing Bird thought that what was good for Little Boys ought to be good for Little Bears, too! It was Aundak, the Knowing Old Bird, that told him how to punish Little Bear so that he would not think it so much of a joke, after all. Even soft-hearted Little Yellow Hair was surprised and ashamed of the way Little Bear acted—and she told him so, very plainly!



Aundak told Growing Bird (in a "crow's whisper") to whip Little Bear ON THE FEET!—and so, when that Giggling Cub was getting ready to put on his moccasins—which he had taken off before climbing the tree—Growing Bird suddenly grabbed him by his short, fat legs and stood him on his head! He then called to Yellow Hair to bring his bow, and, while she held one end of it, he tied Little Bear's feet to it, in the middle, using the loosened bowstring. (You can see in the picture above how they did it!) Then Growing Bird picked up an arrow and began to whip Little Bear on the bare soles of his pudgy little feet! Oh, how that fat rascal did squall and yell!!! He howled and howled, crying out: "Stop! That hurts DREADFULLY!!!" Yellow Hair couldn't bear to look; she just HAD to turn her head away until the whipping was over.



Growing Bird untied Little Bear and helped him put his moccasins on his aching feet. Then he sent him back to the Wigwam in disgrace. As he went away, blubbering like the cry-baby he was, he said he would "tell Nokomis," and that he'd "run away and be a little WILD bear, maybe"—just like some little boys often threaten to do! But when he reached the Wigwam he just sneaked quietly in and crawled into his little bed. Soon he was sound asleep, and all his troubles forgotten. That is said to be the best medicine to take after a whipping, anyway! And ever since then, the Muk-quag, or Bear People, cannot stand a whipping on the feet. THEY know the story—and you can tell by the way they curl up their feet and whine, when they sit down, that they often think about it!