

LITTLE GROWLING BIRD IN WINDY GO LAND



After the accident which befell the children (which you were told about last week), Nokomis was kept busy for a while "doctoring" burns and mending clothes. She made some Indian "Medicine Plaster" by covering strips of cotton cloth with the sticky gum of the Balsam tree. This is very healing medicine for cuts or burns, and, in a few days, the children, Little Bear and Aundak, the Crow, were about the same as before they tried to play making fireworks. Growing Bird still had one finger tied up, and the Bear Cub and the Crow wore strips of plaster over their burnt spots. When Nokomis went down to the stream one day to look at the fish which were smoking in the "Smoke Wigwam" Big Bear proposed that they go out and pick some Strawberries before they were all gone. So, off they started for Wah-jew, the Hill, where the Strawberry patch was.

Each took a tin pail along, and Little Bear and Aundak carried tiny pails also. Now Teen-de-se, the Blue Jay, had just found his way to the Refuge Ground, and he watched them sharply from a tree as they went by. Because Blue Jay is always looking and listening, he is the first to notice anything stirring in the woods. He gives warning by crying in a harsh voice, "JAY! JAY! JAY!" and all the other wild things know that there is some one coming. (That is why he is sometimes called "The Watchman of the Woods"). Well, when they came to the Hill of Strawberries they began to pick the pretty red berries, and Growing Bird warned Little Bear, knowing how greedy he was, not to eat all the berries he picked, but to put them in his little pail. When they brought them home they would put maple-sugar on them and have them for supper.



As there were still a great many berries left they soon filled their pails. Then Yellow Hair asked Big Bear to tell her why the Indians call Strawberries "O-day-e-minna," or "Heart Berries." "It's a short story," said Big Bear, "and soon told!" So they sat down under the shade of a tree and Big Bear began: "Once upon a time, before there were any Indians," he said, "the Puk-wudjies, the 'Little Wild Ones,' or Pygmies, were the only people of the woods. One evening a little girl Puk-wudjie, playing among the flowers, caught sight of a beautiful shining thing high up among the tree-tops. It was Oon-ah-gooah Ahnung, the beautiful Evening Star, but SHE thought it must be some new and lovely "King Flower" that had come to woo her. She loved it deeply, but it soon disappeared, and so she pined away until she died.

"But Keshay Muneedo, the Good Spirit, took pity on her and changed her into a little green vine with a pretty, white, starlike flower which bloomed while Evening Star was climbing up the sky, but drooped and died when he was gone. And later, when the golden arrows of Keeris, the Sun, came darting and searching among the growing things they found no starlike flower, but only a little Puk-wudjie HEART, blushing red among the dark green leaves!"

While Big Bear was telling the legend Little Bear was very busy at the other side of the tree. He didn't care for fairy tales—maybe he didn't even BELIEVE in the Fairies! But, like all of the Bear People, he believed that Berries were very good to eat, and that he would just eat ONE—to see if they were sour. In a few minutes HIS PAIL WAS EMPTY!



His greedy appetite now got the better of him and he slyly reached around the tree and took Aundak's pail and emptied it; then Growing Bird's and Yellow Hair's berries quickly followed and, after these were eaten, he began on the pail of Big Bear! As he was devouring the last of the Strawberries Teen-de-se, the Blue Jay, who had been watching him, screamed out: "The Bear Cub is eating all the Strawberries!" Big Bear jumped up quickly and glared at the culprit, who was coolly licking his paws, taking no thought of the punishment sure to follow. Big Bear was so angry that he seized the Greedy Cub by the scruff of the neck and gave him—oh, SUCH a beating! Of course, he howled DREADFULLY—he ALWAYS did—but he got it just the same! Yellow Hair stopped her ears so she would not hear his cries; but the others said he got only what he deserved.

After the whipping was over Big Bear gave the naughty Cub a final cuff and sent him off home crying and whining. "Ma no help you pick berries any more!" he whimpered—just as if he HAD been helping, instead of undoing all their work! Of course, they had to go and fill the pails all over again, and they were late for supper, besides. But Little Bear did not forget THAT whipping—for a whole week at least! And Blue Jay thought that the Refuge Ground was a pretty good place to live, so he made his home there, and Growing Bird called him Tuk-kooey-way Penashee, "The Policeman Bird," because he watched what every one was doing all the time!

Maybe that is the reason that nearly ALL policemen now wear BLUE clothes—so that they may become as sharp-eyed as Blue Jay, the "Policeman of the Woods."