

**AMONG THE MEADOW
PEOPLE**



HAYING IN THE MEADOW

AMONG THE MEADOW PEOPLE

BY

CLARA DILLINGHAM PIERSON

Illustrated by F. C. Gordon



YESTERDAY'S CLASSICS
CHAPEL HILL, NORTH CAROLINA

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INTRODUCTION

MANY of these stories of field life were written for the little ones of my kindergarten, and they gave so much pleasure, and aroused such a new interest in “the meadow people,” that it has seemed wise to collect and add to the original number and send them out to a larger circle of boys and girls.

All mothers and teachers hear the cry for “just one more,” and find that there are times when the bewitching tales of animals, fairies, and “really truly” children are all exhausted, and tired imagination will not supply another. In selecting the tiny creatures of field and garden for the characters in this book, I have remembered with pleasure the way in which my loyal pupils befriended stray crickets and grasshoppers, their intense appreciation of the new realm of fancy and observation, and the eagerness and attention with which they sought Mother Nature, the most wonderful and tireless of all story-tellers.

CLARA DILLINGHAM PIERSON.

Stanton, Michigan,
April 8th, 1897.



AS the warm August days came, Mr. Yellow Butterfly wriggled and pushed in his snug little green chrysalis and wished he could get out to see the world. He remembered the days when he was a hairy little Caterpillar, crawling slowly over grass and leaves, and he remembered how beautiful the sky and all the flowers were. Then he thought of the new wings which had been growing from his back, and he tried to move them, just to see how it would feel. He had only six legs since his wings grew, and he missed all the sticky feet which he had to give up when he began to change into a Butterfly.

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The more he thought about it the more he squirmed, until suddenly he heard a faint little sound, too faint for larger people to hear, and found a tiny slit in the wall of his chrysalis. It was such a dainty green chrysalis with white wrinkles, that it seemed almost a pity to have it break. Still it had held him for eight days already and that was as long as any of his family ever hung in the chrysalis, so it was quite time for it to be torn open and left empty. Mr. Yellow Butterfly belonged to the second brood that had hatched that year and he wanted to be out while the days were still fine and hot. Now he crawled out of the newly-opened doorway to take his first flight.

Poor Mr. Butterfly! He found his wings so wet and crinkled that they wouldn't work at all, so he had to sit quietly in the sunshine all day drying them. And just as they got big, and smooth, and dry, it grew dark, and Mr. Butterfly had to crawl under a leaf to sleep.

The next morning, bright and early, he flew away to visit the flowers. First, he stopped to see the Daisies by the roadside. They were all dancing in the wind, and their bright faces looked as cheerful as anyone could wish. They were glad to see Mr. Butterfly, and wished him to stay all day with them. He said: "You are very kind, but I really couldn't think of doing it. You must excuse my saying it, but I am surprised to think you will grow here. It is very dusty and dry, and then there is no shade. I am sure I could have chosen a better place."

THE BUTTERFLY THAT WENT CALLING

The Daisies smiled and nodded to each other, saying, "This is the kind of place we were made for, that's all."

Mr. Butterfly shook his head very doubtfully, and then bade them a polite "Good-morning," and flew away to call on the Cardinals.

The Cardinals are a very stately family, as everybody knows. They hold their heads very high, and never make deep bows, even to the wind, but for all that they are a very pleasant family to meet. They gave Mr. Butterfly a dainty lunch of honey, and seemed much pleased when he told them how beautiful the river looked in the sunlight.

"It is a delightful place to grow," said they.

"Ye-es," said Mr. Butterfly, "it is very pretty, still I do not think it can be healthful. I really cannot understand why you flowers choose such strange homes. Now, there are the Daisies, where I just called. They are in a dusty, dry place, where there is no shade at all. I spoke to them about it, and they acted quite uppish."

"But the Daisies always do choose such places," said the Cardinals.

"And your family," said Mr. Butterfly, "have lived so long in wet places that it is a wonder you are alive. Your color is good, but to stand with one's roots in water all the time! It is shocking."

"Cardinals and Butterflies live differently," said the flowers. "Good-morning."

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Mr. Butterfly left the river and flew over to the woods. He was very much out of patience. He was so angry that his feelers quivered, and now you know how angry he must have been. He knew that the Violets were a very agreeable family, who never put on airs, so he went at once to them.

He had barely said "Good-morning" to them when he began to explain what had displeased him.

"To think," he said, "what notions some flowers have! Now you have a pleasant home here in the edge of the woods. I have been telling the Daisies and the Cardinals that they should grow in such a place, but they wouldn't listen to me. The Daisies were quite uppish about it, and the Cardinals were very stiff."

"My dear friend," answered a Violet, "they could never live if they moved up into our neighborhood. Every flower has his own place in this world, and is happiest in that place. Everything has its own place and its own work, and every flower that is wise will stay in the place for which it was intended. You were exceedingly kind to want to help the flowers, but suppose they had been telling you what to do. Suppose the Cardinals had told you that flying around was not good for your health, and that to be truly well you ought to grow planted with your legs in the mud and water."

"Oh!" said Mr. Butterfly, "Oh! I never thought of that. Perhaps Butterflies don't know everything."

THE BUTTERFLY THAT WENT CALLING

“No,” said the Violet, “they don’t know everything, and you haven’t been out of your chrysalis very long. But those who are ready to learn can always find someone to tell them. Won’t you eat some honey?”

And Mr. Butterfly sipped honey and was happy.



THE ROBINS BUILD A NEST

WHEN Mr. and Mrs. Robin built in the spring, they were not quite agreed as to where the nest should be. Mr. Robin was a very decided bird, and had made up his mind that the lowest crotch of a maple tree would be the best place. He even went so far as to take three billfuls of mud there, and stick in two blades of dry grass. Mrs. Robin wanted it on the end of the second rail from the top of the split-rail fence. She said it was high enough from the ground to be safe and dry, and not so high that a little bird falling out of it would hurt himself very much. Then, too, the top rail was broad at the end and would keep the rain off so well.

“And the nest will be just the color of the rails,” said she, “so that even a Red Squirrel could hardly see it.” She disliked Red Squirrels, and she had reason to, for she had been married before, and if it had not been for a Red Squirrel, she might already have had children as large as she was.

“I say that the tree is the place for it,” said Mr. Robin, “and I wear the brightest breast feathers.” He said this because in bird families the one who wears

THE ROBINS BUILD A NEST

the brightest breast feathers thinks he has the right to decide things.

Mrs. Robin was wise enough not to answer back when he spoke in this way. She only shook her feathers, took ten quick running steps, tilted her body forward, looked hard at the ground, and pulled out something for supper. After that she fluttered around the maple tree crotch as though she had never thought of any other place. Mr. Robin wished he had not been quite so decided, or reminded her of his breast feathers. "After all," thought he, "I don't know but the fence-rail would have done." He thought this, but he didn't say it. It is not always easy for a Robin to give up and let one with dull breast feathers know that he thinks himself wrong.

That night they perched in the maple-tree and slept with their heads under their wings. Long before the sun was in sight, when the first beams were just touching the tops of the forest trees, they awakened, bright-eyed and rested, preened their feathers, sang their morning song, "Cheerily, cheerily, cheer-up," and flew off to find food. After breakfast they began to work on the nest. Mrs. Robin stopped often to look and peck at the bark. "It will take a great deal of mud," said she, "to fill in that deep crotch until we reach a place wide enough for the nest."

At another time she said: "My dear, I am afraid that the dry grass you are bringing is too light-colored. It shows very plainly against the maple bark. Can't you find some that is darker?"

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Mr. Robin hunted and hunted, but could find nothing which was darker. As he flew past the fence, he noticed that it was almost the color of the grass in his bill.

After a while, soft gray clouds began to cover the sky. "I wonder," said Mrs. Robin, "if it will rain before we get this done. The mud is soft enough now to work well, and this place is so open that the rain might easily wash away all that we have done."

It did rain, however, and very soon. The great drops came down so hard that one could only think of pebbles falling. Mr. and Mrs. Robin oiled their feathers as quickly as they could, taking the oil from their back pockets and putting it onto their feathers with their bills. This made the finest kind of waterproof and was not at all heavy to wear. When the rain was over they shook themselves and looked at their work.

"I believe," said Mrs. Robin to her husband, "that you are right in saying that we might better give up this place and begin over again somewhere else."

Now Mr. Robin could not remember having said that he thought anything of the sort, and he looked very sharply at his wife, and cocked his black head on one side until all the black and white streaks on his throat showed. She did not seem to know that he was watching her as she hopped around the partly built nest, poking it here and pushing it there, and trying her hardest to make it look right. He thought she would say something, but she didn't. Then he

THE ROBINS BUILD A NEST

knew he must speak first. He flirted his tail and tipped his head and drew some of his brown wing-feathers through his bill. Then he held himself very straight and tall, and said, "Well, if you do agree with me, I think you might much better stop working here and begin in another place."

"It seems almost too bad," said she. "Of course there are other places, but—"

By this time Mr. Robin knew exactly what to do. "Plenty of them," said he. "Now don't fuss any longer with this. That place on the rail fence is an excellent one. I wonder that no other birds have taken it." As he spoke he flew ahead to the very spot which Mrs. Robin had first chosen.

She was a very wise bird, and knew far too much to say, "I told you so." Saying that, you know, always makes things go wrong. She looked at the rail fence, ran along the top of it, toeing in prettily as she ran, looked around in a surprised way, and said. "Oh, *that* place?"

"Yes, Mrs. Robin," said her husband, "*that* place. Do you see anything wrong about it?"

"No-o," she said. "I think I could make it do."

Before long another nest was half built, and Mrs. Robin was working away in the happiest manner possible, stopping every little while to sing her afternoon song: "Do you think what you do? Do you think what you do? Do you thi-ink?"

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Mr. Robin was also at work, and such billfuls of mud, such fine little twigs, and such big wisps of dry grass as went into that home! Once Mr. Robin was gone a long time, and when he came back he had a beautiful piece of white cotton string dangling from his beak. That they put on the outside. "Not that we care to show off," said they, "but somehow that seemed to be the best place to put it."

Mr. Robin was very proud of his nest and of his wife. He never went far away if he could help it. Once she heard him tell Mr. Goldfinch that, "Mrs. Robin was very sweet about building where he chose, and that even after he insisted on changing places from the tree to the fence she was perfectly good-natured."

"Yes," said Mrs. Robin to Mrs. Goldfinch, "I was perfectly good-natured." Then she gave a happy, chirpy little laugh, and Mrs. Goldfinch laughed, too. They were perfectly contented birds, even if they didn't wear the brightest breast feathers or insist on having their own way. And Mrs. Robin had been married before.



THE SELFISH TENT-CATERPILLAR

ONE could hardly call the Tent-Caterpillars meadow people, for they did not often leave their trees to crawl upon the ground. Yet the Apple-Tree Tent-Caterpillars would not allow anybody to call them forest people. "We live on apple and wild cherry trees," they said, "and you will almost always find us in the orchards or on the roadside trees. There are Forest Tent-Caterpillars, but please don't get us mixed with them. We belong to another branch of the family, the Apple-Tree branch."

The Tree Frog said that he remembered perfectly well when the eggs were laid on the wild cherry tree on the edge of the meadow. "It was early last summer," he said, "and the Moth who laid them was a very agreeable reddish-brown person, about as large as a common Yellow Butterfly. I remember that she had two light yellow lines on each forewing. Another Moth came with her, but did not stay. He was smaller than she, and had the same markings. After he had gone, she asked me if we were ever visited by the Yellow-Billed Cuckoos."

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“Why did she ask that?” said the Garter Snake.

“Don’t you know?” exclaimed the Tree Frog. And then he whispered something to the Garter Snake.

The Garter Snake wriggled with surprise and cried, “Really?”

All through the fall and winter the many, many eggs which the reddish-brown Moth had laid were kept snug and warm on the twig where she had put them. They were placed in rows around the twig, and then well covered to hold them together and keep them warm. The winter winds had blown the twig to and fro, the cold rain had frozen over them, the soft snowflakes had drifted down from the clouds and covered them, only to melt and trickle away again in shining drops. One morning the whole wild cherry tree was covered with beautiful long, glistening crystals of hoar-frost; and still the ring of eggs stayed in its place around the twig, and the life in them slept until spring sunbeams should shine down and quicken it.

But when the spring sunbeams did come! Even before the leaf-buds were open, tiny Larvæ, or Caterpillar babies, came crawling from the ring of eggs and began feeding upon the buds. They took very, very small bites, and that looked as though they were polite children. Still, you know, their mouths were so small that they could not take big ones, and it may not have been politeness after all which made them eat daintily.

THE SELFISH TENT-CATERPILLAR

When all the Tent-Caterpillars were hatched, and they had eaten every leaf-bud near the egg-ring, they began to crawl down the tree toward the trunk. Once they stopped by a good-sized crotch in the branches. "Let's build here," said the leader; "this place is all right."

Then some of the Tent-Caterpillars said, "Let's!" and some of them said, "Don't let's!" One young fellow said, "Aw, come on! There's a bigger crotch farther down." Of course he should have said, "I think you will like a larger crotch better," but he was young, and, you know, these Larvae had no father or mother to help them speak in the right way. They were orphans, and it is wonderful how they ever learned to talk at all.

After this, some of the Tent-Caterpillars went on to the larger crotch and some stayed behind. More went than stayed, and when they saw this, those by the smaller crotch gave up and joined their brothers and sisters, as they should have done. It was right to do that which pleased most of them.

It took a great deal of work to make the tent. All helped, spinning hundreds and thousands of white silken threads, laying them side by side, criss-crossing them, fastening the ends to branches and twigs, not forgetting to leave places through which one could crawl in and out. They never worked all day at this, because unless they stopped to eat they would soon have been weak and unable to spin. There were nearly always a few Caterpillars in the tent, but only in the early morning or late afternoon

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or during the night were they all at home. The rest of the time they were scattered around the tree feeding. Of course there were some cold days when they stayed in. When the weather was chilly they moved slowly and cared very little for food.

There was one young Tent-Caterpillar who happened to be the first hatched, and who seemed to think that because he was a minute older than any of the other children he had the right to his own way. Sometimes he got it, because the others didn't want to have any trouble. Sometimes he didn't get it, and then he was very sulky and disagreeable, even refusing to answer when he was spoken to.

One cold day, when all the Caterpillars stayed in the tent, this oldest brother wanted the warmest place, that in the very middle. It should have belonged to the younger brothers and sisters, for they were not so strong, but he pushed and wriggled his hairy black and brown and yellow body into the very place he wanted, and then scolded everybody around because he had to push to get there. It happened as it always does when a Caterpillar begins to say mean things, and he went on until he was saying some which were really untrue. Nobody answered back, so he scolded and fussed and was exceedingly disagreeable.

All day long he thought how wretched he was, and how badly they treated him, and how he guessed they'd be sorry enough if he went away. The next morning he went. As long as the warm sunshine lasted he did very well. When it began to grow cool,

THE SELFISH TENT-CATERPILLAR

his brothers and sisters crawled past him on their way to the tent. "Come on!" they cried. "It's time to go home."

"Uh-uh!" said the eldest brother (and that meant "No"), "I'm not going."

"Why not?" they asked.

"Oh, because," said he.

When the rest were all together in the tent they talked about him. "Do you suppose he's angry?" said one.

"What should he be angry about?" said another.

"I just believe he is," said a third. "Did you notice the way his hairs bristled?"

"Don't you think we ought to go to get him?" asked two or three of the youngest Caterpillars.

"No," said the older ones. "We haven't done anything. Let him get over it."

So the oldest brother, who had thought that every other Caterpillar in the tent would crawl right out and beg and coax him to come back, waited and waited and waited, but nobody came. The tent was there and the door was open. All he had to do was to crawl in and be at home. He waited so long that at last he had to leave the tree and spin his cocoon without ever having gone back to his brothers and sisters in the tent. He spun his cocoon and mixed the silk with a yellowish-white powder, then he lay down in it to sleep twenty-one days and grow his

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wings. The last thought he had before going to sleep was an unhappy and selfish one. Probably he awakened an unhappy and selfish Moth.

His brothers and sisters were sad whenever they thought of him. "But," they said, "what could we do? It wasn't fair for him to have the best of everything, and we never answered when he said mean things. He might have come back at any time and we would have been kind to him."

And they were right. What could they have done? It was very sad, but when a Caterpillar is so selfish and sulky that he cannot live happily with other people, it is much better that he should live quite alone.



IN the lower part of the meadow, where the grass grew tall and tender, there lived a fine and sturdy young Snail; that is to say, a fine-looking Snail. His shell was a beautiful soft gray, and its curves were regular and perfect. His body was soft and moist, and just what a Snail's body should be. Of course, when it came to travelling, he could not go fast, for none of his family are rapid travellers, still, if he had been plucky and patient, he might have seen much of the meadow, and perhaps some of the world outside. His friends and neighbors often told him that he ought to start out on a little journey to see the sights, but he would always answer, "Oh, it is too hard work!"

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There was nobody who liked stories of meadow life better than this same Snail, and he would often stop some friendly Cricket or Snake to ask for the news. After they had told him, they would say, "Why, don't you ever get out to see these things for yourself?" and he would give a little sigh and answer, "It is too far to go."

"But you needn't go the whole distance in one day," his visitor would say, "only a little at a time."

"Yes, and then I would have to keep starting on again every little while," the Snail would reply. "What of that?" said the visitor; "you would have plenty of resting spells, when you could lie in the shade of a tall weed and enjoy yourself."

"Well, what is the use?" the Snail would say. "I can't enjoy resting if I know I've got to go to work again," and he would sigh once more.

So there he lived, eating and sleeping, and wishing he could see the world, and meet the people in the upper part of the meadow, but just so lazy that he wouldn't start out to find them.

He never thought that the Butterflies and Beetles might not like it to have him keep calling them to him and making them tell him the news. Oh, no indeed! If he wanted them to do anything for him, he asked them quickly enough, and they, being happy, good-natured people, would always do as he asked them to.

There came a day, though, when he asked too much. The Grasshoppers had been telling him about

THE LAZY SNAIL

some very delicious new plants that grew a little distance away, and the Snail wanted some very badly. "Can't you bring me some?" he said. "There are so many of you, and you have such good, strong legs. I should think you might each bring me a small piece in your mouths, and then I should have a fine dinner of it."

The Grasshoppers didn't say anything then, but when they were so far away that he could not hear them, they said to each other, "If the Snail wants the food so much, he might better go for it. We have other things to do," and they hopped off on their own business.

The Snail sat there, and wondered and wondered that they did not come. He kept thinking how he would like some of the new food for dinner, but there it ended. He didn't want it enough to get it for himself.

The Grasshoppers told all their friends about the Snail's request, and everybody thought, "Such a lazy, good-for-nothing fellow deserves to be left quite alone." So it happened that for a very long time nobody went near the Snail.

The weather grew hotter and hotter. The clouds, which blew across the sky, kept their rain until they were well past the meadow, and so it happened that the river grew shallower and shallower, and the sunshine dried the tiny pools and rivulets which kept the lower meadow damp. The grass began to turn brown and dry, and, all in all, it was trying weather for Snails.

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One day, a Butterfly called some of her friends together, and told them that she had seen the Snail lying in his old place, looking thin and hungry. "The grass is all dried around him," she said; "I believe he is starving, and too lazy to go nearer the river, where there is still good food for him."

They all talked it over together, and some of them said it was of no use to help a Snail who was too lazy to do anything for himself. Others said, "Well, he is too weak to help himself now, at all events, and we might help him this once." And that is exactly what they did. The Butterflies and the Mosquitoes flew ahead to find the best place to put the Snail, and all the Grasshoppers, and Beetles, and other strong crawling creatures took turns in rolling the Snail down toward the river.

They left him where the green things were fresh and tender, and he grew strong and plump once more. It is even said that he was not so lazy afterward, but one cannot tell whether to believe it or not, for everybody knows that when people let themselves grow up lazy, as he did, it is almost impossible for them to get over it when they want to. One thing is sure: the meadow people who helped him were happier and better for doing a kind thing, no matter what became of the Snail.



IN one of the Ant-hills in the highest part of the meadow, were a lot of young Ants talking together. "I," said one, "am going to be a soldier, and drive away anybody who comes to make us trouble. I try biting hard things every day to make my jaws strong, so that I can guard the home better."

"I," said another and smaller Ant, "want to be a worker. I want to help build and repair the home. I want to get the food for the family, and feed the Ant babies, and clean them off when they crawl out of their old coats. If I can do those things well, I shall be the happiest, busiest Ant in the meadow."

"We don't want to live that kind of life," said a couple of larger Ants with wings. "We don't mean to stay around the Ant-hill all the time and work. We want to use our wings, and then you may be very sure that you won't see us around home any more."

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The little worker spoke up: "Home is a pleasant place. You may be very glad to come back to it some day." But the Ants with the wings turned their backs and wouldn't listen to another word.

A few days after this there were exciting times in the Ant-hill. All the winged Ants said "Good-bye" to the soldiers and workers, and flew off through the air, flew so far that the little ones at home could no longer see them. All day long they were gone, but the next morning when the little worker (whom we heard talking) went out to get breakfast, she found the poor winged Ants lying on the ground near their home. Some of them were dead, and the rest were looking for food.

The worker Ant ran up to the one who had said she didn't want to stay around home, and asked her to come back to the Ant-hill. "No, I thank you," she answered. "I have had my breakfast now, and am going to fly off again." She raised her wings to go, but after she had given one flutter, they dropped off, and she could never fly again.

The worker hurried back to the Ant-hill to call some of her sister workers, and some of the soldiers, and they took the Ant who had lost her wings and carried her to another part of the meadow. There they went to work to build a new home and make her their queen.

First, they looked for a good, sandy place, on which the sun would shine all day. Then the worker Ants began to dig in the ground and bring out tiny round pieces of earth in their mouths. The soldiers

THE ANT THAT WORE WINGS

helped them, and before night they had a cosy little home in the earth, with several rooms, and some food already stored. They took their queen in, and brought her food to eat, and waited on her, and she was happy and contented.

By and by the Ant eggs began to hatch, and the workers had all they could do to take care of their queen and her little Ant babies, and the soldier Ants had to help. The Ant babies were little worms or grubs when they first came out of the eggs; after a while they curled up in tiny, tiny cases, called pupa-cases, and after another while they came out of these, and then they looked like the older Ants, with their six legs, and their slender little waists. But whatever they were, whether eggs, or grubs, or curled up in the pupa-cases, or lively little Ants, the workers fed and took care of them, and the soldiers fought for them, and the queen-mother loved them, and they all lived happily together until the young Ants were ready to go out into the great world and learn the lessons of life for themselves.



THE CHEERFUL HARVESTMEN

SOME of the meadow people are gay and careless, and some are always worrying. Some work hard every day, and some are exceedingly lazy. There, as everywhere else, each has his own way of thinking about things. It is too bad that they cannot all learn to think brave and cheerful thoughts, for these make life happy. One may have a comfortable home, kind neighbors, and plenty to eat, yet if he is in the habit of thinking disagreeable thoughts, not even all these good things can make him happy. Now there was the young Frog who thought herself sick—but that is another story.

Perhaps the Harvestmen were the most cheerful of all the meadow people. The old Tree Frog used to say that it made him feel better just to see their knees coming toward him. Of course, when he saw their knees, he knew that the whole insect was also coming. He spoke in that way because the Harvestmen always walked or ran with their knees so much above the rest of their bodies that one could see those first.

The Harvestmen were not particularly fine-looking, not nearly so handsome as some of their

THE CHEERFUL HARVESTMEN

Spider cousins. One never thought of that, however. They had such an easy way of moving around on their eight legs, each of which had a great many joints. It is the joints, or bending-places, you know, which make legs useful. Besides being graceful, they had very pleasant manners. When a Harvestman said "Good-morning" to you on a rainy day, you always had a feeling that the sun was shining. It might be that the drops were even then falling into your face, but for a moment you were sure to feel that everything was bright and warm and comfortable.

Sometimes the careless young Grasshoppers and Crickets called the Harvestmen by their nicknames, "Daddy Long-Legs" or "Grandfather Graybeard." Even then the Harvestmen were good-natured, and only said with a smile that the young people had not yet learned the names of their neighbors. The Grasshoppers never seemed to think how queer it was to call a young Harvestman daughter "Grandfather Graybeard." When they saw how good-natured they were, the Grasshoppers soon stopped trying to tease the Harvestmen. People who are really good-natured are never teased very long, you know.

The Walking-Sticks were exceedingly polite to the Harvestmen. They thought them very slender and genteel-looking. Once the Five-Legged Walking-Stick said to the largest Harvestmen, "Why do you talk so much with the common people in the meadow?"

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The Harvestman knew exactly what the Walking-Stick meant, but he was not going to let anybody make fun of his kind and friendly neighbors, so he said: "I think we Harvestmen are rather common ourselves. There are a great, great many of us here. It must be very lonely to be uncommon."

After that the Walking-Stick had nothing more to say. He never felt quite sure whether the Harvestman was too stupid to understand or too wise to gossip. Once he thought he saw the Harvestman's eyes twinkle. The Harvestman didn't care if people thought him stupid. He knew that he was not stupid, and he would rather seem dull than to listen while unkind things were said about his neighbors.

Some people would have thought it very hard luck to be Harvestmen. The Garter Snake said that if he were one, he should be worried all the time about his legs. "I'm thankful I haven't any," he said, "for if I had I should be forever thinking I should lose some of them. A Harvestman without legs would be badly off. He could never in the world crawl around on his belly as I do."

How the Harvestmen did laugh when they heard this! The biggest one said, "Well, if that isn't just like some people! Never want to have anything for fear they'll lose it. I wonder if he worries about his head? He might lose that, you know, and then what would he do?"

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It was only the next day that the largest Harvestman came home on seven legs. His friends all cried out, "Oh, how did it ever happen?"

"Cows," said he.

"Did they step on you?" asked the Five-Legged Walking-Stick. He had not lived long enough in the meadow to understand all that the Harvestman meant. He was sorry for him, though, for he knew what it was to lose a leg.

"Huh!" said a Grasshopper, interrupting in a very rude way, "aren't any Cows in this meadow now!"

Then the other Harvestmen told the Walking-Stick all about it, how sometimes a boy would come to the meadow, catch a Harvestman, hold him up by one leg, and say to him, "Grandfather Graybeard, tell me where the Cows are, or I'll kill you." Then the only thing a Harvestman could do was to struggle and wriggle himself free, and he often broke off a leg in doing so.

"How terrible!" said the three Walking-Sticks all together. "But why don't you tell them?"

"We do," answered the Harvestmen. "We point with our seven other legs, and we point every way there is. Sometimes we don't know where they are, so we point everywhere, to be sure. But it doesn't make any difference. Our legs drop off just the same."

"Isn't a boy clever enough to find Cows alone?" asked the Walking-Sticks.

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“Oh, it isn’t that,” cried all the meadow people together. “Even after you tell, and sometimes when the Cows are right there, they walk off home without them.”

“I’d sting them,” said a Wasp, waving his feelers fiercely and raising and lowering his wings. “I’d sting them as hard as I could.”

“You wouldn’t if you had no sting,” said the Tree Frog.

“N-no,” stammered the Wasp, “I suppose I wouldn’t.”

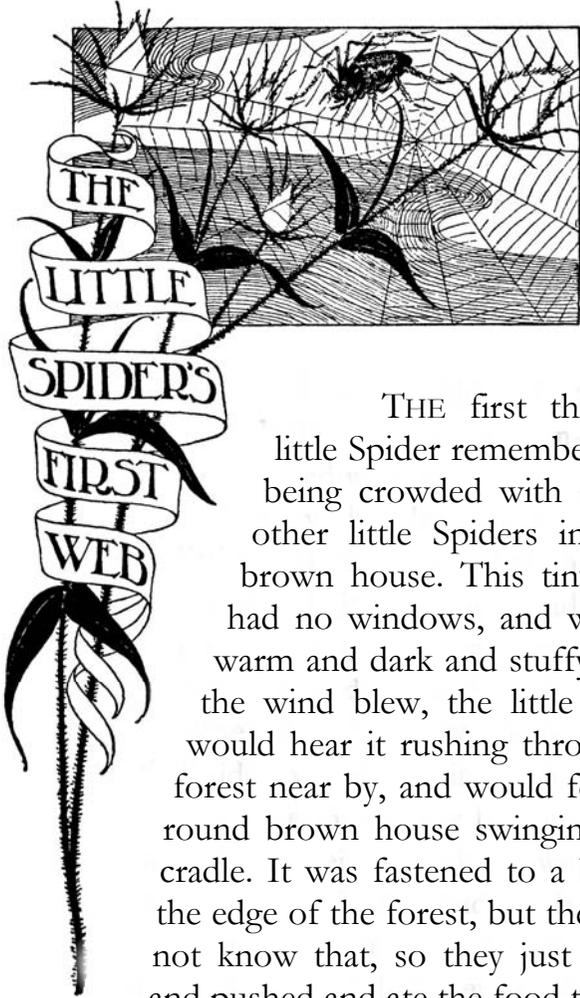
“You poor creature!” said the biggest Katydid to the biggest Harvestman. “What will you do? Only seven legs!”

“Do?” answered the biggest Harvestman, and it was then one could see how truly brave and cheerful he was. “Do? I’ll walk on those seven. If I lose one of them I’ll walk on six, and if I lose one of them I’ll walk on five. Haven’t I my mouth and my stomach and my eyes and my two feelers, and my two food-pincers? I may not be so good-looking, but I am a Harvestman, and I shall enjoy the grass and the sunshine and my kind neighbors as long as I live. I must leave you now. Good-day.”

He walked off rather awkwardly, for he had not yet learned to manage himself since his accident. The meadow people looked after him very thoughtfully. They were not noticing his awkwardness, or thinking of his high knees or of his

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little low body. Perhaps they thought what the Cicada said, “Ah, that is the way to live!”



THE first thing our little Spider remembered was being crowded with a lot of other little Spiders in a tiny brown house. This tiny house had no windows, and was very warm and dark and stuffy. When the wind blew, the little Spiders would hear it rushing through the forest near by, and would feel their round brown house swinging like a cradle. It was fastened to a bush by the edge of the forest, but they could not know that, so they just wiggled and pushed and ate the food that they found in the house, and wondered what it all meant. They didn't even guess that a mother Spider had made the brown house and put the food in it for her Spider babies to eat when they came out of their eggs. She had put the eggs in, too, but the little Spiders didn't remember the time when they lay curled up in the eggs. They didn't know what had been nor what was to be—they thought that to eat

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and wiggle and sleep was all of life. You see they had much to learn.

One morning the little Spiders found that the food was all gone, and they pushed and scrambled harder than ever, because they were hungry and wanted more. Exactly what happened nobody knew, but suddenly it grew light, and some of them fell out of the house. All the rest scrambled after, and there they stood, winking and blinking in the bright sunshine, and feeling a little bit dizzy, because they were on a shaky web made of silvery ropes.

Just then the web began to shake even more, and a beautiful great mother Spider ran out on it. She was dressed in black and yellow velvet, and her eight eyes glistened and gleamed in the sunlight. They had never dreamed of such a wonderful creature.

“Well, my children,” she exclaimed, “I know you must be hungry, and I have breakfast all ready for you.” So they began eating at once, and the mother Spider told them many things about the meadow and the forest, and said they must amuse themselves while she worked to get food for them. There was no father Spider to help her, and, as she said, “Growing children must have plenty of good plain food.”

You can just fancy what a good time the baby Spiders had. There were a hundred and seventy of them, so they had no chance to grow lonely, even when their mother was away. They lived in this way for quite a while, and grew bigger and stronger every

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day. One morning the mother Spider said to her biggest daughter, "You are quite old enough to work now, and I will teach you to spin your web."

The little Spider soon learned to draw out the silvery ropes from the pocket in her body where they were made and kept, and very soon she had one fastened at both ends to branches of the bush. Then her mother made her walk out to the middle of her rope bridge, and spin and fasten two more, so that it looked like a shining cross. After that was done, the mother showed her something like a comb, which is part of a Spider's foot, and taught her how to measure, and put more ropes out from the middle of the cross, until it looked like the spokes of a wheel.

The little Spider got much discouraged, and said, "Let me finish it some other time; I am tired of working now."

The mother Spider answered, "No, I cannot have a lazy child."

The little one said, "I can't ever do it, I know I can't."

"Now," said the mother, "I shall have to give you a Spider scolding. You have acted as lazy as the Tree Frog says boys and girls sometimes do. He has been up near the farm-house, and says that he has seen there children who do not like to work. The meadow people could hardly believe such a thing at first. He says they were cross and unhappy children, and no wonder! Lazy people are never happy. You try to finish the web, and see if I am not right. You

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are not a baby now, and you must work and get your own food.”

So the little Spider spun the circles of rope in the web, and made these ropes sticky, as all careful spiders do. She ate the loose ends and pieces that were left over, to save them for another time, and when it was done, it was so fine and perfect that her brothers and sisters crowded around, saying, “Oh! oh! oh! how beautiful!” and asked the mother to teach them. The little web-spinner was happier than she had ever been before, and the mother began to teach her other children. But it takes a long time to teach a hundred and seventy children.