

### Natural History for Little Folks.

#### Our Daily Bread.

The bread and cake you eat at tea are made of flour by the baker, and the miller grinds this flour from the wheat which he buys from the farmer.

The farmer ploughs the field and sows little seeds of corn. A wheat seed is a tiny thing, smaller than the nail of your little finger, with a thin, hard husk, and white flour inside. In the midst of the flour there lies a very thin germ, not so big as a pin's head.

This germ sleeps in the seed like a baby sleeps in the cradle, but out of the tiny germ grows a blade as tall as a tall child, with roots and leaves below and an ear of wheat at the top. In the ear there are again many new seeds, more than the fingers on your hands, which have all sprung from the one seed which the farmer laid in the earth. The farmer sowed one sackful in the spring, but he brought home many full sacks in the autumn.

One seed is eaten by a beetle, another is carried by the field-mouse to her little ones in the mouse-hole, a third the lark eats for his breakfast, after which he sings a glorious song of thanks, and a fourth the sparrow swallows for his lunch, while the hen takes a few for her supper that she may lay another egg to-morrow. The doves and the geese have their share thrown to them, and the cow and the horse enjoy their feed of corn in their stalls, but there will still be many, many grains left, and of these are made corn-flour and vermicelli, besides coarse and fine flour for people all over the world.

#### A Young Monkey

This little monkey was born in the crown of the highest palm tree where he was the only child of his devoted mother. Round about him swayed the delicate fans of the tree, bright clusters of blossoms and branches of fruit hung round his cradle, and the wind rocked it gently. The air was sultry, and the vast forest lay dark and quiet deep down below, with a tangle of plants covering the swampy ground. Pine apples, figs, and cocoanut palms grew there by the side of tall sugar canes. For a long time the young monkey clung to his mother's neck, till he had learned to climb alone along the swaying creepers that were slung from one tree to another, while exquisite butterflies fluttered round him and parrots greeted him with loud shrieks.

The old monkeys, his parents, took the greatest care of him, and his mother carried him down to the spring to wash his little face, which she did in

spite of his screams and struggles. Sometimes, when the monkey family was resting in the heat of the day, a glistening, poisonous snake would slide noiselessly up with murder in her heart, but father monkey, always on the alert, would spy it instantly, and give the signal for flight.

The little one was well taken care of, but, on the other hand, he had to learn the strictest obedience. When a lot of old monkeys were gathered together, discussing—who knows what?—and the little one popped his inquisitive head among the bearded elders, a tremendous box on the ear was his reward, that sent him, a howling, but wiser little monkey, back to his fond mother's arms. She taught him to climb up and down the strings of twining plants, and, swinging by his tail, to seize the distant branch of a tree, and to hide behind the dark foliage. If a shadow stole over the leaves she disappeared with him, quick as lightning, into the thickest mass of creepers and showed him overhead the much feared eagle, who was ready to dive through the crowns of the trees to seize the unobservant with his deadly sharp claws.

Sometimes at night, in the forest tangle, something stirred, and two gleaming eyes glowed through the darkness. A jaguar was about to fall upon the sleeping monkeys on the tree, when they fled in terrified haste to the uttermost ends of the branches. There they hung by their tails and swung in mid-air where the robber could no longer seize them.

Another time, the mother showed her young one where the sweetest fruit and berries of the forest were to be found, and taught him how to open the nuts and how to sort the kernel from the shell. At night they listened to the wonderful concert which the other monkeys were giving in the wide crests of a giant tree, twenty at a time sitting round about in the branches with the moon for their lamp and the sparkling fire-flies and glow-worms for candles. One bearded monkey would begin with an ear-splitting howl, and sing uniformly and drearily alone for a time, till suddenly the whole chorus joined in with full strength, so that the uproar could be heard a mile off through the halls of the forest, and the sleepers about were aroused. Then the young monkey joined with the others in the song, and his mother was proud of her well-brought-up little son.

#### The Spider.

Once upon a time there was a little spider, who came from out of the garden into a room, and hid