

LITTLE FOLKS

What The Old Tree Learned

(Arthur W. Upson, in 'Sunday-School Times'.)

One October day, many, many years ago, a big fat acorn was being carried by a blue-jay over a large, open pasture, in a New England town. Just at that moment a hunter in an adjoining field shot off his gun, and Blue-Jay was so scared that he dropped the acorn and flew away, and forgot to come back for it.

Now the acorn bounded just under the edge of a little hummock, and soon, one day, there was a hard thunder-shower; the rain pelted down on the hummock and loosened a piece of earth from its edge, and it fell right on the acorn and buried it.

Quite content to stay where it was, it yet wanted to look through its covering, so straightway it went at work to bring it about, and before many days, in some mysterious way, it had sent a little shoot up through the particles of earth. Urged and helped by something below, this shoot kept pushing up higher and higher and higher, till, at the approach of winter, several times invisible hands took it in their grip and squeezed harder and harder, until it seemed to the tender little spire as if it must perish. But a kind wind elf came one day and wrapped round it several leaves from the parent tree, and these all stayed during the winter and helped it to endure more of the same kind of suffering.

One spring day another elf came and took the leaves away, and then the little tree, for such it had become, was very happy, and all summer it drank in the rain-water, it basked in the sun, and gleefully took many a shower-bath. Then one night its experiences of a year ago were repeated. It shivered, its sap-blood ran cold, and its leaves turned red and brown. Instead of a wind elf came a wind fury and whipped it back and forth, until it seemed as if it must lose branches as well as leaves. But it clung desperately to both, although its sap-blood fled to its roots and left the branches stiff and shrivelled. But the recollections of summer stayed with it and lent it strength and again in the spring it took a



A Clever Spider.

He finished the pictures, and then he began

To read, and to read, and to read.

'Ho! ho!' said the Spider, 'tis this little man

That I need, that I need, that I need!

He kept very still, for of course he was deep

In his book, in his book, in his book;

And what happened you'll see with just one tiny peep,

If you'll look, if you'll look, if you'll look!

new hold on life and put forth new leaves and grew taller, broader and stronger.

Many summers and winters passed. Each summer there was development, and each winter there was hardship. In spite of all, there finally stood, a conspicuous landmark in the middle of this great pasture, with no other trees near, a large, handsome oak. The birds visited, prinked, wooed, nested and rested in its branches; the wind elves all played tag among its leaves, and the cows chewed their cud while lying in the luxury of its shade.

But for a long time there had been something wrong with the tree. In the midst of summer it continually thought of winter. And every perfect day, it said, was a forerunner of a hail storm. The rain fell too fast, or the sun shone too hot. To the birds it said, 'If I could fly like you, and choose my home and resting-place, and flee to the sunny clime when winter was near, how happy I would be.' To the wind elves it said, 'And you

may go where you will; visit one day the sea, and the next the mountain, or rest on the plain, while I, and misery it is, stay here year in and year out, with no companion for fellowship to admire me or condole with me.' And to the cows it said, 'My lot is harder even than yours, for you have this whole great pasture to roam over by night, the shade of my leaves by day, and the warm stables for winter.' The birds, wind elves, and cows agreed that this was a strange way for a tree to talk, but they made no reply, only kept on visiting it.

But one day it had a revelation. It came in this way. On a fine August afternoon there appeared a company of jolly boys and girls, carrying blankets, baskets, and boxes, and headed straight for the old tree. When they reached it they spread their blankets in its shade, opened their baskets and boxes, and spent a gay hour. Then quiet began to steal over them, as they noticed that twilight was coming, and one boy, a little more