

# LITTLE FOLKS

## Listeners Never Hear Any Good of Themselves.

(By Carolyn Wells, in 'St. Nicholas.')

Three little crickets, sleek and black,  
Whose eyes with mischief glistened,  
Climbed up on one another's back  
And at a keyhole listened.

The topmost one cried out, 'Oho!  
I hear two people speaking!  
I can't quite see them yet, and so—  
I'll just continue peeking.'

Soon Dot and Grandma he could see—

Tea-party they were playing;  
And as he listened closely, he  
Distinctly heard Dot saying:

'This pretty little table here  
Will do to spread the treat on  
And I will get a cricket, dear,  
For you to put your feet on.

The cricket tumbled down with fright;

'Run for your life, my brothers!  
Fly, fly!' He scudded out of sight;  
And so did both the others.

## An Indian Legend of the Will-o'-the-Wisp.

(Hope Darling in the 'Michigan Christian Advocate.')

Long, long years ago, when the summer evenings came, and the Indian children gathered in front of the wigwam, this is one of the stories their mothers used to tell them. Doubtless as she talked, they could look down from the summit of a wooded hill upon a stretch of low, wet land. There they could see that gleaming phosphorescent light that so strangely comes and goes, and which we call the will-o'-the-wisp.

At one time there was a strange commotion among the stars. Clouds and storms had served to drive them from their customary way, and they wandered to and fro in the mist. At last one fell from the sky.

The poor star did not descend to the earth. Instead he wandered about, sometimes far above the treetops, again coming very near the ground.

He approached the homes of the Indians, hoping for a friendly greeting, for he was lonely and sad. To his surprise they were frightened.

'See! see!' they cried. 'It is an evil spirit, a manito that will bring us evil,' and they ran away.

'Nay, nay, I am but a poor lost star, seeking friends,' he called after them, but they could not understand his words.

Again and again he tried to make



HIS FIRST SKATES.

—The 'Youth's Companion.'

friends. It was in vain; every tribe that he visited feared the wandering star.

He grew, first sad, then despondent, and at last angry. If the Indians would have none of his friendship, he would watch them, and there might come a time when he would bring to them the evil which they looked for from him.

Then one evening he saw something new in the Indian village. It was a beautiful little girl, with a face like the morning light and eyes that shone as brightly as did his brothers and sisters up in the sky.

When the little girl saw the light that was so near her, she reached up her hands and cried:

'O, the beautiful star! See! It comes so near. It is my star, my own.'

The lost star and the little Indian maiden came to be fast friends. Every night he hovered above her. The last thing before she fell asleep the little girl looked out from the wigwam and murmured:

'Good-night, my star.'

Gradually the star's resentment towards the Indians passed. He saw that the child loved them all, and he could hate nothing that she loved.

One night, when the star approached the village, all was commotion. He heard the cry of wailing and lamentation. High above the voices of the other women sounded that of the mother of his beloved.

The little girl was lost. She had

wandered into the forest and had not returned.

A party started out to hunt for her. Far ahead of them went the star, seeking for the lost child.

It was hours before he found her. She had wandered into the treacherous swamp, and, stumbling into a pool of water, was held fast in the slime and mud.

'O my star, my own!' she sobbed. 'I knew that you would come. Lead my people here, that they may take me home.'

Very low over her hovered the light. Tenderly, caressingly he whispered:

'Weep not, beloved. I go, but I will come again, bringing you help.'

It was hard to leave her in the darkness, but there was no other way. He hastened back to those who were searching for the child, hovering over them and trying to attract their attention. Unto them he could not speak, for they must trust him, to hear his voice.

'See!' cried a warrior. 'It is the wandering star which the child loved. Let us follow it, and we may find her.'

Soon they reached the little girl. Tenderly they lifted her from the mud and slime and bore her home.

The star mused long over this incident. At last he resolved to go to the swamp and make it his home. It was a dangerous place, and as all but one feared and shunned him, his presence would serve to drive travellers away from what might be their death.