



WATER SPIDERS.

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These are very remarkable creatures. They possess the faculty of making a little balloon, as it were, in the water, and filling it with air, so that they can live quite comfortably beneath the surface of a pond. This little air chamber is attached by numerous threads to various water plants. The spider makes frequent visits to the surface, as shown in the picture. The amount of mechanical and almost scientific skill that these creatures possess is marvellous. They may be said to have invented both diving-bell and suspension bridge long before man had ever thought of either. Small wonder that the Psalmist, considering the wonders of nature, devoutly exclaimed, "O Lord! how marvellous are thy works! in wisdom hast thou made them all!"

A BIRD THAT GOES A-FISHING.

BY EVALENA L. FRYER.

The kingfisher is a fisherman by nature. He likes to stay about quiet streams and out-of-the-way ponds, for here he can fish and pass his time in comfort and ease. The food of this singular bird consists for the most part of small fish; so he needs to be quick of sight, as well as of motion. He likes best clear and smooth water and a bright, sunny day. In dull weather Mr. Kingfisher is very apt to stay at home. And where is that? In among the branches of the trees.

Because of this habit of culy coming out on fine days, people who were not

Christians used to believe the kingfishers had some strange power over the weather, and so were able to cause it to be fine when they took a notion to go a-fishing. They had not been taught to think of birds as we have.

The kingfisher usually sits on a branch overhanging a stream, where he can watch all that goes on in the water below. By and by a little minnow will appear, and quick as a flash this fisherman bird darts down into the water, returning in a moment to his perch with the struggling fish in his bill. He beats his prey upon the branch until it is quite dead, and then swallows it whole. So strong is this instinct, that when shut up in a cage and fed on raw meat, the kingfisher will beat his food before eating it.

Now and then a sad accident befalls this greedy little fisherman. He will catch a fish too large for him to swallow, and when trying to do so it will stick in his throat, and he will choke to death.

Once a kingfisher was trying to swallow a fish that was too large for him, choked, and while he was floating down the stream flapping his wings and trying to swallow the fish, a large pike stuck his head out of the water and seized the bird and the fish, and carried them both off together.

The queerest thing about this queer bird is its nest, which is built of fish-bones. Not a very comfortable bed, you would think, for the baby kingfishers? As the bird swallows its food whole, of course the bones are all in. So after the food is digested the bones and scales remain in the stomach; but this bird is so constituted

that it can eject these bones from its stomach. After doing so the kingfisher uses them to make a bed for the eggs.

THE DAY WHIMPY CRIED.

BY MARY MAPES DODGE.

Whimpy, little Whimpy,
Cried so much one day,
His grandma couldn't stand it,
And his mother ran away;
His sister climbed the haymow,
His father went to town,
The cook flew to the neighbour's
In her shabby kitchen gown.

Whimpy, little Whimpy,
Stood out in the sun,
And cried until the chickens
And the ducks began to run;
Old Towser in his kennel
Growled in an angry tone,
Then burst his chain, and Whimpy
Was left there all alone.

Whimpy, little Whimpy,
Cried and cried and cried.
Soon the sunlight vanished,
Flowers began to hide;
Birdies stopped their singing,
Frogs began to croak,
Darkness came, and Whimpy
Found crying was no joke.

Whimpy, little Whimpy,
Never'll forget the day
When grandma couldn't stand it
And his mother ran away.
He was waiting by the window,
When they all came home to tea,
And a gladder boy than Whimpy
You need never hope to see.

A WILL AND A WAY.

Several years ago an effort was made to collect all the chimney-sweeps in the city of Dublin for the purpose of education. Among others came a little fellow who was asked if he knew his letters.

"O, yes, sir!" was the reply.

"Do you spell?"

"O, yes, sir!" was again the answer.

"Do you read?"

"O, yes, sir!"

"What book did you learn from?"

"O, I never had a book in my life, sir!"

"And who was your schoolmaster?"

"O, I never was at school!"

Here was a singular case: a boy could read or spell without a book or master. But what was the fact? Why, another little sweep had taught him to read by showing him the letters over the shop doors which they passed as they went through the city. His teacher, then, was another little sweep like himself; his book the signboards on the houses. What may not be done by trying! "Where there is a will there is a way."—*Christian Observer*.