

“Peter Gets a Lame Neck”
by Thornton Burgess

For several days it seemed to Peter Rabbit that everywhere he went he found members of the Warbler family. Being anxious to know all of them, he did his best to remember how each one looked. There were so many and some of them were dressed so nearly alike that, after awhile, Peter became so mixed that he gave it up as a bad job. Then, as suddenly as they had appeared, the Warblers disappeared. That is to say, most of them disappeared. You see they had only stopped for a visit, being on their way farther north.

In his interest in the affairs of others of his feathered friends, Peter had quite forgotten the Warblers. Then one day, when he was in the Green Forest where the spruce-trees grow, he stopped to rest. This particular part of the Green Forest was low and damp. On many of the trees gray moss grew, hanging down from the branches and making the trees look much older than they really were. Peter was staring at a hanging branch of this moss without thinking anything about it when suddenly a little bird alighted on it and disappeared in it. At least, that is what Peter thought. But it was all so unexpected that he couldn't be sure his eyes hadn't fooled him.

Of course, right away he became very much interested in that bunch of moss. He stared at it very hard. At first it looked no different from a dozen other bunches of moss, but presently he noticed that it was a little thicker than other bunches, as if somehow it had been woven together. He hopped off to one side so he could see better. It looked as if in one side of that bunch of moss was a little round hole. Peter blinked and looked very hard indeed to make sure. A minute later there was no doubt at all, for a little feathered head was poked out and a second later a dainty mite of a bird flew out and alighted very close to Peter. It was one of the smaller members of the Warbler family.