

“Peter Gets a Lame Neck”  
by Thornton Burgess

“Sprite!” cried Peter joyously. “I missed you when your cousins passed through here. I thought you had gone to the Far North with them.”

“Well, I haven’t, and what’s more I’m not going to go on to the Far North. I’m going to stay right here,” declared Sprite the Parula Warbler, for that is who it was.

As Peter looked at Sprite he couldn’t help thinking that there wasn’t a daintier member in the whole Warbler family. His coat was of a soft bluish color with a yellowish patch in

the very center of his back. Across each wing were two bars of white. His throat was yellow. Just beneath it was a little band of bluish-black. His breast was yellow and his sides were grayish and brownish-chestnut.

“Sprite, you’re just beautiful,” declared Peter in frank admiration. “Why didn’t I see you up in the Old Orchard with your cousins?”

“Because I wasn’t there,” was Sprite’s prompt as he flitted about, quite unable to sit still a minute. “I wasn’t there because I like the Green Forest better, so I came straight here.”

“What were you doing just now in that bunch of moss?” demanded Peter, a sudden suspicion of the truth hopping into his head.

“Just looking it over,” replied Sprite, trying to look innocent.

At that instant Peter looked up just in time to see a tail disappearing in the little round hole in the side of a bunch of moss. He knew that tail belonged to Mrs. Sprite, and just that glimpse told him all he wanted to know.

“You’ve got a nest in there!” Peter exclaimed. “There’s no use denying it, Sprite; you’ve got a nest in there! What a perfectly lovely place for a nest.”

Sprite saw at once that it would be quite useless to try to deceive Peter. “Yes,” said he, “Mrs. Sprite and I have a nest in there. We’ve just finished it. I think myself it is rather nice. We always build in moss like this. All we have to do is to find a nice thick bunch and then weave it together at the bottom and line the inside with fine grasses. It looks so much like all the rest of the bunches of moss that it is seldom any one finds it. I wouldn’t trade nests with anybody I know.”