

“Some Feathered Diggers”

by Thornton Burgess

Peter Rabbit scampered along down one bank of the Laughing Brook, watching for a high, gravelly bank such as Grandfather Frog had said that Rattles the Kingfisher likes to make his home in. If Peter had stopped to think a little, he would have known that he was simply wasting time. You see, the Laughing Brook was flowing through the Green Meadows, so of course there would be no high, gravelly bank, because the Green Meadows are low. Peter Rabbit, in his usual heedless way, did no thinking. He had seen Rattles fly down the Laughing Brook, so he had just taken

it for granted that the home of Rattles must be somewhere down there.

At last Peter reached the place where the Laughing Brook entered the Big River. Of course he hadn't found the home of Rattles. But now he did find something that for the time being made him quite forget Rattles and his home. Just before it reached the Big River the Laughing Brook wound through a swamp in which were many tall trees and a great number of young trees. A great many big ferns grew there and were splendid to hide under. Peter always did like that swamp.

He had stopped to rest in a clump of ferns when he was startled by seeing a great bird alight in a tree just

a little way from him. His first thought was that it was a Hawk, so you can imagine how surprised and pleased he was to discover that it was Mrs. Longlegs. Somehow Peter had always thought of Longlegs the Blue Heron as never alighting anywhere except on the ground. But here was Mrs. Longlegs in a tree. Having nothing to fear, Peter crept out from his hiding place that he might see better.

In the tree in which Mrs. Longlegs was perched and just below her was a little platform of sticks. He didn't suspect it was a nest because it looked too rough and loosely put together to be a nest. He wouldn't have thought about it had not Mrs. Longlegs settled

herself on it right while Peter was watching. It didn't seem big enough or strong enough to hold her, but it did.

“As I live,” thought Peter, “I’ve found the Longlegs’ nest! He and Mrs. Longlegs may be good fishermen but they certainly are mighty poor nest-builders. I don’t see how under the sun Mrs. Longlegs ever gets on and off that nest without kicking the eggs out.”

Peter sat for a bit, but as he didn’t care to make his presence known, and as there was no one to talk to, he made up his mind that being so near the Big River he would go over there to see if Plunger the Osprey was fishing again on this day. When he reached the Big River, Plunger was not in sight.