

“Some Feathered Diggers”
by Thornton Burgess

“Do—do—do you mean you live in a hole in the ground?” cried Peter.

“Why not?” twittered Banker as he snapped up a fly just over Peter’s head.

“I don’t know any reason why you shouldn’t,” confessed Peter. “Somehow it is hard for me to think of birds as living in holes in the ground. I’ve only just found out that Rattles does. I didn’t suppose there were any others. Did you make that hole, Banker?”

“Of course,” replied Banker. “That is, I helped make it. Mrs. Banker did her share. Away in at the end of it we’ve got the nicest little nest of straw

and feathers. What is more, we've got four white eggs in there, and Mrs. Banker is sitting on them now."

By this time the air seemed full of Banker's friends, skimming and circling this way and that, going in and out of the little holes in the bank.

"I am like my big cousin, Twitter the Purple Martin, fond of society," explained Banker. "We Bank Swallows like our homes close together. You said that you had just learned that Rattles the Kingfisher has his home in a bank. Do you know where it is?"

"No," replied Peter. "I was looking for it when I discovered your home. Can you tell me where it is?"

“I’ll do better than that;” replied Banker. “I’ll show you where it is.”

He darted some distance along the bank and hovered close to the top. Peter scampered over there and looked up. Just a few inches below the top was another hole, much larger than those he had just left. As he was staring up at it, a head with a long sharp bill and a crest that looked as if all the feathers on the top of his head were brushed the wrong way was thrust out. It was Rattles. He didn’t seem at all glad to see Peter. He came out and darted at Peter angrily. Peter didn’t wait to feel that sharp dagger-like bill. He took to his heels. He had seen what he wanted to find and he was content to go home.

Peter took a short cut across the Green Meadows past a certain tall, dead tree. A sharp cry of “Kill-ee, kill-ee, kill-ee!” caused Peter to look up just in time to see a trim, handsome bird whose body was about the size of Sammy Jay’s but whose longer wings and longer tail made him look bigger. One glance told Peter that this was the smallest member of the Hawk family. It was Killy the Sparrow Hawk. He is too small for Peter to fear him, so Peter was possessed of nothing more than a lively curiosity and sat up to watch.

Over the meadow Killy sailed. Suddenly, with beating wings, he hovered in the, dropped into the grass, and was up again in an instant.