

“A New Friend and an Old One”  
by Thornton Burgess

When Peter found him, he was sitting with all his feathers puffed out until he looked almost like a ball with a head and tail. He looked positively sleepy. Then as he caught sight of Peter he drew those feathers down tight, cocked his tail up after the manner of Jenny Wren, and was as slim and trim looking as any bird of Peter's acquaintance. He didn't look at all like the same bird of the moment before. Then he dropped his tail as if he hadn't strength enough to hold it up at all. It hung straight down. He dropped his wings and all in a second made himself look fairly disreputable.

But all the time his eyes were twinkling and snapping, and Peter knew that these changes in appearance were made out of pure fun and mischief.

“I’ve been wondering if you were coming back,” cried Peter. “I don’t know of any one of my feathered friends I would miss so much as you.”

“Thank you,” responded Kitty. “It’s very nice of you to say that, Peter. If you are glad to see me I am still more glad to get back.”

“Did you pass a pleasant winter down South?” asked Peter.

“Fairly so,” replied Kitty. “By the way, I picked up some new songs down there. Would you like to hear them?”

“Of course,” replied Peter, “but I don’t think you need any new songs. I’ve never seen such a fellow for picking up other people’s songs excepting Mocker the Mockingbird.”

At the mention of Mocker a little cloud crossed Kitty’s face for just an instant. “There’s a fellow I really envy,” said he. “I’m pretty good at imitating others, but Mocker is better. I’m hoping that, if I practice enough, I can be as good. I saw a lot of him in the South and he certainly is clever.”