

THE OAK AND THE REED

ON THE bank of a river grew a tall Oak Tree. It stood with its roots firm in the ground, and its head high in the air, and said to itself: "How strong I am! Nothing shall make me bow. I look down upon all the other trees."

But one day there was a storm. The terrible unseen wind came and struck the proud Oak. Crash! went the trunk, down came all the beautiful branches, and the Tree fell into the river. As the water carried it away, it passed a Reed that grew on the bank. The little Reed stood up tall and slender, and looked at the poor broken Tree.

"O Reed," said the Tree, "how did it happen that you were not broken down and spoiled when the wind came? You are so little and weak, and I was so strong and proud."

"Ah, poor Tree!" said the Reed, "that is just the reason that the wind did not hurt me. I bent low until it had gone by, but you stood stiff and tried to stop it on its way. No one can stop the wind. It must go where it is sent, but it will not hurt those who are not proud and stubborn."