

### THE GREENIES.

A rose-tree stood in the window. But a little while ago it had been green and fresh, and now it looked sickly — it was in poor health, no doubt. A whole regiment was quartered on it, and was eating it up; yet notwithstanding this seeming greediness, the regiment was a very decent and respectable one. It wore bright green uniforms. I spoke to one of the "Greenies;" he was but three days old, and yet he was already grandfather. What do you think he said? It is all true — he spoke of himself and the rest of his regiment, Listen!

We are the most wonderful creatures in the world. The wisest of the creatures, the ant (we have the greatest respect for him) understands us well. He does not eat us up; he takes our eggs, lays them in the family ant-hill on the ground-floor — lays them, labelled and numbered, side by side, layer on layer, so that each day a new one may creep out of the egg. Then he puts us in a stable, strokes our hind legs, and milks us. He has given us the prettiest of names — "Little milch-cow."

All creatures, who, like the ant, are gifted with common sense, call us by this pretty name.

I was born on a rose leaf. I and all the regiment live on the rose tree. The gardener calls us plant-lice; the books calls us Aphides; but the children call us the ant's cows. — Anderson.

### THE PEACOCK'S FINE FEATHERS.

#### A FABLE.

A long time ago the birds quarrelled as to who was the finest singer. So they said they would have a concert, and two judges would say who was the best singer. The prize was to be a set of the finest feathers ever seen.

Only the male birds were to sing. The ladies were too shy to sing in public. That is why one never hears them.

It was a hard matter to settle who were to be the judges. They must not be birds, or they might give the prize to themselves. They must know what good singing is.

"I shall not sing," said the wise owl. "I would get the prize if I did. Choose the two beasts that sing best for judges." But as he could not tell them what beasts sang best they were no wiser.

Then the sparrow said, "Choose the two beasts with the finest ears. They are sure to hear the best. We want then to hear, not to sing." So they chose a donkey and a hare for the two judges, and the concert began.

The ladies sat in the front rows, and the singers came to the front one by one. The bantam came first, and crowed loud and shrill over and over again.

Then the turkey pushed him aside and gobbled out his song.

The lark came next, but he could only sing in the sky. He flew up, up, up, singing like the living voice of sunshine. When he came back they were hearing the quack, quack of a drake.

The nightingale then sang so softly at first that the donkey fell asleep. Most of the others began to talk, so he stopped quite hurt.

Then the peacock gave such a screech that the hare jumped with fright. The donkey woke up with a start, thinking Mrs. Ass was scolding him. "All listen to me," said the peacock; "my song is so sweet."

Then came the parrot, the magpie, the crane, and others. All had their turn. Then the judges went behind the fence to talk about the songs and to think which was best.

The donkey said, "No doubt, Mr. Hare, you think with me that the peacock has the finest voice."

"The nightingale sang very sweetly," said the hare, meekly.

"What are you thinking about?" said the donkey. "No such bird was at the concert. You must have been dreaming."

The hare knew the donkey had been dreaming, but he did not like to say so.

"The peacock must have the prize," said the donkey. "He sang as sweetly as I do myself." Then he went back to the birds, with the hare behind him.

"We both think," said the donkey, "that you have all sung well. But we must give the prize to the peacock. He has the best voice, and knows how to make the most of it."

Then there was a great noise. The birds said it was not fair. Mrs. Nightingale said, "No one but a donkey would say the peacock sang better than my husband."

At last they were quiet, and the fine feathers were brought out and stuck upon the peacock's back. You can see his tail beneath them if you look. That is how the peacock came by his fine feathers.