

## THE BAREFOOT BOY.

BY J. O. WHITTIER.

Blessings on thee, little man,  
Barefoot boy, with cheek of tan:  
With thy turned-up pantaloons,  
And thy merry whistled tunes,  
With thy red lip, redder still  
Kissed with strawberries on the hill,  
With the sunshine on thy face,  
Through thy torn irons jaunty grace,  
From my heart I give thee joy,—  
I was once a barefoot boy!  
Let the million-dollared ride:  
Barefoot, trudging at his side,  
Thou hast more than he can  
In the reach of ear and eye,—  
Outward sunshine, inward  
joy.  
Blessings on thee, barefoot  
boy!

O for boyhood's painless  
play,  
Sleep that wakes in laugh-  
ing day,  
Health that mocks the  
doctor's rules,  
Knowledge never learned  
of schools,  
Of the wild bee's morning  
chase,  
Of the wild flowers time  
and place,  
Flight of fowl and habitude  
Of the tenants of the wood,  
How the tortoise bears his  
shell,  
How the wood-chuck digs  
his cell,  
And the ground-mole sinks  
his well;  
How the robin feeds her  
young,  
How the oriole's nest is  
hung;  
Where the whitest lilies  
blow,  
Where the freshest berries  
grow,  
Where the groundnut trails  
its vine,  
Where the wood-grape's  
clusters shine,  
Of the black wasps cun-  
ning way,  
Mason of his walls of clay,  
And the architectural plans  
Of gray hornet artisans!—  
For, eschewing books and tasks,  
Nature answers all he asks,  
Hand in hand with her he walks,  
Face to face with her he talks,  
Part and parcel of her joy—  
Blessings on the barefoot boy!

O for festal dainties spread,  
Like my bowl of milk and bread,—  
Pewter spoon and bowl of wood,  
On the door-stone gray and rude!  
O'er me like a regal tent,  
Cloudy-ribbed, the sunset bent,  
Purple-curtained, fringed with gold,  
Looped in many a wind-swung fold,  
While for music came the play

Of the pied frog's orchestra,  
And, to light the noisy choir,  
Lit the fly his lamp of fire.  
I was monarch: pomp and joy  
Waited on the barefoot boy!

Cheerily, then my little man,  
Live and laugh as boyhood can:  
Though the flinty slopes be hard,  
Stubble-speared the new-mown sward,  
Every morn shall lead thee through  
Fresh baptisms of the dew;  
Every evening from thy feet  
Shall the cool wind kiss the heat.  
All too soon these feet must hide  
In the prison coils of pride,  
Lose the freedom of the sod,



THE BAREFOOT BOY.

Like a colt's for work be shod,  
Made to tread the mills of toil,  
Up and down in ceaseless moil,  
Happy if their track be found  
Never on forbidden ground;  
Happy if they sink not in  
Quick and treacherous sands of sin.  
Ah! that thou couldst know thy joy,  
Ere it passes, barefoot boy!

A REMARKABLE INCIDENT OF  
TWO BOYS TAKING A JACK-  
DAW'S NEST.

In the town of Derby there is a beautiful church called All Saints, which has a very tall and massive tower, the height of

which is 210 feet, being much higher than most of the towers of the same kind throughout England.

The following incident in connection with this church tower is related by Mary Howitt, and therefore may be relied on as being a true tale. Many years ago a jackdaw built its nest in a crevice under the window of the belfry; and no doubt it might have been perfectly safe; but birds, like children, are sometimes mistaken.

Two boys got to know about this nest, and they set their wits to work to try if they could by any means get possession of it. It was impossible to accomplish their object while standing within the building, and equally out of the question to reach the nest from below. So they determined to put a plank through the window; and it was agreed that the bigger boy should balance it by sitting on the end within, and the lighter lad should take the more perilous position of standing outside. Having got to work, the plucky little fellow outside soon found that he was able to reach the nest, and having ascertained that there were five little jackdaws inside, he was not long in announcing the news to his comrade.

He told him that there were "five young 'uns."

"Then I'll have three," shouted the bigger boy.

"No, you won't," said the other; "I ran all the danger, and I'll have the three."

"You shall not," said the voice from the safe end of the plank; "promise me three, or I'll drop you."

"Drop me, and welcome!" cried the intrepid little fellow at the other end of the plank.

And, strange to say, the other accepted the challenge, and suiting the action to the word, let his companion drop, though the distance to the ground could not be less than 100 feet. But more wonderful still, the poor little fellow reached the ground without being injured. Two things helped to save him from harm; one was the birds were sufficiently fledged to have wings, and while he was descending they made vigorous use of them; another and perhaps the chief thing was—the boy had on a stout new carter's frock, which, filling with air, buoyed him up like a balloon, and enabled him to light like a cat on his legs. And on finding himself safe, and in possession of all the five birds, he looked up at his horror-stricken companion, and exclaimed: "Now you shall have none!"

While we are indignant with the big boy, and cannot but admire and sympathize with the little one, we hope that all our young readers will see the cruelty and wickedness of the practice of robbing poor birds of their young. Who knows but the mother of those five young birds would be as distressed at the loss of her family, as the mother of either of those boys would have been if anything had happened to them?