



CURIOUS NESTS.

The Volunteer of '85.

LIGHTLY he left us, smiling, smiling,
Soon to be back from the wars of the West;
Sadly he came, amid weeping, weeping,
His country's flag wrapped around his breast.

I gave him a flower as he donned his helmet:
He said he'd repay me with blossoms more dear;—
But he never came back till in death cold sleeping,
Wild prairie flowers blooming upon his bier.

Kissing their hands to us, gaily they shouted
"We will do all that brave men can!"
Well was the promise redeemed, though to meet it,
The bravest died on Saskatchewan!

Envy me not for all that's left me!
You have your heroes and I have mine,—
Yours come back with the thunder of cannon,
And flags that were floating adown their line:—

But I would not give mine in his youthful beauty
Sleeping the sleep of the brave and true,
Who lived for his love, and who died at his duty,
For all the heroes that smile on you!

Sleep, soldier! sleep; victorious though fallen,
Dead to our eyes, to our hearts still alive;
Young, and so brave, and so bitter the parting—
One of the heroes of "Eighty-five!"

—William Wye Smith.

Curious Nests.

PERHAPS the most interesting creatures in nature to study are the birds and their habits, especially those that live about our homes. All of their nests are wonderful, when you think of the skill and instinct of the tiny creatures, and many of them are very curious, several of which we have shown in our illustration.

The first is that of the tailor-bird, that makes its nest of leaves, which it skilfully sews together with spears of grass, using its beak for a needle.

Then we have the beautiful hanging nest of the oriole, or it may be that of the goldfinch or American yellow bird. The nest of the former is made of fibres

from the silk weed, while that of the latter is made of lichens.

Down in the left corner we see the nest of the red-winged black-bird, which is generally seen about ponds and marshes, and builds its nest in low bushes or tufts of sedges.

Last summer a pair of robins built their nest in just such a knothole in our old apple tree as the one you see in the right-hand corner of the picture. It was a very interesting sight to see the little ones poke their heads out when the old birds were bringing their food. You would hear a great noise and then we see several yellow mouths, for you know a young bird seems to be all mouth, then the old bird would talk to them in bird-language, drop the food into their open beaks and fly off in search of more. Such ravenous appetites did these little creatures have that my heart used to almost ache sometimes for the old birds, so patient were they and so many times did they fly back and forth. After they were older you would often see their little heads with their beady eyes peeping out and they looked very cute.

I confess that I am not certain about the middle bird and its nest. It looks to me very like that of a Peivee or Phoebe bird that built its nest in the porch over our dining-room door one summer. The peivee generally finds some secluded place in which to build its nest of mud, grass and moss, the inside of which is softly lined. I wish that you would hunt up this nest for yourself and many more which you will find delightful to study about.

The cutest of all little nests are those of the humming-birds. Perhaps you have seen one of these tiny creatures, the brilliant plumage of which is simply indescribable. Their food consists of small insects and the honey from the flowers. Their nests are woven into a cup-shaped cradle, made of cotton-thistledown, delicate little fibres and other soft materials. They build them on a low branch of a tree and cover the outside with lichens in such a manner

that the nest appears like a part of the branch.

I have not space to tell you more, but I hope that you will be interested enough to find out more for your selves. All God's creatures are wonderful.

Union—Its Sequel.

MANY friends of the Methodist union were fearful that some unfortunate results might attend a measure so speedily consummated. Strife and contention were predicted, and even some shrinkage would not have astonished the most earnest promoters of a godly work.

How mercifully and gently has the Great Head of the Church rebuked us. He seems to say, "O ye of little faith, wherefore did ye doubt?" Already the Western Conferences, not including Manitoba, show an increase of membership over last year of 17,318. The two Maritime Conferences just closed have added about 1400 to that number. It may therefore be concluded that the Manitoba and Newfoundland Conferences will bring the number to at least 20,000. A further pleasing feature is the harmony and satisfaction so generally prevailing. We here heard of slight friction in some quarters, but we learn from our obliging London Conference correspondent, whose letter in another column will repay reading, that not a single memorial demanded the attention of the committee appointed as usual to consider such documents. That this unanimity is not that of icicles is shown by the reports of the Conference and the growth of the membership. To God be the glory!

From the despatches to the daily press we learn that the net gain of our Presbyterian brethren in communicants in the same field during the past year has been six thousand. We congratulate them on their growth.—*Westeyan.*

The C. T. C. C.

THE Chautauqua Literary and Scientific Circle is now recognized among the most important educational movements of the times. It is a home school and college, counting its pupils in every English-speaking nation in the world, and having a roll-call of over 80,000 past and present members. Its plan of work is to provide for its members a course of home reading and study that shall include enough of history, literature, and science to give at least an insight into the higher education of our colleges, to induce habits of study, to create in the home the atmosphere of the universities, to help those who for any reason have not been able to get a college education. It has also a special course of reading and study for young people who, unable to attend the high schools, still wish to know what high school education means, and who wish to supplement the common school studies with something better.

So successful has been this system of home study that many attempts have been made in the same direction by the formation of reading circles, literary societies, and associations for the study of nature. Among the most important of these is the Agassiz Association of Young People for the study of Natural History, now numbering over 7,000 members. The Agassiz Association confines its attention strictly to the study and observation of nature, and the Chautauqua Literary and Scientific Circle has hitherto only considered

pure science. The whole range of the arts, the art industries, agriculture and manufacture have, so far, been left untouched. There have been no attempts until now to form circles or associations for the home study of the industries. This unoccupied field of education the Chautauqua Circle now proposes to enter. The Chautauqua Literary and Scientific Circle, recognizing the demand for industrial education, recognizing the unfortunate drift of so many young people into our overcrowded cities, and desiring to help young people to see the charm of country life, to learn the value of outdoor observation and study, and desiring to open fields of useful work, has decided to add to its great school a branch or annex devoted to the study of the leading industry of the country—agriculture.

This new Chautauqua idea includes a course of reading for winter evenings, and a first-class farm that will be the headquarters of the new school. The new circle is to be called the Chautauqua Town and Country Club, and is for any one; and every one who cares to know something, and who can read, can join the Circle at any time in the year. There will be no entrance examination, no requirements whatever except a willingness to take up one or more of the Circle's easy and entertaining labours, to read its few books, and pay its yearly fee of twenty-five cents for two years.

The novel feature of the C. T. C. C. is the programme of work. Every young person who joins this town and country club will be expected to do something on the farm, in the garden, the greenhouse, the window garden, fish pond, kennel, the poultry yard, bird house, barn or dairy or home. The pupils will be given a list of things to do, from which, whether he or she lives in town or country, is at home or in school, at work or at play, each will select the most convenient and pleasant. Each will faithfully carry out the work selected under instructions from the headquarters, and will send in a report of the work. There will also be an examination of the reading, and at the end of the second year every one who has passed the examination, read the books, and performed each year one of the works will be entitled to a diploma as a graduate of the C. T. C. C.

The new Circle is now fully organized, and with an enrolment of more than five hundred members. For particulars, address Miss K. F. Kimball, Plainfield, N. J.

OCCASIONALLY, but too rarely, at the present day, we hear of the committing to memory of Scripture. In his interesting autobiography, just published, Mr. Ruskin thus tells of the influence of the Bible upon his character and literary style: My mother forced me by steady daily toil to learn long chapters of the Bible by heart; and to that discipline, patient, accurate, and resolute, I owe not only much of my general power of taking pains, but the best part of my taste in literature. Once knowing the 15th of 1st Corinthians, the Sermon on the Mount, and most of the Apocalypse, every syllable by heart, and having always a way of thinking with myself what words meant, it was not possible for me, even in the foolish times of youth, to write entirely superficial or formal English, and the affectation of trying to write like Hooker and George Herbert was the most innocent I could have fallen into.