

## ✻ This and That ✻

### A CURIOUS BIRD'S-NEST.

Those who are familiar with our common house wren know how often it happens that very strange nesting-sites are at times decided upon by this bird. It is not so long ago that a small watering-pot, hanging within easy reach of a pump constantly used, was taken possession of, and the wrens, all unmindful of people constantly coming and going very near them, raised their brood, and returned the following summer. A permanent box was placed in the spot after the second season, and this has since been used.

Wrens have been known, too, to enter houses through open windows and attempt nest-building indoors, and in places, too, very inconvenient to the family, as in a card-basket, on the piano, and on the pole supporting portieres. But more curious than all other instances, it seems to me, is the following: In the spring of 1901, a hornet's nest that had long hung in my hall was temporarily placed in a covered porch. Some weeks later, a pair of wrens were noticed examining it very critically, and they finally decided that as a nesting-site it was in every way admirable. The fact that I was frequently sitting on that porch, often with two or three people, in no wise troubled them. The birds were absolutely fearless.

Having chosen the hornet's nest as a summer residence, the wrens first cleared out sufficient space for their use, and chipped a new circular entrance to it. This they made the more secure by placing in front a platform of twigs, many of which were thrust through the paper walls. This was not always easily done, and gave rise to some cross words, or so it seemed. Except a few feathers, there was nothing carried into the hole made by the wrens in the body of the hornet's nest. As soon as all was to their liking, eggs were laid and the brood successfully reared.

While the parent birds were noticeably tame during the days of nest-making, they were even more so when there were young birds to look after. Without really troubling them, I tried in many ways to test their confidence in my good will toward them. Several times I leaned against the pillar supporting the roof of the porch, so as to bring my face within eighteen inches of the opening to the nest. Twice under such circumstances, one of the old birds darted by me and entered, but at other times waited most impatiently until I again sat down in the chair near by.

One fact that interested me greatly, was that when interrupted by my coming, the wren, firmly holding a wriggling worm in its beak, would scold crossly, making a loud whirring and shrill sound. How the bird could make the sound and yet retain the worm in its beak I leave to others to explain.—Charles C. Abbott, M. D., in St. Nicholas.

### THE BOY'S MISTAKE.

A boy applied to a city merchant for a situation. Incidentally he mentioned that he attended St. Luke's Sunday school.

"St. Luke?" said the merchant. "Does he carry on the Sunday school?"

"Why, no," answered the boy, with evident disgust at such deplorable ignorance; "the saints are all dead."

The boy's mistake was a common and not unnatural one. In a literal sense it is true. One must be dead before he can have a place in the formal and official calendar of saints. But not all the saints have been canonized; nor are they all dead. There are saints of whom the world has never heard, and in whose honor no church is ever likely to be named—men and women who are bearing heavy burdens and wearing unseen the crown of thorns. No halo surrounds their brow, no poet sings their praise, and no artist glorifies them in marble or upon canvas.

There is the mother broken in health and spirits, with a family of little ones to care for, and having a dissolute and worthless husband. God alone knows how hard she toils and how much she suffers. There is that poor, patient, bedridden sufferer, year after year bearing her burden of pain, and growing sweeter and sweeter all the while.

Far out on the frontier is the home missionary, on meagre fare and with threadbare coat, preaching the gospel in rough mining camps and small settlements, while the faithful wife at home mends and patches, pinches and saves, that there may be fire upon the hearth and food upon the table.

Our idea of sainthood is different from that of former days. The old-time saint was mostly intent upon saving his own soul. He fled to the desert, dwelt in a cave, and dozed and dreamed the hours away, and the more dirty and wretched his personal appearance the greater degree of sainthood was he supposed to have attained.

The modern saint is one who serves and gives his life and thought for others. Many such may be found. Every paper records some heroic act of rescue, some noble deed of benevolence. There is the Red Cross nurse upon the field of battle, the Sister of Charity moving about in the quiet ward, the engineer who gives his life that the passengers may be saved.

No, the saints are not all dead.—Rev. J. S. Gilbert, in Christian Advocate.

### LIFE IN THE COUNTRY.

In the country every morning of the year brings with it a new aspect of spring or fading nature, a new duty to be fulfilled upon earth and a new promise or warning in heaven. No day is without its innocent hope, its special prudence, its kindly gift and its sublime danger, and in every process of wise husbandry and every effort of contending or remedial courage the wholesome passions, pride and bodily power of the laborer, are excited and exerted in happiest union. The companionship of domestic and the care of serviceable animals soften and enlarge his life with lowly charities and discipline him in familiar wisdom and unobstinate fortitudes, while the divine laws of seedtime, which cannot be recalled, harvest, which cannot be hastened, and winter, in which no man can work, compel the impatience and coveting of his heart into labor too submissive to be anxious and rest too sweet to be wanton.—John Ruskin.

### WHERE HE CAME FROM.

It was in a mission Sunday school far over on the east side, and the brisk young clergyman from Chicago was about to make a brief address. His smile was as complacent as ingratiating, and he began with an adroitness, as he supposed, of exordium which would have left Quintilian speechless with wonder and envy:

"Well, children, I guess none of you knows where I come from."

His own ingenuity warmed his heart as he saw visions of his stockyard strides to come. But he promptly got a cold. "Oh, yes, we do!" spoke up shiny-faced preternaturally so—Joe Dugan in the front row. An orator must follow his lead even if it isn't the one he desired. So the youthful minister, a slight shade of disappointment now on his unwrinkled front, asked:

"Well, where do you think, then?"

"From the country!"—New York Evening Post.

### VALUE OF SUNDAY REST.

An important contribution to scientific data bearing on the necessity of Sunday rest from labor has been made by a Pennsylvania railroad official. He selected two groups of laborers from the working force of a certain freighthouse controlled by his road. He measured the working capacity of each group in terms of tons handled daily for a week. On Sunday one group rested; the other worked as usual. On the following Monday the men who had been continuously at service showed a decrease of 10 per cent in efficiency as compared with the previous Monday, and each day after their comparative delinquency became greater. The men who had their Sunday respite, on the other hand, were as valuable to the company the second week as the first.—Sel.

Christopher Marlowe gave forth the invitation so often repeated by his brothers in a less public way: "Love me little, love me long."

The poet Campbell found that "Coming events cast their shadows before," and "The distance lends enchantment to the view."

### CHILDHOOD'S PRAYER.

The fire upon the hearth is low,  
And there is stillness everywhere;  
Like troubled spirits, here and there  
The firelight shadows fluttering go.  
And as the shadows round me creep,  
A childish treble breaks the gloom  
And softly from a farther room  
Comes: "Now I lay me down to sleep."

And, somehow, with that little prayer  
And that sweet treble in my ears,  
My thought goes back to distant years  
And lingers with a dear one there.  
And as I hear the child's amen,  
My mother's faith comes back to me;  
Couched at her side I seem to be,  
And mother holds my hands again.

O for an hour in that dear place!  
O for the peace of that dear time!  
O for that childish trust sublime!  
O for a glimpse of mother's face!  
Yet, as the shadows round me creep,  
I do not seem to be alone—  
Magic of that treble tone—  
And "Now I lay me down to sleep."

—Eugene Field.

### CROTCHETY, CRABBED, AND CROSS.

Crotchety, Crabbed, and Cross, one day  
Went out for a sail on the Sulky Bay.  
Their boat was leaky, their sail was torn,  
And hung on the bow was a dinner horn.  
"We'll sail to the north," said Crotchety,  
"I'll stand by the helm to steer," said he.

Bounding and scudding they sailed along,  
The waves rolled high, and the wind blew strong,  
"I won't stay here to be drowned at sea;  
We'll sail to the south, where the wind is free!"

"I'll steer for awhile," said angry Cross,  
"For I don't see why you should be boss."  
Seizing the helm with a wrathful frown,  
He steered for the south; and the wind went down.

"We can't drift home; for there is no tide!  
We're stuck here, becalmed!" was what  
Crabbed cried.

"We'll sail to the eastward now," said he,  
"No, you won't," laughed the Wind  
across the sea.

Out of the eastward the Wind blew strong,  
And swift in its path they were borne along.

The Westward Shore and the Setting Sun  
Were laughing to see what the Wind had done.

"You went for a pleasure sail, you say?  
You will never succeed in Sulky Bay."

"Go to the harbor of Smiles and Fun,"  
Said the Wind, with a wink at the Setting Sun;

"You'll find a boat which will sail alone,  
If pleasure, not anger, is only shown."  
The darkness descended on all the three,  
And they steered by the stars for the Sunshine Sea.

—Eleanor A. Sterling, in The Christian Commonwealth.

### SING ON, LITTLE BIRD.

Sing on, little bird, sing on!  
What though the rain may come down,  
And the clouds hang heavy and dark,  
Or the sky wear its solemn frown;  
'Tis only a passing shower  
Which the flowers have needed so long;  
The sun will shine bright in an hour;  
So go on, little bird, with your song.

Shine on, little star, shine on!  
You are not all alone in the sky,  
For hundreds and hundreds of stars  
Will be sparkling up there by and by.  
The children who watch for your light,  
Will smile when they see your bright eye.

As you twinkle up there all the night,  
Then shine on, little star, in the sky.  
—The Silver Cross.

### WHAT THE SPIDER SAID.

"I was spinning a web in the rose vine,"  
said the spider, "and the little girl was  
sewing patchwork on the doorstep. Her  
thread knotted and her needle broke, and  
her eyes were full of tears. 'I can't do it,'  
she said, I can't! I can't."

"Then her mother came, and bade her  
look at me. Now, every time I spun a  
nice, silky thread, and tried to fasten it  
from one branch to another, the wind blew  
and tore it away."

"This happened many times, but at last  
I made one that did not break, and fast-  
ened it close, and spun other threads to  
join it. Then the mother smiled."

"What a patient spider!" she said.  
"The little girl smiled, too, and took up  
her work. And when the sun went down  
there was a beautiful web in the rose vine,  
and a square of beautiful patchwork on  
the step."—Babyland.

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### THE END OF MAN.

The older I grow—and I now stand upon the brink of eternity—the more comes back to me the sentence in the catechism which I learned when a child at my mother's knee and the fuller and deeper its meaning becomes, "What is the great end of man?" "To glorify God and to enjoy him forever."—Carlyle.