

and almost inaudible chuckle and cluck that greeted the insertion of a bunch of freshly-culled, common grass seed-plumes between the wires of his cage, and of which he always delightedly partook.

Whilst a species of peacefulness and content may have hitherto apportioned the mind of Evariste between them, a satisfaction was now his that put the former to shame, and if Madame now sat alone on the front steps each summer's evening, or gossiped on a neighbor's, while Monsieur smoked his last pipefuls of the day in the garden in the rear of the house by the side of a bird-cage that dangled from a clothes-line, instead of puffing them, as formerly, in his wife's presence, Madame neither commented nor berated Monsieur—nor forgave the canary.

But the day came when all these things were swept as leaves from land that ride about in water.

Carefully as Evariste daily washed the perches, cleansed and sanded the cage, offered L'Petit his bath, and gave fresh seed and water to his pet (many a bolt has fallen out of a clear sky, and escape to freedom come to pass when the goaler least expected it) the bottom fell from the cage one day as completely as it sometimes does out of speculation.

Three hasps originally fastened the floor to the lower rim of L'Petit's dwelling, and where one was now missing a piece of white string supplied its place.

Now it happened one fine morning that, as the cage hung from its accustomed place on the clothes-line by the porch, a tailless mother sparrow and four fledglings—*habitués* of the vicinity and acquainted with easy gain—alighted on the bottom of the cage extending outside of the rim—the back of Evariste turned—and greedily commenced to filch what they could.

A white string was as a worm to one of the innocents, and a few tugs soon did away with the mistake—and the knot.

The sound of a falling object and five



DRAWN BY ALEX. MACLEOD.

"CREEPING SOFTLY BACK INTO THE HOUSE, SHE SAT DOWN."

noisy, scurrying sparrows, caused Evariste to look quickly around, but—too late! A bottomless cage hung from the clothes-line, and L'Petit sat with the marauders on an adjacent fence, free as the day he came.

Evariste seldom swore, but the twirl of "*S-a-c-r-é!*" now in his mouth had an easy and familiar twist to it.

"Your apron—quick?" he demanded of his wife a moment later in the kitchen. "L'Petit is out of his cage. For the sake of God come and help, or he is gone."

But Madame was mute, and stirred not, neither was there an answering look on her face; and Evariste, with perception sharpened of late, saw much where another would have beheld little or nothing.

Wordless in the scorn marking his glance, and with an angry light in his eyes, he turned on his heel and was gone.

L'Petit? *Bien!* there he was at the furthest end of the garden, a yellow dot on a high fence, beyond which lay the open fields—and absolute escape.

Evariste breathed a prayer for the