

HOME AND SCHOOL

Do unto others
As ye would
That They
Should
Do unto
You.

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A Ship in Winter.

A SHIP in summer when the weather is clear, the breezes are gentle and the water smooth, is a thing of beauty and a delight to those who have the privilege of sailing in them; but when the winter comes and storms of sleet and rain cover the rigging and decks with ice, the life of the sailor is dreary enough. The ship in our picture has been in a severe storm and every rope, mast, spar and cable is covered with ice. The waves dash fiercely against the sides of the hull and the sea moans most dismally. Surely it is not a very pleasing spectacle. But let that same ship float out into a clear, calm sea where the sun is shining, and the air is clear and balmy, and it would be a pleasure to ride upon her. Well, what good lesson can we learn from the ship? We were just thinking what if the ship should sail along willingly and faithfully when the wind and weather was favourable, but when the storm and cold came would say, "I cannot endure this tedious weather. I must be excused from service when the storm comes." That would be about the way some Christians do. You have heard of fair-weather Christians, have you not? Of course you have, and no doubt you have seen them too, for they are far too common. They are quite ready to be Christians when the tide of religious interest is favourable, but when temptations and persecutions come, they are ready to turn aside and shirk the responsibility of standing up for Jesus. The readers of the HOME AND SCHOOL must not be fair-weather Christians, but stand steady and strong against the storms of trial and persecutions, and Jesus will bring them through gloriously in the end.

Our beliefs are independent of our will, but our honesty is not: and he who keeps his honesty keeps one of the most precious possessions of all true Christians and gentlemen.



A SHIP IN WINTER.

Birds' Nests.

THERE are few things as wonderful as birds' nests. These little creatures, which one would suppose good for nothing but to pour forth their sweet songs, are really capable of building "houses without hands." These are built for the purpose of rearing and protecting their young. The materials used for the nest are different with different birds, but they are generally straw, twigs, wool, thread, or moss. I once saw a nest made out of some fine lace, taken from the clothes-line of our neighbours.

The styles of building their nests are nearly, if not quite, as numerous as those employed by man in building houses. Some English author has classified them into twelve distinct groups: Miners, ground-builders, masons, carpenters, platform-builders, basket-makers, weavers, tailors, felt-makers, cementers, dome-builders, and parasites. These names indicate the methods used in building. Under the head of miners come the common bank-swallows. The hawk is both a ground and platform-builder. The robin is a mason, and the woodpecker

is a carpenter. The martial eagle, of Southern Africa, builds a platform said to be strong enough to hold the largest man. The magpie and crow are basket-makers, and hang their nests from some twig or branch where the leaves entirely conceal them. Of the weavers, the Baltimore oriole is, perhaps, the most familiar example.

There are many other examples of the wonderful ways in which birds construct their nests. Who teaches them how to do all these things is a question we cannot answer. We know, however, that they must have a natural impulse which leads them to do, without reasoning, what is best for their own safety.

A short time ago I read a story about a magpie, which was accustomed to receive dainty bits from the mouth of its mistress. One day it came and perched on her shoulder, and, putting its beak between her lips, the grateful bird dropped a large, fat worm into her mouth!—*Band of Mercy.*

Trying to Drown the Cat.

MR. CLIMIE remarked: "I know a man who had in his house a vicious cat, which he determined to destroy. So one day he took the cat down to the river, and, taking a rope from his pocket, he tied a stone around the neck of the animal, and threw it into the water. He turned for home with a feeling of satisfaction at having accomplished the task. But on his arrival, he found that the cat was there before him, and waiting at the door to welcome him. And it is much the same with the man who tries to fight his besetting sin in his own strength. He faces it, fights it, and struggles against it until he thinks it is dead; but, unexpectedly, it meets him again, and gets him in his power once more. Men are very foolish to fight sin in their own strength. It is only through the grace of Christ that any conquest may be achieved and evil overcome."