

The Children's Page

THE RAGGEDY DOLL.

When the nursery blinds are all fastened and tight, When the curtains are drawn and it's not at all light, When my mother has kissed me and hurried away And I hear them down stairs, very busy and gay— Then the raggedy doll in her calico dress Comes cheepily creep from the nursery press, She remembers I'm little and lonely, I guess.

Oh, she never comes out through the sunny day. The fellows and I don't use dolls when we play, But she waits till the football and bat are asleep And she picks up her skirts and comes creepily creep. Does the raggedy doll in her raggedy clothes With holes in her elbows and holes in her toes And her sawdust all dripping wherever she goes.

Then the grizzly black bear who hides back of the door Goes a-slinking away, and the imp on the floor Who scatter and point till I cover my head, Go a-scrampering off. There's quite nothing to dread, For the raggedy doll waves a raggedy arm To keep little me safe from all harm, And she climbs in the crib and lies down, soft and warm.

THE LEGEND OF THE GOLD-FINCH.

Raphael's earliest masterpieces include the name of "La Madonna del Cardellino"—Our Lady of the Goldfinch. The inspiration to compose this great work of art came to him while travelling from Florence to Urbino, when, overtaken by a thunderstorm, he sought refuge in a peasant's cottage in the little village of Ostia del Monte. Here it was that Raphael heard for the first time the beautiful legend of "Il Cardellino della Santa Madonna," so familiar to all the peasantry of the Roman States. The story made a deep impression upon the young artist, with the result of which the whole world is familiar.

In the days when the Child Jesus was leading a hidden life in His humble home at Nazareth, little St. John—afterward known as the Baptist—dwelt at Hebron with his aged parents, the high-priest Zachary and St. Elizabeth. As he daily grew in beauty and in knowledge, all were won by the boy's singular charm and his marvellous wisdom; and they said of him: "He will be a great prophet—greater than any of the House of Jacob!" Maybe the child had some presentiment that he would one day be the herald of a new era; maybe he foresaw, in the divine light which flooded his soul, the sublime time for its fulfilment, however, was not yet come, for he was but nine years old.

Now, although St. John had never seen the Holy Child, he had heard tell of that wondrous night when Jesus was born in the lowly stable at Bethlehem, and how the angels of God had proclaimed the glad news to shepherds watching their flocks hard by; and he had always felt a great love for the little Child who was said to be the Son of God. This love had grown within him till it became so strong that he yearned to go to the city of Nazareth and behold Jesus with his own eyes.

pausing here to smell a flower, there to taste the luscious fruit of the pomegranate, then racing on again in pursuit of a beautiful butterfly.

On and on he ran till his little feet were aching and he grew tired of the chase, for he was only nine years old. Then, as though waking from a dream, suddenly he came to himself, and tears of sorrow started to his eyes as he remembered Him whom he had set out to find. But now he had lost his way, and he knew not whither to turn. Unconsciously he had wandered into a sort of meadow, with vast fields of golden corn on the one hand, and a belt of mighty cedars on the other. He searched about him for the lost track, but he had left it far behind. At length he found a narrow pathway, almost hidden with weeds and briars; and this he followed till he came to a little stream.

"Whither goest thou, little John?" a sweet voice cried to him; and, looking up into a tree whence the sound came, he saw a little bird—a kingfisher—pruning itself upon one of the lower branches.

"I am going to Nazareth in Galilee, where dwells the Holy Child. Wilt thou come with me, pretty bird, and guide me there? For I have gone astray and know not which way to turn."

"Nay, I can not go with thee. I have my nest in yonder bank. Who will finish it if I leave here? Vagabonds may wander from their homes, careless of the pain and anxiety they cause their parents; but I have my work to do. Nay, I will not accompany thee."

He continued up the stream, when once more he was aroused by a voice clear and musical: "Whither goest thou, little John?" And there, fluttering about a white blossom of fragrant perfume, he saw a beautiful humming-bird.

"To Nazareth," he replied. "Wilt thou come and show me the way, sweet bird of paradise?"

"Nay; my little ones will soon be hatched. Who would watch them if I were to go? I can not go with thee," was the answer.

And he went on his lonely way, the same cry greeted him again and again; yet when he called upon them to help him, the birds each in turn gave him the same reply. All were too busy with their nests or their young to give heed to him.

Presently, in the stillness of the evening, a soft, melodious voice whispered to him: "What seest thou, little wanderer?"

It was a goldfinch perched upon the large purple flower of a tall thistle close by. But the child made no reply. What was the use, he thought to himself? For all the birds were in league against him. And in the anguish of his heart he cried aloud: "O God, Thy creatures are all against me! Do Thou come to my aid!" Then wearily he sank upon the ground and was soon in a deep sleep.

At length the longing became so intense that he started off one morning, little knowing how far he had to travel, and reckless of the hardships he might have to endure.

At early dawn St. John awoke, radiant and happy. Running to the foot of the ravine, he made his way through the cluster of tamarisk trees, and then stood spellbound. A narrow, ragged pathway wound itself through the intervening hills; and there beyond, bathed in the glory of the rising sun, stood the fair city of Nazareth.

SYNOPSIS OF CANADIAN NORTH-WEST Homestead Regulations

Any even numbered section of Dominion Lands in Manitoba, Saskatchewan and Alberta, excepting 8 and 26, not reserved, may be homesteaded by any person who is the sole head of a family, or any male over 18 years of age, to the extent of one-quarter section of 160 acres, more or less.

(1) At least six months' residence upon and cultivation of the land in each year for three years.

(2) A homesteader may, if he so desires, perform the required residence duties by living on farming land owned solely by him, not less than eighty (80) acres in extent, in the vicinity of his homestead. Joint ownership in land will not meet this requirement.

(3) If the father (or mother, if the father is deceased) of a homesteader has permanent residence on farming land owned solely by him, not less than eighty (80) acres in extent, in the vicinity of the homestead, or upon a homestead entered for by him in the vicinity, such homesteader may perform his own residence duties by living with the father (or mother).

(4) The term "vicinity" in the two preceding paragraphs is defined as meaning not more than nine miles in a direct line, exclusive of the width of road allowances crossed in the measurement.

(5) A homesteader intending to perform his residence duties in accordance with the above while living with parents or on farming land owned by himself must notify the Agent for the district of such intention.

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Deputy of the Minister of the Interior.

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ning the white houses of Nazareth, till they fell upon one half-way on the hillside—a little cottage wreathed in flowers, which he knew at once was the one he sought.

Running toward the Holy Child with eager outstretched arms, St. John cried out: "Lamb of God, who take away the sins of the world!"

And Jesus answered: "This is John. He shall be great before the Lord."

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then He placed it in His Mother's hands. She in turn held it captive for a moment, touched it gently with her lips; then, in her loving tenderness, she restored it its liberty. It is said that on the day of the Crucifixion this same little bird flew to the cross of our Saviour, and for hours strove with its tiny beak to draw out the long, sharp thorns from the cruel crown which pierced the sacred head of the Crucified.

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