

PLEASANT HOURS

A PAPER FOR OUR YOUNG FOLK.

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A Tragedy in Three Parts.

Part I.—The Bonnet.

A bit of foundation as big as your hand;
Bows of ribbon and lace;
Wire sufficient to make them stand,
A handful of roses, a velvet band—
It lacks but one crowning grace.

Part II.—The Bird.

A chirp, a twitter, a flash of wings,
Four wide-open mouths in a nest;
From morning till night she brings and
brings,
For growing birds, they are hungry
things—

Aye! hungry things at the best.

The crack of a rifle, a shot well sped;
A crimson stain on the grass;

THE BLACKSMITH'S PETS.

BY MRS. M. JEANIE MALLARY.

Nellie Winters and her brother, Hal, had gone with their parents to spend the summer months in the country. The children were always on the look-out for something new, and one evening, as they were strolling together, Nellie exclaimed: "Oh, the swallows! The pretty swallows!"

"My!" exclaimed Hal. "If I only had brought my sling-shot! Wouldn't I make them dance? Why, I could kill half a dozen at one throw, I do believe."

"Hal, would you kill a pretty, little swallow?"

"Indeed I would. Wouldn't it be fun? Why didn't I bring my sling-shot?"

believe when that boy knelt to say his prayers at night, Jesus would turn his face away."

"Oh, but didn't you hear mother call them 'pests,' and don't they build their clay-nests in our chimneys, and once in a while, don't they come tumbling down full of those horrid, little unfeathered balls, making a big litter of clay and soot? Ugh!"

"See that bright-eyed little one on the lowest wire. Hal, how pretty! Now it darts for a fly—"

W-h-i-z-z went something right by Hal's head, and down fell the bird at his feet. The children had not noticed a blacksmith's shop near; but now they were filled with terror, as a man, with sleeves rolled up to his shoulders, caught

dead, but now she's hurt, and will die, too, I'm afraid."

"Its leg is broken, sir; let me take it home with me and nurse it," said Nellie. "It's my namesake, sir," and she pressed her lips to its brown head as the blacksmith laid it in her hand tenderly, and then, as the tears glistened in her eyes, she added:

"I'll try not to let it die."

Then they said "Good evening," and started homeward, and the blacksmith stood with arms akimbo, and watched them till almost out of sight. Not a word did the children speak until sure they were out of hearing, and then Hal, slapping his pocket, exclaimed:

"Whew! Ain't I glad I didn't bring my sling-shot!"



THE BLACKSMITH'S PETS.

Four hungry birds in a nest unfed—
Ah! well, we will leave the rest unsaid;
Some things it were better to pass.

Part III.—The Wearer.

The lady has surely a beautiful face,
She has surely a queenly air;
The bonnet had flowers and ribbon and
lace;
But the bird has added the crowning
grace—
It is really a charming affair.

Is the love of a bonnet supreme over all,
In a lady so faultlessly fair?
The Father takes heed when the spar-
rows fall,
He hears when the starving nestlings
call—

Can a tender woman not care?
—Anon., in Current Literature.

"Buddie, I don't think it would be fun at all. See how low they fly; just as much as to say, 'I trust you. I trust you.'"

"Ha! Ha! Nellie, you've got the wrong tune this time. The people won't let us boys shoot guns in these kind of places, for fear of frightening horses, and these birds know it, and when they fly low, it is to say, 'I dare you, I dare you. I never could take a dare, and wouldn't now, if I had my sling-shot. Why, I'd sling it so softly, nobody would know it, and even the birds would wonder how they come dead. Ha! ha! Ah! you young gentlemen, just wait till to-morrow.'"

"Hal, don't hurt the little things; they are not fit to eat, and to kill a bird just to see how well one can aim—why, I

Hal's arm and shook him roughly, say-
ing:

"Flingin' at my birds, hey? You little rascal. I'll teach you better."

"Oh," exclaimed Nellie, "he didn't do it, sir, indeed he didn't."

As soon as Hal could catch a good breath he said:

"I didn't throw at all, sir; the rock came over my head."

"Then, young gentleman, I beg your pardon. You see, I began to pet two swallows, so that they would come and eat out of my hand. Then they hatched and more came, till now there are twenty-five, and they are all named and know their names too. I planted these vines for them too. Somehow I loved this little Nellie best, because I named her after my own little Nellie that's

SUNDAY SCHOOL PICKPOCKETS.

At the annual May meeting of the Ragged School Union, England, Canon Wilberforce said: "On one occasion when Lord Shaftesbury was teaching in East London on a Sunday evening, he had a class of fifteen or sixteen young lads, and was giving them a Bible lesson. While doing so the clock struck eight, and immediately the whole class rose and went out of the room."

"He said to one of them, 'Why are you going away?'"

"The boy replied, 'Why, of course we must be ready to catch them all as they come out of chapel.' The lads were all making their living with that subtlety of finger hardly consistent with strict morality. It is to save such children that the Ragged School Union works."