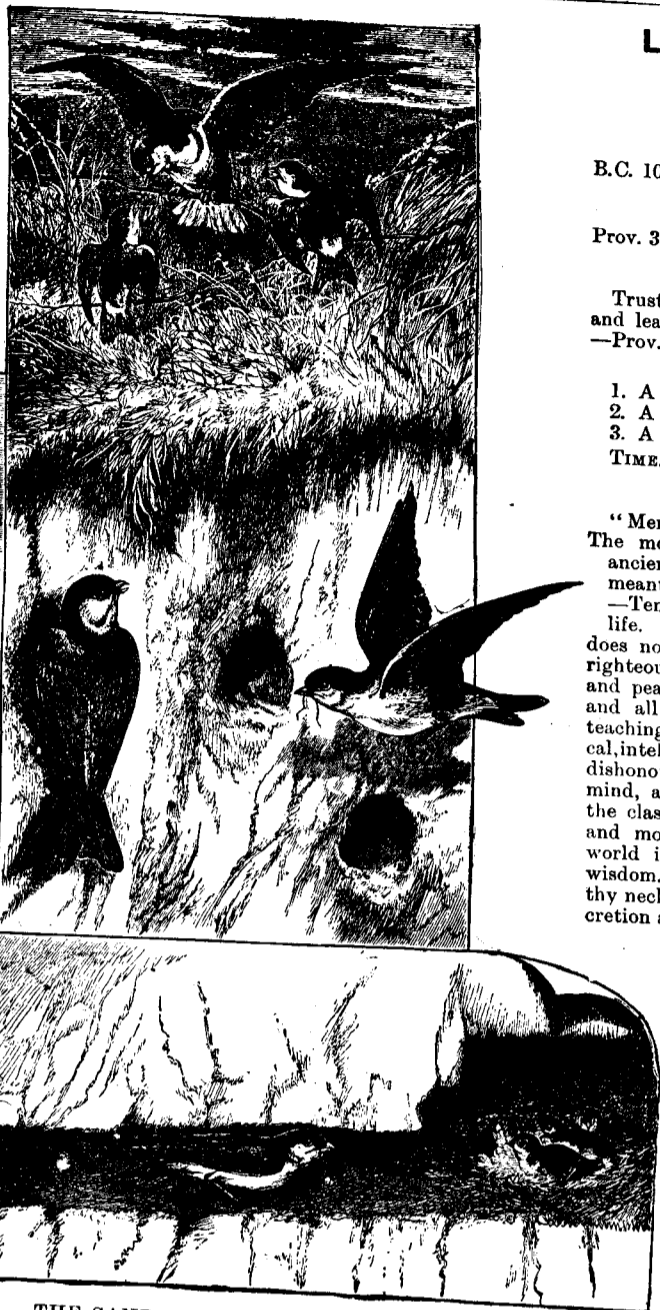


THE SAND-MARTIN.

I do not know of any more interesting little builder than the sand-martin. It is a wonderful little bird, as you will confess when I tell you about it. First of all, think what wonderful travellers these birds are. In the summer they abound not only in England, but actually as far off as the northern parts of Sweden and Norway. When the summer has passed away



THE SAND-MARTIN.

they take their departure, and make their winter home as far away as India and the south of Africa. Sometimes they have to cross many miles of sea, and it is no uncommon thing to see hundreds resting during their flight on the masts and ropes of any vessel they may happen to pass on their journey. It is the first of all the birds of passage to return to England in the spring, and when you read of some one having seen the "first swallow" in the spring, you may be sure it was a sand-martin and not a swallow, that had been seen. But you need never mistake a sand-martin for a swallow. It is a smaller bird, its under part being white and its upper parts mouse-coloured; when on the wing it moves with a peculiar jerking flight, which readily distinguishes it from either the swallow or its near relative the house-martin. The bird, however, is best known on account of the wonderful house which it forms for rearing its young. It selects the face of some cliff, where the rock is not too hard, and bores a passage with a wonderful amount of regularity and skill. When beginning to work, it clings to the face of the bank with its feet and pecks away at the hard surface, loosening the earth bit by bit. During the work the bird assumes all manner of positions, its beak acting as a kind of pivot, the bird working as often as not with its head downwards. Looking at its tiny beak you can hardly believe that it could achieve the result it does; especially as if you tried you would find yourself unable to do anything of the kind with a strong pocket-knife. The little tunnel into the bank having been formed, the bird continues in a tolerably straight line with a little upward slope for a considerable distance, sometimes about three feet, sometimes even eight or nine feet long. At the end a chamber of somewhat larger dimensions is formed, which the bird lines with some grass and feathers very prettily arranged, on which the pinky-white eggs are laid.

The same parents rear several broods of young birds each year, but the birds do not multiply very fast. The chief reason for this is that although they are quite secure so long as they remain in their curious nests, yet when the young birds make their first attempts to fly, there are many foes such as the magpie and crow and sparrowhawk on the lookout for them, and thus large numbers are snapped up before they are able to take care of themselves. Then again many boys, I am sorry to say, think it a very fine sport to climb up the banks and root out the nest which they cannot reach. This is a cruel and foolish sport, and the more so because the sand-martins are very good friends to the farmers, killing flies and other insects that otherwise would be very troublesome.

MANN'S ADVICE TO BOYS.

HORACE MANN gives this bit of advice to boys: "You are made to be kind, boys; generous, magnanimous. If there is a boy in the school who has a club-foot, don't let him know you ever saw it. If there is a boy with ragged clothes, don't talk about rags in his hearing. If there is a lame boy, assign him some part in the game that doesn't require running. If there is a hungry one, give him part of your dinner. If there is a dull one, help him to get his lessons. If there is a bright one, be not envious of him; for if one boy is proud of his talents and another is envious of them, there are two great wrongs and no more talent than before. If a larger or stronger boy injured you and is sorry for it, forgive him. All the school will show by their countenance how much better it is than to have a great fuss. And remember who said, 'Love your enemies,' and 'bless them which curse you.'"

NEVER expect permanent happiness while you indulge in sin. It will never come.

LESSON NOTES.

SECOND QUARTER.

OLD TESTAMENT TEACHINGS.

B.C. 1000.] LESSON VI. [May 7.

THE VALUE OF WISDOM.

Prov. 3. 11-24.] [Mem. verses, 13-17.

GOLDEN TEXT.

Trust in the Lord with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding. —Prov. 3. 5.

OUTLINE.

- 1. A precious chastening, v. 11, 12.
2. A precious treasure, v. 13-16.
3. A pleasant way, v. 17-24.
TIME.—About B.C. 1000.

EXPLANATIONS.

"Merchandise"—Trading. "Rubies"—The most costly among precious stones in ancient times. Some think that pearls are meant, and some coral. "Length of days"—Temperance and godliness lead to long life. "Pleasantness . . . peace"—The Bible does not anywhere teach that inevitably a righteous man is rich, honoured, long-lived, and peacefully situated; but it does teach, and all human experience agrees with the teaching, that violation of God's law, physical, intellectual, or moral, tends to poverty, dishonour, physical weakness, disquietude of mind, and early death. In each community the class of people who have the happiest and most prosperous passage through this world is the godly class—the followers of wisdom. "Life unto thy soul and grace to thy neck"—This means that wisdom and discretion are both vital and ornamental. They lengthen life and beautify character. "Thou shalt not be afraid"—Ignorance is the mother of terror.

PRACTICAL TEACHINGS.

Explain how this lesson—
1. Points out a way for all to become rich.
2. Shows the way for all to be happy.
3. Shows how all can be safe in both worlds.

THE LESSON CATECHISM.

- 1. What is said about those whom the Lord loveth? "Whom the Lord loveth, he correcteth."
2. What is the value of wisdom? "It is better than silver, gold, or rubies."
3. What is the result of wisdom? "Length of days, riches, honour, pleasantness, peace."
4. What are wisdom and discretion found to be by those who keep them? "Life to the soul, and grace to the neck."
5. What is the exhortation of the Golden Text? "Trust in the Lord with all thine heart," etc.

DOCTRINAL SUGGESTION.—The love of God.

CATECHISM QUESTIONS.

What other proof is there that the Bible is inspired?
Its wonderful and heavenly power over the human heart.
How must we then esteem the Scriptures?
As the true word of God, the sure and sufficient rule of faith and practice.

ASTONISHED AT THE COLD.

The natives of tropical countries are seldom so much astonished as when they are first introduced to snow and ice. The congealing of ice is a phenomenon they are slow to comprehend. A few months ago Sir William Macgregor enticed several New Guinea natives to the hitherto unscaled summit of Mount Owen Stanley, the loftiest peak in British Australia. On its barren summit, nearly a thousand feet above the zone of vegetation, big icicles were found, greatly to the astonishment of the natives, who were much startled when they touched them, and insisted that their fingers had been burned. A year ago, when Mr. Ehlers ascended Mount Kilma-Njaro, in Africa, his native porters, who had lived all their lives near the base of the great mountain, pulled off the boots with which they had been provided, as they approached the snow-line, and plunged merrily into the snow in their bare feet. They lost no time in plunging out again, and lay writhing on the ground, insisting that their feet had been severely burned. Some of the Central African natives, who had been introduced into Germany,

mistook, last winter, the first snow-storm they saw for a flight of white butterflies. Lieutenant von Francois says the mistake was a very natural one. One day, when he was ascending a tributary of the Congo, he saw for the first time the air filled with white butterflies, and he says the spectacle closely resembles a gentle fall of snow. It is said that the Alaskan Eskimo thinks the weather is uncomfortably sultry when the temperature is at the freezing point, while the Central African shivers in great distress in a temperature of sixty degrees above zero.—Sun.

Minding Mother.

Boys! just listen for a moment
To a word I have to say:
Manhood's gates are just before you,
Drawing nearer every day;
Bear in mind while you are passing
O'er that intervening span,
That the boy who minds his mother
Seldom makes a wicked man!

There are many slips and failures
In this world we're living in;
Those who start with prospects fairest
Oft are overcome by sin;
But I'm certain that you'll notice,
If the facts you'll closely scan,
That the boy who minds his mother
Seldom makes a wicked man!

Then, be guided by her counsel,
It will never lead astray;
Rest assured she has your welfare
In her thoughts both night and day;
Don't forget that she has loved you
Since the day your life began.
Ah! the boy who minds his mother
Seldom makes a wicked man!

WONDER WHAT HE'LL DO NEXT.

Two sailors once went with a tame parrot to a show in Tokio, Japan, where a Japanese was giving an exhibition of sleight-of-hand tricks. At the end of each one the sailors said: "Now, isn't that clever? Wonder what he'll do next?" The parrot heard this so often that he picked it up. Presently the Japanese, while trying to keep in the air a number of bamboo sticks lighted at both ends, dropped one on a heap of fire-crackers and bombs, which exploded and sent the parrot up about a hundred yards. As the bird came down it shrieked, "Wasn't that clever? Wonder what he'll do next?"

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