

A clergyman, having been inducted into a living in Kent, took occasion during his first sermon to introduce the word "optics." At the conclusion of the service a farmer who was present thanked him for his discourse, but intimated that he had made a mistake in one word, softening down the severity of his criticism by saying, "We all know very well, sir, what you meant." On the clergyman making further inquiries about the word, the farmer replied: "What you call hopsticks, in this part of the country we call hop-poles."

"Mr. Dickson are you a member of the African church?" "Not dis year, sir. I jined that church in good faith. I give ten dollars to de preaching of the gospel the first year, and de church people all call me 'Brudder Dickson.' De second year my business was not so good, and I only give five dollars. Dat, year de people call me 'Mr. Dickson.' Well, sah, de third year, I feel very poor, sickness in de family and I didn't gib nuffin for de preachin.' Well, sah, arter that they call me 'ole nigger Dickson,' an' I left 'em."

"A CERTAIN SOMETHING."—Anxious mamma: "This will be your first ball my child. Endeavour to make a good impression." Ingenious darling: "Mamma, I heard uncle Ned say that when you were a young girl, although you were not in the least good-looking or brilliant, you had a certain something about you that fascinated everybody. Won't you lend me that certain something for to-night, please, mamma?"

BOSTONITE OR BOASTONITE?—An English gentleman in Boston who had been quoting Shakspeare was asked by a Bostonite for the loan of his plays. After some time the book was returned to him. "Well," he asked, "and what do you think of it?" "I thought it simply splendid," answered the American, adding, "why, I don't believe there are half a dozen men in Boston who could have written it!"

LEGAL AND ILLEGAL.—A well-known judge not long since interested himself actively on behalf of a member of his former circuit who happened also, a contemporary tells us, to be the son of a peer, and succeeded in obtaining for him an important lucrative appointment. The noble parent, full of gratitude called upon the judge to thank him for his exertions, and said that he felt all the more obliged because his son had never done much at the Bar, adding, with unconscious and unintentional sarcasm, "I suppose he was too much of a gentleman."

Small boy (entering shop.) "I want a penny-worth o' canary-seed." Shopkeeper (who knows the boy): "Is it for your mother?" Small boy (contemptuously): "No! It's for the bird."

Mr. Musclejohn, hearing that a neighbor was reporting that he was a man of violent temper, excitedly said: "He ought to know better than to spread such a slander, for I knocked him down only yesterday for merely hinting it in my presence."

### Instinct in Birds.

No subject connected with the history of birds furnishes more interesting material for study than that of instinct. Young birds of different species show that they have very different degrees of instinctive knowledge. Some are able to take the entire care of themselves, and do not need a mother to watch over them; others, on the contrary, are perfectly helpless, and need teaching before they can do anything for themselves, except breathe, and swallow what is put into their mouths. The young chicken, a short time after it leaves the egg, knows how to take care of itself nearly as well as does the year-old bird. It can run after its mother, use its eyes, pick up food, and answer the call of the old hen; and it does all this without instruction. How different it is in all these respects from the young barn-swallow! This is blind, and unable to run, or even to stand, knowing only enough to open its mouth when it hears the old bird return to the nest, and to swallow the food placed in its open bill. Far from knowing by instinct how to use its wings, as the young chick does its legs, it does not learn this until it is well grown, and has had several lessons in flying; and even then it flies badly, and improves only after long practice. After it has learned to fly, it is still very helpless and baby-like, and very different from the active, bright-eyed, independent little chick of the barn-yard—and, indeed, the young of all the *Rasbors*, or scratching birds, such as the hen, the quail, the partridge, the pheasant and the turkey.

The scratching birds are not the only ones which can take care of themselves at an early age. This is true of the running birds, such as the ostrich; and the same is the case with many of the wading birds, such as the woodcock; and among the swimming birds there are several kinds that take full care of themselves soon after leaving the shell.

Far from standing in any need of instruction, young ducks take to the water by instinct, even when they have been brought up by a hen; and they know that they are perfectly safe upon it, although the anxious hen tries in every way to restrain them and to call them back.

There are many ways in which some of our young birds show their really wonderful instincts, but there is nothing more curious in this respect than the habits of the little chickens, which most of us have opportunities of noticing—if we choose to take the trouble. These little creatures, almost as soon as they are born, understand what their mother "clucks" to them; they know that they must hide when a hawk is about; they often scratch the ground for food before they see their mother or any other chicken do so; they are careful not to catch bees instead of flies; and they show their early smartness in many ways which are well worth watching.

But, sometimes, a brood of these youngsters find something that puzzles them, as when they meet with a hard-shelled beetle, who looks too big to eat and yet too small for a playmate.—*Prof. W. H. Brooks, in St. Nicholas.*

### The Bumble-Bee and Grasshopper.

A bumble-bee, yellow as gold,  
Sat perched on a red-clover top,  
When a grasshopper, wiry and old,  
Came along with a skip and a hop.  
"Good-morrow!" cried he, "Mr. Bumble-Bee!  
You seem to have come to a stop."

"We people that work,"  
Said the bee with a jerk,  
"Find a benefit sometimes in stopping;  
Only insects like you,  
Who have nothing to do,  
Can keep up a perpetual hopping."

The grasshopper paused on his way,  
And thoughtfully hunched up his knees;  
"Why trouble this sunshiny day,  
Quoth he, "with reflections like these?  
I follow the trade for which I was made;  
We all can't be wise bumble-bees."

"There's a time to be sad,  
And a time to be glad;  
A time both for working and stopping;  
For men to make money,  
For you to make honey,  
And for me to do nothing but hopping."

### A Tree Agent Treed.

The July *Scribner* contains the concluding installment of Mr. F. R. Stockton's droll "Rudder Grange" sketches, which are to be published in book form in the fall. One of the incidents of this last sketch is quoted below. The proprietor of Rudder Grange, returning from a drive with Euphemia, his wife, finds a tramp in one of his trees and a tree agent in another near by, with his savage dog, Lord Edward, plying between. The following scene ensues:

"This one," said Pomona, "is a tree man—"  
"I should think so," said I, as I caught sight of a person in gray trowsers standing among the branches of a cherry tree not very far from the kitchen door. The tree was not a large one, and the branches were not strong enough to allow him to sit down on them, although they supported him well enough, as he stood close to the trunk just out of reach of Lord Edward.

"This is a very unpleasant position, sir," said he, when I reached the tree. "I simply came into your yard on a matter of business, and finding that raging beast attacking a person in a tree, I had barely time to get up into this tree myself before he dashed at me. Luckily I was out of his reach; but I very much fear I have lost some of my property."

"No he hasn't," said Pomona. "It was a big book he dropped. I picked it up and took it into the house. It's full of pictures of pears and peaches and flowers. I've been lookin' at it. That's how I knew what he was. And there was no call for his gittin up a tree. Lord Edward

never would have gone after him if he hadn't run as if he had guilt on his soul."

"I suppose, then," said I, addressing the individual in the cherry tree, "that you came here to sell me some trees?"

"Yes, sir," said he quickly, "trees, shrubs, vines, evergreens—everything suitable for a gentleman's country villa. I can sell you something quite remarkable, sir, in the way of cherry trees—French ones, just imported; bear fruit three times the size of anything that could be produced on a tree like this. And pears—fruit of the finest flavor and enormous size—"

"Yes," said Pomona. "I seen them in the book. But they must grow on a ground-vine. No tree couldn't hold such pears as them."

Here Euphemia reproved Pomona's forwardness, and I invited the tree agent to get down out of the tree.

"Thank you," said he; "but not while that dog is loose. If you will kindly chain him up, I will get my book and show you specimens of some of the finest small fruit in the world, all imported from the first nurseries of Europe—the Red-gold Amber Muscat grape—the—"

"Oh, please let him down!" said Euphemia, her eyes beginning to sparkle.

I slowly walked toward the tramp tree, revolving various matters in my mind. We had not spent much money on the place during the winter, and we now had a small sum which we intended to use for the advantage of the farm, but had not yet decided what to do with it. It behooved me to be careful.

I told Pomona to run and get me the dog chain, and I stood under the tree, listening, as well as I could, to the tree agent talking to Euphemia, and paying no attention to the impassioned entreaties of the tramp in the crotch above me. When the chain was brought, I hooked one end of it in Lord Edward's collar, and then I took a firm grasp of the other. Telling Pomona to bring the tree agent's book from the house, I called to that individual to get down from his tree. He promptly obeyed, and, taking the book from Pomona, began to show the pictures to Euphemia.

"You had better hurry, sir," I called out. "I can't hold this dog very long." And, indeed, Lord Edward had made a run toward the agent, which jerked me very forcibly in his direction. But a movement by the tramp had quickly brought the dog back to his more desired victim.

"If you will just tie up that dog, sir," said the agent, "and come this way, I would like to show you the Melinagua pear—dissolves in the mouth like snow, sir; trees will bear next year."

"Oh, come look at the Royal Sparkling Ruby grape!" cried Euphemia. "It glows in the sun like a gem."

"Yes," said the agent, "and fills the air with fragrance during the whole month of September—"

"I tell you," I shouted, "I can't hold this dog another minute! The chain is cutting the skin off my hands. Run, sir, run! I'm going to let go!"

"Run! run!" cried Pomona. "Fly for your life!"

The agent now began to be frightened, and shut up his book.

"If you only could see the plates, sir, I'm sure

"Are you ready?" I cried, as the dog, excited by Pomona's wild shouts, made a bolt in his direction.

"Good day, if I must," said the agent, as he hurried to the gate. But there he stopped.

"There is nothing, sir," he said, "that would so improve your place as a row of the Spitzenberg Sweet-scented Balsam Fir along this fence. I'll sell you three-year-old trees—"

"He's loose!" I shouted, as I dropped the chain.

In a second the agent was on the other side of the gate. Lord Edward made a dash toward him; but, stopping suddenly, flew back to the tree of the tramp.

"If you should conclude, sir," said the tree agent, looking over the fence, "to have a row of these firs along here—"

"My good sir," said I, "there is no row of firs there now, and the fence is not very high. My dog, as you see, is very much excited, and I cannot answer for the consequences if he takes it into his head to jump over."

The tree agent turned and walked slowly away.