

LITTLE FOLKS

His Good Shot.

Once, so the story goes, there was a boy who was a good marksman with a stone, or a sling, or a bow, or an air-gun, or anything he took aim with. He was very proud of his skill, too, and he went about all day aiming at everything he came near. Even at his meals he would think about good shots at the clock, or the cat, or the flies on the wall, or anything he chanced to see.

Near where he dwelt there lived a little bird that had a nest of five young birds. So many large mouths in small heads always open wide for food, kept her hard at work. From dawn to dark she flew here and there, over fields and woods and roads, getting worms and flies and seeds, and such things as she knew were good for her young birds. Every three or four minutes she came flying back to the nest with something in her bill for one of her little nestlings. It was a great wonder what a quantity of food those five small things could eat. What she brought each day would have filled that nest full up to the top, yet they ate it all and asked for more before daylight next morning.

Though it was such hard work she was glad to do it, and went on day after day, always flying off with a gay chirp, and back with some kind of food; and though she did not eat much herself, except what stuck to her bill after she had fed them, yet she never let them want, not even the smallest and weakest of them. The little fellow could not chirp as loudly as the others, yet she always fed him first.

One day, when she had picked up a worm and perched a minute on the wall before flying to her nest, the good marksman saw her, and, of course, aimed at her and hit her in the side. She was much hurt and in great pain, yet she fluttered and limped and dragged herself to the foot of the tree where her nest was, but she could not fly up to her nest, for her wing was broken.

She chirped a little, and her young ones heard her, and as they were hungry they chirped back loudly, and she knew all their voices, even the weak note of the smallest of all; but she could not come up to them, nor even tell them

why she could not come. And when she heard the call of the small one she tried again to rise, but only one of her wings would move, and that just turned her over on the side of the broken wing.

All the rest of that day the little mother lay there, and when she chirped her children answered, and when they chirped she answered, only when the good marksman chanced to pass by then she kept still. But her voice grew fainter and weaker, and late in the day the young ones could not hear it any more, but she could still hear them.

Some time in the night the mother bird died, and in the morning she lay there quite cold and stiff, with her dim eyes still turned up to the nest where her young ones were dy-



SHE CAME FLYING BACK TO THE NEST WITH SOMETHING IN HER BILL.

ing of hunger. But they did not die so soon. All day long they slept until their hunger waked them up, and then called until they were so tired they fell asleep again.

And the next night was very cold, and they missed their mother's warm breast, and before day dawn they all died, one after the other, excepting the smallest, which was lowest down in the nest, and in the morning he pushed up his head and opened his yellow bill to be fed; but there was no one to feed him, and so he died too at last, with his mouth wide open and empty.

And so the good marksman had killed six birds with one shot—the mother and her five young ones. Do you not think he must be a proud boy?—'Silver Link.'

Kathie's Brave Defence.

(Mary L. Wyatt, in 'Union Signal'.)

It was in one of the newly laid out towns of Wisconsin that the Slocums lived. The main street on which their house stood was a broad one, and the house lots on

either side were quite large and were not fenced in.

The centre of the town where the school house, stores and railway station were grouped, was a quarter of a mile north of Mr. Slocum's house. There was one church, which boasted of a clock, and this clock, whose tones could be heard a long distance, was the pride of the town.

It was early in September, and the day was warm.

Mr. Slocum harnessed Lightfoot, the colt, as he had been called for ten years, and brought the carriage to the door. 'Come, mother,' he called to Mrs. Slocum, 'we'd better be starting.'

Mrs. Slocum came from the kitchen, where she had been giving Kathie, her twelve-year-old daughter, some instructions.

'I'm all ready,' she said. 'Good-bye, Kathie, have the children's dinner ready for them, won't you. They are always so hungry when they get home from school.'

'All right, I will,' said Kathie, as her father and mother rode away to attend the funeral of an aunt in another town.

Kathie heard the town clock striking eleven as they rode away. She soon had everything ready for the children's dinner, and seated herself near the south window. This was her favorite window, for here she could look across the broad fields and far up the wide street. She liked to look out, too, and watch the chickens and doves and kittens in their own dooryard. There were six beehives back of the large woodpile, and Kathie loved to watch the bees flying in and out of the hive.

All was so pleasant and peaceful that it seemed to her young mind that no place on earth could be more beautiful. There had been no frost yet that season, and the bright geraniums and other flowers were still in bloom. Kathie gave a sigh of contentment and let her book drop into her lap while she looked on the beautiful scene out of doors.

The large clock in the corner of the room ticked solemnly, and that, with the buzzing of a fly, were all the sounds to be heard within the house.

Kathie had been ill, and so when the schools opened after the vaca-