

CHILDREN · AND · FORBID · THEM · NOT · TO · COME ·

PEACE ON EARTH · CANADA · GOOD WILL TOWARD MEN ·

SUFFER · LITTLE · UNTO · ME ·

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The Cuckoo.

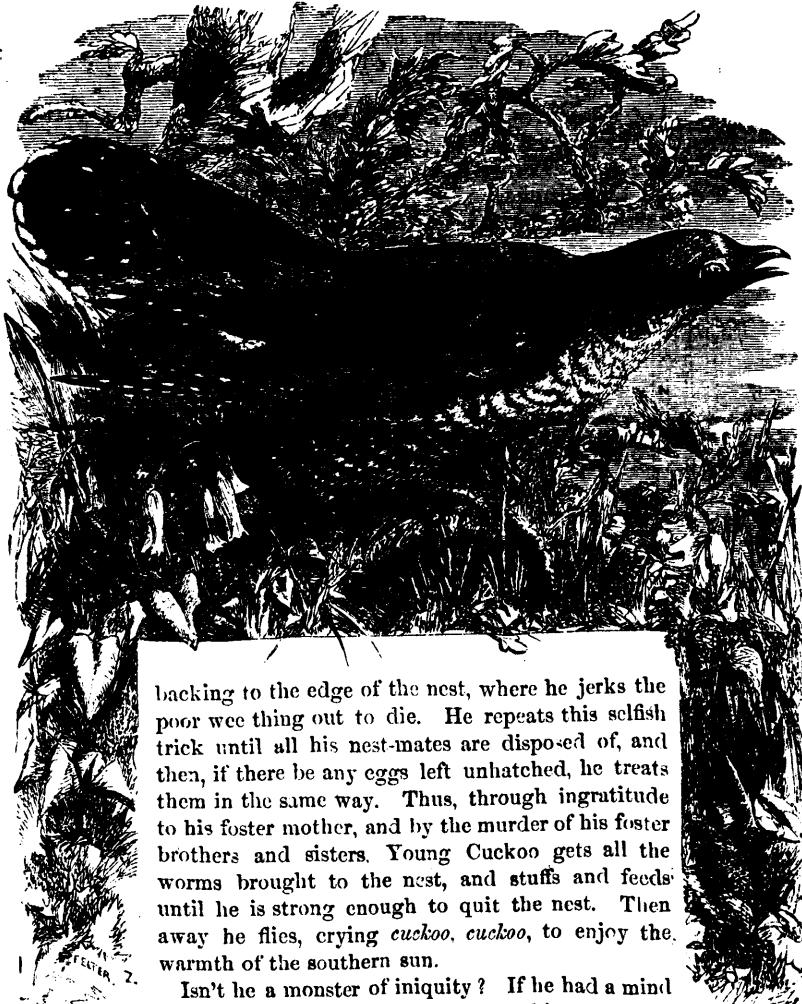
BY THE CHILD'S PHILOSOPHER.

You never saw this bird, I dare say, my little friend, for the very good reason that it is not a native of America. We have, to be sure, the CAROLINA CUCKOO, sometimes called the COW-BIRD, because its note sounds like *houe, houe, houe*. Then we have the RED-HEADED GROUND CUCKOO, which is found in our swamps and thickest woods. But the cuckoo proper never emigrated from the old world. He sticks to our fatherland. He makes Spain, Italy, and Southern France his home. Yet he takes a summer trip to England, and other northern countries, and gives the people a few specimens of his musical powers, stays long enough for his lady to lay her eggs in the nests of other birds, and then away he flies back to warmer climes.

Mrs. Cuckoo is not a very good mother. She never hatches her own eggs, but drops them very slyly into the nests of other and smaller birds, and leaves them to be hatched out by a foster mother. Why she does this I cannot tell you. Perhaps, because Mr. Cuckoo is too lazy to build her a nest; or, may be, because she is too restless to stay long enough in one place to rear a brood of young cuckoos: or, possibly, because she is in a hurry to get back to warmer regions. But whatever may be her motive, it is clearly her habit to intrude her eggs into the nests of other birds, one here and another there, and then leave them to take their chances.

What do the other birds do? They hatch them, poor innocent things, because they don't know them from their own. They can't count, you know, and the cuckoo's egg is about the same size as their own, although they come from a mother nearly four times as large as they are. Hence the strange egg is not suspected, and the little bird sits upon it as patiently as if it were her own.

Now a cuckoo's egg hatches quicker than the eggs of the little bird which warms it into life. So it comes to pass that the cuckoo is born first, and gets all the worms which the father bird brings to the nest. By and by the other eggs are hatched, and then the greedy young cuckoo pokes his tail under one of the little fellows, and, by the help of his wings, hoists him on his back. He then goes



backing to the edge of the nest, where he jerks the poor wee thing out to die. He repeats this selfish trick until all his nest-mates are disposed of, and then, if there be any eggs left unhatched, he treats them in the same way. Thus, through ingratitude to his foster mother, and by the murder of his foster brothers and sisters, Young Cuckoo gets all the worms brought to the nest, and stuffs and feeds until he is strong enough to quit the nest. Then away he flies, crying *cuckoo, cuckoo*, to enjoy the warmth of the southern sun.

Isn't he a monster of iniquity? If he had a mind to think, and a conscience to warn him, I should reply, Yes. But, you see, he hasn't. He has nothing but his instincts, and doesn't know nor care a button about right and wrong. And, therefore, while we can't love his naughty ways we can't blame him.

Now if you were to act toward your protectors and companions as the cuckoo does to his, you would be wicked indeed. You know that ingratitude and cruelty are big crimes. Your heart tells you that. God made you to be grateful, kind, and loving. I hope you will be all this, and that you will never fail to love Him who gave you the noble nature you possess, to be grateful to your loving parents, and kind to all your brothers, sisters, and friends.

A Smile.

LITTLE Daisy's mamma was trying to explain to her the meaning of *smile*. "O yes! I know," said the child, "it is a whisper of a laugh."

What Ella Saw in the Fire.

"O, ELLA, do come and help me make this dress for dolly! Look, I can't cut out the sleeve right, and I know nurse showed you how to do it the other day."

It was Ella's little sister Annie who spoke.

"I can't," said Ella; "I'm busy."

"But this wont take you a moment, and it does not matter when you finish that story-book."

"I can't do it, I tell you, Annie," returned Ella, crossly.

"Then I must ask nurse," said Annie. "Nurse," she continued, turning to a kind-looking woman who was rocking baby in her arms, "will you cut out this sleeve for me?"

"Not just now, Miss Annie; I am afraid baby will cry again if I put him out of my arms. Perhaps Miss Ella will do it for you."

"Ella says she can't, nurse."

"Miss Ella," said nurse, "you surely will help your sister, as I am busy with baby. It wont take you long, and you will be doing a great service to her and to me."

"I don't care if I shall," said Ella; "I want to go on reading my book."

"O, Miss Ella!" said nurse, gravely, "don't you know that we are all put into the world to help one another, and that we should always be ready to do so? Not one of us can get on alone. Think what you would do if nobody helped you."

Ella did not speak, but sat pouting by the fire. "I remember a beautiful story," continued nurse, "that my mother used to tell me when I was a little girl. It is about helping one another."

"Will you tell it us, please, nurse?" asked Annie.

"Yes, if you wish it," replied nurse; and then she began the story.

"Once upon a time a man went a long journey. His road lay through beautiful valleys and over high mountains. All of a sudden he came to a part of the road where there was a large piece of rock that entirely blocked up the way. He tried to get over it, but it was too large. He tried to roll it away, but it was too heavy. While he was thinking what to do next, another traveler came. He, too, tried to move the stone. But he was not strong enough. At length two more travelers came to the