

LITTLE FOLKS

A Pair of Jacks and Jills.

(B.M. Peirse, in 'Child's Companion')

There was great excitement at the Cottage, for the new rector had bought two swans.

'And where the poor creatures are to get water enough with only that bit of a pond, I can't think,' ended up Millie the housemaid, who brought the news.

The Rectory was a mile away up the dusty road at the top of the hill. The Cottage lay in the hollow with a wood opposite, and the softest emerald-green velvety lawn

begged for a bowl of water and bread to feed them with. Alas! the swans, though they took advantage of this hospitality, were not gracious; perhaps the walk had ruffled their tempers, but they met all overtures with such hisses and stretchings of necks and flappings of wings, that the twins shrank back, and nurse firmly declined to step outside the door.

The family went to church by the back entrance, leaving the pretty cross visitors in front; and after service the rector was told

Jill; mind where ye be a-goin', ye silly birds,' said he.

Then humbly and meekly the big bullying creatures obeyed, and the way they flopped down the four steps before their tiny driver was the most undignified thing you ever saw.

Mother and nurse and Millie and cook and the twins came running out to watch and laugh. Mother looked a little ashamed, and said it was 'just as well daddy wasn't at home to tease them,' and nurse said, 'Of all things!' and Millie and cook said, 'Well, I never!' at the same moment and had to have a wish. But Jack and Jill looked at each other.

'They were called after us—they *ought* to have behaved better, and that boy was *so* little! If they come again *we'll* take them back, our two selves, wiff two sticks,' said they.

Six Things Behind.

('Herald and Presbyter.')

'Rufus,' said his mother, 'did you mail the letter I gave you last evening?'

'Oh, mother, I forgot it. I meant to, but just then I had to go and get some new shoestrings, so it went out of my mind.'

'But didn't I speak of those things yesterday morning?'

'Yes; but just then father had called me to ask if I had weeded the pansy-bed the night before.'

'And had you?'

'No, mother; I was just then writing the letter you said must go to grandma—'

'I thought you were to write that on Saturday.'

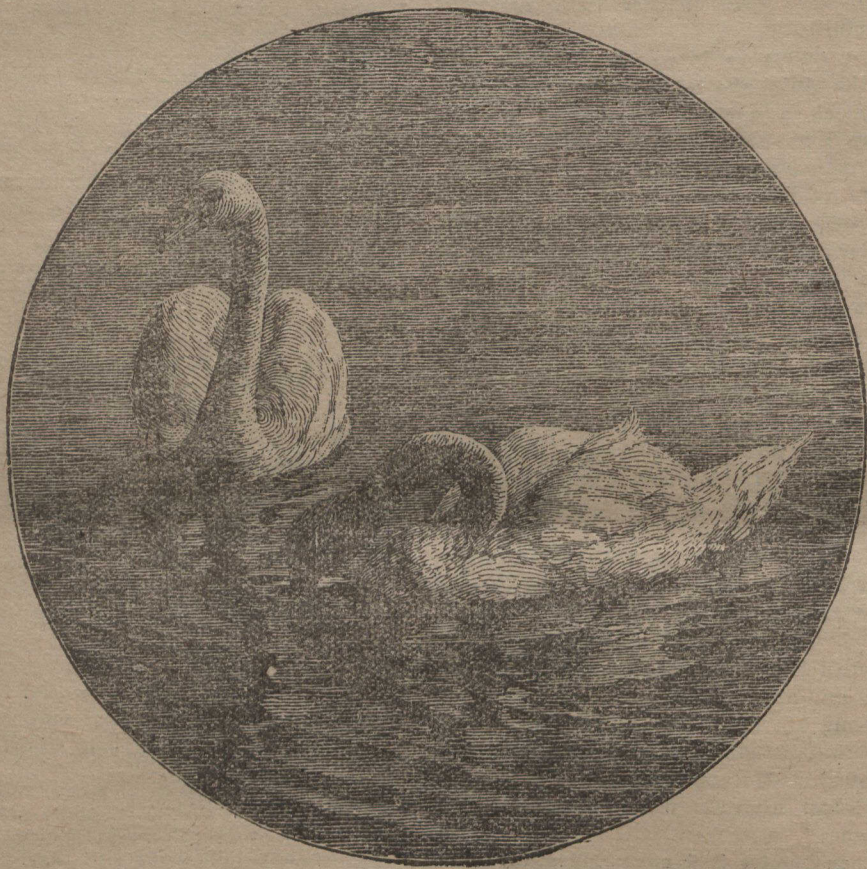
'I meant to, but I had to do some examples that I didn't do on Friday, so I hadn't time.'

'Rufus,' called his brother, 'didn't you nail the broken slat on the rabbit pen yesterday?'

'Oh!' Rufus sprang up in dismay, 'I was just going to, but I hadn't watered the house-plants, and I went to do that, and then—'

'The rabbits are all out.'

Rufus hastened to join in the hunt for the pets. In the course of the search he came upon two tennis racquets which he had 'meant to' bring in the night before, and they were in bad condition.



possible, four steps up from the road through the little gate.

Jack and Jill, the twins, longed to see the swans.

'May we go to the Rectory garden after church on Sunday an' see them, mummie?' they asked.

But when Sunday came the swans had left the Rectory. Wearied no doubt of the tiny pond, they made their escape and wandered away too; they were tired of the long dusty road, and when they scented the sweet soft turf of the Cottage lawn, thought it next best to what they desired. So they took possession of the lawn; no one saw them come up the steps, but the gate had been left open and there they were.

Jack and Jill were radiant, and

where his lost pets were, and promised to send for them.

'Please send soon,' said mother, 'for we can't get into the garden.'

'Yes, please do,' added Jill, 'for I want to sit there—though they are lovely dear things,' she added.

Stealthily the family returned by the back gate, for the swans had a way of coming round the house to look into things that was embarrassing. Paddy, the terrier, was in the field, quite discomfited.

Presently a ragged urchin came up the steps with a little stick.

'Who's that?' cried Jack from the window.

But the boy took no notice; he prodded first one great bird and then the other.

'Come along, Jack—come on,