



PRIDE OF DRESS.

A FABLE.

A LITTLE boy and girl were once seated on a flowery bank, and talked proudly about their dress.

"See," said the boy, "what a beautiful new hat I have got! what a fine blue jacket and trousers! and what a nice pair of shoes! It is not every one who is dressed so finely as I am!"

"Indeed, sir," said the little girl, "I think I am dressed finer than you, for I have on a silk hat and pelisse, and a fine feather in my hat; I know that my dress cost a great deal of money."

"Not so much as mine," said the boy, "I know."

"Hold your peace!" said a caterpillar crawling



near the hedge; "you have neither of you any reason to be so proud of your clothes, for they are only second-hand, and have all been worn by some creature or other, of which you think but meanly, before they were put upon you. Why, that silk hat first wrapped up such a worm as I am."

"There, miss, what do you say to that?" said the boy.

"And the feather," exclaimed a bird, perched upon a tree, "was stolen from, or cast off by, one of my race."



"What do you say to that, miss?" repeated the boy. "Well, my clothes were neither worn by birds or worms."

"True," said a sheep grazing close by, "but they were worn on the back of some of my family before they were yours; and as for your hat, I know that the beavers have supplied the fur for that article; and my friends, the calves and oxen in that field, were killed not merely for their flesh to eat, but also to get their skins to make shoes for you."

See the folly of being proud of our clothes, since we are indebted to the meanest creatures for them! and even then we could not use them if God did not give the wisdom to contrive the best way of making them fit for wear and the means of procuring them for our comfort.

THE SWALLOW'S NEST.

THE celebrated Baron Cuvier, when a young man, was tutor in a nobleman's family. His own room overlooked the garden, and every morning at break of day he opened his window to inhale the refreshing air. One morning he observed that two swallows had begun to build their nest in the very corner of his little window. The male bird brought the moistened clay in his beak, which the female kneaded, and with the addition of some chips of

straw and hay, she built her little lodging with wonderful skill. As soon as the nest was finished they departed to a neighboring wood, and did not return till the end of twelve or fifteen days.

Alas! changes had taken place during their absence. While the swallows were laboring with such assiduity in building a house, Cuvier had noticed two sparrows perched at a short distance, busily watching them. When the swallows went for their country excursion, the sparrows took no pains to conceal their odious scheme; they impudently took possession of the nest, which was empty, and without an owner to defend it, and established themselves there as though they had been its builders. Cuvier observed that the cunning sparrows were never both out of the nest at the same time. One of the usurpers always remained as sentinel, with his head placed at the opening which served for a door, and with his large beak interdicted the entrance of any other bird except his companion.

The swallows returned in due time to their nest; and their surprise may be imagined at finding the nest, on which they had bestowed so much care, occupied. The cock bird, moved with indignation and anger, rushed upon the nest to chase away the usurpers; but he found himself met by the formidable beak of the sparrow, who at that moment guarded the stolen property. What could the slim beak of the swallow do against the redoubtable pincers of the sparrow, armed with a double and sharpened point? Very soon the poor proprietor, dispossessed and beaten back, retreated with his head covered with blood, and its neck nearly stripped of its feathers. He returned to the side of his wife, with whom he appeared for some minutes to hold counsel, after which they flew away into the air and quickly disappeared.

The female sparrow came back soon afterward; her mate recounted all that had passed, and both seemed highly delighted. Presently the female went forth again, and collected in haste a much larger quantity of provisions than usual; and after having completed the supplies for a siege, two pointed beaks instead of one defended the entrance to the nest.

Cries, however, began to fill the air, and an assemblage of swallows gathered together on a neighboring roof. Cuvier distinctly recognized the dispossessed couple, who appeared to relate to each new-comer the robbery of the sparrow. In a little while two hundred swallows had arrived at the scene of conflict.

While the little army was forming and deliberating, all at once a cry of distress came from an adjacent window. A young swallow, doubtless inexperienced, instead of taking part in the counsels of his brethren, was chasing some flies which were buzzing about a bunch of castaway flowers before the window. The pupils of Cuvier had stretched a net there to catch sparrows, and one of the claws of the swallow was caught in it. At the cry which he made a score of his brethren flew to the rescue; but all their efforts were in vain; the desperate struggles which the prisoner made to free himself from the fatal trap only drew the ends tighter, and confined his foot more firmly. Suddenly a detachment took wing, and retiring about a hundred paces, returned rapidly, and, one by one, gave a peck at the snare, which each time, owing to the determined manner of the attack, received a sharp twitch. Not one of the swallows missed its aim, so that after half an hour of this persevering and ingenious labor the chafed string broke, and the captive, rescued from the snare, went joyously to mingle with his companions.

Throughout this scene the sparrows made not the slightest movement, but with their two large beaks steadily guarded the narrow entrance to the nest.

The council of the swallows, while a certain number of them were succoring their companion, had continued to deliberate gravely: as soon as all were united they took flight, and Cuvier felt convinced they had given up the field, or rather the nest, to

the robbers, who had so fraudulently possessed themselves of it.

Judge of his surprise when, in the course of a few seconds, he beheld a crowd of two or three hundred swallows arrive, and with the rapidity of thought throw themselves before the nest, discharge at it some mud which they had brought in their bills, and retire to give place to another company, which repeated the same maneuver. They fired at two or three inches from the nest, thus preventing the sparrows from giving them any blows with their beaks. The mud continued to thicken more and more on the nest, and, although the sparrows made desperate efforts of self-defense, their enemies soon succeeded in perfectly closing up the nest.

But they had not yet done. They continued to carry up moistened clay till they had built a second nest over the very opening of the besieged one; it was raised by a hundred beaks at once, and then occupied by the dispossessed swallows.

The dishonest sparrows paid for their theft with their lives. A sudden and a miserable end was theirs; teaching us—if we will be taught by this true and curious story about birds—that "honesty is always the best policy."

For the Sunday-School Advocate.

THE VOICE OF OUR DEAD SCHOOLMATE.

ONE sweet flower has drooped and faded;
One sweet youthful voice is fled;
One fair brow the grave has shaded;
Our dear schoolmate now is dead.

But we feel no thought of sadness,
For we know he's happy now;
He has knelt in soul-felt gladness
Where the holy angels bow.

He has gone to heaven before us,
But he turns and waves his hand,
Pointing to the glories o'er us
In that happy "spirit-land."

May our footsteps never falter
In the path that he has trod;
May we worship at the altar
Of the great and living God.

OUR PRAYER.

O FOR a holy fear
Of every evil way;
That we may never venture near
The path that leads astray.
Wherever it begins
It ends in death and woe;
And he who suffers little sins
A sinner's doom shall know.

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