

OUR YOUNG FOLKS.

HOW A BEAR CAUGHT FISH.

Very few people, says a Maine paper, know that bears take to water naturally. They roam over the mountains and through the forests, dig open rotten logs for ants and worms and secure all the hornet's nests they can, and tear them to pieces and eat the young grubs, pick berries of all descriptions and eat them, and would seem to belong to the dry land animals. The fact is different. They love the water, not, perhaps, as well as the moose and deer, but better than most dry land animals.

They are very fond of fish, and are expert fishermen, and they show more cunning and instinct, if not reason, than many city chaps I have seen fishing about the lakes.

I came once suddenly upon a large bear in a thick swamp, lying upon a large hollow log across a brook, fishing, and he was so much interested in his sport that he did not notice me until I had approached very near to him, so that I could see exactly how he baited his hook and played his fish. He fished in this wise:

There was a large hole through the log on which he lay, and he thrust his forearm through the hole and held his open paw in the water, and waited for the fish to gather around and into it, and when full he clutched his fist and brought up a handful of fish, and sat and ate them with great gusto; then down with the paw again, and so on. The brook was fairly alive with little trout and red-sided suckers, and some black suckers, so the old fellow let himself out on the fishes. He did not eat their heads. There was quite a pile of them on the log. I suppose the oil in his paw attracted the fish and baited them even better than a fly hook, and his toe nails were his hooks, and sharp ones too, and once grabbed the fish are sure to stay.

They also catch frogs in these forest brooks, and drink of the pure water in hot summer days and love to lie and wallow in the muddy swamps as well as our pigs in the mire. They often cross narrow places in lakes by swimming and also rivers, and seem to love to take a turn in the water. I once saw one swimming from the mainland to the big island in Mooselmagantic Lake, with just a streak of his back out of the water looking like a log moving along. Sometimes you see only their heads out of water; at other times half of their bodies are to be seen. We account for this difference by their condition. If fat the grease helps to buoy them up; if lean, they sink lower in the water.

ANIMALS FOR CHILDREN.

If you introduce a new cat, or dog, or bird into a nursery, where a group of children are playing with dolls, or building blocks, or tin soldiers—everything is at once deserted for the living creature, which must be admired, and caressed, and fed, and is an object of never ceasing interest. Even a homely bull dog will thus come to be loved, and we have known one which was worthy of all the affection bestowed upon him, and showed in return the most perfect fidelity and gentleness toward

the little people who used to play with him.

Of course, in selecting animals which are to be pets and playmates of children, it is exceedingly important to choose those which may be relied upon to be always faithful and friendly.

By their early acquaintance with animals thus obtained, children unconsciously acquire considerable knowledge of natural history, and their experience with their pets is not only a pleasure in itself, but a step in education.

THE PRICE OF A DRINK.

"Five cents a glass!" does any one think,
That that is really the price of a drink?
"Five cents a glass," I hear you say;
"Why that isn't very much to pay."
Oh, no, indeed, 'tis a very small sum
You are passing over 'twixt finger and thumb;
And if that were all that you gave away,
It wouldn't be very much to pay.

The price of a drink? let him decide
Who has lost his courage and lost his pride,
And lies a grovelling heap of clay,
Not far removed from a beast to-day.
The price of a drink? Let that one tell,
Who sleeps to-night in a murderer's cell,
And feels within him the fires of hell,
Honour and virtue, love and truth,
All the glory and pride of youth,
Honour of manhood, the wreath of fame,
High endeavour, and noble aim—
These are the treasures thrown away,
As the price of a drink from day to day.

"Five cents a glass!" how Satan laughed,
As o'er the bar the young man quaffed,
The beaded liquor, for the demon knew
The terrible work that drink would do;
And before the morning the victim lay,
With his life-blood swiftly ebbing away;
And that was the price he paid, alas!
For the pleasure of taking a social glass.

The price of a drink! if you want to know
What some are willing to pay for it, go
Through the wretched tenement over there,
Where dingy windows and broken stairs,
Where foul disease, like a vampire crawls
With outstretched wings o'er the mouldy walls,
There Poverty dwells with her hungry brood,
Wild-eyed as demons for lack of food;
There Shamo, in a corner crouches low,
There Violence deals its cruel blow;
And innocent ones are thus accursed,
To pay the price of another's thirst.

"Five cents a glass!" Oh, if that were all,
The sacrifice would indeed be small;
But the money's worth is the least amount
We pay; and whoever will keep account,
Will learn the terrible waste and blight
That follows this ruinous appetite.
"Five cents a glass!" Does any one think
That that is really the price of a drink?

THE NEST IN THE MAIL-BOX.

We had to fasten a box for our mail on the gate-post, because the postman is afraid of our dog, and will not come into the yard. Last summer two little bluebirds made a cunning nest right in the box.

The mamma bird laid five tiny eggs, and sat on them, letting the postman drop the letters on her. Every morning and evening the newsboy put in the paper.

Papa bird brought her worms, and mamma, sister, and I used to watch him. He would never go in the box while we looked on, and when we walked away he would drop down as quick as a flash.

By-and-by there were five little birds in the nest. We thought the letters and papers would surely kill them. But they did not; the birds grew finely. Their mouths were always wide open. One day I put some fine crumbs in the nest, thinking they would like to eat. I wish you could have seen mamma bird. She flew around, acting as if crazy. Finally she began taking out the tiny crumbs one by one, until the last one was thrown

away. I had seen pictures of children feeding crumbs to birds, and thought it the right thing to do. But surely it was not the food these birds needed. For several weeks we watched them, and saw them grow.

We wanted to see the mamma teach them to fly. But they all left suddenly. The nest was empty one day, and we could never tell our birds from the others in the yard. I brought the nest into the house and kept it all winter. We wondered if we should see the little birds again the next year.

At the opening of spring we watched closely, and sure enough the bluebirds did come again, and built a nest in the same box. This time they made a better foundation, raised the nest higher up, lined it with horse-hair, and put it in one corner of the box. Then the mamma bird laid five little eggs, and we and they were happy. One day we missed an egg. The next day another was gone, and then another, until only one was left. We found that some bad boys had discovered the nest and were stealing the eggs. Finally the boys took the last one; then we felt so sorry, and thought we should see the birds no more. But they did not give up. They at once tore to pieces the old nest, and built a new one in another corner. Four more little eggs were laid in it. The bad boys took two of those out. Then papa and I locked the box. I thought the mamma bird might be so frightened she would not want to stay on the nest. But she did stay; and now we have two little baby birds which open their mouths wide and squirm whenever we raise the cover of the box.

BOYS, CAN YOU TELL?

Boys should never go through life satisfied to be always borrowing other people's brains. There are some things they should find out for themselves. A farmer's boy should discover for himself what timber will bear the most weight, what is the most elastic, what will last longest in the water, what out of the water, what is the best time to cut down trees for firewood? How many kinds of oaks grow in your region, and what is each specially good for? How does a bird fly without moving a wing or a feather? How does a snake climb a tree or a brick wall? Is there a difference between a deer's track and a hog's track? What is it? How often does a deer shed his horns, and what becomes of them? In building a chimney, which should be the largest, the throat or the funnel? Should it be wider at the top or drawn in? The boys see many horses. Did they ever see a white colt? Do they know how old the twig must be to bear peaches, and how old the vine is when grapes first hang upon it? There is a bird in the forest which never builds a nest, but lays her eggs in the nests of other birds. Can the boys tell what bird it is? Do they know that a hop vine always winds with the course of the sun, but a bean vine always winds the other way? Do they know that when a horse crops grass he eats back towards him; but a cow eats outward from her, because she has no teeth upon her upper jaw and has to gum it?