

He heard the bleating sheep,
He heard the shepherd's call,
Until, at last, for him
Silence had covered all.
The shepherd in the morn,
Looking for lambs astray,
Found him where, stiff and cold,
Upon his rock he lay.

—*Sunday-School Journal.*

BIRDS AT THE WINDOW.

"Better be at work," grumbled John Spence, as he passed the minister's house and saw Jenny, the minister's daughter, feeding the birds that came every day to her window. "My girls have something else to do. I'll not give a cent to support such lazy doings."

"Good morning, Mr. Spence," said a friendly voice.

"Oh! It's you. Good morning, Egbert. Nice day, this."

"Elegant! Balmy as May, and soft as June. I was going round to see you."

"Ah, indeed. Just met then in the nick of time."

"Yes, in the nick of time; I want to know how much you will put down for Mr. Elder's salary this year. We want to increase it five hundred dollars if we can."

The countenance of Mr. Spence fell. He pushed out his lips and looked hard and disagreeable.

"Not one cent," was his slow, emphatic answer.

"Oh, you're jesting, Mr. Spence, said his neighbor.

"No; I'm in earnest. My girls have something better to do than feeding birds. Humph!"

"Feeding birds! I'm blind as to your meaning," replied Mr. Egbert.

"Let me open your eyes. Come back with me a little way."

They turned and walked a short distance.

"Yes, there it is," said Mr. Spence, as he came in view of the minister's house.

"Do you see that?" And he pointed to a window where Jenny Elder, the minister's daughter, stood feeding half a dozen birds that flew close to her hand; one or two of them even lighting on her shoulder.

"Well, that is beautiful!" exclaimed Mr. Egbert.

"Beautiful?"

"Yes; don't you think so?"

"I think she'd better be at work," replied Mr. Spence, in a hard voice.

Mr. Egbert turned and looked at his neighbor in mute surprise.

"I mean just what I say," added Mr. Spence. "My daughters have no time to waste after that fashion, and I can't see that I am under any obligation to support other people's daughters in idleness."

"Jenny Elder is no idle girl," said Mr. Egbert, a little warmly.

"Don't you call that idleness?"

"No; it's both rest and invigoration. The ten minutes spent with these birds will sweeten her life for a whole day. She will hear them chirping and twittering as she goes about her household duties, and be stronger and more cheerful in consequence."

Mr. Spence shook his head, but not with the emphasis of manner shown a little while before. A new thought had come into his mind. A bird had flown in through a window of his soul.

"Work, work, work, every hour and every minute of the day," said Mr. Egbert, "is not best for any one—nor best for Jenny Elder, nor for your daughters, nor mine."

"Nobody said it was," replied Spence. "But—but—" His thoughts were not very clear, and so he hesitated.

"The rest that gives to the mind a cheerful tone, that makes it stronger and healthier, is the true rest, because it includes refreshment and invigoration."

"Nobody denies that," said Mr. Spence.

"And may not Jenny's ten minutes with the birds give her just the refreshment she needs, and make her stronger for the whole day? If not stronger, then more cheerful; and you know how much comfort to a household one cheerful spirit may bring."

"You have such a way of putting things," replied the neighbor, in a changed voice. "I never saw it in this light before. Cheerfulness—oh, dear! I am weary looking at discontented faces. If feeding birds at the window is an antidote to fretfulness, I shall recommend my children to commence at once."

"Let the birds come first to your window," said Mr. Egbert.

"Oh, I'm too old for anything like that," was replied.

"To the windows of your soul, I mean. Spence shook his head. "You shoot too high for me."

"Thoughts are like birds—right thoughts like doves and sparrows, wrong thoughts like hawks and ravens. Open the windows of your mind, and let true thoughts come in. Feed them, and they will come to you and fill your soul with music. They will bear you up on their wings; they will lift you into purer regions. You will see clearer and feel stronger. You will be a wiser and a happier man."

"I never did hear any one talk just as you do, Egbert!" said the neighbor. "You look into the heart of things in such a strange way."

"If we get down to the heart of things, we're all right," was the smiling answer. "And now I want to know how much we