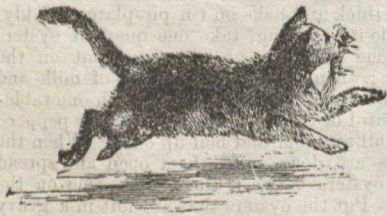


CHIPPERNIP.

BY LUTHERA WHITNEY.

The people of Boston found that the squirrels which were put on their Common a few years ago were the deadly enemies of the birds; so, bright and cunning as they were, they all had to be sacrificed.

They are, however, near neighbors in our woods. There is no lack of birds on Skitchawang mountain, and it is a famous place for squirrels; whether they ever molest the birds or not I cannot tell, but the different species quarrel with each other and among themselves. I have often seen a red squirrel chasing a chipmunk to and fro through the woods, up and down trees, over fences and under brush-heaps, almost as rapidly as my eye could



"A TOUCH OF NATURE."

follow; and I once saw an old red squirrel carrying off one of her young in her mouth, as a cat carries a kitten. She seemed to be fleeing from some enemy, I did not enquire too closely what, lest it might be one of the rattlesnakes which infest the mountain.

A pair of old grays had their nest near the school-house last summer. We used to see them every other day on the fences, or on the roof, and, as she was never disturbed, she grew quite tame; but, search as we might, neither teacher nor scholars could ever find her nest. Other squirrels used to come into the school yard to pick up bits of bread and cake which the scholars threw away while eating their dinner. During the autumn we ate many water-melons, and the squirrels feasted on the seeds.

The chipmunks, who are very provident, would fill their cheeks with them, and scamper away to their holes; but the others ate them on the spot, taking one seed at a time between their paws, sitting upright, and picking out the kernels with great rapidity.

The song says:

"The squirrel is a pretty bird,
He has a bushy tail," &c.;

but I have seen one whose tail was as bare and more slender than a rat's. He was a very young gray squirrel, with hardly any hair on him, and had mere depressions instead of eyes. My brother got a pair of them from a nest in a big birch tree on the side of the mountain, and proposed raising them. He fed them milk and cream from a teaspoon, but they were awkward and helpless, and one of them died in a few days. The other seemed likely to follow, when we called a family council, and, in despair,

decided to give him to the cat! This was not quite as cruel as it sounds. We had at the time a very handsome tortoise-shell cat named "Lady Lytton." She was very intelligent, and we had taught her the respect due property in whatever form it might be. She never molested chickens or ducklings which were sometimes brought into the house, and once she allowed a swallow, who had become unable to fly, to sit a whole week on the edge of the kitchen wood-box. She had two little kittens in her warm nest in the shed, and there I carried the poor, shivering little squirrel; and explained the case fully.

"Now, Lady Lytton," said I, "you must take care of little Chippernip; he is hungry and cold and he has not any eyes. Do please try and see what you can do for him."

Lady Lytton spread her white furry arms and took him in, washed the sour milk from his poor little face, and gave him part of the kittens' supper. From that time Chippernip was provided for. In about three weeks his eyes opened, and he soon began to run about the shed. Puss was always more anxious about Chip than about the kittens. One night some wild cats came prowling about the shed. Litty fought them valiantly and drove them away. The next night, just at dusk, she brought Chip into the sitting room, put him on the lounge and then went back for the kittens. We thought she was jealous because none of the family had visited her that day, so we played with them a few minutes and carried them back to the shed.



KIND LADY LYTTON.

She brought them in again directly, and continued to do so, as we carried them out, for some time. At last, despairing of making us understand the desperate state of things, she fled with Chippernip to the chamber, and hid him so securely that we could not find him, neither could he escape from his retreat. Lytton then went back to her kittens and spent the night, evidently understanding that they were in less danger than Chip, for she took him first each time. The next morning, as soon as the family had arisen, she went upstairs with the greatest apparent anxiety, and brought him, after which we made her bed in a more secure spot.

She used sometimes to punish her kittens severely, yet I never knew her to get out of patience with Chip but once. She was

lying on the flower-stand, where she usually took her day-time naps; and he would pounce upon her from the window-sash, the oleander, and every other eminence within several yards. She



CHIP "DOETH MURDER SLEEP."

moved from the flower-stand to the rocking-chair, and from there to grandma's easy chair, but none of them were too far away for one of Chip's leaps; he came flying through the air, with his tail—now grown bushy enough—floating like a comet's behind him; lighted on her head or her back, bit her ears and her tail, and was away in a twinkling, making ready to repeat the performance. At last puss thought forbearance had ceased to be a virtue. She caught him in his next leap, held him with one fore-paw, and with the other she cuffed him long and well, then went to finish her nap on grandma's bed, where, as a great treat, she was sometimes allowed to sleep.

Chippernip used to have fine frolics with the kittens; what belacked in strength he made up in activity. He would cry out while they rolled him over and over on the floor, and climb to the highest point within reach, where he panted for breath; but as soon as he regained it, he sprang upon them, eager to renew the tumble.

Chip was a great mimic. He imitated the cats in all unusual motions, and once, when mother was winding yarn, he watched her intently a few minutes, and then, sitting erect, he began to twirl his paws, keeping time with her hands. When she stopped to untangle her skein he watched to see what she would do next, and when she began winding he went on twirling his paws, and keeping time as before.

Chippernip was never very fond of food prepared for the cat; and one day, when I gave him a piece of sweet apple, he evidently made up his mind that he would never eat any more "cats' messes." He ate raw apples after this till one day I gave him a baked one, after which he refused raw apples altogether. Then he ate successively apple and pumpkin pie, ginger-bread, rice and bread pudding, and other things—always

refusing all but what was his prime favorite at the time—till the nuts were ripe.

My brother brought him some chestnuts one day—this was food fit for the gods, Chip thought.

He had his supper of them, and the rest were saved for his breakfast; but, alas! his keen sense of smell told him where they were, and he climbed up to the pocket containing them, devoured the whole of them, and went to sleep on the shells.

He paid dearly for the theft, however, for they made him deathly sick, and he spent all the next day lying prone in the notch between the two roofs, scolding and chattering at every one who came in his sight. Per-

haps he learned not to eat so many, but he certainly did not lose his taste for nuts or his inclination to steal them. He always found out where they were and possessed himself of them, and when the rightful owner came he found only the empty shells. He ate



SUMMARY MEASURES.

chestnuts mostly, but he would gnaw through a hickory or butternut, and sometimes he would bite an acorn, shell and cup and kernel, into little bits, but I never knew him to eat even a single bite; hunger would probably have brought him to it, but he was never forced to it. He never damaged the furniture, but would often spend half an hour gnawing a bit of stick. It was necessary for him to gnaw some hard substance, I suppose, for the teeth of the rodents—to which class the squirrels belong—are constantly growing, and unless worn away will cause serious damage.

After Chip considered himself too big to sleep with the kittens he found several beds which he occupied for a night or two; sometimes in the pocket of a coat or dress, hanging in one of the bedrooms, sometimes in a hat or cap or shawl on the hall table; but at last he settled down to the habit of lodging under the counter-pane of



grandma's TIRES. He always had a frolic out-of-doors just at sunset, after which he climbed up the scarlet runners and went in at the top of the window; the upper sash of