

## JAPANESE BIRD LOVERS.

Few things are more pitiable than the sight of wild birds shut up in tiny cages, sitting with cramped wings, and dull sad eyes. It is dreadful to think how they must suffer in their narrow prisons after their free, happy life, in the open air. Especially I always pity skylarks as they beat their heads against the low roof of the cage and flutter against the bars in their longings to fly outward and upward into the boundless blue sky. I hope some day the law will forbid the catching of skylarks. Some ten years ago I read a description by Canon Tristan of the way birds are loved and cared for in far Japan. That clever people, who startled the world by their clever victories in war, seem to know how to make their cage-birds happy. Birds such as robins, titmice and warblers, that would quickly die if we were to cage them, seem happy and sing cheerily outside a Japanese dwelling. And as for the swallows, Tokyo, the capital, abounds with them. To and fro they glance in the streets, and their nests are usually within easy reach of any passer-by. But no one thinks of molesting them.

## INSPIRED BY OLD ROME.

Did you ever wonder how George Stephenson came to adopt the 4 ft. 8 1-2 in. gauge for his railways? Councillor Weidner told the story in Newcastle the other day. A venerable friend of his, long since dead, said that when he was a young man he was in the employ of George Stephenson, and was one of the latter's principal men when he made his Newcastle and Carlisle Railway, about 1832. His informant asked the great engineer how he came to fix the gauge.

George Stephenson told him that he got his idea from inspecting some portion of the Roman Wall through which the chariots used to be driven. Deep ruts were worn, and on measuring these he found their distances apart to be, as near as possible, 4 ft. 8 1-2 inches.

Stevenson thought that if a world-power like the Romans had made such use of a measure for its chariots he could not be wrong in adopting those measurements as a rule for his railway; and railways, he felt confident, would also extend all over the world.

"The regular, conscientious study of missions will have a transforming influence upon the lives of those engaging in it. The Christians of to-day need some object great enough to engage all the powers of their minds and hearts. We find just such an object in the enterprise to make Christ known to the whole world. Moreover, there is no subject more elevating, more broadening, more deepening, and more quickening than the extension of the kingdom of God among men."—John R. Mott.

## LIFE'S PICNIC.

Oh, the folly of it. We pack our hamper for life's picnic with such pains. We spend so much, we work so hard. We make choice pies; we cram the basket to the lid with every delicacy we can think of. Everything to make the picnic a success is there—except the salt. Ah, woe is me, we forgot the salt. We have at our desks, in our workshops, to make a home for those we love; we give up pleasures; we give up our rest. We toil in our kitchen from morning till night, and we render the whole feast tasteless for want of a ha-porth of salt, for want of a soup-con of amiability, for want of a handful of kind words, a touch of caress, a pinch of courtesy.—Jerome K. Jerome.

## THE GRACE OF CHARACTER.

In a certain town a few years ago, was a girls club composed of both society and working girls. Any working girl might become a member by conforming to a few simple regulations, but the other girls were more carefully chosen—nobody was allowed to join who would "patronize" either by word or manner, in the club-rooms there was to be no distinction of circumstance, but only the common meeting ground of youth and friendliness.

Among the working girls was one who, though she would never acquire much which many of her more clever companions were quickly learning from the "other girls," met her new opportunities with so eager a spirit that she soon became the most interesting member to those who were overheard describing her.

"She is so absolutely simple and honest," she said. "It shows in her face and words, in the way she reads, in everything she does. I can't tell you how it makes me feel. I know that I have affectations—all of the girls, I know have; they seem impossible to avoid. But when I am with Agnes Duncan, plain working girl that she is, I feel as if I were not worthy to teach her anything. No one would dream of calling her a lady, but you feel somehow as if she were something greater."

She was not "greater than a lady"—there is nothing greater—but it was another proof that the essence of real lady hood lies not in ease or grace or culture, but in character.—Forward.

Never trifle with one sin. It is like a little cloud which, as the poet has said, may hold a hurricane in its grasp. The next sin you commit may have a mighty effect in the blighting of your life. You do not know the streams that may flow from the fountains for sin is a fountain—not a mere act, but a fountain of evil.—Andrew A. Bonar.

Many minds are content because they have abandoned the quest of what should be for the uneventful stoicism of that which is.

## CAREFUL MOTHERS.

The little troubles that afflict children come without warning, and the careful mother should keep at hand a medicine to relieve and cure the ailments of childhood. There is no medicine does this so speedily and thoroughly as Baby's Own Tablets, and the mother knows this medicine is safe, because it is guaranteed to contain no opiate or poisonous soothing stuff. These Tablets cure colic, indigestion, constipation, diarrhoea, simple fever, and teething troubles. They break up colds, prevent croup, and bring natural sleep. Mrs. Mary Fair, Escott, Ont., says: "I have used Baby's Own Tablets with the very best results, and would not be without them in the house." Sold by all medicine dealers or sent by mail at 25 cents a box by writing The Dr. Williams Medicine Co., Brockville, Ont.

A little Moslem child accounted for her preference for the Christian religion by saying, "I like your Jesus because he likes little girls. Our Mohammed did not love little girls." With unerring instinct she had seized upon at least one of the great differences between the two religions.

When we assume to do God's work we should be sure we can see as he sees, that we have the same angle of vision, that the wish of the servant is in no sense alien to the will of the Master.

Some men are judged by the good they do, others by the racket they make.



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