

Children's Department

The Rabbits' Master.

"Mother! Father says the rabbits in this hutch may belong to me, to be my very own, you know, and oh! aren't they beauties?"

Little Ned Clay spoke in pleased excitement, and turned to his mother quite expecting the sympathy she always gave him in both sorrow and joy.

To the lad's surprise her ready smile was missing, and Mrs. Clay was silent for a while, as she stood, with baby in her arms, watching Ned feed his new pets. At last, as he looked up in rather an aggrieved way, she said gravely, "I am wondering if my son will be a kind master to these helpless little animals?"

"Mother!" and Ned's eyes flashed, with tears of astonishment shining in them.

"Nay, laddie, I would not hurt you, if I could help it, but remember how careless and forgetful you are, and also remember if the rabbits are to be yours, father will expect you to see to their wants."

The lad flushed as many a thoughtless act came into his memory.

"I would not hurt them!" he muttered.

"Not willingly, dear, I am sure, but I only thought it right to remind you that your carelessness might harm the things you even love. And now baby and I must go. I am only too glad for you to have pets, if you will take care of them," and pressing a kiss on her boy's cheek, Mrs. Clay went into the house.

Ned's pride was in arms, and the rabbits had a good time for awhile, but a bad habit is a hard thing to overcome, and Ned's forgetfulness was of long standing. So alas! it happened one morning, when the lad was excited over starting for a day's excursion, that his pets' meal was forgotten, and

when he returned tired in the evening, Ned hurried off to bed, without a thought of their hunger. He had promised to go blackberrying the next day, and again, with his mind occupied with pleasure, forgot the poor rabbits.

But in the afternoon as he strolled home, Ned suddenly remembered that for nearly two days he had not been near them, and it was a very flushed, panting boy who rushed into the yard where his hutch stood.

One poor bunny was rubbing its nose feebly against the bars, and nibbled thankfully at a leaf Ned offered it, but its companion was lying prostrate, and the boy with bitter tears of regret found that his carelessness had cost one of his pets its life. The poor thing had been ailing before, and the long fast had proved too much for it!

Ned's loud cries brought his mother out. Instantly she understood what had happened, but her tender heart would not allow a reproach in the midst of his grief, which she knew would be a severe lesson to the child.

So she only said softly: "Let this prove to you, laddie, that want of thought is not a trifling fault, and do not forget. Who can help you to overcome that or any other bad habit!"

The Robin and the Viper.

We are all familiar with Robin Red-Breast, the fearless little visitor who in snowy winter time hops on our windowsills to beg our stray crumbs.

With his crimson breast and his bright inquisitive eyes, he is a favorite with most.

But with all his good points, Robin is very fond of fighting. Any intruder on what Robin considers his premises is promptly driven off, if possible; and if they are too big for this, he makes them so uncomfortable by his ceaseless efforts that at last they are glad to go.

Robin will defend his young against any enemy. One summer day, a hewer of granite, belonging to Dalbeattie, was plying his vocation at Craignae quarry, when he was attracted to a certain spot by the cries of a bird in distress.

Hurrying to the place, he saw that an adder, twenty inches long, was protruding its head over the edge of a robin's nest, built among the brushwood, and containing the poor bird's unfledged offspring. Bob was alternately coming down upon the spoiler, darting his beak into the adder's forehead, and then rising a yard or so into the air.

The quarryman soon despatched the enemy. Then Bob entered the nest, and having ascertained that his children were all safe, flew on to a neighbouring branch, and piped a song of triumph and gratitude.

Keep to the Right.

Do you know what a maze is. It is a long and intricate series of winding paths generally bordered on either hand by high hedges, and so arranged that it is difficult for any one entering by the outer gate to find his way to the centre. It is, in fact, nothing more nor less than a very big puzzle.

There is one famous maze in a palace garden near London, into which it is usually difficult to discover the road—unless you happen to know the rule. Then the puzzle is no longer a puzzle, and it is the easiest thing in the world to walk straight to the centre. The rule is, keep to the right, that is to say, wherever the pathway winds or

wherever there is a choice of two roads, always take that which is on the right hand. The maze reminds me of life. We often come to moments of doubt and hesitation; often there lies beyond us a choice of two or more courses of action, where one seems to be smiling and beckoning to us, and rich in promises of desirable things. There is something about it, however, that does not quite satisfy our conscience, yet we are loth to turn aside and adopt the other course, which is to outward appearances so unprofitable and unattractive. What shall we do in this difficulty? Remember the rule of the maze: no matter what may befall, heeding not the immediate consequences, disregarding all the allurements of the evil one—keep to the right.

A Noble Boy.

Well! I saw a little boy do something the other day that made me feel good for a week. Indeed, it makes my heart fill with tenderness and good feeling even now as I write about it. But let me tell you what it was. As I was going down the street, I saw an old man who seemed to be blind walking along without any one to lead him. He went very slowly, feeling with his cane.

"He's walking straight to the highest part of the curbstone," said I to myself. "And it's very high, too; I wonder if some one won't tell him, and start him in the right direction!"

Just then a boy, about fourteen years old, who was playing near the corner, left his playmates, ran up to the old man, and said, "Let me lead you across the street." By this time there were three or four others watching the boy. He not only helped him over one crossing, but led him over another to the lower side of the street. Then he ran back to his play.

Now this boy thought he had only done the man a kindness, while I knew that he had made three other persons feel happy, and better, and more careful to do little kindnesses to those about them. The three or four persons who had stopped to watch the boy turned away with a tender smile on their faces, ready to follow the noble example he had set them. I know that I felt more gentle and forgiving toward every one for many days afterward.

Another one that was made happy was the boy himself; for it is impossible for us to do a kind act, or to make any one else happy, without being better or happier ourselves. To be good, and to do good, is to be happy.

Quarrelsome Birds.

"Mother," called little Edith, one day last May, "come here, quick!"

"What is the matter, dear?" asked her mother.

"The birds are quarrelling. I thought 'birds in their little nests agree.'"

"So they do, but you see these birds are not in their little nest. That is what is the matter. Two birds want the same nest or place to build one, and neither will give it up to the other."

"Just see how they peck each other, and they scream and talk back! They ought to be put up in some closet until they say they will be good. What are all those other birds doing? they look like a crowd of boys around two boys that are fighting."

"That is just what they are doing." "Don't they know that it is wrong? They are just like bad children."

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"I'm sorry I wouldn't let Ned have 'Mother Goose.' He may have it now. I'm glad I know what is right and what is wrong. Which bird will give up first?"

"The weaker one; but it is the other way with little girls and boys. It is the strong one that gives up first. I mean 'strong to do right.'"

Hans and the Mouse.

In the cottage where Hans and little Gretchen lived there was a big cat which Gretchen claimed as her own.

One night when all was still, a little mouse was seen moving about on the floor picking up the crumbs from the carpet. When Hans saw it he rose

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