

impression on heart and mind. At Sunday-school a new teacher, a young lady, had taken the class for the last three months, and whereas, up to that time, he had played all sorts of pranks during the Sunday lessons, and had stirred up his companions to all sorts of naughtiness, he now found that this sort of conduct was neither so easy nor so pleasant.

Miss Mallison never scolded, never punished; she never even what Rob called *preached*, but one sad look out of her large grave eyes, one gentle shake of her head, one grieving tone of her soft voice, were more to the lad than the scoldings or the canings which he received only too often at the day-school where he attended.

And now, as he sauntered on, a bright thought struck him. Like many another boy, he had a passion for bird's-nesting, which Miss Mallison had done all in her power to check. But it now occurred to Rob's mischievous brain that if he found a nest of young birds and presented his teacher with some of them as a keepsake, she could hardly reprove him in the future for any offence of this sort.

"Then, too," he said to himself, a softened look coming into his roguish eyes, "I would like uncommon to give her somethin', for I do like her, I do!"

Presently Rob came down to the pond where he remembered to have seen a moorhen's nest which he would have taken long ago, only that he preferred young birds to eggs, and so had waited until they were nearly fledged.

He did not quite recall to memory the exact spot where the nest had been hidden, and now, unconscious that two ladies were watching him, he crept along on tip-toe nearer and nearer.

Another moment, and he would have been stooping among the long grass and rushes, when two hands were laid on his shoulders, and a sweet voice said behind him—

"Robbie, my boy, what mischief are you up to now?"

Rob looked round with a start and exclamation. "There—now you've been and spoilt it all!" cried he, and as he spoke the parent birds dashed out from under the bank, followed by four little downy things, just able to swim.

"It's too bad, teacher," he said, with a heavy sigh. "I'd fixed it in my mind to give you some of them little birds, and afore I had a chance they got away. Now I shall have to wait for the evenin' and take 'em when they're asleep."

Miss Mallison looked at him without speaking for a minute or two. Then she said with a grave mouth but smiling eyes, "Oh, I see, you thought that if I accepted your present, Rob, I should never try to stop your bird's-nesting again."

Rob hung his head—he was a little ashamed of his double motive now.

"You were mistaken, my boy," continued his teacher. "I should never have allowed you to give me those poor little birds; they would only die as soon as they were taken from their parents and then home. Now, if you love me, Robbie, you will leave that nest alone, and not rob it to-night. Will you promise me?"

But the temptation was too strong; Rob would not give the promise; and Miss Mallison, after some further fruitless talk, parted from him looking really grieved and hurt.

Evening came, and Rob stole round in the darkness to Sedge Corner, by the old log where the two ladies had been that day. No one was there now, so he crept down to the water's edge on hands and knees. To his right a thick willow bush grew, under which the nest had been made, and putting out his arm to part the branches, he felt his fingers grasped in a soft cold hand, which struck a chill of fear to his heart. Then a dark figure rose from behind the bush, and Rob shrieked aloud—"A ghost! A ghost!"

Wrenching his hand free, he was about to fly as if for dear life, when a voice said huskily—

"Robbie, the wicked flea when no man pursueth. I felt sure you would return to-night, and I was determined to prevent you from taking the nest."

"Well, 't warn't worth all that trouble," said the lad; then, as Miss Mallison coughed, and put her hand to her chest, he exclaimed, "Oh, teacher, if you been and catched cold, settin' there in that damp, I'll never forgive myself."

"I think I have a cold," she said, hoarsely, "but I don't mind if it——"

"Oh, teacher, dear teacher!" cried Robbie, overcome with remorse, "pray don't get ill, or what shall I do?"

Miss Mallison was quite ill for nearly two weeks after that little adventure, and Rob was utterly wretched until she appeared among her scholars again.

But the boy was cured of bird's-nesting, and he realised, too, how truly his teacher loved him, since she was willing to run a real risk to keep him from doing what she felt to be wrong.

"I know now that you love me, teacher," said he, the first Sunday that Miss Mallison came back to her class. The rest of the boys had gone, and he was left alone with her.

"Then think, Rob," said she, "how much more the dear Saviour must love you when He was willing to give His life to save you from sin and misery, and give you eternal life. And if you love me, dear child, how much more you should love Him who has done so much for you."

