



## SPARE THE BIRDS.

BY LEANDER S. KEYSER.

I SOMETIMES think it a pity that guns and slings for boys were ever invented. If these weapons were always put to a profitable use, or used only for harmless sport, it would not be so bad; but there is something in the nature of many boys that makes them delight in acts of cruelty. They seem to think their sport lacking in spice unless it is mixed with the agony of some innocent creature.

One day I met a half-dozen young men in a marsh near several large willow trees. One of them tried his best to kill a downy wood-pecker with his sling or "nigger-shooter," as he would have called it. He came within half an inch several times of hitting the poor bird, and I trembled for its life. Now what harm had the wood-pecker done him or any one else? None whatever. On the contrary, all winter I had seen this busy bird creeping about the branches, ridding them of nits and grubs that would doubtless soon have destroyed the beautiful trees.

Birds are often accused of sins that they are entirely innocent of. For instance, it has often been said that the goldfinches destroy the buds of trees. But one day I stood for a long while beneath an oak tree watching a covey of these birds taking their breakfast, and I did not see them destroy a single bud. They pushed their bills around the buds and sometimes pecked at them as if hunting for nits or insects' eggs, but never snipped them off or pulled them apart. Where these birds destroy one bud by accident, as may sometimes happen, they prevent the destruction of millions by noxious insects.

On the same day I caught the tufted titmouse really eating buds in the woods. The sly little rogue! No doubt he was nearly famished and had to eat something. But my opinion is that it is really a blessing to the trees to have a few buds cropped off, just as grapevines need pruning to keep them from growing too luxuriant.

Have you ever thought what immense swarms of insects would infest the woods if many of the eggs, larvae, and nits were not destroyed by the birds early in the season? It would be impossible to remain an hour in the woods, if indeed there could be any woods at all. It would be impossible to compute the number of insects destroyed by one bird in a single season.

One spring day I found a hooded warbler fitting about like a shuttle of gold among

the bushes and saplings at the foot of an old gravel bank. For an hour I watched him catching gnats and millers on the wing. I think he must have caught, on the average, three insects every minute; so that he destroyed no less than 180 in an hour. If he averaged that many for five hours of the day—certainly a low estimate—he would have devoured 900 from sunrise to sunset. But it must be remembered that he was only one bird among the many in the woods engaged in the same exercise.

Every one is aware of the injury done to the corn crop by the cut worms, one of the great pests of the farmer. Now, the robins are very fond of these worms. A mother red-breast will often fly down into the furrows after the plough and gather up four or five in her bill, and then fly off with them to her nest to feed her hungry birdlings. Sometimes the male robin is no less busy. How many of these destructive worms would a score of robins destroy in six hours averaging one every five minutes? Do not kill the robins because they pilfer a few cherries. It is better to have fewer cherries than no corn.

There is another bird that has a soft tooth for cherries—the red-headed wood-pecker; and for that reason he is often slaughtered without mercy. But what does the jolly red-head feed on before cherry time arrives? On the grubs that bore into the trees. Yet no one ever says "thank you!" to him for his service, but the moment he helps himself to a toothsome cherry he must be shot like the veriest highwayman.

There is another reason, and a very potent one, for sparing the birds: the world would be poor indeed without their carols and trills. Birds are nature's minstrels. Remember, every time you shoot a songbird you silence one of God's own musicians. Kill the English sparrows, blue jays, hawks, and other birds of prey, if you wish, but never so much as point a gun at an insect-eating or singing bird.

—A class in grammar was reciting, and one of the younger boys was asked to compare "sick." He began thoughtfully, "Sick," paused, while his brain struggled with the problem, then finished triumphantly, "Sick, worse, dead!"

—"Your husband was a man of many excellent qualities." "Yes," sighed the widow, "he was a good man; everybody says so; I wasn't much acquainted with him myself; he belonged to six lodges."

—Teacher: "Freddie Fangle, you may give the German name of the River Danube." Freddy: "Dunno." Teacher: "Donau; that's right. I am glad you have studied your lesson so well." [Freddy is surprised, but keeps still.]

## Landing of the Pilgrim Fathers, 1620.

BY FELICIA HEMANS.

The breaking waves dashed high  
On a stern and rock-bound coast,  
And the woods against a stormy sky  
Their giant branches tossed.

And the heavy night hung dark  
The hills and water o'er,  
When a band of exiles moored their bark  
On the wild New England shore.

Not as the conqueror comes,  
They, the true-hearted, came;  
Not with the roll of stirring drums,  
And the trumpet that sings of fame.

Not as the flying come,  
In silence and in fear—  
They shook the depths of the desert's gloom  
With their hymns of lofty cheer.

Amidst the storm they sang,  
And the star heard and the sea!  
And the sounding aisles in the dim wood rang  
To the anthems of the free!

The ocean-eagle soared  
From his nest by the white waves' foam;  
And the rocking pines of the forest roared—  
This was their welcome home!

There were men with hoary hair  
Amidst the pilgrim band!  
Why had they come to wither there,  
Away from their childhood's land?

There was woman's fearless eye,  
Lit by her deep love's truth;  
There was manhood's brow serenely high,  
And the fiery heart of youth.

What sought they thus afar?  
Bright jewels of the mine?  
The wealth of seas, the spoils of war?  
They sought a faith's pure shrine!

Aye, call it holy ground,  
The soil where first they trod!  
They have left unstained what there they  
found—  
Freedom to worship God!

## THE BOY AND THE CIGARETTE.

THE manner employed by cigarette manufacturers to advertise and sell their goods among boys is one of the peculiar features of the tobacco trade at present. They place pictures of various kinds in the packages and offer a premium to the boy who presents the greatest number. We hereby suggest a scale of premiums to boys that might be more appropriate than any yet offered: "To the boy who smokes two packages of cigarettes a day we guarantee a case of sore eyes; five packages, loss of appetite and inability to sleep; six packages, impaired memory, and trembling of the limbs; seven packages, vertigo, inflamed sore throat, fainting fits and tendency to hysterics, while for the boy who can give undeniable evidence that he gets away with eight packages of cigarettes per day, we will insure paralysis, insanity and sudden death."—*Texas Siftings.*

## A SMALL SWARM OF BE'S.

Be earnest! Half-heartedness will not accomplish one-half so much as whole-heartedness will, rightly handled. Be earnest!

Be honest! "Honesty is the best policy," and the best policy will often be found along the way which honest men travel! Be honest!

Be straight! Not only "straight as a string," but rather "straight as an arrow," if you would be sure to "hit the mark." Be straight!

Be watchful! "Watch out," and "watch in" as well; also "watch and wait," if you would not let opportunity slip by unnoticed. Be watchful!

Be considerate! "Consider your ways, and be wise;" and, having found the ways of wisdom, walk therein "all the days of your life." Be considerate!

Be amiable! "A cross-patch" may pass by on the other side without being asked to "come back our way," while all the world likes to go hand in hand with amiable. Be amiable!

## HELP YOURSELF.

PEOPLE who have been bolstered up and levered all their lives are seldom good for anything in a crisis. When misfortune comes they look around for something to cling to or lean upon. If the prop is not there, down they go.

Once down, they are as helpless as cap-sized turtles, or unhorsed men in armour, and cannot find their feet again without assistance.

Such silken fellows no more resemble self-made men, who have fought their way to position, making difficulties their stepping-stones, and deriving determination from defeat, than vines resemble oaks, or sputtering rush-lights the stars of heaven. Efforts persisted into achievements train a man to self-reliance; and when he has proved to the world that he can trust himself, the world will trust him.

It is unwise to deprive young men of the advantages which result from their own energetic action by "boosting" them over obstacles which they ought to surmount alone.

## Keep Your Pledge.

BY MRS. M. A. HOLT.

KEEP your pledge, my boy,  
Ever have it in mind;  
Enter no place of decoy,  
Pray for a spirit benign.

Your pledge will help you on,  
Over the places where  
Unholy deeds are done,  
Revealing Satan's snare.

Press onward, then, my boy,  
Learn wisdom every day,  
Endeavour to destroy  
Dark sin upon your way.  
Give God your heart in youth.  
Enter the way of love and truth.

—Bridget: What is the result of casting bread upon the waters? Brooks: In our house it returns the second day as pudding.

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