

tactics of the male cuckoo. He would make a sudden rush toward the nest, would be attacked fiercely by the stonechats, and flutter away in a lame sort of way, uttering strange cries, quite unlike his usual musical note. All this most plainly meant to decoy the little creatures from their nest in order to give his mate a chance of attaining to it. But his devices only succeeded as regarded the male stonechat, who would sometimes pursue the enemy to a little distance and then dart back to the assistance of his mate, who seemed quite to understand that steady defence of the position was her true policy. Occasionally both cuckoos would swoop down toward the nest; again they would fly off to the wood and disappear for a short time, but only to return to the charge with renewed vigor and subtlety of purpose, and to be received with angry cries and fierce peckings. Once or twice the female cuckoo alighted on the ground at a short distance, while her mate continued skirmishing. Possibly she was watching her opportunity, but more probably she was gaining breathing time. It would be difficult to describe in mere words the wonderfully graceful action of both male birds during their aerial encounters, and, indeed, the flight of the cuckoo at times much resembled that of a small falcon.

It was about half past ten o'clock when I had first come on the scene of action, and I watched till the forenoon was well-nigh past. During this time I am quite sure the stonechats had neither food nor drink, there being no water in the immediate vicinity. The female showed evident signs of exhaustion, her flight grew feebler, and when she lit on a twig near her nest her little wings drooped, and she seemed to pant for breath. It did seem hard that she should have the privacy and retirement of her own house invaded by what she seemed to consider an unwelcome intruder, and I was meditating on the expediency of scaring the cuckoos away, when the female flew up quietly and came down on the ground very near the nest, but on the farther side of the heather clump in which it was placed. At the same time the male cuckoo made a hasty swoop toward the nest, was driven off by the stonechats, and while they were thus engaged the female, with rapid forward, alighted on the heather, thrust her head and neck through the small opening into the nest, in an instant withdrew and soared aloft, uttering for the first time a cry not "Cuckoo, cuckoo!" but a gurgling, water-bubble kind of note. Her mate immediately joined her, and the two soared away to the wood, he joining in the shout of triumph with fond "Cuckoos!"

In a few moments I had run forward to the nest, and, behold! lying beside the four pretty little stonechat's eggs was a beautifully-marked cuckoo's egg, still wet with the saliva of the mother-bird. The stonechats reared their young in peace and safety, but that cuckoo's egg lies before me as I write, and the sight of it recalls one of the most interesting episodes I ever met in bird-life. J. FRASER.

COALS OF FIRE.

BY CLARA J. LOOMIS.

"Second class in spelling!" called the teacher in a small country school, one hot summer afternoon.

So they came out and stood with their toes on the wide crack in the floor, and their hands folded behind them.

"Susie Brown, spell botany!"

"B-o-t-b-o-t-o-b-o-t-o-n-y-n-y, botony," said Susie, promptly.

"Next, Carrie Pierce!"

"B o t b o t a b o t a n y n y, botany," spelled Carrie.

"Right, go up to the head," said the teacher.

But Susie Brown stood still like a rock, with her teeth gritted together, and would not let Carrie go above her until the teacher took hold of her and gently compelled her to change places with Carrie. Half an hour later, when the first geography class was reciting, the teacher said—

"Susie Brown, you may pass the water to-day."

This was a great privilege, and every girl felt especially honored when allowed to do it. When it fell to Susie's lot, if she liked a girl she would take pains to give her a full cup, and when she came to one for whom she did not care much she let her drink what was left. So Susie filled the tin cup a good many times at the water pail, and carried it

first to the big girls, then to the little ones, passed right by Carrie Pierce, then to the boys, even down to the most ragged and dirty boy in the school, and last of all she went back and offered a quarter of a cupful to Carrie. Thirsty little Carrie shook her head and flushed hotter than the blazing summer sun beating pitilessly in at the unshuttered windows could have made her do.

The teacher, so busy with explaining water-sheds between the Mississippi and the St. Lawrence river systems, never noticed a thing. When school was over, Carrie waited for no one, but seized her dinner-basket and ran. Like a wounded deer she stretched every nerve to reach the safe covert of home, and home was a long mile away. Past the neighbors' houses she flew, past the mill-pond, till she reached home and burst into a passion of grief and anger and scalding tears in her mother's lap.

"Sometimes," said her mother when she had heard the story, "the Lord Jesus gives us something to do, my darling, but to-day He gave you something to bear."

"I can't bear it. I'll pay her off—spiteful thing—when it's my turn to pass the water," said Carrie between her sobs.

"Sh—!" said her mother. "Has my little daughter been good to-day and learned all her lessons and not been idle?"

"I had my lessons, but I was idle some."

"Idleness is a sin. God says, 'The idle soul shall suffer hunger.' You could have studied to-morrow's lessons, I suppose. Now, dear, you may go up-stairs and have a nice bath and get cool. Read Matthew 6: 14, 15, ask Jesus to help you, and then come down to tea."

Then Mrs. Pierce went into her bed-room, took a lead pencil, and scribbled these lines:—

Because on earth the Holy Child
When mocked and spit upon, reviled,
Forgave His enemies—I, too,
If I am His, this thing must do.

I know He drank a bitter cup—
Alas! my sins had filled it up—
And therefore I can sweetly take
Some bitter draught for Jesus' sake.

I would not all ungrateful be
For what the Saviour bore for me,
And when I die my heart will break
If I've borne nothing for His sake.

All injuries I do forgive!
And will, as long as I shall live;
E'en scorn and insult I will take
And meekly bear for Jesus' sake.

These she gave to Carrie, who after supper climbed into the low crotch of her favorite apple-tree and read them over and over, and thought of God, and of Jesus when He was a little boy doing good always and never ill; and the child's face reflected something of unearthly glory as it faced the west where the sun went down in great banks of gold and purple splendor, and she could say from her heart, "I do forgive Susie Brown, and I'll be good to her if I get a chance."

Next day at 12 o'clock, when the teacher said "School's dismissed," the boys swallowed their dinners in about five minutes, and went to wade in the brook, and pick peppermint that grew on its banks, and watch how a little striped chipmunk made its nest and tunnelled its hole away under a stone-wall.

The girls went into a grove close behind the school-house, where they had made a lovely cubby-house of hemlock boughs, all furnished with sofas made of piles of bark and sweet fern, and elegant little fairy tea-sets made of acorns and acorn cups, and dolls, such dainty dolls, made of poppies by tying back the scarlet, or white, or mottled petals for dresses, and leaving the black stamens round their necks like a thread lace ruche—only they had to make the dolls new every day because they withered. Here they liked to eat their dinner, as most of the children had a long walk to school.

"Oh dear," said Susie Brown, as one of the big girls took out her dinner, and displayed a great speckled goose egg, "I wish my father kept geese. I like cold boiled eggs dearly with my bread and butter and ham, and mother says hens' eggs are just as good, but I don't believe it anyway there is not so much of 'em."

The big girl didn't take the hint, and as Carrie's father was the only other man in town who kept geese, she looked eagerly into her basket to see what mother had put up for her to-day. Good! there was the little tin salt and pepper box, so the coveted goose egg must be in her bill-of-fare to-day, as it was.

Carrie was hungry enough to have eaten

double rations, but she thought of her mother's verses, "for Jesus' sake," and holding it up, as large as her small hand could clasp, she said—

"Here, Susie, I'd like to swap, if you'll give me your hen's egg for my goose's egg!"

"Oh, thank you, I never tasted a goose's egg, all my life," said Susie with enthusiasm, and took it greedily, but somehow she winced, and felt strangely uncomfortable, and could not say much to Carrie. Then they all played "needle's eye that doth supply," and then the bell rang for school.

Oh, how hot it grew! The big girls fanned themselves with their book covers, untidy little Jim went fast asleep and snored, and the teacher said, "Carrie Pierce may pass the water."

"At which end of the room shall I begin?" thought Carrie. "For Jesus' sake," came her mother's refrain; so she carried some first to the teacher from courtesy, and then gave a brimming cup to Susie, first of all the school.

The scholars droned on in their recitation until all were through.

"Shut books," said the teacher, "ten minutes to spare. Take your Testaments and each learn and recite a short verse. Ready! Fred Patterson!"

"John 14: 6: 'Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth and the life. No man cometh unto the Father but by me.'"

"Charlie Wheeler!"

"Matt. 6: 46: 'For if ye love them which love you what reward have ye? Do not even the publicans the same?'"

"Carrie Pierce!"

"John 3: 18: 'My little children let us not love in word, neither in tongue, but in deed, and in truth.'"

"Susie Brown!"

"Rom. 12: 20: 'Therefore if thine enemy hunger feed him; if he thirst give him drink; for in so doing thou shalt heap coals of fire on his head,'"

said Susie quite bravely, and then broke completely down, and hid her face.

The minute school was out she hurried to Carrie and said,—

"I was just as mean as I could be. I insulted you before the whole school yesterday, and I wanted to apologize before the whole school just now, and I couldn't. And then she cried right out loud.

"Oh, don't," said Carrie, throwing her arms around Susie, "I don't care now at all about yesterday—truly, I don't. Please don't think of it again. Go home my way and I'll show you the cunningest little birds, and you can get your basket full of berries. Come!"

This happened long years ago, Susie Brown and Carrie Pierce are grown-up ladies now, and are the very best of friends. —Zion's Herald.

"ASK, NOTHING DOUBTING."

BY M. H. JAQUITH.

Four ladies, a committee to consider the needs of the worthy poor, met one cold Saturday to discuss ways and means. Several cases of sad destitution were reported, one very urgent.

"The treasury is totally empty, and we have no one to call on; how shall poor Mrs. Rogers get her coal? Will she not freeze before Monday?" asked one lady.

"We must pray the Lord to send it to her this very night," replied Mrs. S—, the eldest of the group, whose time and means and strength have, for several years past, been consecrated to all good work.

"Does the Lord hear prayer of that kind and answer it?" queried the same lady.

"Indeed He does; He has for me many, many times. Last winter there were three families starved out from the Western borders that came in here to winter. The men worked at anything when it was possible—you remember the bitter cold prevented almost all work—and the women went out or took in washing. They made no complaint, and it was only just before they were starting back to their frontier homes, in February, that we chanced to hear that the children were barefoot, and the entire families almost totally destitute of underclothing. We went there, and clad them comfortably. While there the night before they were to start, I accidentally discovered that by some oversight one woman had no undershirt whatever and only a thin calico dress on.

"I had none I could spare, and no money to buy any. I called on Mrs. Muloch, and she gave me a heavy blanket that would make

two; but remembering they would be two weeks or more on the way, and were to sleep in their waggons, I felt that it ought to be used to cover the children.

"All the way home, during the evening, and when I wakened in the night, that poor woman's case lay on my heart, but I kept saying, 'Dear Lord, thou knowest my needs; give me a warm skirt for that poor creature,' and then I would fall asleep again.

"I got up early and dressed me to take it to her when He sent it. Still praying, I put on my wraps and went out empty-handed; but at the gate I met Miss Brand, who said, as she held out a large parcel, 'Don't turn back; I can't stop a moment. Here's a felt undershirt that I was not wearing. It's nearly new, and good and warm, and it was borne in on my mind to come out of my way and bring it to you this morning.'

"Miss Brand," I said, 'I've been praying for that skirt since last night, and the Lord surely sent it!' I hurried down to my poor woman, found them just ready to start, gave her the skirt—much better than any I had or have—and received their tearful thanks and benedictions.

"Does the Lord hear prayer of that kind? do you ask? I think he likes for us to try him in that very way."—Illustrated Christian Weekly.

Question Corner.—No. 15.

BIBLE QUESTIONS.

169. What king took a rash oath which he was obliged afterward to retract?
170. How many vessels of gold and silver belonging to the temple did the Israelites bring with them when returning from the Babylonian captivity?
171. How did these vessels come to be in Babylon?
172. Where was the country of the Edomites situated?
173. From whom were the Edomites descended?
174. How long did David reign over all Israel?
175. What was David's capital during the first part of his reign?
176. Who was Solomon's mother?
177. What man sacrificed his own daughter?
178. Whom did the Lord command to destroy the Amalekites?
179. Why did the Lord so command him?
180. Whither did Lot flee from the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah?

BIBLE ACROSTIC.

- A strong man.
- A beautiful queen.
- One whose sin brought instant punishment.
- A loving, but artful mother.
- A devout soldier.
- A cruel New Testament king.
- A partner and fellow-helper of Paul.
- The only book in the Bible, besides the Psalms, in which the word *Selah* is used.
- A sorcerer.
- A wise king.
- A heathen king who is spoken of as the Lord's shepherd.
- A Moabitess.
- A seer.
- A mountain to which Balak brought Balaam.
- A title of Nehemiah.
- Where Haran died.
- One who was said by Paul to be chosen in the Lord.
- One who was killed by falling when asleep.
- A woman who ministered to Christ.
- The whole is an injunction of Christ.

ANSWERS TO BIBLE QUESTIONS IN NO. 14

145. Joseph. Gen. xiv. 22.
146. The king's officers, who doubted the predictions of Elisha concerning the approaching abundance in Samaria. 2 Kings vii. 19, 20.
147. One of the twelve spies who returned with a favorable report of the land of Canaan. Num. xxxii.
148. Eighty-five years. Josh. xiv. 10.
149. The king of Moab. 2 Kings iii. 26, 27.
150. Elisha. 1 Kings xix. 19, 21.
151. Elisha. 2 Kings iii. 15.
152. Elisha and Elisha.
153. Elisha and Elisha. 2 Kings ii. 8, 14.
154. Jezebel. 1 Kings xviii. 4.
155. Cousin. Esther ii. 7.
156. To the tribe of Judah. Dan. i. 6.

BIBLE ACROSTIC.

Cana, Antioch, Philippi, Emmaus, Rome, Nain, Athens, Ur, Macpelah.—Capernaum.

CORRECT ANSWERS RECEIVED

To No. 13.—P. J. Hunter, 11, ac; Alexander G. Burr, 11, ac; Annie D. Burr, 11, ac. To No. 12.—Willie Lawson, 10; Robert M. Nobbs, 10; David McGee, 7.