

HELPING TO BUILD NESTS.

Look up in that grand old elm and see that new bird's nest on one of its overhanging branches. It belongs to a pair of orioles, or golden robins, as they are sometimes called. These birds construct their nests of bits of twine, cotton, tow, &c. which they pick up with great pains from the surrounding country. On that tree a pair of these birds have built their nest for several years, because there they were sure of a kind reception and a helping hand.

I saw that nest built the other day, and learned the secret of their attachment to the place. Being on a hasty visit to the country, I called at the residence of John Preston, Esq. of New Ipswich, N. H. I found him seated in his little office very busy cutting up twine of different lengths. He greeted me very cordially, but kept on with his work, which seemed to be of great importance. When he had prepared quite a handful, he led the way out of the office, and deposited the strings under the tree. Then he told me they were for the birds to build their nests with, and that every year, when the sweet notes of the oriole

sounded through the branches of the trees, filling the neighbourhood with sweetest music, he had supplied them with material for building their nest. We retired a short distance, and very soon down came one of the beautiful birds, like a flash of golden light, and commenced selecting material for his nest. I supposed he would take the first piece that came to hand, but, like a skilful builder, he took up first one piece, then another, examining them very curiously and apparently measuring the length with his eye, like a practical carpenter. When one was found that suited his purpose, away he flew to his chosen limb, and having securely fastened it he returned for another. He was the very personification of industry, and set an example worthy of imitation by many bipeds without feathers.

Ordinarily it would require a week or more of hard work for a pair of these birds to finish their nest, as they must usually take long journeys to find proper material, but having everything provided at hand, they nearly completed the outer walls in a single day.

The following morning my friend provided a quantity of tow from bits of rope, which he picked up pieces for the use of

the birds, which they speedily appropriated for a soft lining to the nest.

I was greatly pleased in watching them; but what I admired most, and what I am sure you will also think worthy of imitation, was the kindness shown to these little creatures by this noble-hearted man. He could find time, from pressing business, to care for the birds that came to cheer his home with their songs.

It made me love him better than ever. He has his reward for his kindness in the friendship of the birds, who have learned to know their benefactor, and sing for him their choicest songs. Here, thought I, is a lesson for our boys and girls. How much good you can do if you only improve the opportunities that directly cross your path every day! It is the little acts of kindness all the time, that make life happy, and bring sunlight to the heart and music all around you. Be kind and do good, not only to your young friends and schoolmates, but to the animals that God has made. The Creator is kind to the birds, and we may be sure he will smile upon all those who imitate his example.

BEN CHEILT.

Some years since, Sir John Sinclair in vain urged his brother landowners to supply the deficiency of roads which existed in his native Caithness. There was a steep hill called "Ben Cheilt," which ran right through the country, and as an objection to the turnpike, it was always asked—often in tone of ridicule, "When will you show us a road over Ben Cheilt?" But one morning, having provided beforehand a great store of implements, the young laird mustered on the spot several hundred labourers, and a good carriage way was soon thrown over this terrible mountain.

Now, I am sure, dear reader, that if you have ever tried to accomplish any useful plan, you have often encountered some "Ben Cheilt," which stood as a hindrance in your way. At the present moment, you are, perhaps, gazing in a desponding attitude at such an obstacle to your progress? Take courage; set out with fresh energy; and rest not until you have conquered the difficulty before you.

Are you an earnest student, bending with thoughtful brow over some well-worn

page? And do you find there some principle which you cannot comprehend; some truth which you cannot grasp; some rules which you do not understand? Be not afraid of these "Ben Cheilts," but persevere in your application; give all the powers of your mind to your task, and you shall ere long gain your desired object.

Or is it in the more arduous work of self-improvement that you are just now engaged? Striving to subdue some strong and sinful habit which impedes your onward course? Ah, it seems an almost insurmountable barrier! Yet be not disheartened. Though you fail today, begin again to-morrow. For vigorous and prayerful effort, leads on, step by step, to victory.

Or, are you employed in some work for the good of others which meets with opposition, and disapproval? Are you endeavouring to fashion some smoother pathway through the world for weary and tender feet? And are you stopped by some huge "Ben Cheilt" which confronts you? Fear not; neither yield to indolent self-reproach. Toil on with a steady and cheerful spirit, and the mountain shall become a plain, and you shall rejoice in the reward of your labour.

There are many "Ben Cheilts" to be met with as we pass through life. Therefore we must be prepared for difficulties; we must nerve ourselves for conflicts. Nothing good or noble was ever achieved without much painstaking. But patience, linked with perseverance, surmounts great barriers, and wins constant success. So, "be not weary," dear reader, "in well doing."

WHEN A DAY BEGINS.

Most of the nations of Europe begin to count the hours from midnight, but this plan was not adopted by men in the early ages of the world, and is not used now by full three-fourths of the nations of the earth. Some of the most ancient nations of the world, as the Babylonians, Persians, and Hindoos, began the day with the rising of the sun, as do the Greeks of the present day. The Jews and the ancient Greeks looked upon sunset as the commencement of the day. The Egyptian day began at noon. This mode of reckoning is still observed by astronomers, because the particular instant of time called *noon* can be ascertained more