



### THE OWL.

Owls may be recognized by their short and bulky form, with head disproportionately large, fully feathered, and often furnished with tufts like the ears of quadrupeds. The eyes are very large, and in most forms for seeing in twilight or at night, presenting a vacant stare when exposed to daylight. The wings are broad, and rounded, adapted for vigorous and noiseless but not rapid flight in pursuit of living prey in morning and evening twilight. The plumage is soft and downy.

Owls are great benefactors to man by destroying mice and other noxious animals, but from their nocturnal habits and dismal screeching cry, they are generally regarded with superstitious fear.

In Scripture the owl is almost always associated with desolation; painters, poets, and story tellers introduce it as a bird of ill omen, and as the companion of ghosts, witches, demons, and magicians; almost all uncultivated nations look upon it as an unwelcome visitor; the ancient Greeks and Romans, however, made it the emblem of wisdom, and accorded to Minerva, and indeed its large and solemn eyes give it an air of wisdom, which its brain does not sanction.

Lord Tennyson in the following lines gives his impressions of this strange bird:

When cats run home and night is come,  
And dew is cold upon the ground,  
And the far-off stream is dumb,  
And the whirring sail goes round,  
And the whirring sail goes round;  
Alone and warming his five wits,  
The white owl in the belfry sits.

When merry milkmaids click the latch  
And rarely smells the new-mown hay,  
And the cock hath sung beneath the  
thatch,

Twice or thrice his roundelay,  
Twice or thrice his roundelay;  
Alone and warming his five wits,  
The white owl in the belfry sits.

### A STONE AGE HOUSE.

On St. Kilda's Island which lies in the Atlantic Ocean, eighty-two miles west of the main island of the Hebrides, a house belonging to the stone age has been discovered, with a number of stone weapons, hammers and axes. There are only seventy-one inhabitants on the island, which is four thousand acres in extent. The minister is at the same time the doctor and the school-teacher. He sails to the mainland once a year to shop for the whole island.

### STRANGE MUSICAL INSTRUMENTS.

In the West Indian Islands, says an exchange, there are trees that bear a pod with a split or open edge, the wind blowing through, this makes a whistling noise that is not agreeable. When the trade-winds blow, this whistle is loud and continuous. In a certain valley there are many such trees. The natives call them whistling trees. In the Soudan there is a species of tree the leaf of which, when stung by certain insects peculiar to the region, who use the leaves as a home for their eggs, swells and forms a bladder. When the insect leaves this bladder through a hole, it makes it a musical instrument. When the wind blows through the trees, these leaves give out a sound like a flute.

### THE CURFEW.

Does everyone who has read the beautiful poem, "Curfew must not ring to-night," know just what the "curfew" means? For those who do not we print the following account from the "Encyclopædia Britannica":

A signal, as by tolling a bell, to warn the inhabitants of a town to extinguish their fires and lights and retire to rest. This was a common practice throughout the various countries of Europe during the Middle Ages especially in cities taken in war. In the low Latin of these times it was termed "ignitignium," or "pyritignium." The curfew is commonly said to have been introduced into England by William the Conqueror, who ordained, under severe penalties, that at the ringing of the curfew at eight o'clock in the evening all lights and fires should be extinguished. It seems probable, however, that he merely enforced an exist-

ing and very common police regulation to that effect. The absolute prohibition of lights after the ringing of the curfew bell was abolished by Henry the First in 1100. The practice of tolling a bell at a fixed hour in the evening, still extant in many places, is a survival of the ancient curfew. The common hour was at first seven, and it was gradually advanced to eight, and in some places to nine o'clock. In Scotland ten is not an unusual hour. As a precaution against conflagrations the curfew was a most useful regulation at a period when it was the custom to place the fire in a hole in the middle of the floor, under an opening in the roof, to allow the escape of the smoke. When a family retired to rest for the night the fire was extinguished by covering it up, and hence the term "couvre-feu," or curfew. But this salutary regulation served another important end, since by obliging the people to keep within doors, nocturnal brawls in the street were in great measure prevented. There is a popular tradition, for which no historical authority can be assigned, that the severity exhibited by William the Conqueror in enforcing obedience to the curfew was particularly designed to prevent the English from assembling in secret to plan schemes of rebellion against himself. The ringing of the "prayer bell," as it is called, which is still practiced in some Protestant countries, originated in that of the curfew bell.

### A LESSON FROM A LILY.

At a teachers' convention lately, a lady, in speaking about the influence of beautiful objects upon the character and conduct of pupils, told a pretty story of an occurrence which took place in New York. This is the story as told by The News-Tribune:

"Into a school made up chiefly of children from the slums the teacher one day carried a beautiful calla lily. Of course the children gathered about the pure, waxy blossom in great delight.

"One of them was a little girl, a waif of the streets, who had no care bestowed upon her, as was evinced by the dirty, ragged condition she was always in. Not only was her clothing soiled, but her face and hands seemed totally unacquainted with soap and water.

"As this little one drew near the lovely flower, she suddenly turned and ran down the stairs and out of the building. In a few minutes she returned with her hands washed perfectly clean and pushed her way up to the flower, where she stood and admired it with intense satisfaction.

"It would seem," continued Mrs. Coffin, "that when the child saw the lily in its white purity, she suddenly realized that she was not fit to come into its atmosphere, and the little thing fled away to make herself suitable for such companionship. Did not this have an elevating, refining effect on the child? Let us gather all the beauty we can into the school-room."

### Thanksgiving.

BY LIZZIE CLARK HARDY.

November comes with chilling wind,  
And hint of snowflakes in the air;  
The streams in icy fetters sleep,  
The forest trees are brown and bare,  
And yet our hearts are warm and glad,  
Our hearthstones glow with hearty cheer,  
We open wide the welcome door,  
For, lo! Thanksgiving time is here.

### GEN. CUSTER AND HIS MOTHER.

Mrs. Custer, in her "Boots and Saddles," tells this beautiful trait of her husband's character: "The hardest trial of my husband's life was parting with his mother. Such partings were the only occasions when I ever saw him lose entire control of himself, and I always looked forward to the hour of their separation with dread. For hours before we started I have seen him follow his mother about, whispering some comforting word to her, or, opening the closed door of her room, where, womanlike, she fought out her grief alone, sit beside her as long as he could endure it. She had been an invalid for so many years that each parting seemed to be the final one. Her groans and sobs were heartrending. She clung to him every step when he started to go, and, exhausted at last, was led back, half fainting, to the lounge. The general would rush out of the house, sobbing like a child, and then throw himself into the carriage beside me, completely unnerved. I could only give silent comfort. My heart bled for him, and in the long silence that followed as we journeyed on, I knew that his thoughts were with his mother. At our first stop he was out of the cars in an instant buying fruit to send back to her. Before we were even unpacked at the hotel, where we made our first stay of any length, he had dashed off a letter. I have since seen those missives. No matter how hurriedly he wrote, they were proofs of the tenderness, most filial love, and full of the prophecies he never failed to make of the reunion he felt would soon come."—Michigan Christian Advocate.

### LESSON NOTES.

#### FOURTH QUARTER.

#### STUDIES IN THE ACTS AND EPISTLES.

#### LESSON VII.—NOVEMBER 14.

#### PAUL'S MINISTRY IN ROME.

Acts 28. 17-31. Memory verses, 30, 31.

#### GOLDEN TEXT.

I am not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ; for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth.—Rom. 1. 16.

#### OUTLINE.

1. Promptly at Work, v. 17-22.
  2. Proclaiming Jesus, v. 23-29.
  3. Preaching the Kingdom, v. 30, 31.
- Place.—Rome, the capital of the empire, the centre of the world.

#### HOME READINGS.

- M. Paul's ministry in Rome.—Acts 28. 17-22.  
Tu. Paul's ministry in Rome.—Acts 28. 22-31.  
W. The words of Isaiah.—Isa. 6. 5-10.  
Th. Christ in the Scriptures.—John 5. 39-47.  
F. Hearing without profit.—Rom. 10. 13-21.  
S. Ingrance of unbelief.—Heb. 3. 7-19.  
Sa. Shut out.—Heb. 4. 1-11.

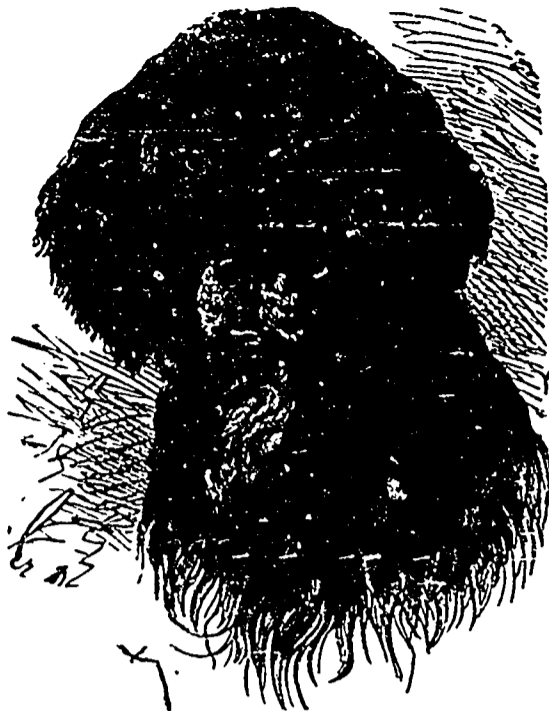
#### QUESTIONS FOR HOME STUDY.

1. Promptly at Work, v. 17-22.  
Why did Paul summon the Jews at Rome?  
Into whose hands had he been delivered prisoner?  
To whom had he appealed?  
For what hope was he bound?  
What had the Jews heard about him?
2. Proclaiming Jesus, v. 23-29.  
What was the theme of Paul's teaching?  
By what witnesses did he prove Jesus to be the Messiah?  
How long did the service continue?  
How were his words received by the Jews?  
What was the message to such as believed? Rom. 1. 16.
3. Preaching the Kingdom, v. 30, 31.  
How long did Paul remain in Rome?  
To whom did he preach?  
Who hindered him in his work?

#### PRACTICAL TEACHINGS.

Where in this lesson have we an illustration—

1. Of Christian zeal?
2. Of manly candour?
3. Of faithful service?



### A Loving Friend.

BY MRS. BROWNING.

Loving friend, the gift of one  
Who, her own true faith hath run  
Through thy lower nature;  
By my benedictions said,  
With my hand upon thy head,  
Gentle fellow-creature!

Underneath my stroking hand,  
Startled eyes of hazel bland,  
Kindling, growing larger,  
Up thou leapest with a spring  
Full of prank and curveting,  
Leaping like a charger.

But of thee it shall be said,  
This dog watched beside a bed  
Day and night unwearied—  
Watched within a curtained room  
Where no sunbeam broke the gloom  
Round the sick and weary.

This dog, if a friendly voice  
Called him now to blither choice  
Than such a chamber keeping,  
"Come out," prying from the door,  
Presseth backward as before,  
Up against me leaping.

Therefore to this dog will I  
Tenderly, not scornfully,  
Render praise and favour;  
With my hand upon his head,  
Is my benediction said,  
Therefore, and forever!

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