

Her chamber is rather a prison than a palace, for she cannot leave it, as all the passages to it are only big enough to admit the common ants, which are ever busily engaged in carrying off the eggs which she lays to the various nests in different parts of the town.— I wish you could have seen some of the thickly inhabited nests which we found in our search, for I fear you will not get a very clear idea of them from mere description. It is difficult to say of what they are made. They appear to be formed of earth and woody matter, which are stuck together by something slightly gummy. Fresh made nests are so moist that it is difficult to take them out of their chamber without their crumbling to pieces; but old nests will bear handling better. These nests do not consist of separate cells, but are rather a number of passages connected with each other, and arranged in stories one above another.— These nests were crowded with thousands of ants in different stages of growth. Fixed to the roof were small white dots resembling sugar. This was probably food for the young ant. In a few of the nests we found ants three times as large as the common ones, and with wings much longer than their bodies. These are the royal family, and in rainy weather many hundreds of them may be seen flying about, for at that time they leave their homes. As they are caught by birds, and as even the natives eat them, great numbers are destroyed. But let us return to the busy little town. When you look around and see the thousands of inhabitants, and remember that there are hundreds of such towns to be found in every direction, and that all these little creatures who live in them require food you will, I think, understand how it is they are so destructive. When they leave their towns in search of food, they work their way underground as far as they can, for whenever they can they work out of sight; but if, in order to gain an object, it is necessary for them to come to the light, they build

for themselves covered passages.— This is done by each ant bringing a piece of moist earth about the size of a pin's head, and these are placed so as to form an arched pathway. This work goes on very quickly, for all are busy. Sometimes a bridge is required. This is always a tube, and generally about as thick as your finger; but it is so well made that, though as long as your hand, it does not break down. I once saw one of these tubular bridges which was of such great length that it would have broken down if it had not been supported, but there was a buttress built underneath to keep it up. The object they wanted to reach was a band-box; but this stood upon a chest of drawers when, fortunately, the little destroyers were discovered in time to save the handbox and its contents.

Do you not think we may learn a lesson of wisdom from these busy little creatures? Solomon said, as you know, "Go to the ant, thou sluggard; consider her ways and be wise." Many of you may say, But I am not a sluggard. Perhaps not; but are you never idle? Are you doing with diligence all the work God has given you to do?—at home, by striving to help your dear parents as much as possible,—in school, by paying attention to your lessons, and at all times having some pleasant or useful employment; for

"Satan finds some mischief still
For idle hands to do."

Above all, would I urge you to learn more of your Saviour, and become more like him. For He is our brightest example of activity, for he was ever going about doing good. Working for Christ and spreading his gospel in the world is the duty and joy of all those who love him.

I remain, dear young Friends,
Yours affectionately,

S. W.

Nagercoil, Nov. 1, 1853.