

OUR YOUNG FOLKS.

DO BIRDS THINK?

"Do birds think? Let me tell you of a little bird I once owned. The little bird was a female mocking bird, who had a nest of young ones about a week old. The baby birds were never healthy, inheriting weakness from their father, who had asthma. Early one morning, I was awakened by the mother bird standing on my pillow, pouring into my ear the most mournful notes I ever heard. I knew something was wrong, and arose at once. The little mother flew to her nest, then looked to see if I was following, which I was. As soon as I reached her nest, she took hold of one of the baby bird's wings, pinched it gently with her beak and watched it eagerly, I think, to see if it moved. Then she took hold of one of the little feet and pinched it in the same manner, and, finding it did not move, she looked up at me in a pleading way, as if she wanted me to try to waken them. I reached my hand out toward the nest. She stood aside and looked on with as much interest and feeling apparently as any young human mother.

"I examined the lifeless little bodies, and when I withdrew my hand the mother hastened to hover over the little ones, seeming to think that if she could warm them they would awaken. In a few moments she hopped off the nest, looked at her babies, held food close to their mouths, and coaxed and called them, but in vain. She then flew all around the room, as if in search of some untried remedy. Several times she perched on my shoulder, and looked so distressed and pitiful I could scarcely keep from crying. I put her in a cage, and hung her in the sunshine to see if she would become quiet. She took a bath, but still remained nervous and seemed anxious, and by and by grew so restless I had to take her out of the cage and let her go to her nest again.

"She stood quiet a while looking at her dead children. Then she went over all the little bodies—pinched them gently and watching them closely to see if they moved. When she saw no signs of life she seemed puzzled. She seemed at last to make up her mind the little ones were dead. And one by one she lifted them tenderly in her beak and laid them side by side in the middle of the room. She looked at them lovingly a moment, then flew to her empty nest and gazed wonderingly into that. Finally she perched on my shoulder and looked into my eyes as if to ask: What does all this mean? What a lesson of love and devotion that little bird taught? She always fed the little ones before taking a mouthful herself, and sometimes she would stand coaxing them to take one more mouthful, and finding they had enough would swallow it herself."—*Chicago Times*.

"I WAS GOING TO."

Children are very fond of saying, "I was going to." The boy lets the rats catch his chickens. He was going to fill up the hole with glass, and to set traps for the rats; but he did not do it in time, and the chickens were eaten. He consoles himself for the loss and

excuses his carelessness by saying, "I was going to attend to that." A horse falls through a broken plank in the stable and breaks his leg, and is killed to put him out of his suffering. The owner was going to fix that weak plank, and so excuses himself. A boy wets his feet and sits for hours without changing his shoes, catches a severe cold and is obliged to have the doctor for a week. His mother told him to change his wet shoes when he came in and he was going to do it, but did not. A girl tears her new dress so badly that all her mending cannot make it look well again. There was a little rent before, and she was going to mend it, but she forgot. And so we might go on giving instance after instance, such as happen in every home with almost every man and woman, boy and girl. "Procrastination is" not only "the thief of time," but is the worker of vast mischiefs. If a mister "I-was-going-to" lives in your house, just give him warning to leave. He is a loungeur and nuisance. He has wrought unnumbered mischiefs. The girl or boy who begins to live with him will have a very unhappy time of it, and life will not be successful. Put Mister "I-was-going-to" out of your house, and keep him out. Always do things which you are going to do.

PERSEVERANCE.

One step and then another,
And the longest walk is ended;
One stitch and then another,
And the largest rent is mended;
One brick upon another,
And the highest wall is made;
One flake upon another,
And the deepest snow is laid.

So the little coral workers,
By their slow and constant motion,
Have built those pretty islands
In the distant dark-blue ocean;
And the noblest undertakings
Man's wisdom hath conceived,
By oft-repeated effort
Have been patiently achieved.

Then do not look disheartend
On the work you have to do,
And say that such a mighty task
You never can get through:
But just endeavour, day by day,
Another point to gain,
And soon the mountain which you feared
Will prove to be a plain!

"Rome was not builded in a day,"
The ancient proverb teaches,
And nature by her trees and flowers,
The same sweet sermon preaches.
Think not of far-off duties,
But of duties which are near,
And having once begun to work,
Resolve to persevere.

THE OLDEST CITY IN THE WORLD.

Damascus is the oldest city in the world. Tyre and Sidon have crumbled on the shore; Baalbec is a ruin; Palmyra is buried in a desert; Nineveh and Babylon have disappeared from the Tigris and Euphrates. Damascus remains what it was before the days of Abraham—a centre of trade and travel—an island of verdure in the desert; "a presidential capital," with martial and sacred associations extending through thirty centuries. It was near Damascus that Saul of Tarsus saw the light above the brightness of the sun; the street, which is called Strait, in which it was said "he prayed," still runs through the city. The caravan comes and goes as it did a thousand years ago; there is still the sheik, the ass, and the waterwheel; the merchants

of the Euphrates and the Mediterranean still "occupy" these "with the multitude of their wares."

The city which Mahomet surveyed from a neighbouring height, and was afraid to enter, "because it was given to man to have but one paradise, and, for his part, he was resolved not to have it in this world," is to-day what Julian called the "eye of the East," as it was in the time of Isaiah, "the head of Syria."

From Damascus came the damson, our blue plums, and the delicious apricots of Portugal, called damasco; damask, our beautiful fabric of cotton and silk, with vines and flowers raised up on a smooth, bright ground; the damask rose, introduced into England in the time of Henry VIII; the Damascus blade, so famous the world over for its keen edge and wonderful elasticity, the secret of whose manufacture was lost when Tamerlane carried the artist into Persia; and that beautiful art of inlaying wood and steel with gold and silver, a kind of mosaic, engraving and sculpture united—called damaskeening—with which boxes, bureaus and swords are ornamented. It is still a city of flowers and bright waters; the streams of Lebanon, and the "silk of gold" still murmur and sparkle in the wilderness of the Syrian gardens.—*Exchange*.

THE LOST KITTEN.

Some years ago in a sermon one Sunday morning, says Mr. Spurgeon, I told my congregation about the awful stir that was in my house one night, and all because the kitten had been lost. I added, "If we feel happy over a found kitten, and if we feel sad over a lost one, what sadness the Lord must feel about a lost soul and what must be his joy over the finding of it. One afternoon last month an old lady came to join the church and brought to me a sermon all yellow and worn, which she had carried in her pocket for some time, and there was this little bit about the kitten marked. Sir," she said, "you introduced that story with an apology, but you need not have apologized." And then she told me a story about two kittens that were lost when she was a little girl, and described what a fright she was in when they were lost, and what joy she experienced when they were found. "And so, sir," she added, "I found peace with God from reading this, for I recollected my own joy as a girl over the finding of my kittens; and I thought, God must think more of me; and be willing to save me, and so I came to Him, and here I am."

"HATRED stirreth up strifes: but love covereth all sins."—*Prov. x. 12*.

"WEALTH maketh many friends; but the poor is separated from his neighbour. A false witness shall not be unpunished, and he that speaketh lies shall not escape."—*Prov. xix. 4, 5*.

THE little girls of the wealthier class in Calcutta, India, have their hair arranged in a plaited coil at their back of her head, and adorned with gold or silver pins, having a bunch of little chains hanging at one end, to which tiny bells are attached.