

OSTRICHES TWO WEEKS OLD.

TWO LETTERS.

"I wish I could see my uncle John Tyler," said Tommy, puckering up his forehead, and looking as though he would as lief cry about it as not. "I just wish I could, now!"

"Well, you can't," said Daffy, nodding her curly head, "and so it isn't any use to wish. Because he's away out to California—as much as twenty hundred miles from here I wouldn't wonder—and he isn't coming home for a year."

"And a year is twelve months, and a month is four weeks, and a week is seven days, and a day is twenty-four hours, and an hour is sixty minutes, and a minute is sixty seconds," piped Ben, cheerfully. "I learned that in my deduction tables."

"Oh, de-ar!" quavered Tommy. "I'm 'fraid he won't ever come home long's I live."

"Why, yes, he will," said Tommy's mother, who had just that minute finished getting the baby to sleep. "A year isn't a very long time, dear. And you may write him a letter now, if you want to; that'll be next thing to talking to him."

"Oh, can I?" cried Tommy, delighted.

"With pen and ink, mamma?"

"With a pencil," said his mother, smiling.

"And I'll tell you how, dear, while I'm sewing my patchwork," said motherly Daffy.

"And I'll write it for you, Tommy," said Ben, "I'd just as lieves as not."

But Tommy didn't like that idea a bit; because if Ben did the writing, and Daffy told him what to say, where would be his own letter to uncle John? He scowled a little.

"I'm going to write it myself in printing," he said, looking at Ben, severely.

"So you shall, dear," Daffy said.

"Shan't he, mother?"

"If he can," her mother answered.

But he couldn't, as it turned out. His poor little fingers boiled for half an hour, maybe, over "Dear Uncle John," and when it was written, mother herself couldn't have told what it was, if she had not known.

"Hudn't you better let Ben write for you, Tommy?" she asked. "It's hard work, you know."

But Tommy shook his head, half-crying. "Then it wouldn't be my very own letter," he said. "Oh, de-ar!"

All at once Daffy jumped up and ran out of the room. When she came back she brought the mucilage-bottle and an old A-B-C book.

"I've thought of a plan," cried she, "a real nice one. See, dear, you can cut the letters right out of this book; they're big, you know, and it's all to pieces, besides, and stick 'em on a sheet of paper, just the same as if you were really, truly writing. Won't that be fun?"

"Yes, um, it will!" cried Tommy, gleefully, scrambling for the scissors. And of course it would be; but whoever but Daffy would have thought of such a thing?

After that the letter progressed finely. Daffy told what to say and how to spell it, for her part, and Tommy cut out the letters for his part, besides helping Ben a good deal at sticking them in place, though Ben privately thought he could have done a great deal better without the

aid of Tommy's clumsy little fingers, as I do not doubt he could, myself.

However, the letter was a great success; the lines were really much straighter than could have been expected, under the circumstances, and the print might be read across the room, it was so plain. Tommy was highly pleased; he did not want to let it go out of his sticky little hands, for a minute.

"You'll muss it all up, dear," said wise Daffy. "Now sister'll read it to you one time more, and then we'll let Ben take it to the post-office."

So Daffy read the letter—which I haven't room to write here—about the deep snow, and the baby's cunning tricks, and the new bossy-calf, and Tommy's reading through the primer twice and having the whooping-cough. Mother laughed slyly as she listened, but she felt that it could not fail to be a very interesting letter to uncle John Tyler.

Then Daffy folded it and put it in the envelope, and Tommy sealed it and lapped the mucilage all off of two stamps before he got one securely stuck in the upper-right-hand corner, and mother directed it, and Ben ran down to the office with it in a hurry.

"Now, when will I get it back?" demanded Tommy. "To-morrow, s'pose?"

"Oh, no," laughed Daffy. "Maybe you won't for two weeks, dear."

"O-oh, now!" said Tommy.

"And perhaps not for three weeks," said mother. "You mustn't be disappointed if you don't."

"Oh, de-ar!" said Tommy. "I ca-ant wait!"

But he could, you know, and he did, though not so long as mo her had said he might have to. It was just two weeks to a day from the time Ben carried the letter to the office till he brought home a big white envelope with two stamps on it, directed plain as plain could be to "Master Thomas H. Pulsifer."

"Oh! oh! oh!" cried Tommy, and it wasn't a minute, no, it wasn't ten seconds before he had it open. And out on the floor dropped two bits of cardboard.

"Pictures!" cried Daffy, almost as much excited as Tommy, himself, was. "Why, what are they?"

"Why, what is 'em?" echoed Tommy, regardless of grammar. "Eggs and a dog and—and chickens—and—and!"

"Ostriches," laughed mother. "Don't you know that uncle John is on an ostrich farm? Bring me your letter, dear, and we'll see what about it."

So Tommy carried the letter to mother, hugging the pictures close all the while. And this is what was about it:

"MY DEAR LITTLE TOMMY,—Your letter came safe and sound, and I was very much pleased with it, because I could read it without my glasses. I know you will want an answer right back, and as I haven't much time to write, I am going to send you some pictures which I'm sure you will like better than any stupid letter. One of them is a photograph of the first ostriches which were hatched here after I came, and which are now more than a year old: the other is of chicks two weeks old, two ostrich-eggs with a hen's egg beside them, and my dog Floss."

"Oh, how little the hen's egg is!" cried Daffy. "It isn't any bigger than one of my wax beads."

"That's 'cause the other eggs are so big,

goosey," said Ben, with all the wisdom of ten years.

"But don't the chickens look funny, and isn't the dog cute?"

"Uncle John says he's going to send Daffy a plume for her best bonnet this spring," smiled mother, who had read the letter through.

"When he knows I don't wear 'em, any more than he does glasses," Daffy laughed merrily. "The idea of uncle John Tyler wearing glasses!"

"The idea!" murmured Tommy, hugging his pictures tight.—*Youth's Companion.*

THE BEST PREPARATION.

"I suppose it is dreadfully wicked to say so, but other books help me more than the Bible does." The girl with the book in her hand (one of Pansy's latest) looked up expecting sharp reproof.

"What book, for instance?" was the question quietly put.

"This," holding it up.

"How does it help you more than the Bible does?"

"Because the people in it are real,—like me. They are helped as I want to be helped. I suppose it is wicked," she repeated half defiantly, half penitently.

"The truth is God's truth anywhere; you mean Pansy interprets it to you?"

"Yes," with a relieved inflection; "does any other book help you more than the Bible?"

"No; nothing begins to help me like the Bible."

"I go to Sabbath school altogether for the books; I never care about the lessons." She had grown bolder with the withheld rebuke.

"If you did not care for Pansy's book, if it were stupid and did not help you, would you think it the author's fault?"

"I certainly should; I will not read the second chapter of any book whose first does not interest me."

"If the Bible does not interest and help you do you consider it the fault of the author?"

The question was quietly put, but it brought a frightened look into the eyes of the listener.

"Perhaps it is my teacher's fault," she answered quickly and sullenly. "Tell me how the Bible helps you?"

"The same way Pansy's books help you; the people are real to me; they are helped as I want to be helped."

"People ages ago real to you!" was the unsatisfied and incredulous exclamation.

"God is not ages ago; he is now."

As her listener did not reply the teacher continued: "I read the Bible to learn about him. What God says himself is more to me than any interpretation the wisest, holiest saint can put upon his words or his ways. I do not care so much for David, but I care for what I learn about God through David's sins, his successes, his disappointments, his human interests—like mine; not so much for Hannah, or Dorcas, or any one whom God put upon the earth for the same relationship to himself. He will be just as good to me as he was to them, and that is why I want to know how good he was to them. As it is God's heart, and mind, and will, and work I am learning, I find myself as much in his

book as they were; turn a leaf and there my life is, with God in it, over it, through every hour of it, as he was in their lives. The Bible is as intensely interesting to me as God is; God speaking is God speaking to me; he means me everywhere."

"That is too wonderful for me."

"Begin it, then; come up to it little by little. Think of it every day and every night as illustrating God's commands, promises, and then you will love God's book with such perfect satisfaction that you will turn hungry from every other."

"Yes, so I would, if I felt that way," the listener acknowledged.

"I was thoroughly aroused to a delight in the Bible at thirteen," continued the teacher, "and that delight has increased with every year; it is now an absorbing and daily increasing satisfaction. It is God speaking to me in every breath I breathe."

The girl looked down upon the book in her hand. "It is more to you, then, than my book is to me. You cannot tell me how it became so?" with a wistfulness in her voice.

"I think I can. When I was a young girl I heard a sermon upon the text 'Open thou mine eyes that I may behold wondrous things out of thy law.' The preacher told us to pray that prayer every time we opened the Bible. And I do."

"Do you have something new every day?"

"Every day that I ask for it."

"But, don't you think—" the girl was roused with her sudden inspiration. "Don't you think that is a selfish way to love the Bible?"

"Certainly, if it ended with myself; but if we love it we will live it. We can't help doing so."

"I begin to understand. The Bible is more to me now than it was half an hour ago. I believe I would ask nothing more than to love it and help others to love it."—*S. K. W. in Westminster Teacher.*

CHURCH MOORINGS.

An old sea-captain was riding in the cars, and a young man sat down by his side. He said:

"Young man, where are you going?"

"I am going to Philadelphia to live."

"Have you any letters of introduction?"

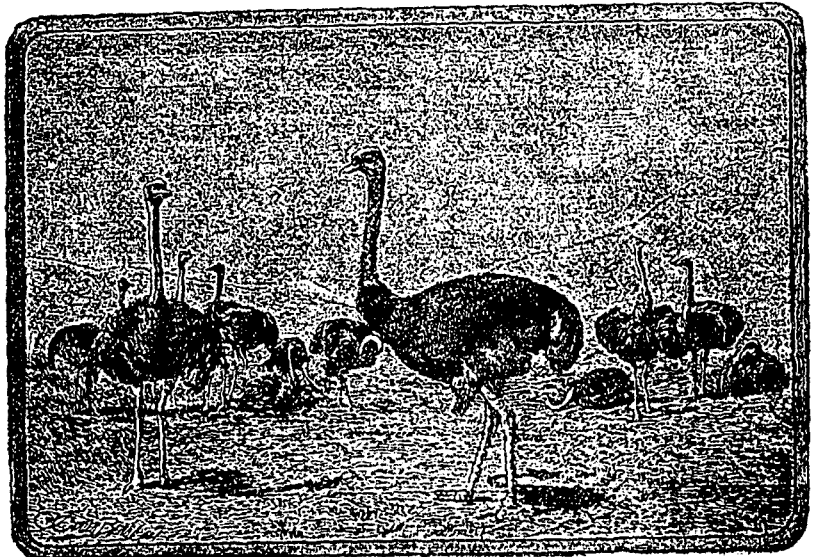
"Yes," said the young man, and he pulled some of them out.

"Well," said the old sea-captain, "have you a church certificate?"

"Oh, yes," said the young man, "I did not suppose you desired to look at that."

"Yes," said the sea-captain, "I want to look at that. As soon as you reach Philadelphia, present that to some Christian church. I am an old sailor, and I have been up and down in the world, and it is my rule as soon as I get into port to fasten my ship fore and aft to the wharf, although it may cost a little wharfage, rather than have my ship out in the stream floating hither and thither with the tide.—*Leaves of Light.*

IT IS THEY who glorify God that shall enjoy Him; they who deny themselves who shall not be denied; they who labor for Him on earth who shall rest in heaven; they who seek to bless others who shall themselves be blessed.—*Dr. Guthrie.*



OSTRICHES A YEAR OLD.