

USED TO KILL BIRDS.

I used to kill birds in my boyhood,
Bluebirds and robins and wrens,
I hunted them up in the mountains,
I hunted them down in the glens,
I never thought it was sinful—
I did it only for fun—
And I had rare sport in the forest
With the poor little birds and my gun.

But one beautiful day in the spring-time
I spied a brown bird in a tree,
Merrily swinging and chirping,
As happy as bird could be,
And raising my gun in a twinkling,
I fired, and my aim was too true,
For a moment the little thing fluttered,
Then off to the bushes it flew.

I followed it quickly and softly,
And there to my sorrow I found,
Right close to its nest full of young ones,
The little bird dead on the ground!
Four birdies! For food they were calling;
But now they could never be fed,
For the kind mother-bird who had loved them
Was lying there bleeding and dead.

picked up the bird in my anguish,
I stroked the wee motherly thing
That could never more feed its dear young
ones,
Nor dart through the air on swift wing.
And I made a firm vow in that moment,
When my heart with such sorrow was
stirred,
That never again in my lifetime
Would I shoot a poor innocent bird!
BOYCE'S MONTHLY.

BOB.

Old Farmer Brownlee was moving
slowly across his big onion-field. He
was on his hands and knees, and his
head was bent low so that his near-
sighted eyes could distinguish the
weeds among the tiny upright onion-
points. Now and then he raised
himself wearily. His back was too
old and rheumatic for such work,
and he wished that one of his boys
had chosen to be a farmer instead of
a business or professional man.
When at home they had taken all
such work as this from him, but now
the last one of them was packing his
trunk for the city, and hereafter he
must do his own chores and onion-
weeding. Well he would not com-
plain—the boys had bettered them-
selves, and that was what he most
desired.

When he reached the end of the
row he straightened his shoulders
with a sigh of relief. Then a look
of surprised inquiry came into his
face. He thought he knew every
boy in the neighborhood; but there,
from the topmost rail of his zigzag
fence, a ragged, unknown boy of
twelve or thirteen was regarding him
earnestly. As he looked up the boy
grinned conciliatingly.

"What is them things you're so
careful 'bout tendin', Mister?" he
asked.

Farmer Brownlee's face darkened.
The idea that any one could be so
ignorant as not to recognize growing
onions never entered his head.

"None of your sass, boy," he said,
angrily; "an' just suppose you git
down off that fence. Fust thing you
know there'll be a rail broke, or
suthin'."

The boy sprang nimbly to the
ground, but it was on the inside of
the fence and not on the outside, as
the old man had intimated.

"I'd like awfully well to know what
they be, Mister," he said, as he bent
down to examine the green, needle-
points. "I've been watchin' you a
long time, an' s'pose likely they're
some extra fine posies, you're so
careful of 'em. But say, if you don'

mind, I'd like to try a row of 'em
across. I b'lieve I can do it."

The look of anger on Farmer
Brownlee's face became one of
astonishment. A boy anxious to
weed onions! and not know what
they were! Two phenomena that
made him almost speechless. His
boys had always been willing to do
the work for him, but he could not
remember that either of them had
ever seemed anxious for the job.

"Not—know—onions! Well, that
beats me!" Then a quizzical look
came into his face. "I'd know's I
mind you goin' across and back. I'll
sit under this tree an' sort o' keep

an oversight. You must be careful
an' not pull up any onions. An'
say," as the boy dropped on his knees
astride of the rows, "you haven't told
me your name yet, nor where you
come from."

"Bob Cooper; an' I'm one of the
fresh-air boys over at that farmhouse
t'other side the hill."

"Um! yes; I b'lieve I did hear Sol
Perkins speak of takin' some street
boys for a week. Crazy idee, I
thought it."

For some minutes he watched the
boy dubiously; then the uncertainty
left his face and he leaned back
comfortably against the tree.

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"Mighty spry with his fingers, an'
careful as one of my own boys," he
thought, approvingly. "Do the work
twice as fast as I can, if he is a
greeny. Um! makin' of another good
farmer lost in him, I s'pose." Here
his eyes closed, and they had not
opened when the boy came back on
his second row. A sharp scrutiny,
and then Bob turned to the third row
and again weeded his way slowly
across the field. As he rose from
the sixth row he heard the sharp
clang of a bell. Going to the old
man he touched him lightly on the
shoulder.

"I guess likely that's your dinner-
bell, Mister," he said.

"Dinner-bell? Sho! Sho! Tain't 9
o'clock yet. I only just shet my
eyes a minute." He glanced up at
the sun, then down at the newly-
weeded onions, and his face length-
ened into incredulous astonishment.
"You don't mean you've weeded six
rows! Why, that's much as my
obstinate old back'll let me do in a
whole day." Again the dinner-bell
sounded. "Yes, that's for me, sure
enough. Won't you come in an' eat
with me?"

"No; Mis' Perkins'll wonder where
I've gone. But if you don't mind I'll
come back soon's I've eat. I'd like
to try them onions again."

"Mind! I should think not. I'm
always glad to run across such help."

It was nearly half an hour to
Solomon Perkins', but when the old
man returned to his onion field he
found Bob already there and well
down his seventh row.

They worked until dark; then the
old man took out his pocket-book.
Bob shook his head and grinned.

"I don't want no money, Mister;
but if you'll let me come again to-
morrow I'll be much obliged."

"Come all you want to. There's
plenty of work, an' we can settle
when we're through. But it seems
sort of hard for you to come down
here on a vacation an' then work all
the time."

"Oh, that's all right. I like
farmin';" and with a quick spring he
was over the fence and running
across the field.

It took three days to weed the
onions, and when they were finished
the old man again took out his
pocket-book, but again Bob shook
his head. The old man looked per-
plexed.

"Come, come, boy, take the
money," he urged. "I don't want
nobody to work for me for nothin'.
You've ained it, every cent."