

The Stormy Petrel's Warning

(By Geo. E. Walsh, in 'Christian Advocate').

It was a dull, leaden day in summer, and the great Atlantic Ocean was moaning a strange song of sorrow for the dead which it had swallowed up, for it was just after one of the hurricanes which occasionally sweep up the coast and destroy ships by the score. The clouds were dark and heavy overhead; the waves white and fleecy with foam and spray. The shore birds had retreated inland during the storm; but now they were returning to their accustomed haunts along the water's edge, glad that the storm had spent its fury.

But suddenly out of the dull roaring of the sea there came a sound which made the plovers, ducks, snipe and terns stop their feeding and look up inquiringly. It was the distant cry of a bird borne to their ears far across the tossing waves. At first the birds wondered if one of their number had been washed out to sea and was calling for help; but a few moments later they caught the more distant cry of the sea bird, and a small tern, which was soaring high in the air, called down to its mate:

'Its only one of Mother Carey's chickens.'

'Oh, indeed,' replied the tern on the sand. 'I wonder if it has had a good time in the storm. I can never understand why a bird should like to go so far out to sea.'

'Neither can I,' spoke up a grebe; but, then, that isn't strange, for the shore birds around here can't understand why I like to dive so much; but I do, and I suppose it's because I was made to dive.

With that the grebe walked toward the water, swam out where it was deep, and then disappeared deep down in the water. For a long time it did not appear again, but the birds looked out of curiosity to see it come up half a mile away. It suddenly bobbed its head up within a foot of the stormy petrel, or Mother Carey's chicken, whose voice had so startled the feeding birds on the beach.

'You frightened me!' exclaimed

Up, up in the morning early
For nobody else must ring
The bell for mother's breakfast
The merriest ting-a-ting!

Away to the garden after,
For nobody else but she
Must gather the flowers for mother,
And lay them on mother's knee.

Then off with her book of spelling,

the petrel. 'Where did you come from so suddenly?'

'From the bottom of the sea,' answered the grebe; with a violent shake of its head and feathers. 'But where did you come from?'

'O, I came from the middle of the sea—a thousand miles away.'

'I should think you would be tired out, and want to rest on the shore.'

'I never get tired,' answered the petrel, 'or if I do I rest on the waves, or sleep under the stern of a passage ship. I would feel lost on the shore.'

The two were now slowly making their way toward the shore birds. The grebe was swimming rapidly, but the little petrel half-flew and half-walked over the surface of the sea, making such speed

For nobody knows so well,
It's every daughter's duty,
To work and to learn to spell.

There's nobody quite so precious
As mother's own girl, you know:
The queen of the house, God bless
her;

'Twas mother who told me so!

—M. Maddick.

that the grebe could hardly keep up with it.

'What are the birds doing on the water now?' asked the petrel, surveying the different flocks floating around or skimming far out over the waves on strong wings.

'They are eating their dinner and flying around for exercise,' answered the grebe. 'They are all so glad that the storm is over.'

'Over? Do they think this storm is over?' asked the petrel, incredulously. 'Why, it has just begun. The worst of it is coming up the coast. It is so violent that I am flying just ahead of it to keep out of its way.'

'Are you sure of that?' asked the grebe, doubtingly.

'Did you ever know a petrel to make a mistake? Don't we know



Mother's Girl.