



DEVOTED TO TEMPERANCE, SCIENCE, EDUCATION, AND LITERATURE.

VOLUME XXII., No. 2.

MONTREAL & NEW YORK, MAY 6, 1887.

30 CTS. per An. Post-Paid.

SAVED BY AN ALBATROSS.

Some years ago there lived in a cottage on the outskirts of Liverpool an aged pensioner who had been a soldier in the time of the great war. He had gone down to that place to be near a daughter who was the wife of a sailor, the chief mate of a merchant ship. The sailor used to bring home curious things from foreign lands for his wife and children, shells and birds and various treasures. Old Joseph, the grandfather, would never rest satisfied till his son-in-law promised to bring him an albatross, dead or alive. It was a long time before this wish could be gratified. To kill an albatross is an affair of evil omen among seamen, and this superstition is universal among people who never heard of Coleridge and His Ancient Mariner. Old Joe was so importunate and so persistent in his demand that at last his son-in-law brought home an albatross. He never said how he got it, whether it was shot or bought or what; but there it was in the old soldier's possession, and was soon stuffed and mounted and formed the chief pleasure and ornament of the pensioner's little room.

It was not till the bird had been for some time in the house that old Joe told to his daughter and his grandchildren the reason for his special desire to possess an albatross. And this was the substance of the story as he told it to them. He was on board a ship of war near the Cape of Good Hope in the time of the war. He had committed some fault, the exact nature of which he did not state, but it was of so heinous a kind, or an example was so much needed to keep up strictness of discipline, that he was ordered a hundred lashes. Lashed to the mast with his shoulders bare, he was exposed to this terrible chastisement, two men keeping up the strokes even when his torn back and shoulders were streaming with blood.

In that fearful hour Joseph forgot all that a kind, pious mother had taught him as he knelt beside her in his early years. She had told him always to lift his heart in prayer to God, especially when in danger and suffering, and most of all when he fell into temptation and sin, as must have been his case at the present time.

Nothing of this sort crossed Joseph's mind. Never a thought had he of his mother or of the God whom he had forgotten and offended. His one thought was of anger and desperation, with his soul on fire with pain and the shame of his punishment. In spite of the severity of the flogging he did not faint or show signs of suffering, but when the hundredth lash was given and he was let loose, he uttered a piercing shriek, like the yell of a wounded beast, and, rushing to the side of the ship, leaped into the waves.

The captain was a humane man. He had pitied the poor fellow, while deeming it necessary to maintain discipline after the cruel method of those times. But now, when his life was in peril, he gave instant orders to put about the ship and lowered a boat for his rescue. However, the wind was strong; in three minutes the ship had made

great headway; the huge billows threatened the frail bark; the chances of safety seemed few and very feeble.

"I watched the scene," said an officer of the ship afterwards, "through my glass, and I turned it keenly in the direction where the poor fellow ought to be seen. I could not make him out, but just at that moment I perceived a strange object, like a bird with huge wings, flapping on the surface of the water, and presently I saw part of a man appearing and disappearing close to the bird. I began to hope. As we drew nearer the hope changed to certainty. It was our poor lost man!"

This was written by the officer in a letter to his home from the Cape.

It appears that the sudden chill of the water and the sight of approaching death calmed the rage of the soldier, and, having deplored his folly, he sought pardon from God. And then, in a far-off English village

seized the limb of the bird, and thus was kept above water till the boat reached and rescued him.

Terrified, the bird struggled to get free, but Joseph kept tight hold. It was this strange spectacle which the officer descried with his telescope and of which he gave the account in his letter. The sailors laid hold of the poor fellow and got him into the boat. He no sooner was there than, exhausted by his efforts and by the pain of his flogging, he fainted away and lost consciousness. The bird, released from the troublesome weight rose aloft with its powerful wings, and no doubt hastened to tell its companions of the strange adventure it had experienced.

The sailors would have gladly captured the bird and offered it to the captain for his table, but their attention was fixed on the unhappy man whom they had rescued. The captain, I doubt not, would have set the bird free for having saved the soldier's life.

tened to the accursed tree, as I was fastened to the mast, and to think of him bearing his cross to Calvary for the salvation of sinners! O Lord Jesus, I bless and praise thy name! Thou didst look on me and delivered me from the death I had deserved."

Such was the tenor of the old man's remarks when, in an English village fifty years after, he used to tell his grandchildren and his neighbors the story of the albatross. No wonder that he liked to have a specimen of the bird in his room. He used to tell the little folks about the habits of the bird, how it is inoffensive with all its majestic power, and not like the huge eagles which would destroy rather than save any defenceless prey within their reach. The old pensioner in telling the story never failed to turn the narrative into an utterance of praise and gratitude to God. His little pet, Ada, listening with her mouth and big eyes open, used to hold with her hands the neck of the great bird, and, caressing it fondly, would say, in her little gentle speech, "Good abatos, who saved the life of our grandpapa!"

God is the hearer of prayer. This rescue by an albatross was a singular and remarkable incident. But everywhere and every day there are mighty deliverances for those who are ready to sink and to perish. The resources of Providence and of grace are infinite. Great and manifold are the divine works of love and mercy to man. God is almighty; let us trust in him. Let us pray for ourselves and for those who are dear to us, and Jesus, who has so often commanded us to pray, will send, in his own way and time, deliverance and help as strong and as seasonable as was the rescue of poor Joe by the albatross.—Sunday at Home.



HOW TO START A MUSEUM IN A HOME.

A museum at home may be a source of constant pleasure, or the cause of perpetual annoyance. All depends upon the purpose with which it is started, and the manner in which it is managed. Before giving advice as to the best way of making such a museum permanently enjoyable, I will mention some of the most common causes of failure.

Many fail because they start their museum "just for fun." Others because they think that a museum is the same thing as a curiosity shop, and seek only those things that are quaint or rare.

A third cause of failure is the attempt to collect all sorts of things at once. You shall see crowded together on the same shelf coins, stamps, Indian relics, birds'-eggs, autographs, sharks' teeth, sand from the Mississippi, wood from the home of Walter Scott, sea-beans, and pieces of the funeral decorations in memory of Lincoln and Garfield. In this way, the mind, confused and wearied, soon loses its interest. An equally fatal error is the neglect to learn all that can be learned about each specimen. I once had a boyish craze for coin-collecting. My chief motive was to see how many I could get; to get more and rarer ones than my

home, there was a Christian mother who day by day had never ceased to pray for her absent son, beseeching the Almighty that he might live, and not die before he had turned his soul to the Saviour. She had offered this prayer on this day as on every other to Him who is the hearer of prayer and who willeth not the death of a sinner, but that he should turn and live. Infidels make a mock of prayer and faith, but this mother prayed to God and received an answer to her prayer in the deliverance of her son from death. The albatross was the means of his rescue.

The albatross is a large bird, one of the largest of all birds of the sea. It is not uncommon in the seas near the Cape of Good Hope. Instinctively the drowning man

Of the fact of the rescue nothing would have been made public but for the letter of the officer who described the scene. The wonderful story of deliverance, however was often told by Joseph in after years, and, best of all, he told how that rescue of his life had proved to him the commencement of spiritual life. "The albatross saved me," he would say; "without its succor I must have perished in the bitter waters and no one would have seen my body more. And my soul, what would have become of it? Oh, my God, I bless thy name for having sent that bird for my deliverance! My mother—I wish ever to remember her early lessons; I wish to read my Bible, I wish to pray to my Saviour and to love him who saved my soul. Oh, to think of him fas-