

ABOUT HEAVEN.

A Hindoo fable says that one day a crane was greedily eating snails in a marsh. Her relish for them was so great that she said within herself, I could live for ever, happy and contented, if only snails were abundant! As she was thus engaged a dove flew down from the sky, and lighted near her. "Where do you come from?" asked the crane. "From heaven," was the answer.

"What have you seen in heaven?" asked the crane. "Everything that can make people happy." And then the dove went on and described some of the joys of that glorious place.

"Have they any snails in heaven?" asked the crane, as much as to say—"I don't care to be in any place where there are no snails."

"You bad, low-craving creature!" said the dove, as she left the crane, "They neither speak nor think of snails in heaven."

Now suppose that this crane had been taken to heaven; would it have been happy there? Not at all. It would have been hungering all the time, for the marsh where it used to wade and catch snails. We must be *prepared* for heaven, if we hope to be happy there. And there is only one true preparation. This is to have the new heart and new nature (John iii. 3), which manifests itself in love of things which are pure, and love to Jesus.

When the first missionaries at Madagascar had converted some of the islanders there, a Christian sea captain asked a former chief what it was that first led him to become a Christian. "Was it any particular sermon you heard, or book which you read?" asked the captain.

"No, my friend," replied the chief, "it was no book nor sermon. One man, he a wicked thief; another man, he drunk all day long; big chief, he beat his wife and children. Now, thief, he no steal; drunken Tom, he sober; big chief, he very kind to his family. Every heathen man gets something inside him, which make him different, so I became a Christian, too, to know how it feel to have something strong inside of me, to keep me from being bad."

Now that old chief had the right idea of Christianity. He had got something new and strong inside of him. He had a new motive; it was the desire to be true and pure.

At one of the ragged schools in Ireland a minister asked the poor children before him "What is holiness?" Thereupon a poor little Irish boy, in dirty, tattered rags, jumped up and said, "Please your reverence, it's to be clean inside." Could anything be truer?

Those who believe have Christ in their hearts; heaven in their eye; and the world under their feet; God's Spirit is their guide; God's fear is their guard; God's people are their companions, God's promises are their cordials; holiness is their way; and heaven is their home,