

YOUNG CANADA.

THE STORKS OF DELFT.

The bells clanged dread in every spire,
The watchman cried: "Fire! fire! fire! fire!
Ho! men of Delft, the city flames,
Run from your labours and your games.
Ho! rich and poor, haste for your lives,
Snatch your dear children and your wives,
The bedrid, aged, sick, and blind,
The idiot and insane of mind,
Then think of household goods and gear,
Rich tapestries and flagons dear,
And plate wherewith your town makes cheer.
Run, burghers, for the flames are red;
They hiss and crackle overhead,
And high above each lane and street
Hangs our brave city's winding-sheet."
And thus it chanced in Delft of fame
Lived many storks, that went and came,
Free from all harm, protected, blessed,
Because they cleared the city's pest—
Toads, frogs, and noisome creatures foul.
So wise a bird some gave a soul,
And scarce a man but reared a hatch
Whereon the little storks might hatch.
Now, on that fatal third of May,
When lurid clouds obscured the day,
With nestling birds just out of shell,
A strange and piteous thing befel.
Soft, downy, formless wing and head
They lay within the natal bed.
The parent birds quick saw their doom,
'Mid stifling smoke and sullen boom
Of falling roof and splintering wall,
And groan, and curse, and anguish call,
'Mid swaying crowds and rushing feet,
And furnace-blasts of withering heat,
And flying sparks like living things,
That bore destruction on their wings.
And first they sought in haste to bear
Their nurslings through the heated air.
But no, their strength may not suffice;
They struggle, but they cannot rise,
And, panting back upon the nest,
They hide their young with wing and breast,
And calmly wait the fiery wave
To lay them in a common grave.
The flying crowds with wonder saw
A sight to fill the soul with awe,
Those birds that chose not life, but death,
To shield their young with latest breath;
Mounting in love a funeral-pyre
They gave their bosoms to the fire.
And thus perchance the storks that day
Taught some poor craven heart the way
To stay his feet for those in need,
To help the weak, the sick to heed,
Remembering those old words, how writ:
"Who saves his life shall forfeit it."
Amid the records of the town
This tale is truly written down.
In letters of the purest gold
Such noble story well were told,
Of birds heroic in their death
Teaching Christ's truth with failing breath,
And glazing eye, and fluttering wing—
Those storks of Delft whereof I sing.

—Augusta Larned.

THE OWL AND THE WEASEL.

SOME people would tell you that you ought to destroy stoats and weasels whenever you see them. I myself think you ought not, because, although they do sometimes treat themselves to a young leveret, or even a duckling or a chicken, they should be forgiven for this when we consider the amount of good they do by destroying such grain-eating animals as rats and mice, to say nothing of our garden pests and moles.

Even the owl is a very useful bird of prey, because he works by night, when hawks have gone to sleep. Like many human thieves and robbers, mice like to ply their pilfering avocations after nightfall, and they might do so with impunity were it not for those members of the feathered vigilance committee—the owls.

Now, so long as an owl does his duty, I

think he has a right to live, and even be protected; but even an owl may forget himself sometimes, and be guilty of indiscretion. When he does so, he has only himself to blame if evil follow.

There was a particular well-to-do and overweeningly ambitious owl lived once in an old castle, not far from the lovely village of Fern-dene.

"Oh!" he said to himself one bright moonlight night, as he sat gazing down on drowsy woodland, and the little village with its twinkling lights, "I should like a repetition of last night's feast—a tasty young weasel. Oh! I would never eat mouse again, if I could always have weasel." And he half closed his old eyes with delight as he spoke.

"And why not?" he continued brightening up; "there were five of them, and I only had one. So here I go."

And away flew the owl out of the topmost window of the tower, and flapping his great lazy wings in the air, made directly over the trees to the spot where the weasel had her nest.

"I shouldn't wonder," said one bat to another, "if our friend Mr. Owl finds more than his match to-night."

Farmer Hodge, plodding wearily homewards through the moonlight, about half an hour after, was startled by a prolonged and mournful shriek that seemed close to his ear, while at the same time he saw something dark rising slowly in the sky. He watched it for many minutes; there was another scream, but a fainter one, high up in the air; then the something grew darker and larger, and presently fell at his feet with a dull thud. What could it be, he wondered, as he stopped to examine it. Why, a great barn owl with a weasel fast on its neck. Were they dead? Yes, both were dead; but then one died bravely doing its duty, and defending its homestead; the other was a victim to unlawful ambition.

A PASSING SHOWER.

IT was sunshine over the meadow, and all through the farm-house; sunshine over the old apple orchard, and sunshine all the way down the road, as far as one could see.

Could it be possible there was a cloud in the world that day? You would hardly believe it. Yet there was one rising just at that moment, a big, black, stormy-looking cloud, while the sky was as blue as ever.

Down the garden path, and beyond the summer-house, stood a fine old oak tree; and right under its great branches the dark cloud gathered. Over two round brown faces it spread quickly, till all the sunshine fled away in fright.

Ralph and Jamie loved to play under the old oak. From its thickest bough hung a splendid swing, the gnarled roots made nice seats, and it was always cool and shady there.

"Can't find my knife, what did you do with it?" said one little voice, "Didn't have it at all," said the other little voice—"I say you did."—"I tell you I didn't!" and the little voices came very sharply now. "You had it last, you naughty boy," said Ralph; and then the cloud on Jamie's face grew darker, and big rain drops fell from the blue eyes, while the angry sobs which followed so astonished the

sparrows overhead that they stopped chirping, and hopped down on the low branches to see what was the matter. "Bad boys, go home!" chirped Mrs. Sparrow, and just then came mamma's voice from her window, "Boys, come to me."

Wee Jamie toddled off, and Ralph followed. As they passed the summer-house, there on the grass lay Cherry's doll, Lizette, in white pinafore and scarlet shoes. They peeped in, and there was Cherry herself, fast asleep on the hard bench, with her own chubby arm for a pillow. The ground was strewn with chips, from among which gleamed the lost knife, while a fat fist tightly clasped a stick of wood which she had been trying to whittle "like bruvver."

Ralph and Jamie dearly loved their little sister, and there was the precious knife, and Cherry herself had been cut. So the rain of tears stopped at once, and a bright laugh from Cherry as she woke up scattered the cloudy looks so fast that before you could turn around all was sunshine again.

Then Ralph and Jamie and rosy little Cherry ran to mamma as fast as their little feet would carry them, and told her all about it.

And mamma kissed the three puckered mouths, and said softly: "Little children, love one another."

RULES FOR HOME JOYS.

SHUT every door after you, and without slamming it.

2. Never shout, jump, or run in the house.

3. Never call to persons upstairs or in the next room; if you wish to speak to them, go quietly where they are.

4. Always speak kindly and politely to the servants, if you would have them to do the same to you.

5. When told to do or not to do a thing, by either parent, never ask why you should or should not do it.

6. Tell of your own faults and misdoings, not of those of your brothers and sisters.

7. Carefully clean the mud or snow off your boots before entering the house.

8. Never sit down at the table or in the parlour with dirty hands or disordered hair.

9. Never reserve your good manners for company, but be equally polite at home and abroad.

HOW TO BREAK OFF BAD HABITS.

UNDERSTAND the reason, and all reasons, why the habit is injurious. Study the subject until there is no lingering doubt in your mind. Avoid the places, the persons, that lead to the temptation. Frequent the places, associate with the persons, indulge in the thoughts that lead away from temptation. Keep busy; idleness is the strength of bad habits. Do not give up the struggle when you have broken your resolution once, twice, a thousand times. That only shows how much need there is for you to strive.

When you have broken your resolution, just think the matter over, and endeavour to understand why it was you failed, so that you may guard against the occurrence of the same circumstances. Do not think it an easy thing that you have undertaken. It is folly to expect to break off a habit in a day which may have been gathering strength for years.