

FOR THE CHILDREN

The Swallow's Nest.

CHARLEY came from school one Friday afternoon. He was going home with his grandfather, at whose house he was to spend the next day. It was the month of May; and the drive of ten miles among the green trees and fields was very delightful.

There were no playmates for Charley at grandpa's; but with a calf at the barn, several broods of chickens, and four kittens, he found enough to occupy his mind. He was up very early in the morning, and it was after ten o'clock when he came into the kitchen rather hungry.

"Look under the cloth on the table, Charley," called his grandma from the sitting-room. "You'll find a little cake I baked for you. Don't you see it?" she asked, coming into the kitchen. "There, that one."

"Oh!" said Charley, "I thought that was a loaf."

Then, taking the cake in his hand, he sat on a rock at the foot of a tree a little distance from the house, and began to eat with great relish.

Not far from him, and a little way from the other buildings, was the corn-barn, and at one end of its roof was a bird-house, which had been taken by two little birds for their home. Charley saw one bird come out and fly away. While she was gone, her mate kept watch at a short distance to see that no harm came to the eggs that were within.

Charley noticed that, in flying, these birds had different motions from the sparrows and robins which lived about his own home in the city, and, when he went nearer, he saw that they were swallows.

As he watched them pass in and out of their house, he observed that there was something inside that opened and shut like a door. It was pressed back when the birds went in, and sprang into place again as soon as they were inside. Charley could not make out what it was, and ran to the house to ask about it.

"Grandma," he said, "is there a real door to the swallows' house?"

"They make one for themselves," she answered, "there is no door to the box. You know their house stands where it is exposed to all the winds, and, on some days since they came, they must have felt the cold very much. But I saw one come flying home one day with a turkey's feather in his beak, and they worked away at it very busily until they had placed it as you see. It keeps out the wind, and makes the house much more comfortable."

Charley went back to look at the door again, and wished he could be small enough, for a few minutes, to go inside the bird-house, and see just how it was fastened. But he could not have his wish, and the swallows kept their secret.

SUSAN CHENERY.

What the Fox Thought.

BY WEBB DONNELL.

NAT had a very exciting story to tell to Ned—all about how he had been down in the lower field and had seen a fox, and how the fox had cantered off and disappeared in the ground.

"I found the hole," said Nat, eagerly, "an' we'll get the hired man to go with us to-night and dig out the little ones! It's just time now for the little foxes to be in the nests, Mr. Cummins says."

The boys' father had told them of

a little tame fox he used to have when he was a boy, and ever since Nat and Ned had been wild to get a baby fox to "bring up."

Jackson, the hired man, agreed to go with them that evening when his work was done, and seven o'clock found them at the hole in the field. None of them saw a pair of sharp eyes watching from the bushes.

It was hard work digging in the stony soil, and, dear me! when they got to the end of the little tunnel in the ground there was a great disappointment in store for Nat and Ned—there were no foxes there!

The owner of the sharp eyes stole softly away, and if she had any thoughts upon the subject, and I'm quite sure she did, this is what they were: "What stupid folks to go to all that trouble without finding out beforehand something about the habits of foxes! Then they would have known that we always take our babies and scamper off to hole number two as soon as we find that somebody has discovered hole number one. That is our protection." — *Youth's Companion*.

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The Two Gowns.

BY MIRIAM S. CLARK.

MY mama has a pretty dress
Of silk, that's rich and fine;
She wears it when there's company
Or when she's out to dine;
The collar has a velvet bow
Below my mama's face;
The skirt is long, and very wide,
The sleeves are trimmed with lace;
It shines and shimmers in the light,
All changing, gold and green;
I smile at her, and whisper low,
"My mama is a queen!"

My mama has another dress
That's cozy, soft and red,
She wears it on "home evenings,"
When I am going to bed;
And after I have said my prayers
And when I've said good-night,
I'm not afraid of hurting it,
I hug up to it, tight,
And say, with arms round mama's neck,
"Oh, have you ever guessed,
That though your blue silk gown is grand,
I like this dress the best?"

—St. Nicholas.

* * *

His Spelling.

BY E. P. E.

LITTLE WEE had been brought up to be polite, and not to interrupt when there was company unless it was very important. He always remembered this and kept very quiet. One day there were visitors, who talked and stayed and stayed, until poor little Wee was tired. He wished them to go, but not for anything would he let them see this.

All of a sudden he thought of a nice plan that his mother and father knew when he was too little to spell and they did not want to hurt his feelings. So in a little pause in the ladies' talk, Wee said, in his prettiest way, "Mother, please can't we be a-l-o-n-e?" And all the visitors laughed and kissed him good-by, and gave him his good mother all to himself.

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The Gentleman in Grey.

HUSH, little May! Snuggle here by my side:
Do you see in that corner a door open wide?
That's the door of a house: if you watch it a minute,
The shy little owner will come and sit in it.



Tea Time Talks



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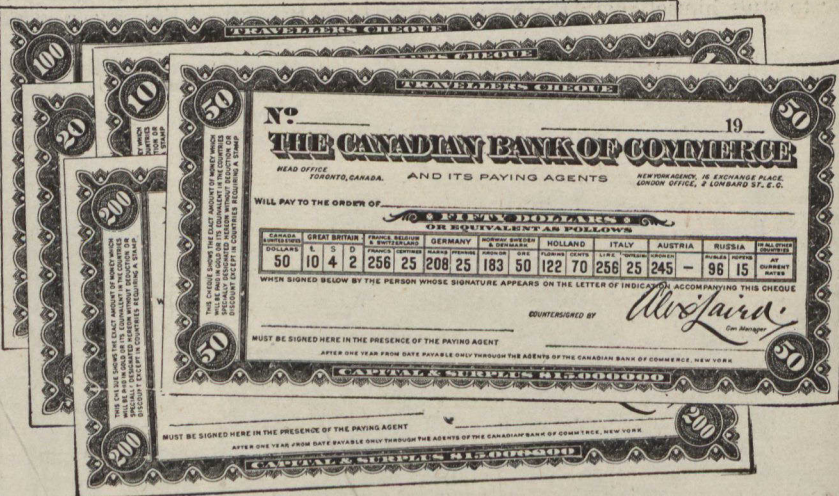
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