

he had to wait thirteen months, sometimes two years, for it to be answered. At one time he gave an order out of his meagre salary for seventy-five dollars' worth of books, which his soul craved. Two years passed. Day after day the missionary's eye searched the cloudless horizon in vain, looking for a sail.

At last the mail arrived; but instead of books he received the incredible reply that it was thought his order overdraw his salary; and, using their discretion, wiser heads had sent him what they thought he ought to have, not what he needed most. Two years more of bitter waiting before his books came! Four years for an order which any one of us could have filled in almost as many hours!

Such martyr-like fidelity and patience are a marvel to most men. They do not understand the power of manliness reinforced by the self-effacement of true religious devotion. The instance we have given may be exceptional in the conditions under which practical Christianity was exhibited—but the wish and resolve to bless mankind can become a ruling passion in other minds as well as in that of the pioneer missionary. In all walks of life, there is brave work to be done, that involves the sublimest motives, and Christian self-denial can bear and do anything for its sake.—'Youth's Companion.'

### A Dark Month.

(By Mattie W. Baker.)

'I do wish,' exclaimed Annie Ellis, pettishly, 'that we lived in a pretty place.'

'Why, Annie,' replied her mother, 'what do you mean? People often speak of the beauty of our place and the fine view we have.'

'Oh, yes; I know; but I've seen it so long I'm sick of it! Nell Kimball's cousin from Troy has been telling us of the view from her home—oh! it must be lovely! I hate this place worse than ever!'

'Of course, every one loves their own home the best, or, at least, they ought to.'

'Why, certainly, mother, I love my home,' said Annie, feeling rebuked, 'but I wish it stood in a more romantic spot. There's nothing to be seen here only the same old fields, and mountains, and that tiresome river.'

Mrs. Ellis sighed, and said no more. It pained her to have Annie dissatisfied with her home surroundings, but she felt it was only the result of outside influence, and would pass away in time.

It was but a few days after this that Annie had a serious attack of sore eyes. She had often had trouble with her eyes before, but this was so severe she could not go to school, and finally the doctor was called in. He said she must be kept in a perfectly dark room.

'Oh, dear! For how long?' asked poor Annie.

'That depends,' said the doctor, 'perhaps a week.'

'I should die before a week was over; I know I should,' said Annie.

But she did not die, though she had to stay in the dark a month, instead, a long, long month, longer than any year she ever knew before. To sit there in the dark with bandaged eyes, hour after hour, day after day, how dreary it was! How she came to pity people who were always blind, and to think, with a sinking heart, 'What if I should never see again!'

The family did all they could to amuse her, but her mother had her work to do, and of course she could not see to sew in the dark. The other children went to school, but though they went in and told her

about school, and of their games and all, they soon tired of the dark room.

It was the same with Annie's mates when they came in. None of them wanted to stay long.

'I don't see how Annie endures it,' they would say to each other. 'It seems like being in prison.'

When at last her eyes were pronounced cured, and she could go out on the porch and look around, she was fairly breathless with delight.

'Oh, mother,' she exclaimed, 'this is a beautiful place, after all! I never knew how to prize it before. It is so good to see it again!'—'Presbyterian Banner.'

### Swallows' Nest Soup.

(By Mrs. Battersby.)

Many of my young readers have peeped into a bird's nest, and admired its beautiful shape and the softly-lined hollow where the pretty eggs are lying so cosily. If you live in the country, I dare say you have watched the nests of different birds, and

always built in caves and clefts. Sometimes these men have to be let down to these caves and clefts by ropes fastened on the tops of the cliffs, and often they have to climb up a fearful height, inside the caves, to carry off the nests. These are built by a kind of swallow, and fastened to the sides of the rocks, just in the same way as our swallows fasten their nests under the eaves.

For a long time people thought they were made of seaweed, which the birds picked up on the waves or on the shore: but now the swallows are believed to have the power of forming their nests from a gluey stuff which they can draw out of their bodies, and which looks like a thread in their bills.

This thread they weave backwards and forwards, just as silkworms do when they are making a chrysalis. Well, the edible swallows are said to make their gelatine houses in the same way. The first nests they build every season are quite white, and so clear, you can see writing through them, and they are always the dearest to buy. The next nests have less and less gum, and are not so clear.



thought how unlike they were to each other.

You have looked up to the rook's large bundle of sticks in the top of some tall tree, and then you have searched for the lovely little nest of the chaffinch, well hidden with moss and grey lichens, on the branch of an apple-tree close by.

But what would you say to eating a bird's nest?—eating it, that is, when made into soup. The nests in our picture are thought so much of, that they are sold for a very high price. You must not think these are common nests, built of grass and moss. No! they are made of something very like gelatine, or isinglass, which you have seen given in little paper packages to cook, and still more like a gum called mastic, which is sold in layers—not lumps, like common gum, and is whitish in color.

The natives in China, Java, Borneo, and Ceylon, venture into very dangerous places every year, to collect these nests, which are

The poor little birds are said to take two months to finish their nests, and they are robbed of them every year, sometimes before the young ones are able to fly, which is very cruel, as many of them are killed.

### How Aunt Jennie Learned to Write Letters.

'Auntie, how many letters you write!' said Mattie Steele, one morning, as she came into her Aunt Jennie's room and found her busy at her desk. 'I do so hate to write letters,' she added with a sigh, thinking of at least a half-dozen that she ought to answer.

Aunt Jennie looked up and laughed. 'Oh, I can remember when it was quite as hard for me to write a letter as it is for you now,' she said, as she turned her chair from the desk and faced Mattie.

'Why, I supposed it was always easy for