



"THE BOYHOOD OF JESUS."

THE PRETTY DRINKING CUP.

MILLIE has a dainty silver cup which auntie gave her. She is very proud of it, and one day, when Cousin Belle was visiting her, she said,

"No one has such a pretty cup as this!"

"I saw a bird drinking from a prettier one than that one day," said papa.

"Birds don't drink from cups, do they?" asked Belle.

"Yes, sometimes. This was a leaf-cup, the cup of the pitcher-plant, and it has a lid, and holds water as well as your cup."

"And do the birds really drink out of it?"

"Yes; the rain and the dew gather in the cup, and by and by a thirsty bird comes along. 'Now I will have a drink,' says Birdie, and he sips from the leaf-cup, and lifts up his head as if to thank God for the drink. No wonder; the heavenly Father loves and cares for the birds, as well as for the children!"

AT THE FARM.

ONE of the things that Lawrence and Susie very much enjoyed was watching the birds at the farm. There were a great many of them, and every morning the children were awakened by a perfect chorus of sweet singers in the trees just outside their windows. Then out in the barn there were a great many pigeons, some white and some blue, and some brown and golden. The sun shone on their beautiful backs as they glided so gracefully past on their outstretched wings. They were very tame too. They made a soft cooing sound that the children learned to imitate quite well. One day when they were out in the woods they found a nest with five little birdies in it. The mother bird came and brought them

food, and the wee birdies seemed as if they were all mouths, so eager were they for their breakfast. Sometimes they went with old Towser after the cows at night, and they used to enjoy these evening walks very much, often gathering little bouquets of wild flowers by the roadside and in the pasture. The cows were all very gentle and steady, so the children did not fear them the least bit. They were not at all afraid of Towser, either. Indeed, they were fond of him, for he was always ready for a frolic with them. Nobody was

afraid of him—not even the cat, who would quite often sit close beside him on the most friendly terms.

MRS. SPECKLES AND HER FAMILY.

It was very strange, was it not? This is how it was. Mrs. Speckles had sat upon her eggs for a whole month. It was very uncomfortable to sit with her legs cramped up under her, and never to move. No running about, no play, no nice things to eat. For when she did rush away to snatch a morsel, she was back again in half a minute. Mrs. Speckles got so thin you would hardly have known her.

And all this for what? Well, for the sake of the ten dear little downy creatures who at last rewarded her patient care. After her long waiting she heard a faint "Peep, peep" from one, then a shrill "Chirp, chirp" from another, till presently, why there they all were, started on the great world with nothing but egg-shells left behind. Mrs. Speckles was happy; ten healthy thriving children, what mother could wish for more? Mrs. Speckles thought hers the dearest and downiest that ever could be. It might have struck her (but it didn't) that they were not quite the same as her last family—that they were more yellow, their backs broader, and that there was something wrong about their bills. Their legs, too, looked odd, and what well-bred chickens ever waddled as these did? However, Mrs. Speckles did not notice, and so they lived together happily—for a little while. Then a man came and moved her and coop and all to another place. It was a shock to her feelings, and ruffled her very much. But a worse shock was coming. There was a pond just below, and what should she see but all her children—the

whole ten of them—rushing down as fast as they could to the water! How she cried and clucked and tried to make them know that they would all be drowned!

But they were not drowned. They dived and spluttered and played as if they had been on the pond for weeks and yet they had never seen it before!

A SIGN-BOARD.

I'll paint you a sign, rumseller;
And hang it upon your door,
A true and better sign-board
Than ever you had before;
I'll paint with the skill of a master,
And many shall pause to see
This wonderful piece of painting.
So like the reality.

I'll paint yourself, rumseller,
As you wait for that fair young boy,
Just in the morn of manhood,
A mother's pride and joy;
He has no thought of stopping,
But you greet him with a smile,
And you seem so blithe and friendly,
That he pauses to chat awhile.

I will paint you again, rumseller,
I'll paint you as you stand,
With a foaming glass of liquor
Holding in either hand:
He wavers—but you urge him,
Drink! pledge me! just this one;
He lifts the glass and drains it,
And the hellish work is done.

I'll paint you now a drunkard—
Only a year has flown,
And into this loathsome creature
The fair young boy has grown;
The work was quick and rapid,
I'll paint him as he lies
In a torpid, drunken slumber,
Beneath the winter skies.

I'll paint the form of the mother,
Knelt by her darling's side,
Her beautiful boy who was dearer
Than all the world beside.
I'll paint the shape of a coffin
Labelled with one word "Lost";
I'll paint all this, rumseller,
And paint it free of cost.

The sin and the shame and sorrow,
The crime, the pain and the woe
That's born there in your rumshop
No hand could paint, you know.
But I'll paint you a sign, rumseller,
And many shall pause to view,
This wonderful swinging sign-board,
So terribly, fearfully true.

—Ellis Wheeler.