



THE USELESS KETTLE.

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Some one has thrown away this rusty old kettle, probably because it has a hole in its side and is no more use for holding water. There it lies in the long grass almost hidden from sight, and it will certainly never hold boiling water again, or be of any more use in the kitchen. But, as the time passes by, and the spring comes round, and the birds begin to look out for cosy and sheltered spots to build their nests in, one little bird, with sharper eyes than the rest, spies out this old kettle lying half out of sight in the grass and weeds; and it thinks to itself, "Ah! What a nice warm place the inside of that kettle would be for my little ones when they come out of the eggs and have no feathers on their little bodies to protect them against the cold winds; I will call my mate and we will build a nest inside as quick as ever we can."

So the nest was built, and in the picture we can see the soft feathers inside and the mother bird looking on and thinking to herself, with pleasure, how cosy and safe her little ones would be in so quiet and sheltered a spot.

A little lad of three years when asked why he had opened the gate after being forbidden to do so, replied, "To get a little fresh air."

WHAT HARRY DECIDED.

"I think you are real mean, anyhow!" said Harry, looking disappointed and cross. "You haven't much of a collection and I'd give you something real nice for this."

"I don't want 'something real nice,'" said Fred; "I want this."

"This" was a queer-looking bird's nest; Harry had never seen one like it before, and Fred's uncle had told him that the birds which built such nests did not often put them where people could find them.

The scholars in his class were making collections of interesting things—flowers, and stones, and mosses, anything they could find in the fields, or woods, or along the river bank. On the last day of the term they were all to be shown, and the one who had made the best collection was to be given a book full of coloured pictures of birds, and bugs, and flowers. Harry wanted that book; he had believed, until Fred Harper found the queer bird's nest, that he would get it; but he wasn't so sure now. He thought Fred was mean not to sell the nest to him, because Fred did not care for such things, and had not half tried.

One afternoon, just at dusk, Harry was on his way home. He had been to town on an errand, and was taking a short cut through the woods, and whistling for company, when all at once he stopped. There, at his feet lay a bird's nest exactly like

the one Fred had found! He chuckled as he picked it up and said aloud:—

"There, Fred Harper! I've got a nest like yours without any of your help. I mean to—"

But he didn't tell what he meant to do; he had found something that made him look sober. A bit of paper was tucked into the nest with Fred Harper's name on it. Then Harry guessed what had happened, Fred must have dropped his nest out of his pocket and this was it.

"I don't care!" said Harry; "I'm not to blame because he lost it; it's mine now, anyhow."

Just then a thought came to him so plain that Harry almost looked about him to see if somebody had said it: "What shall it profit a man if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?"

The Golden Text! Harry had helped Nannie to learn the hard words in it that very morning, and had tried to explain their meaning. He kicked a twig out of the path and looked cross. "I haven't found the whole world!" he said; "I've only found a bird's nest, and it's mine, too. What I find belongs to me."

"But," said a voice in his heart, "what ought Fred to do with your things if he finds them? You know he ought to bring them back to you, don't you? And you know that to get things in such a way is just like stealing, don't you? Are you going to be as mean as that?"

"No!" said Harry, so loud that a bird in a tree above him was startled. "I'm not! I'm going right straight over to Fred's with this bird's nest; of course I am."

He went, too.

TELL HIM THE TRUTH.

The stories she read him were thrilling enough,
Of fairies and goblins wild,
And the small boy opened his big blue eyes
And wondered like any child.
And yet with a scornful toss of his head,
Said, "They're only a-makin' it up."

She told him of cats with a baleful grin,
Of mice and rats that could talk,
Of Mr. Bull Frog and Dr. Fly,
Of tables and chairs that could walk.
But he, with a scornful toss of his head,
Said, "You're only a-makin' it up."

So she closed the book of the fairy tales,
And told him where sponges grew;
Of their watery home with the fishes
strange,
Way down in the ocean blue.
And he, with a thoughtful look on his face,
Asked "You aren't a-makin' it up?"

She promised she'd tell him only the truth,
And talked of the land of snow,
Where the people must always wrap in
furs,
Where nothing but mosses grow.
And he, with a sober look on his face,
Said, "That's better than makin' it up."