

THE BEETLE GRAVE-DIGGER.

FOR CURIOUS CHILDREN ONLY.

A GENTLEMAN named Mr. Gleditch laid a dead mole that had been caught in a trap upon some soft mould in his garden, and when he returned the next day to the same spot he found a small grave, about four inches deep, exactly corresponding to the size of the dead mole, which lay within it. This charitable work was the performance of the grave-digging beetles, (*Nevrophorus germanicus*). The next day the grave was half filled with earth, and if his curiosity had not caused him to disturb the beetles in their occupation they would doubtless have made all smooth.

Wishing to observe this habit of theirs more closely, Mr. Gleditch provided a glass vessel half filled with moist earth, into which he put four of these beetles with a dead linnet. No alarm was shown by the captives. They began immediately to inspect the bird, and then commenced the digging of a hollow underneath, removing the earth and shoveling it on either side. This was accomplished by leaning strongly upon their collars and bending down their heads, and working with singleness of purpose; while the bird seemed to move its head or tail, its feet or wings, when the beetles attempted to drag the body by its feathers into the hole. After laboring for nearly two hours, one of the beetles drove away the smallest of their number, which Mr. Gleditch concluded to be a female, and would not allow her to work again.

Soon afterward two of the others also went away and left the remaining beetle, who worked hard for five hours more, during which time he removed an astonishing quantity of earth. At length, when the hollow was nearly excavated, the sturdy laborer suddenly stiffened his collar, after the custom of his race, and by an extraordinary exertion of strength lifted up the bird, and arranged it within the spacious grave. Every now and then the sagacious creature mounted upon the body and appeared to tread it down; he then renewed his efforts and pressed it a little further, till it sunk to a considerable depth. At last he seemed spent with fatigue, and after resting his head upon the earth for nearly an hour he retired under ground.

Next morning Mr. Gleditch revisited the place. The grave-digger had been again at work, and there lay the bird, buried to the depth of two fingers' breadth, resembling a tiny corpse upon a bier, with a mound of earth all round. Before night the grave was sunk about half a finger's breadth; and the industrious beetle, aided by his companions, continued to labor for near two days longer, when the grave was finished.

This most singular employment of this species of beetle, which continues from May to October, proceeds from an instinctive desire for the preservation of their offspring. Eggs are deposited by the parents in the substances which they inter; when hatched, these produce larvæ, which grow to an inch in length. These, in their turn, change into yellow chrysalides, and lastly into beetles, and the beetles, when emerged from the earth, begin to dig graves for the benefit of another generation.

POUND AWAY.

"WILL you give me them pennies now?" said a big newsboy to a little one after giving him a severe thumping.

"No, I wont," exclaimed the little one.

"Then I'll give you another pounding."

"Pound away! Me and Dr. Franklin agrees. Dr. Franklin says, 'Take care of the pence and the pounds will take care of themselves.'"



For the Sunday-School Advocate.

IN THE RAPIDS.

My dear lads, do not drink the first glass of wine, the first draught of lager beer or other drink of the kind; do not play cards; do not even *learn* to play cards, however fashionable it may be in the society in which you move; do not learn to smoke. Touch not, taste not, handle not. If you abide by this rule, *you*, certainly, will not become a drunkard, a gambler, or a slave to tobacco. But if you begin, it is not certain but you will go too far for return. I have a little story to tell you—and it is perfectly true—as an illustration of this.

In the town in which I now am it happened, seventy years ago or more, that two men, who went to the same church and fished together every spring at the same spot by the falls, had a quarrel. Mr. Burdock said that Mr. Yew had wronged him, and ought to confess it and ask his pardon. Mr. Yew said he had done no such wrong, and he never would ask his pardon. Mr. Burdock insisted on the wrong, and also said, "You *shall* ask my pardon, and I will at some time oblige you to do it."

Weeks passed on and Mr. Burdock appeared to have forgotten the threat. They were accustomed to go out frequently on the river together, and their boat was a log canoe. Perhaps you never heard of one. It was dug from a log something in shape like an Indian's birch bark canoe; an awkward sort of boat, one would think, but these men knew perfectly well how to manage it.

Once when they were out in this way, just above the falls, Mr. Burdock, who stood in the stern and could steer as he pleased, said, "Now, Mr. Yew, if you do not confess you have wronged me and ask my pardon I will carry you right over the falls."

Mr. Yew did not believe his neighbor would risk his own life in this way, and he determined to show as much obstinacy as Mr. Burdock could. So he said:

"I sha'n't do any such thing."

The other man steered resolutely for the rapids. Both men knew exactly the very point to which it was safe to go, and beyond which there was no return. The canoe reached that spot. Mr. Yew looked in his neighbor's face. He could see nothing there but dogged obstinacy. The man cared more for his own way than he did to save his life.

"I confess I wronged you," said the other hastily, even falling on his knees in his earnestness some say. "I confess—I beg your pardon."

Then they used their paddles as they never did before. It was a dreadful struggle. For a time the astonished bystanders on the shore were in doubt if they could save themselves. By the most violent effort they held the canoe in that very spot in the rapids in which they were when Mr. Yew made the hasty concession. But not one inch could they gain. After a time, by repeated vigorous strokes of the paddles, using all their power of muscle, they managed to gain a little, then a little more, until they drew themselves out of the rapids and made for the shore.

You see into what trouble and danger these wrong-

headed men brought themselves. In one moment more they could not have prevented themselves from going over the falls. Just so, if you begin to walk in these little green by-ways which lead to the road where wicked men are traveling, you cannot tell, nobody can tell you, that you will not go so far you cannot return. For every drunkard and gambler was once a harmless little child. He *made a beginning* in learning to drink, to smoke, and to swear. Most likely when he learned these habits of evil boys or men, he did not expect to become the lost and vile creature which he is. He did not expect, any more

than you do, to fill a drunkard's grave. Some such persons do turn and reform, but it is as difficult for them as it was for these men in the rapids to return to the shore. But it is well worth the effort. If those men, periling their lives in their folly, had reason to use every effort possible for escape, how much more ought men to try to escape the eternal destruction which comes from sin! But don't begin in these evil ways, boys. Keep away from the rapids.

UNA LOCKE.

THE LITTLE BOY'S DREAM.

LAST night when I was in bed,
Such fun it seemed to me,
I dreamed that I was grandpapa,
And grandpapa was me.
I thought I wore a powdered wig,
Drab shorts, and gaiters buff,
And took, without a single sneeze,
A double pinch of snuff.
But he was such a tiny boy,
And dressed in baby-clothes;
And I thought I smacked his face because
He wouldn't blow his nose.
And I went walking up the street,
And he ran by my side;
But, because I walked too quick for him,
My goodness, how he cried!
And after tea I washed his face;
And when his prayers were said,
I blew the candle out, and left
Poor grandpapa in bed.

EBATHA'S CONSCIENCE.

A MISSIONARY in Australia writes: "One of my little girls, Ebatha, was reading a lesson which runs thus: 'A good boy will not lie, swear, steal,' etc. When she came to the word 'lie,' she suddenly stopped short, and would not go on. I asked why she did so? She hesitated to answer, but at length acknowledged that she did not like to read it, because it condemned her conduct."

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