

## GRANDMOTHER'S SERMON.

The supper is over, the hearth is swept,  
And in the wood fire's glow  
The children cluster to hear a tale  
Of that time, so long ago,  
When grandmamma's hair was golden brown,  
And the warm blood came and went  
O'er the face that could scarce have been  
Sweeter than  
Than now in its rich content.  
The face is wrinkled and careworn now,  
And the golden hair is gray;  
But the light that shone in the young girl's eyes  
Never has gone away.  
And her needles catch the fire's light  
As in and out they go  
With the clicking music that grandma loves,  
Shaping the stocking toe.  
And the waiting children love it, too,  
For they know the stocking song  
Brings many a tale to grandma's mind,  
Which they shall hear ere long.  
But it brings no story of olden time  
To grandma's heart to-night;  
Only a refrain, quaint and short,  
Is sung by the needles bright.  
"Life is a stocking," grandma says,  
"And yours is just begun;  
But I am knitting the toe of mine,  
And my work is almost done.  
With many hearts we begin to knit,  
And the ribbing is almost play;  
Some are gay-colored and some are white,  
And some are ashen gray.  
But most are made of many a hue,  
With many a stitch set wrong,  
And many a row to be sadly ripped  
Ere the whole is fair and strong.  
There are long, plain spaces, without a break,  
That in youth is hard to bear,  
And many a weary tear is dropped  
As we fashion the heel with care.  
But the saddest, happiest time is that  
We court, and yet would shun,  
When our Heavenly Father breaks the thread  
And says that our work is done."  
The children come to say "good-night,"  
With tears in their bright young eyes,  
While in grandma's lap, with broken thread,  
The finished stocking lies.  
—Ellen A. Jewett.

## HOW ANIMALS PLAY.

I doubt if any animal can be found which does not, in some way or at some time, show a desire for what we term "amusement." Among the land animals, or rather the land and water animals, the otters are especially noticeable from the fact that some of their games are exactly like those of human device. It was Audubon who first chronicled their actions, he having watched them from a secluded spot, and since then their games have been enjoyed by many observers. The otters are, perhaps, the originators of the games of sliding down hill and tobogganing.  
Otters are always found about streams; building their tunnel-nest in the banks, having, as a rule, one entrance into the water, and another on shore. During the winter a bank is selected having a good incline, and leading into the water, or sometimes out upon the ice. The snow is then carefully patted down, and rendered as smooth as possible, and finally becomes a glare of ice. This accomplished, the otters start at the top of the hill, and, turning upon their backs, give themselves a push with their hind feet, and away go the living sleds, dashing down the incline, turning at the bottom and with a splash entering the cold water, or darting away on the smooth ice. So fond are the animals of this sport that they keep it up for a long time, and hunters watch the slides, knowing that here they have the best chance of finding the otters.  
Even crabs appear to have a sense of humor, and to go through certain manoeuvres, presumably games. I remember once, in Florida, in crossing a long marsh, to have come suddenly to a spot not covered with grass, where an immense number of crabs, known as fiddlers (from the fact that one claw is of enormous size, comparatively,) were marching about in what appeared to be regular order. There must have been several hundred, and, with the great claws held aloft, they were wheeling, marching and counter-marching; making no attack upon each other, but moving about in solemn array, that undoubtedly gave some satisfaction to the participants.

As a rule, the cranes and herons are the most dignified of all the bird creation, especially when observed in the haunts of their choice—generally the desolate marshes, where the approach of an enemy can be readily seen. Here they stand motionless, resting on one leg, either asleep or engaged in deluding some unfortunate fish into the belief that they are, or with fiery eyes fixed upon the water below. The heron or crane is not always the solemn creature it represents itself to be. When numbers of them gather together upon some sandy point, especially on moonlight nights, a perfect transformation occurs. They leap in the air, hop over one another's backs, contorting their long necks, pecking at imaginary enemies in mid-air, then alight and stalk up and down, with mincing tread. Sometimes a number of birds will remain motionless while one will perform, and, then, as if eager to join the dance, the entire party will leap forward, and a scene ensues laughable in the extreme.  
It would be difficult to find a more demure bird than the Cock-of-the-Rock (*Rupicola*), of South America. It is a little smaller than a good-sized pigeon. The birds are timid, and it is difficult to approach them, their nests being formed up near the rocky beds of streams in inaccessible places. A naturalist succeeded in stealing upon a flock, however, and observed what might be termed a "bird-circus." The group consisted of eight or ten birds, standing upon a large rock in a ring several feet in diameter. All the birds faced the centre, and were evidently watching the performance with the greatest interest. The entertainer of this feathered audience was a single bird who stood in the centre. Extremely sedate in all its actions, it moved about, lifting its claws as high as possible, bowing its head, and spreading its tail, marching around in a circle, leaping solemnly in the air, and going through a variety of ridiculous manoeuvres. After the bird seemed to have exhausted its powers as a contortionist, it retired, and took its place among the spectators, another bird or actor stepping into the ring, and evidently trying to exceed the other in the eccentricity of its motions. Now

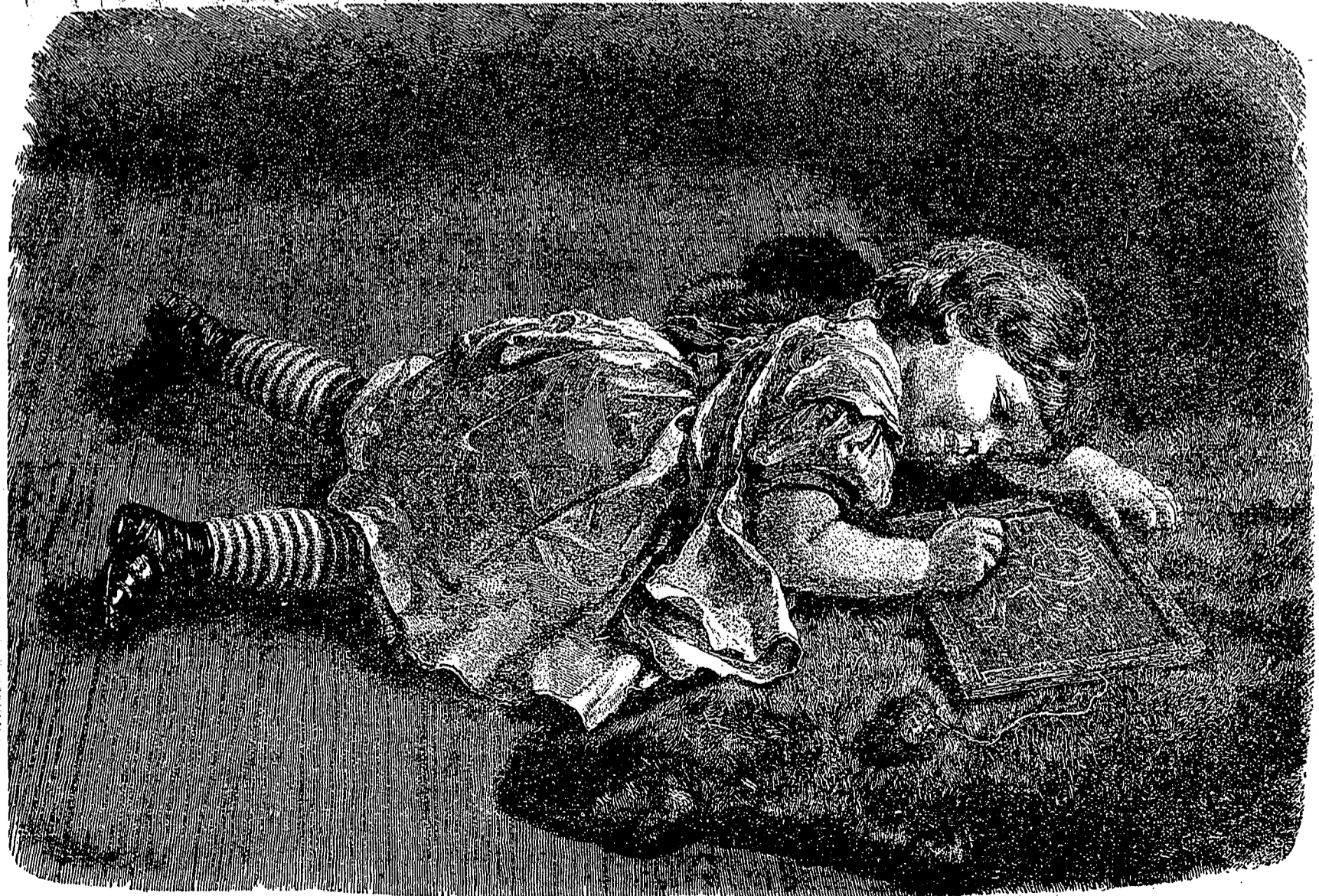
some imaginary enemy was attacked, and violent pecks and wing-strikes made at the empty air, the performer wheeling about, darting quickly this way and that, as if avoiding the adversary's blows, until, exhausted, it fell back into the line, giving way to a fresh performer.—From a *Strange Company*, by Dr. C. F. Holder.

## PERPETUAL TEARS.

The discharge of tears from the lachrymal glands is not occasional and accidental, as is commonly supposed, but continuous. It goes on both day and night—though less abundantly at night—through the "conduits," and spreads equally over the surface of the pupil, in virtue of the incessant movement of the lids. After serving its purpose, the flow is carried away by two little drains, situated in that corner of each eye nearest the nose—into which they run—and called the "lachrymal points." The usefulness of this quiet flow of tears to both man and beast is manifest. There is such an immense quantity of fine dust floating in the air and constantly getting into the eyes that, but for it, they would soon become choked. Very little is requisite to keep the ball free, and when some obnoxious substance—smoke, or insect or the like, that affects the nerves—does make its way in, an increased flow is poured out to sweep it away.—*Ex.*

## WE MIGHT IF WE WOULD.

All good work is costly work. He who wants to do good work must be willing to do hard work, and to put himself into his work without regard to its cost of time and strength. Even so simple a matter as appearing cheerful before others, as showing consideration for others, costs many a struggle with one's self, and many an act of self-denial. It is of no use for one to say that it is not in his nature to be cheerful and kindly. The truth in his case is, that he is not willing to be at the cost of making himself cheerful and kindly. We could have a great many more good things than we have, and we could do a great many more good things than we do, if only we were willing to be at the cost of such having and doing.—*S. S. Times.*



BUDDING GENIUS.