

How could it be otherwise, after such a life?

Becoming more and more miserable, one day when his pain was severe, and he was in a condition too dreadful to describe, he asked for a knife to pare an apple, and with it attempted his own life. But his nephew Ahiah rushed forward, and prevented his intention.

Antipater—his eldest son, who was then in prison, closely confined by Herod's orders—hearing a shout, and thinking his father was dead, was overjoyed, and tried to escape, and Herod ordered his son to be executed. That was only five days before his own decease; but the approach of death, instead of leading him to repentance, only hardened him.

Thinking to compel the Jews to mourn when he was gone, he commanded the most respected of their elders to be brought to Jericho, where he then was; and, confining them all in the circus, gave orders that the moment he ceased to breathe his soldiers should rush in and slay them.

This last wicked order—which happily was not executed—only increased the joy of the Jews when at last the cruel king expired.

Though this is so sad a story, it is not unprofitable, since it teaches us that the cruel and unjust cannot expect to come to a merciful end. It points out, too, the evil of giving way to bad tempers, and of letting a selfish ambition, and not the desire to do good, be the rule of life.

Herod was buried with great pomp and splendor. His body was laid on a golden bier, adorned with precious stones. He was clothed in purple robes, and a sceptre was placed in his hands. On his head was a crown of gold, and he was followed by a great train, including all the army, and five hundred servants carrying spices. But he might well have envied the beggar Lazarus, who was "carried by angels into Abraham's bosom," or the holy Stephen, who fell peacefully asleep amid a shower of stones.

—*Little Folks.*

ROBBING THE EAGLE'S NEST.

The Tyrolese are a hardy and adventurous class of people, such as are to be found in all rugged and mountainous countries. In their hunts after the chamois and other wild animals they are compelled to jump from precipice to precipice, and only the sure-eyed, the sure-footed, and bold need ever begin a chase which requires all these qualities. But this is not their most difficult task. Suspended by a rope over the brow of the rock, the hardy mountaineer robs the eagle's nest of whatever it may contain that he wants. Perhaps it is the eggs, the eagles or the prey which it has conveyed to its almost inaccessible home. An interesting story is told of a

man who was in a position something like the young man in the picture, when he was attacked by an eagle and, to save himself, slashed at it with his knife. But instead of wounding the eagle he cut a strand of the rope which held him. It began to untwist, and as it untwisted began to part thread by thread until he saw nothing before him but destruction. Hope had not fled, however, and just as the last threads were about parting he sprang upwards, caught the rope above the cut portion, and soon was safe on the rock to which he was attached. There is a lesson in this incident for very many of the MESSENGER readers. Often they have felt themselves slipping away from Christ. One after another the threads which once united them closely are parted, and beneath

gather decision from the contact. Huber threw a colony of ants into a darkened room, and noticed that they at first ran about in bewildered disorder. After a time, if one ant found the opening he would return and touch several with the antennæ; and after this communication had been carried on for some time the whole number formed themselves in regular files and marched out in perfect order.

The exquisite development of smell in insects enables them to detect the faintest odor at great distances. By this an insect finds the plant most suitable for its food or for depositing its eggs, and to settle upon it amid a thousand others. Insects that feed on flesh detect the odor of a piece of meat even when covered by a bell-glass. This exquisitely fine sense of smell is believed to lie in the



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and beside them they see nothing but destruction. But all hope is not lost. Christ who died for the worst of sinners does not desire his destruction; and if the one hanging over the black yawning gulf into which every moment threatens to precipitate him, resolves, he may catch hold of his Saviour and be yet saved.

ABOUT INSECTS.

Insects show the most wondrous delicacy of organization combined with stupendous power and activity. Their intelligence is no less surprising, and their powers are in some cases so highly developed as almost to supply an additional sense, or the means of making up what we should deem a lacking one. Ants talk to each other by touch. When two meet they touch each other with their antennæ and appear to

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Nor is the power of sight in insects less remarkable. Man and the larger animals have two eyes, whereas the ant has fifty, the common fly eight thousand, and some butterflies more than twenty thousand! Some aquatic insects have eyes with which they can see above and below them, so that when swimming they can escape by diving from the bird which threatens to pounce upon them from above, while they can fly away from the fish that threatens to attack them from below.

The rapidity of their movements is also almost incredible. Herschel calculates that some insects vibrate their wings several hundred times in a second, which is about as many hundred times as we could raise and depress our arms. A few minutes of such exertion would be enough to tire us completely, whereas the gnat whirls about during the long summer evening without any appearance of fatigue.

The strength of insects is equally marvellous. A man of ordinary strength can with difficulty raise a weight equal to that of his own body, or jump to the height of his own stature, whereas a mole-cricket can easily lift a weight about three hundred times that of its body, and the common flea can jump to a height equal to two hundred times its stature.

The circulating system of an insect is wonderfully complex and extensive. The heart of man has two large openings, each of which is furnished with valves to prevent the reflux of the blood; whereas the circulating apparatus of an insect occupies the greater portion of the back of the animal, and is provided with valves to prevent the blood flowing backwards.

The aerial mouths or breathing orifices of the insects are in many cases lined with a sieve-like membrane, which only permits the purest fluid to pass, and arrests the smallest particle of dust or impurity. Some insects have a hair-like protection to their respiratory orifices which acts in the same manner. Water is prevented from forcing its way into the air-passages of aquatic insects by a compound kind of valve which the animal opens or shuts at will. Respiration is with us confined to one region of the body, but in insects the air is inhaled and exhaled over nearly every part of the body.

The metamorphoses of insects have been justly regarded as the most marvellous phenomena in physiology. Changes the most complete and astonishing take place in body, function, organs, and mode of life. The grovelling and gluttonous caterpillar becomes the bright and aerial butterfly, which sips delicately the nectar of flowers. At first a wingless worm or larva which does nothing but eat, the insect having attained its full growth becomes motionless, casts off its skin, and takes the transition or nymph form. In this the caterpillar is lost and the new and perfect insect developed. At the proper time the swaddling case—sometimes of modest brown, sometimes of golden hue, and hence it has received the name of chrysalis—is burst open, and the butterfly emerges from its prison, radiant and bright, without a particle of its gem-like scales being injured, or a hair of its velvet wings being ruffled.—*Selected.*