

BE GENTLE, LITTLE MAY.

I HAD a pleasant dream last night,
'Twas all about the birds
That hovered round my window high,
And sang these pretty words—
"Be gentle, little May."

They hovered round my casement frame,
Then came, then flew away;
But ever to my listening ear
The same kind words they say—
"Be gentle, little May."

And when at morning I awoke,
I felt so calm and mild,
I thought the angels, mother dear,
Had whispered to your child—
"Be gentle, little May."

So mother, I must gentle be,
And ever bear in mind,
The song the birds sang in my ear,
In voices sweet and kind—
"Be gentle, little May."

And God will bless me if I try
To do his holy will;
And like the birds my heart must sing,
In kindest accents still—
"Be gentle, little May."

A WORK OF PREVENTION.

Now is the time when the birds are busy with their housekeeping plans. With what care they choose the spot where the little home is to be built! How patiently and hopefully they work to finish it off with dainty neatness. How gladly the mother-bird gives up her freedom to brood over the precious little eggs, which come along in good time!

Who can have the heart to frighten, or in any way distress, the birds?

But there are boys, yes, and sometimes girls, who are thoughtless enough and cruel enough to trouble these innocent little creatures. Sometimes they steal eggs from the nest, and sometimes they even break up the happy home.

Who will try to prevent as much of this cruelty as possible this season? Appoint yourselves officers or agents of the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Birds, and by gentle words and kind deeds try to help the birds to have a season of delightful peace.

Do you know a boy who stones birds? Do you know one who robs birds' nests?

See what you can do to influence him to leave off. Perhaps you can start a real little "Society," and get him to join.

You will try to do something about it, of course.

A HARD BATTLE.

"A BOX, a box, for Reeve and Marcia!" exclaimed papa, as he opened the mail from the north. "And all the way from Chicago, too, and from Aunt Emma, I do believe."

When the box was opened, there, in a nest of soft white cotton, lay two large eggs, ornamented in beautiful colours. And, wonderful to tell, these eggs had covers which, when lifted up, showed them to be full of sugar-plums. But these lovely boxes were very frail; and in their long, rough journey one of the covers was badly crushed.

"Sister can have that; I'll have the good one," said the little boy at once.

He was looked at with surprise, for he had always seemed a generous little fellow.

"My dear," said mamma, "would you do so selfish, so unmanly a thing as that? Go away and think about it."

"I don't wish to think about it. I don't wish to think about it," he replied excitedly. "I want the good one."

After that no more was said. He began to walk about the room, his face flushed, and he looked very unhappy. It he chanced to come near papa, papa did not seem to see him, he was so busy reading his newspaper.

After walking awhile, he went to the other side of the room where mamma was bathing and dressing his little sister. He was very fond of his mamma. When she was sometimes obliged to punish him, as soon as it was over he would say:

"Wipe my tears! kiss me!"

So now, when his dear mamma did not seem to see that she had a little boy any more, he was cut to the heart.

At last he went into grandma's room. Now, he and grandma were great friends. Many happy hours did he spend in her lap, hearing stories; and she called him her "blessed boy." But now, alas! she was so busy with her knitting that she took no notice of him whatever. This was dreadful!

He climbed up into a chair and sat down. An evil spirit seemed to whisper, "Don't give up;" and so he began again his miserable walk. For nearly an hour did this little boy fight his terrible battle with selfishness, until, at last, he could stand it no longer. He came to mamma, and said in a pleasant voice:

"I will take the broken one; sister can have the perfect one."

Then, when papa and mamma had kissed him, and he had rushed into grandma's loving arms, what a load of unhappiness was lifted from his heart!

AN UNWASHED PRINCE.

THE Crown Prince of Russia was always a very sensible man in the management of his household, and he was ably seconded by his wife. On one occasion the governor of his children came to him, and said:

"Your Highness, I must complain of the little prince. He refuses to have his face washed in the morning."

"Does he?" answered the Crown Prince. "We'll remedy that. After this, let him go unwashed."

Now the sentries have to salute every member of the royal family—children and all—whenever they pass. The day after, the little four-year-old prince went out for a walk with his governor. As they passed a sentry-box where a grim soldier was posted, the man stood rigid, without presenting arms.

The little prince, accustomed to universal deference, looked displeased, but said nothing. Presently, another sentry was passed. Neither did this one give a sign of recognition. The little prince angrily spoke of it to his governor, and they passed on. And when the walk was finished, and they had met many soldiers, who none of them saluted the prince, the little fellow dashed into his father, exclaiming:

"Papa! papa! you must whip every man in your guards! They refuse to salute when I pass."

"Ah, my son," said the Crown Prince, "they do rightly, for clean soldiers never salute a dirty little prince." After that, the boy took a shower bath every morning.

LITTLE RUBY.

LITTLE three-year-old Ruby had a favourite doll, her constant companion in all her travels about the house and grounds. One day an accident—such as comes to all dolls sooner or later—befel this beloved one, and the sawdust began pouring out in a tiny stream, marking with a narrow brown trail the path of the little feet as they pattered over floor, paved walk, or grass, until finally the plump body clasped in the loving little arms became a limp and crumpled piece of cloth. Then such a wail went up from the little broken heart when she beheld the forlorn-looking object which had once been her beloved dolly. But mamma comforted her, and explained the hidden mysteries of doll anatomy; and in time the tears were dried, and visions of dolly made new fitted through the childish mind. Soon after this a baby brother came to her, and when she saw him for the first time she looked long and earnestly at him, and then asked: "Mamma, have he got sawdust in him?"