



FRANKLIN'S EXPERIMENT, JAN. 17, 1706.

FRANKLIN AND THE LIGHTNING.

BY HELEN T. WILDER.

Cecil stood by the big window in the hotel at St. Augustine, holding tightly his papa's hand and watching the black clouds pour down their torrents and give out their flashes of lightning and peals of thunder. He gave papa's hand a harder squeeze as an especially bright flash made him wink.

"Do you see those metal rods over there, Cecil?" asked papa, pointing to a roof not far away.

"Yes, papa, those are lightning rods."

"Do you know anything about the man who invented them?"

"Why, no, papa; I've never thought anything about it."

"Well, he is a man every boy and girl should know about, for he did a great deal for us in some ways. I do not think you would make a Benjamin Franklin, for I do not believe he ever hid his face at a bright flash. Perhaps his sixteen brothers and sisters did, though."

"His sixteen brothers and sisters," repeated Cecil, looking at papa.

"Yes, there were seventeen little Franklins. Benjamin was the youngest boy, and the only one we remember much about. It is just about two hundred years since he was born, and he lived to a good old age. But he was a young man when he became interested in the clouds and thunder storms. After watching the lightning flash from one cloud to another many times, during storms, he began to think he

would like to try to get it to come down to earth and see what it was like. He lived in Philadelphia then. So, after making his preparations for things we might not understand, one day the shower he was waiting for came along. We do know that he had made a wonderful kite; and he felt that if he could get that up in the clouds, which were full of lightning, or electricity, as we call it now, some of it might come down the long cord, and into the key which he had tied to the very end, for he knew electricity liked metal. And, sure enough, as he stood out in the storm, with his kite high up in the cloud, the storm all about him, the thunder

and lightning rolling and playing all around, he touched the key with his finger, and the sparks flew out, and he felt what we call a shock! The lightning had come down from the clouds into the kite, through the long cord and into the metal key. This was just a beginning of wisdom for this very wise Benjamin Franklin. And other men got interested and made experiments; and so our knowledge of electricity grew, until now the lightning rods, which Franklin afterwards invented, and electric lights, and telephones, and telegraphs, and electric cars, do not surprise us."

"But just think, papa," exclaimed Cecil, "what Benjamin Franklin would say if he could see them!"

THE BOY AND THE SPARROW.

Once a sweet boy sat and swung on a limb;
On the ground stood a sparrow-bird looking at him.

Now the boy he was good, but the sparrow was bad;

So it shied a big stone at the head of the lad,

And it killed the poor boy, and the sparrow was glad.

Then the little boy's mother flew over the trees:

"Tell me, where is my little boy, sparrow bird, please?"

"He is safe in my pocket," the sparrow bird said;

And another stone shied at the fond mother's head,

And she fell at the feet of the wicked bird dead.

You imagine, no doubt, that the tale I have mixed,

But it wasn't by me that the story was fixed.

'Twas a dream a boy had after killing a bird;

And he dreamed it so loud that I heard every word,

And I jotted it down as it really occurred.

—Good Words.

A noble part of every true life is to learn to undo what has been wrongly done.



BREAKING THE TABLES.—SEE EXODUS 32. 15-24.