



BABES IN THE WOOD.

ROBIN REDBREAST.

BY FRANCIS FORRESTER, ESQ.

ROBIN REDBREAST is one of the most popular fellows in the air. Everybody likes him—except in strawberry and cherry time, and then he puts so hard a strain on people's regard that they throw sod, if not stones, at him. Robin does love strawberries and cherries, and—like the greedy epicure that he is—he always feasts on the reddest, ripest, most luscious berries and cherries that are on cherry-tree and strawberry-vine. But when the season for these sweet fruits is past, people return to their old loves. Robin recovers his popularity, and is made welcome as ever when he comes, Lazarus-like, as he does in winter, to pick up the crumbs which fall from our tables.

I scarcely know why it is that Robin retains the special good-will of so many people. You know that even egg-hunting, bird-killing boys will spare him, while they rob or kill birds of all other species. There is nothing in Robin's character which entitles him to this impunity. Many other birds might set up a better claim to good treatment on the score of character. He is an unsocial fellow with his kind, and quite

as quarrelsome and selfish as his worst enemies could desire. Just try him with a few crumbs next winter, if he should visit you, and if a brother or sister Robin should dare to hop up and try to get a brother beggar's share, you will see him fly into a terrible passion, and drive the intruder off. Robin is a jealous, selfish fellow. His redeeming quality is that he loves to eat the worms and insects which destroy our trees, and in the winter when other birds forsake us he sticks to our homes and cheers us with his voice.

Yes, people love the Robin. I suppose this is mainly because an old legend states that when a wicked uncle hired some ruffians to carry his little orphaned nephew and niece away and kill them, that he might seize the riches to which they were heirs, and that when those ruffians quarrelled, and finally left the poor babes to wander in the forest until they starved and died folded in each other's arms, the robins came and covered their dear little dead bodies with leaves. For this loving deed, the story of which has been poured into the eager ears of millions of children for many generations, we all love the Robin. Every time we see him we think of the poor babes in the wood, and that thought

awakens a kindly feeling for him whose ancestors are storied to have done that loving deed.

Thus you see how far-reaching in its influence is a deed of love. Possibly the robins never did the loving act with which they are credited. But no matter. It is theirs by reputation, and we love them, and spare them, and feed them from our windows in the winter season. We thus practically say, "Blessed are they who do loving deeds." I trust you all say these words, but I am very desirous to have you do such deeds. You love Jesus because he did the most loving act that ever has been done on earth, when he died the just for the unjust.

THE LITTLE BIRD.

A LITTLE bird with feathers brown
Sat singing on a tree--
The song was very soft and low,
But sweet as it could be.

And all the people passing by
Looked up to see the bird
That made the sweetest melody
That ever they had heard.

But all the bright eyes looked in vain,
For birdie was so small,
And with a modest, dark brown coat,
He made no show at all.

"Why, papa," little Gracie said,
"Where can this birdie be?
If I could sing a song like that,
I'd get where folks could see."

"I hope my little girl will learn
A lesson from that bird,
And try to do what good she can,
Not to be seen or heard.

"This birdie is content to sit
Unnoticed by the way,
And sweetly sing his Maker's praise
From dawn to close of day.

"So live, my child, all through your life,
That be it short or long,
Though others may forget your looks,
They'll not forget your song."

A CHILD'S FAITH.

"WILLIE," said a little orphan boy to his brother, "now we are all alone in the world; father, and mother, and auntie are gone, and there is nobody to take care of us; what shall we do?"

"O, I am not afraid," said Willie; "don't you remember the verse that dear mamma taught us? 'When my father and my mother forsake me, then the Lord will take me up.'"