

THE BOY AND THE BIRD.

'Go, weed in the garden till half after ten.'

Rob's mother said, sharply, 'I'll not speak again.'

'Dear me,' said Rob, sighing, 'I wish I could be
The robin that's singing up there in the tree.'

'Birds never weed gardens—they never bring wood,
They do as I'd like to, and would if I could.'

'They've nothing to trouble them, only to sing,
And rock on the branch when they're not on the wing.'

'See, here, little boy,' said the robin to Rob,
'Though you think I am idle, I'm planning a job.'

'Four nestlings to care for—such great hungry things!
There isn't much rest for a father-bird's wings.'

'The cats try to catch us—the boys are as bad.
Birds have work, wants and worries like others, my lad.'

'Be content as God made us—as bird, boy, or man,
And do what needs doing the best way we can.'

EBEN E. REXFORD.

HIDDEN COUNTRIES.

A VISIT TO THE ZOO.

Bob, Olivia and Tom were most anxious that their father and I should take them to the Zoo. As we deny the children nothing we think is for their good, which has a most excellent effect, I said I would ask their father what he thought. As no man could be more indulgent than he, Tom said, 'If she asks pa I need not fear the reply. Can Ada go with us? I will ask Olivia to put up a lunch for us. Will you, Olivia? Give Bob a ham; a slice would not be enough for his appetite.'

'Now, Tom,' said Olivia, 'though I have first a fowl to truss, I am sure the lunch will be ready before you are. Wash your hands. You have been in the garden marking out flower beds. You should have smoothed down the land or raked it off better. However, no time now. Get some Malaga grapes and pack them.'

I now came back with their father's consent to our all going for the day. I said, 'Take an afghan. I stand in need of something warm; it may turn cool toward evening. Tom, on a cool day you should take a long scarf for your throat.'

'I see Ed,' said Bob; 'I will ask him to go with us.' He ran off, and after talking for some time we heard him call, 'Run it, Ed. State some reason for not waiting for a lunch. We will have plenty.'

'I will come back through the lane if I can, or way round by the Main street and meet you there, if I can't,' called Ed, and Bob, hot and tired with his run, came to the house.

Pa then came in. He said, 'Is it kind, I am sure it is not, to leave you to go without me? I think possibly a purchaser via Harrisburg may come to-day from Williamsport—I am rather looking for him—and I should not lose a chance of selling those lots.'

Ed was now seen coming up the lane. Pa ultimately decided to remain at home. We are sorry not to have him with us, but go on with our preparations.

Tom hears a moan. It is from little Ada, whose tooth aches. 'I fear it will have to be pulled,' she said, 'and it will hurt.'

Said Tom, 'Ada, gas carefully used by a dentist will prevent all pain. I will put peppermint in it now.'

Soon with new zeal and hope of

freedom from pain Ada was helping pack the lunch.

When we reached the Zoo we found much to interest us. A comic ape of good, hopeful disposition so begged for food that we opened our lunch basket. One of the attendants said that to feed the animals was not usually allowed, but he gave us his permission. 'I call this ape Gyp, t'other Hugu,' said he. Hugu ate Malaga grapes with a relish.

'Will you give the grapes to Hugu? I gave an apple to Gyp, and if another ape runs for food we will feed him, too,' said Bob.

Soon we went on to another cage.

'A lynx,' said Tom.

'It a lynx!' said Ada; 'it's a cat,' and they began a dispute.

'If you cannot agree cease talking,' said I.

We went on to cages near by, where a wolf and a tiger howled and growled without unison. The wolf ran certain distances back and forth, the tiger many times growling at the top of its lungs. Suddenly the tiger put out his paw and caught little Ada's dress.

'Call "Help," or tug all together,' I cried, seizing the child's dress, 'Call "Help."'

They all called it as maniacs might do. We still pulled on the dress.

'Will it rip, Olivia,' said Tom.

Just then the dress did rip.

Ed cried, 'Ha, ha!' I tightened my hold, and Ada was quickly pulled out of harm's way.

We found a place to rest after this excitement, and where we could eat our lunch. In spite of Ada's danger there was no lack of appetite, as I am amazed at the rapidity with which everything disappears. Suppers I am sure they cannot eat.

Bob said, 'There are two men who look like a Jap and a Turk eyeing us. Perhaps they never saw people eat in public before.'

We pinned up Ada's torn skirt, and Olivia took Tom's scarf for a sash to cover the rents, and tied it on. Gazelles, bears, with a cub, and animals that Ed said were, he knew, guinea pigs, next engaged our attention. We then went in the bird-house and saw many birds. One—particularly gorgeous—sat on a perch in a queer position. This one on the perch I let Tom poke with a stick, which made it look very cross and frightened Ada. When we looked at the ostriches she would not even touch a bar. 'Bad ostrich,' she said, having now a wholesome fear of all the birds and beasts.

We thought we would take a short row on the river, as Bob announced a new-found landing-place near. Unfortunately the dock was not quite completed, and as we would have been obliged to step over lumber, mud and mire to reach the one boat, we gave up the idea.

As we waited for our car a strange man would insist on talking to us and waiting till our car came, but his car coming first, Ed said, 'I will help the vulgar gent in ere public opinion in our party rises higher against him. That man is an escaped convict, or I am mistaken,' he added.

We soon were at home telling our adventures, and deciding that the next time the children's father should go with us, for we would not alone go back, or each might meet with some accident.—Hulme.

[Find the names of fifty hidden countries.]—'Christian Intelligencer.'

BEN'S PROBLEM.

'I can't do it—it's quite impossible. I've tried five times, and I can't get it right,—and Ben pushed his book and slate away in despair. Ben was a most ambitious boy; he wanted to be 'head' in the school; for, had not the minister already spoken about him, and said such a boy ought to have a chance at college? But Ben worked at great disadvantage. His mother, though a good Christian woman, and a lady, in the best sense of the word, had had very few advantages when a girl, and so could not help Ben; and the father, who might

have done so, had died, leaving his widow with three little children to support by her needle.

Mrs. Hartley gave a little sigh at her boy's perplexity, but only said quietly, 'Then you don't believe in the Lord's Prayer?'

'The Lord's Prayer, mother! Why, there's nothing there to help me with this example.'

'Oh, yes; there is help for every trouble in life in the Lord's Prayer, if we only know how to get at it. I'm afraid you, don't yet know that prayer.'

Ben flushed. If it had been anybody else that had said that, he would have been really vexed, but mother was different. Ben always tried to be sure he quite understood her, for he never for one instant forgot why her hands were never idle.

'Now, mother, you don't mean that. I've said that prayer ever since I was a baby! I couldn't go to bed or leave my room in the morning without saying it. I know I sometimes don't think enough of what I am saying, but you know, mother, I do try to mean it—I—I—' But Ben stopped, his voice half choked.

The mother saw that her boy had misunderstood her, and answered quickly, 'I never doubt, Ben, boy, that you are trying and praying; but I was trying a long time before I knew what the last part of the Lord's Prayer really meant. I'm no minister or scholar, but I'll try and tell it to you. You know we ask God for bread, to be kept from evil, and to be forgiven, and then we say, for thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory. It's God's power we rely on—not our own; and it often helps me, Ben, when I have a difficult new pattern to fit. I say, "For thine is the power—this is my duty, Heavenly Father, give me thy power," and he does, Ben, he does.'

Ben sat silent. It seemed almost too familiar a prayer. And yet, that time when he had to stay from school because he had no clothes, he had asked God; and the minister's wife had brought him a suit the very next day. 'But a boy's sums, mother!' he said.

'I think that sum is just as much to you as many a grander sounding thing to some one else. You say if only you get that right you'll be perfect for the month. Now, I care a great deal about that, but I'm quite sure your Heavenly Father loves you more than I do. I would help you so gladly, Ben, if I could, but he can help you; his is the power; ask him.'

There was another silence, and then Mrs. Hartley said:—'Now, Ben, I want you to run to the store for some sewing-silk for me; the air will do you good. I believe, my son, that, if you ask, you can do that sum when you come home.'

Ben started at once; his mother's slightest wish was law to him. He ran along, enjoying the rest from study and the cool, fresh air. The sewing-silk was bought, and Ben started home, when he caught sight of Phil Earle across the street. Ben gave the whistle boys so delight in, and Phil looked back and joined him.

'Done your lessons?'

'All but my sums.'

'Did you try that fifteenth example?'

'Yes.'

'Get it right.'

'No, not yet; but I will.'

Phil gave a provoking little laugh. 'You will? I guess not; I've done it, I never could have found it out alone. I had help.'

Ben's heart fairly ached with envy for a moment. It was always so; Phil had his Uncle George, and other boys had big brothers or fathers to help them; only he was left quite alone. But just then he remembered his mother's words, 'It's God's power we rely on—not our own.' 'I'll get help, too,' he said to himself.

The boys chatted on, played leap-frog and raced each other; but even as he raced and romped, Ben felt changed. He had begun to believe in his Heavenly Father as never before, and was wonderfully happy.

After giving the silk to his mother, he picked up his slate and book and went up to his own little room. Kneeling by the bed he repeated the Lord's Prayer, stopping at 'thine is the kingdom,' and saying with all his heart, 'And thine is the power, Heavenly Father. I want power to understand this. There's no one to help me, please give me power.'

Ben waited a moment and then, still on his knees, he took his slate and tried again. Do you ask me, did he succeed? 'If any man lack wisdom, let him ask of God, who giveth to all men liberally and upbraideth not.' Ben had asked, and God answered. After a little earnest thought, he saw what rule he had neglected, and worked the example correctly. The next day he was 'head;' for he was the only boy who had 'done his sums without being helped.'

'Yet I was helped, mother,' he said; 'and I shall never forget the last part of the Lord's Prayer after this.'—'Hope Ledyard.'

SHE KNEW A WAY.

A TRUE INCIDENT.

The sun had not quite climbed up the shoulder of Humpback Mountain, but he was on the way. The sky knew it, and brightened at the thought. The birds knew it, and twittered and cheeped, and tuned their voices up and down the scale, to be ready for their part in the chorus.

In the small, sunburnt cottage, halfway up the mountain, a little curly-headed child stirred and cheeped too. She had gone to bed in the early twilight, and now she was tired of sleep, and ready for the new day.

'Mammy,' said the little mountain maid, 'kin I git up?'

'Yes, child, git up, and welcome,' answered the mother. 'I reckon I must be stirring my old bones, too.'

With nimble fingers the child fastened the few scanty garments belonging to her, and ran out on bare brown feet to wash at the little stream below the spring. The intense cold of the water made her cheeks glow and her breath come quickly.

'Now,' she said to herself, 'I will gather the eggs for mammy, and s'prise her. I won't go for no basket, I kin just git 'em in my dress.'

Away she sped to the chicken-house. It was a low-roofed affair, flat on the ground, with so small an opening that nobody bigger than Jess herself could have gotten in and out. The child crept fearlessly in, but hardly had she put the first egg in her gathered-up lap when she saw a large mottled rattlesnake stretch himself across the little opening by which she had entered.

The snake did not seem angry, was not looking at her, in fact, and even Jess's terrified scream did not rouse him. Fortunately she did not move, and in a moment her father ran to her help.

Peering in through a crack in the roof, the man saw not only the snake lying in front of the child, but a second one, its mate, stretched out behind her! It was impossible to kill them both at once; if he struck either, the other one would certainly bite the little prisoner. What a moment of horror!

'Jess,' he said, hoarsely, 'keep as still as the dead, and listen to me. I've got to take off the roof, and lift you out of this here coop. But if you move, you're gone. Can you hold still?'

The little face was white with terror, and at first no sound would come to her lips. Then she said faintly:

'All right, dad; I've thought of a way to keep still.'

The man and his wife quickly unroofed the slight building, making as little noise as possible, and then, climbing out on the chestnut limb that overhung it, Jess's father let down a rope and drew her up, like Jeremiah out of his dungeon, by his arm-pits.

The snakes were promptly killed,