

LITTLE FOLKS

Little Black Solomon.

(Emma C. Dowd, in 'Zion's Herald'.)

Claire was sitting up in bed waiting for the doctor. She had been sick for a fortnight, but now was almost well again. Dr. Bell was down in the hall talking with her mother, and in a minute they would both come upstairs to her. Sometimes the doctor brought her a little gift. Yesterday it was a nest of three pretty pill boxes. She wondered if he would have anything for her to-day.

The door opened, and in came Dr. Bell, a puffed-out paper held carefully in one hand.

'You never could guess what I've brought you,' he said. Then he put the paper on the bed, and uncovered the wretchedest specimen of a little black crow that ever you saw.

'O-o-h!' cried Claire.

'I found him by the side of the road over on the mountain,' said the doctor. 'I kenw he would lie there, for he isn't old enough to fly, so I thought I'd bring him to you. If he lives, he'll make you a fine pet, though he isn't very handsome at present.'

'O, I shall just love him, I know I shall!' Claire exclaimed, delightedly.

Master Crow cocked a bright eye up at her in a way to make them all laugh, and Dr. Bell said:

'O, I shouldn't wonder if he turned out to be a regular Solomon for wisdom!'

'I'll call him Solomon!' cried Claire. 'Wouldn't that be a good name?'

And so Solomon it was.

The bird grew fast, both wise and handsome, and by the time Claire was quite well her pet was able to fly. At first there was talk of clipping his wings; but the little girl could not bear to have it done, so he was left to use his beautiful wings to fly away with if he chose. But Solomon did not choose. Occasionally he would be gone for hours but he was sure to come back at dusk, and rap on the window with his strong bill. On being admitted, he would utter a joyful 'Caw! caw!'

Once Claire looked out in the yard to see Solomon talking to a whole flock of crows, and she trembled lest he should be coaxed away; but her pet had no idea of leaving his home, and after awhile the strangers departed.

Solomon was fond of anything bright, and the family had to keep their coins out of sight. Occasionally they wanted extra milk, so they set a pail out on the steps, dropped the pennies in, to pay for the milk, and put on the cover. Once or twice the money was missing, and then naughty Solomon was caught carefully taking off the pail cover and grabbing the coins.

Recitation.

Praise the Lord.

The birds are warbling in the wood,
The bees are in the clover,
We, too, rejoice; for God is good,
And heaven's blue is over.

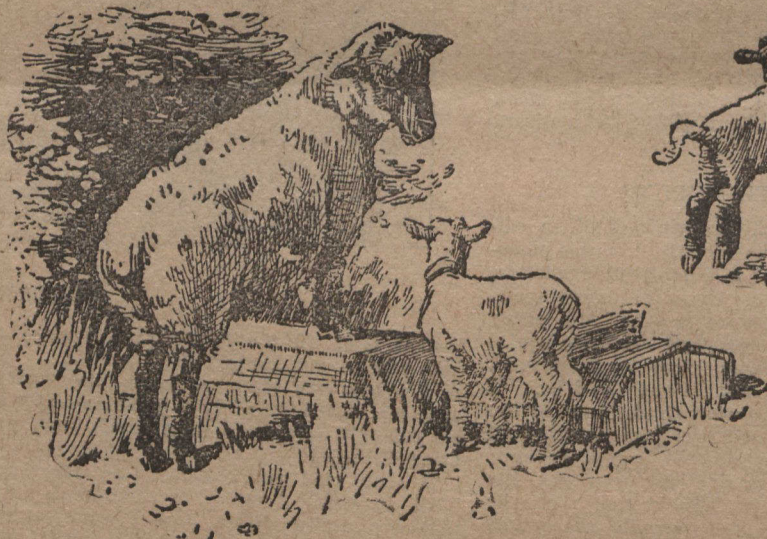
Come out! come out! the lambkins
bleat;

Come out! the birds are crying;
Come out! come out! The day is sweet,
And summer fast a-flying.
Come out and praise the Lord.

The clouds are sailing through the air
The breezes joys are bringing,
The sun is shining everywhere—
All nature is a singing.

Come out! come out! the flowers call;
Come out! the bees are humming;
Come out of doors ye children all;
The frost will soon be coming—
Come out and praise the Lord!

Oh, who could pine on day like this!
Oh, who could have a sorrow?
Then come and share the robin's bliss,
The skies may rain to-morrow.
Come out! come out! the winds repeat,
Come out! the pines are sighing,



All the neighbors knew Solomon, and he paid them frequent visits; but, whenever he was not wanted, all they had to do was to say, 'Go home!' and off he would fly at once.

Claire missed him one day, and wondered what had become of him. He did not appear for dinner or supper. At bedtime he had not come, and she feared her pet had gone forever. The next night he was still away; but before she went to sleep she heard his familiar 'Caw! caw!' and she jumped up to open the window. But such a Solomon! His feathers were rumped, and his tail was gone!

Where he had been nobody has ever found out, but for days he seemed afraid to leave the house. Now he al-

Come out! come out! the day is sweet,
And summer fast a-flying—
Come out and praise the Lord!
—Louise Dalton in 'Ave Maria,' 1891.



ways returns home by nightfall, and Claire looks forward to having Solomon for a pet for fifty years to come.

'Here am I.'

Nannie! Nannie! came the mother's voice from the foot of the stairs. But Nannie, curled up on the window seat, in the upper hall, never moved a bit, never acted as if she heard the call even, because all her thoughts were in the book which she held on her lap.

'Nannie, I want you dear,' came another call.

'Oh dear! Just as I was at such an interesting part of the story. Now what does mamma want. Yes'm, what is it?'