

SUNBEAM

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No. 2.

THE RAZOR-BILL.

We are standing on the sea-side, and turning from the waves we look up to a rocky cliff rising to a height of five or six hundred feet. Lonely is it? Oh, no, it is a peopled city, or rather it is a vast house tenanted by living creatures to the very attics. Only the tenants are not men and women, but birds.

Story after story, ledge above ledge, is occupied by a different race, and they keep themselves to themselves, never visiting or interfering with their fellow-lodgers above or below them.

As we look again, at the towering cliff, we see a row of black spots on every tier, which we know are the heads of sitting birds. Some are called Guillemots, some Razor-bills, some by other names, but the strange thing is that not only does each species keep to the same ledge, but that each separate bird knows its own mate. To us they all look alike, but the birds are wiser than we think. The "foolish" guillemot (as its name is) is not so very foolish after all, is it?"

There is no pretence of nest-building, that is left to the denizens of the woods.

A slight hollow scooped out is all they want, and sometimes there is not even this; the single egg is laid simply on the shelf of rock, and there the mother tends it.

In due time, if all goes well, the little downy creature appears, and then what is to be done next? Nothing but the mother's

wing protects it on that rocky ledge; if she leaves it for a minute it will be over. It will not be able to fly for many a day yet; and though it could swim if only on the sea, what of that, when the sea lies five or six hundred feet below; so that now we can come back to the question with

desire. Perhaps in their own language she has a little motherly talk, reassuring and comforting, with her offspring.

Then it mounts on her back, and down, down they go, mother and child, to the surface of the waiting deep below. Nor to the surface only. The razor-bills, another

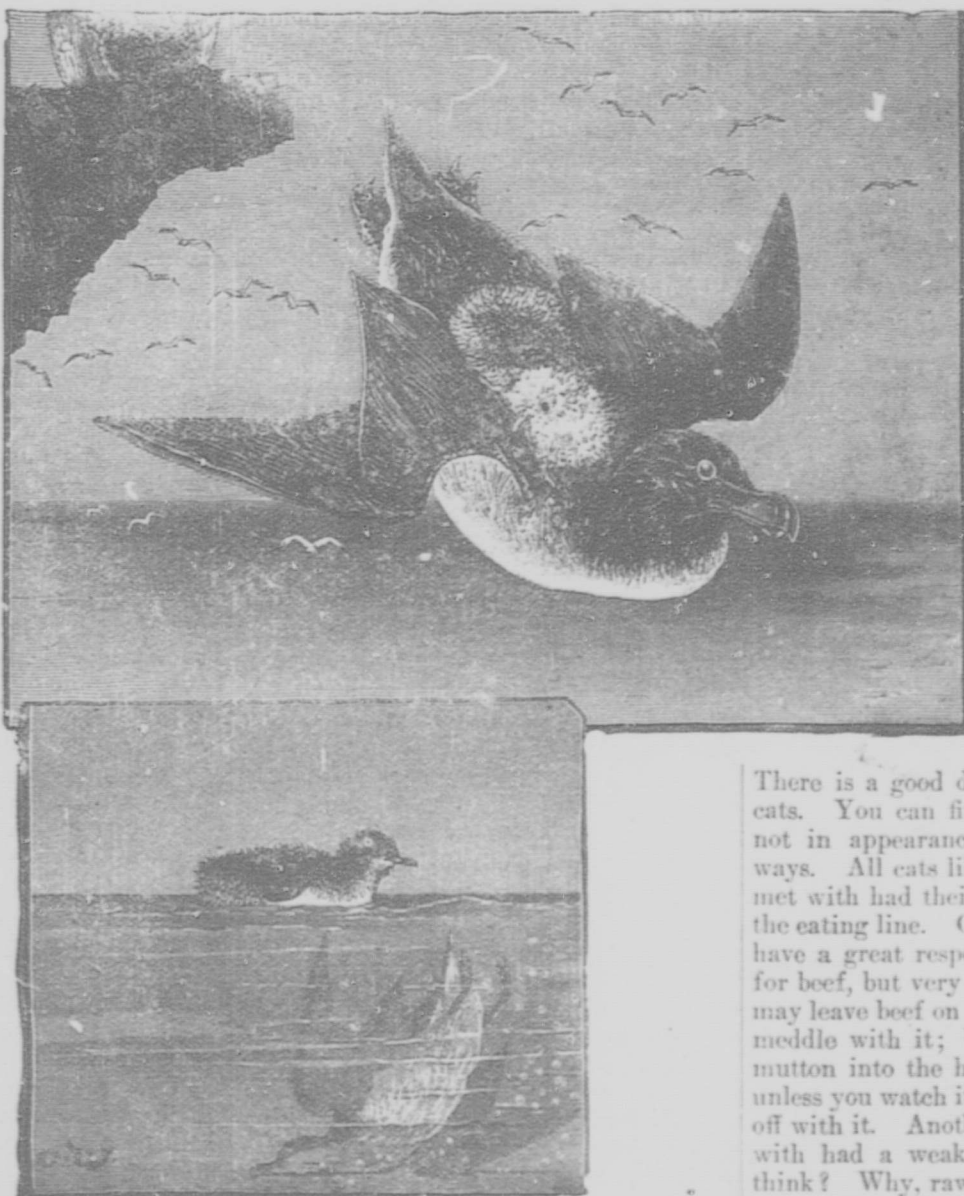
species, are divers, so that there is yet a deeper depth to which they can descend. Most likely diving as well as swimming comes natural to these infants. They never go back to their birth-place on the rock; the waters are now their home till another season or two, when they have turned from downy chicks into full-plumaged birds, and have become in their turn parents and protectors.

QUEER CATS.

I think cats are most interesting animals; and I say this after observing their habits for some years.

There is a good deal of originality about cats. You can find scarcely two alike—not in appearance merely, but in their ways. All cats like fish; but some I have met with had their own peculiar tastes in the eating line. One cat I know well, and have a great respect for, cares very little for beef, but very much for mutton. You may leave beef on the table, and it will not meddle with it; but only bring a leg of mutton into the house, and I assure you, unless you watch it very closely, it will run off with it. Another cat I was acquainted with had a weakness for—what do you think? Why, raw potatoes. Another was most happy when nibbling at a dry crust. But I know a cat that beats all I have seen or heard of. Its special accomplishment is sucking eggs; rather a troublesome sort of pet to keep where there is a dairy.

To have sweet sleep, let the conscience be pure.



which we began. How are we to get them down?

We may ask the question, but the seabird does not. She has no need, for all arrangements are made, and there's a carriage ready for the journey, soft and pillowy as the most tender nestling could

WHY JESUS CAME.

Children, Jesus came to save you—
Came that you through him might live
In his happy home in glory,
If to him your heart you give.

Are you getting ready, children—
Ready for the mansion bright,
Where the saints are ever living,
Near their Saviour, clothed in white?

He is waiting pleading, knocking,
At your heart, oh, let him in!
Then a free and full salvation
And his glorious smile you'll win.

Come, oh, come away to Jesus,
Bid your sins a long farewell;
Cast yourself upon his mercy,
He can save from sin and hell.

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Sunbeam.

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THE THISTLE IN THE HEART.

"I've come again, mamma," said little Lillie White, quietly peeping into the chamber where her mother was writing. "Lillie couldn't help it, mamma."

"And what's the matter with my little girl this time?" said her mother, laying down her pen. "You haven't got another thistle in your finger, have you?"

"No, mamma; the finger is well now; but there is something stinging me here in my bosom. You needn't unfasten my dress, mamma. You couldn't see it—it's deep. I know what it is: it's wrong feeling there. I hate Carrie Marsh, mamma. She is never good to any of us. But her aunt in New York sends her the prettiest things you ever saw. Now she has sent her a blue dress, and a doll all dressed in

pink and white. She brought 'em to me to look at, and said, 'You can't have such pretty things, Lillie White.' That made me hate her. I know it is wrong to have this feeling, and it stings in my heart worse than the thistle did in my finger. Won't you take this out, too, mamma?"

"Only Jesus can take out a sting like this," said her mother, putting her arms very gently around her darling's neck. "Go to your room, my dear child, and kneel down and tell Jesus all about your trouble. Ask him to forgive you for giving way to a wrong feeling, and to take away the sting from your heart."

Then the little girl slipped away from her mother's arms and went to her own room. After a while she was seen walking in the garden, talking to her poor, soiled dolly, and kissing its face as lovingly as Carrie Marsh could have done with her fine, new one. By and by she raised her bright and smiling face to the window, and seeing her mother looking down she said:

"It's all right now, mamma. Jesus has taken away the thistle from my heart just as you took away the one from my finger."

THAT KISS OF MY MOTHER.

George Brown wanted to go somewhere, and his mother was not willing. He tried to argue the matter. When that would not do, instead of saying, "I should really like to go, but if you cannot give your consent, dear mother, I will try to be content to stay," he spoke roughly, and went off slamming the door behind him. Too many boys do so. George was fourteen, and with his fourteen years' experience with one of the best of mothers, one would have thought better of him. "But he was only a boy. What can you expect of boys?" So say some people.

Stop! hear more. That night George found thorns in his pillow. He could not fix it in any way to go to sleep on. He turned and tossed and he shook and patted it; but not a wink of sleep for him. The thorns kept pricking. They were the angry words he spoke to his mother. "My dear mother, who deserves nothing but kindness and love and obedience from me," he said to himself. "I never do enough for her: Yet how have I behaved? her oldest boy! How tenderly she nursed me through that fever!"

These unhappy thoughts quite overcame him. He would ask her to forgive him in the morning. But suppose something should happen before morning? He would ask her now, to-night, this moment. George crept out of bed, and went softly to his mother's room.

"George," she said, "is that you? are you sick?" For mothers, you know, seem to sleep with one eye and ear open, especially when the fathers are away, as George's father was.

"Dear mother," he said, kneeling at her

bedside. "I could not sleep for thinking of my rude words to you. Forgive me, mother, my dear mother! and may God help me never to behave so again!"

She clasped the penitent boy in her arms and kissed his warm cheek. George is a big man now, but he says that was the sweetest moment in his life. His strong, healthy, impetuous nature became tempered by a gentleness of spirit. It softened his roughness, sweetened his temper, and helped him on to a true and noble Christian manhood.

Boys are sometimes ashamed to act out their best feelings. Oh, if they only knew what a loss it is to them not to do so!

A TOUCHING INCIDENT.

We heard a story told the other day that made our eyes moisten. We have determined to tell it, just as we heard it, to our little ones.

A company of poor children who had been gathered out of the alleys and garrets of the city were preparing for their departure to new and distant homes in the West. Just before the time for starting the cars, one of the boys was noticed aside from the others, and apparently very busy with a cast-off garment. The superintendent stepped up to him, and found that he was cutting a small piece out of the patched linings. It proved to be his old jacket, which, having been replaced by a new one, had been thrown away.

There was no time to be lost, and the superintendent said: "Come, John, come; what are you going to do with that old piece of calico?"

"Please, sir," said John; "I'm cutting it to take with me. My dead mother put the lining in this old jacket for me. This was a piece of her dress, and it is all I have to remember her by."

And as the poor boy thought of that dead mother's love, and the sad death-scene in the garret where she died, he covered his face with his hands, and sobbed as if his heart would break.

But the train was about leaving, and John thrust the little piece of calico into his bosom to remember his mother by, hurried into the car, and was soon far from the place where he had known so much sorrow.

We know that many an eye will moisten as this story is told and retold throughout the country, and many a prayer will go to God for the fatherless and motherless in all the great cities, and in all places.

Little readers, are your mothers spared to you? Will you not show your love by obedience? That little boy who loved so well, we are sure, obeyed. Bear this in mind: that if you should one day have to look upon the face of a dead mother, no thought would be so bitter as to remember that you had given her pain by your wilfulness or disobedience.—*Old School Presbyterian.*

FOR JESUS.

BY M. J.

Did it ever occur to you, dear little one,
When you do your best to please us,
That every sunshiny hour you make
Is just so much for Jesus?

Try to remember, dear little one,
That a sweet and loving smile
May bring again to a weary heart
The song that was hushed awhile.

LESSON NOTES.

FIRST QUARTER.

STUDIES IN THE BOOK OF THE ACTS.

LESSON V. [February 2.]

THE FIRST PERSECUTION.

Acts 4. 1-12. Memorize verses 8-10.

GOLDEN TEXT.

There is none other name under heaven
given among men, whereby we must be
saved.—Acts 4. 12.

QUESTIONS ON THE LESSON.

Where did Peter preach his first sermon? In Jerusalem, standing on the street. Where did he preach the second? In the temple. Who listened to it? The people, the priests, and the elders. What did they do to the apostles? They put them in prison. Before whom were they brought the next day? Before the Jewish council. What was it called? The Sanhedrin. Who belonged to it? Seventy of the chief priests and rulers. Who was high priest at this time? Caiaphas. Why is Annas also called the high priest? Because he had once held that office and still had great influence. How did Peter speak before the council? Boldly, for he was filled with the Holy Spirit. What did the apostles say about the only name? (Golden Text).

DAILY STEPS.

- Mon.* Read the lesson verses. Acts 4. 1-12.
Tues. Read the rest of the chapter.
Wed. Read what God says about meeting in his name. Mal. 3. 16-18.
Thur. Hide this wonderful Golden Text in your heart.
Fri. Find what strange power made Peter strong. Verse 8.
Sat. Learn what made the weak man strong. Acts 3. 16.
Sun. Read Hymn 822 in the Methodist Hymn. 1.

LESSON VI. [February 9.]

THE SIN OF LYING.

Acts 5. 1-11. Memorize verses 3-5.

GOLDEN TEXT.

Wherefore putting away lying, speak every man truth with his neighbour.—Eph. 4. 25.

QUESTIONS ON THE LESSON.

How many believers were there now? About eight thousand. How did they live? In love and peace. How did they show their love? By sharing their goods. What did Barnabas do? Sold his land and brought the money to the apostles. What did Ananias and Sapphira pretend to do? As Barnabas had done. What did they really do? They kept a part of the price. Did they think it would be known? No. Who can never be deceived? The all-seeing God. What power was given to Peter? To read the heart of Ananias. What did he tell him? That he had lied to God. What then happened? Ananias and Sapphira both died. What did God want to teach the Church by this? To be true.

DAILY STEPS.

- Mon.* Read about the family church. Acts 4. 32-37.
Tues. Read the sad story of a deceiver. Acts 5. 1-11.
Wed. Find what other disciple was tempted and fell. Luke 22. 3.
Thur. See why it is foolish to tell a lie. Psa. 139. 4.
Fri. Learn what is the root of evil. 1 Tim. 6. 10.
Sat. Learn the Golden Text, so you will never forget it!
Sun. Learn a verse about the truth. Psa. 51. 6.

LITTLE MARY'S PRAYER.

Little Mary's mother had occasion to correct her the other night. Mary was very angry, and when she said her prayers, instead of asking God to bless her papa and mamma, as she was wont to do, she said: "God bless papa, and don't bless mamma."

Her mother took no notice, and Mary jumped into her bed without her good-night kiss. By and by she began to breathe hard, and at length she whispered: "Mamma, are you going to live a great while?"

"I don't know," was the answer.

"Do you think that you shall?"

"I cannot tell."

"Do many mothers die and leave their children?"

"A great many do."

"Mamma," said Mary, with a trembling voice, "I am going to say another prayer." And clasping her little hands, she cried: "God bless papa, and the dearest, best mamma that any little girl ever had in the world."

That's the way, children. If you knew that your mothers were going to die very shortly, you could not be half kind enough to them; but do you know that, be they long or short lived, there lies before you, written so plainly that he who runs may read: "Honour thy father and thy mother"?

Remember that every wrong committed

against loving parents will, when they shall have passed from earth, bite like a serpent and sting like an adder.

AN ACORN.

Norna had been sick a long while, and she was so tired of lying in bed that all the family tried to amuse her. Papa brought her a little musical box, and mamma gave her picture books; Tom bought a new game for her, and Dotty a bunch of grapes. Even baby offered her an acorn which he picked up under the great oak tree. What a beautiful little thing it was, fitting neatly in its tiny saucer; and what a dainty saucer, too, with row after row of wee brown scales folded so prettily over each other! Mamma tied a string around the acorn, hung it over a glass of water, and told Norna that now she could see it grow.

"But how can it find its way to the water, mamma?" asked Norna.

"Watch and see," said mamma, smiling.

The next day Norna thought that the acorn looked a little larger; but soon after that, O dear! there was a dreadful crack all along its side.

"It is spoiled, mamma," sighed Norna, "it will never grow now."

"Watch and see," again said mamma.

Norna did watch. At last she saw something white and something green coming out of the crack. The white shoot grew down into the water and made a root, but the green shoot grew upward and made two leaves, and so the acorn turned into a baby oak; and Norna so enjoyed watching it all that she forgot she was sick, and was almost as happy as if she had been outdoors in the sunshine.

"Your little girl is much better," said the doctor to mamma. "She is well enough to play in the yard. This new medicine has helped her." And nobody knew that the little acorn had helped her as much as the medicine.—*Youth's Companion.*

Hold fast, boys; hold on to your tongue when you are just ready to swear or speak harshly, or use an improper word; hold on to your hand when you are about to punch, strike, scratch, or do an improper act; hold on to your foot when you are on the point of kicking, running off from study, or pursuing the path of error, shame or crime; hold on to your temper when you are angry, excited, or imposed upon, or others are angry with you; hold on to your heart when evil associates seek your company and invite you to join in their mirth, games, and revelry.

Shame on the boy or girl who abuses animals. Any one who will cause needless suffering in a world where so much pain is unavoidable is a coward of the weakest sort.

LITTLE MAIDS AND LITTLE MEN.

Two little maidens, two little men,
All with a penny bright.
Who was the wisest? will you tell
Who used the penny right?

First little maiden, first little man,
Went to a candy store;
Each bought some candy and ate it up,
And the penny was no more.

Next little maiden, next little man,
Four other pennies earned;
And put them all in the mission box,
The best way they had learned.

Five little pennies went over the sea,
Five little pennies bright,
To tell a story we all do love.
Which little pennies were right?

Now, little maidens, now, little men,
When you have a penny bright,
Will you eat it up or make it five,
And send it for your mite?

—*Little Builders.*

A LITTLE HEROINE.

"Nannie, dear, I want you to hem those napkins without fail this afternoon. Can I trust you to do it? I must go out for the whole afternoon, and cannot remind you of them," said Mrs. Barton to her little girl.

"Yes, mother dear, I will; you can trust me," said Nannie.

Now, Nannie did not like to hem napkins any better than you do; but she went at once to her work-basket, took out her needle and thread and thimble, and began work. Pretty soon she heard a sound of music. It came nearer, and at last it sounded right in front of the house. She dropped her sewing to run to the window, and then she stopped. "No; I promised mother, and she trusted me," said Nannie to herself. And she sat down again, and went to sewing.

Soon the door burst open, and in rushed several little girls. "Nannie, Nannie, where are you? There's a monkey out here, and a trained dog; and they're playing lovely tricks. Come on!"

"I can't; I promised mother, and she trusted me," she answered.

They coaxed and scolded, but all to no purpose; so they left her.

Just as she finished the last napkin, her mother came in. "My little heroine!" she said, as she kissed Nannie.

"Why, mother, I didn't save anybody's life, or do anything brave; I only kept my promise," answered Nannie, wondering.

"It is sometimes harder to keep a promise, and do one's duty, than to save a life. You did a brave, noble thing; and I thank God for you, my dear," said Mrs. Barton.—*Our Little Ones.*



ROBIN'S BREAKFAST.

GOD'S BIRDIE.

BY R. M. WILBUR.

There was something to see, of course; else why should there be five pairs of eyes all looking eagerly out of the one dining-room window this sunny morning? And all but baby's eyes were looking in the same direction. He—the dear little mite—stared straight out, and never guessed but he was getting all the fun with the rest. And he got it, too; for when the others laughed he laughed, and was merry as a lark.

It was Rose who had brought them to that sunny window. She had said:

"Please ster scuse me," very properly, when she had finished her breakfast, and had gone to the window to see how pretty

the wet blanket of snow looked. It wouldn't last long in the warm April sun, and Rose loved the snow, and since at her seat at table she had to look at the chimney corner, and "twist her mouth half off" to get a peep at the shining snow, of course it was the best thing in the world to be excused.

"O, ma! Pris! Joe! baby! come quick!"

This under her breath. They came in a twinkling; and there was a dear little robin which had evidently thought that winter was over, and had found out its mistake to its sorrow, for there was not a bit of breakfast awaiting it.

But that didn't last long; for in less time than it takes to write about it, mamma had softly opened the window, and directly there lay robin's breakfast on the whitest of table cloths, almost under his tiny bill.

Robin didn't wait for a bill of fare, but went to work directly and ate it up with a will.

"Wonder if he knows he's God's birdie?" said Rose, soberly.

"Course not!" said Pris.

"He is, though!" was the answer.

POOR DOLLY.

I wonder if there ever was a doll so badly cared for as I. Let me tell you about just one day, and then tell me what you think.

The very first thing this morning Flossie lost me out of the window. She was teaching me to dance on the window-sill; but she danced me over the edge, so down I fell into the middle of a rosebush. How the thorns did tear my pretty pink dress! And there I should have stayed till this minute, if Bridget had not carried me in.

After that Flossy left me lying in all sorts of queer places; once in the cooky jar, once behind the flour barrel, and twice down in the cellar.

Each time Flossy's mamma or Bridget found me, and brought me back to her.

But now I am afraid they will not find me at all. She has dropped me behind the sofa, and here I have been lying for three hours.

To be sure, I have plenty of company; Flossy's ball is here, and some of her checkers, and her big hat that she has been hunting for ever since last Monday.

I suppose that we shall have to lie here all together until next sweeping day.

Did you ever see such a little girl as Flossie, and did you ever hear of such a poor forlorn dolly as I?

Among the Arabs, when a crumb of bread drops on the ground, they do not let it lie there, but pick it up and put it in a place where the birds may find it, saying, "God's gifts must not be trodden under foot."