

Family Reading.

The Beautiful Birds.

BY ELIZA COOK.

Birds! birds! ye are beautiful things, With your earth-treading feet and your cloud-cleaving wings!

Select Serial.

CHRISTIE'S OLD ORGAN.

BY MRS. O. F. WALTON.

CHAPTER V.

NO SIN IN THE CITY BRIGHT.

It had been a close, sultry day, and it was still more oppressive night. It was long before Christie could get to sleep, and when at last he had sunk suddenly by a loud peal of thunder, which made the old attic shake from end to end.

Old Treffy raised himself in bed, and Christie crept to his side. It was an awful storm; the lightning flashed into the attic, lighting up for a moment every corner of it, and showing Christie old Treffy's white trembling face. Then all was dark again, and there came the heavy roll of the thunder, which sounded like the noise of falling houses, and which made old Treffy shake from head to foot.

Christie never remembered such a storm before and he was very much afraid. He knelt very close to his old master, and took hold of his trembling hand. 'Are you frightened, Master Treffy?' he asked at last, as a vivid flash again darted into the room.

'Yes, Christie, boy,' said old Treffy; 'I don't know how it is; I used not to be afraid of a storm, but I am to-night.'

Poor Christie did not speak, so Treffy went on. 'The lightning seems like God looking at me, Christie, and the thunder seems like God's voice, and I am afraid of Him. I don't love Him, Christie, I don't love Him.'

And again the lightning flashed and the thunder rolled, and again old Treffy shook from head to foot.

'I shouldn't like to die to-night, Christie,' he said; 'and the lightning comes so very near me. Christie, boy, do you know what sin is?' he whispered.

'Yes,' said Christie; 'its doing wrong things, isn't it?' 'Yes,' said Treffy, 'and I've done a many of them, Christie; and its thinking bad thoughts, and I've thought a many of them, Christie; and its saying bad words, and I've said a many of them, Christie. But I never cared about it before to-night.'

How did you come to care about it to-night?' asked Christie. 'I've had a dream, Christie, boy, and it has made me tremble.'

Tell me it, Master Treffy,' pleaded Christie. 'I was thinking of what you said about loving Jesus, and I fell asleep, and I thought I was standing before a beautiful gate; it was made of gold, Christie, and over the gate there was

some shining letters. I spelt them out, and they were 'Home, sweet home,' Christie, and I said to myself, 'I've found it at last; I wish Christie was here.'

But just then some one opened the gate, and said, 'what do you want, old man?' I want to come in, I said, 'I am very tired, and I want to be at home.' But he shut the gate and said to me very gravely and sorrowfully, 'No sin can come in here, old Treffy, no sin can come in here; and, Christie, I felt as if I was nothing but sin; so I turned round and walked away, and it grew very dark. And just then came the thunder, and I awoke with a start. I can't forget it, Christie, I can't forget it,' said old Treffy.

And still the lightning flashed and the thunder rolled, and still old Treffy trembled. Christie could not comfort him for he was very much afraid himself; but he pressed very close up to his side, and did not leave him till the storm was over, and there was no sound but the heavy downpour of the rain on the roof of the attic. Then he crept back to bed and fell asleep.

The next morning it all seemed like a bad dream. The sun was shining brightly, and Christie rose and opened the attic window. Everything looked fresh and clean after the rain; the dull, heavy feeling was gone out of the air, and the little sparrows were chirping in the eaves. It was Sunday morning, and on Sunday evening Christie was to hear the clergyman preach in the mission room. Oh, how he wished it was seven o'clock, that he might go and find out what old Treffy wanted to know.

The poor old man seemed very restless and unhappy all that long spring day. Christie never left him, for it was only on Sunday that he could watch beside his dear old master. He could see that old Treffy had not forgotten his dream, though he did not speak of it again.

And at last the long, weary day wore away, and at six o'clock Christie washed himself and prepared to depart.

'Be sure you mind every word he says, Christie, boy,' said old Treffy earnestly.

The mission-room was only just opened when little Christie arrived. A woman was inside lighting the gas and preparing the place for the congregation. Christie peeped shyly in at the door, and she caught sight of him and ordered him off.

'Isn't there going to be any preaching to-night,' said Christie in a disappointed voice.

'Oh! you've come to the service, have you?' said the woman. 'All right, you can come in, only you must sit still, and you mustn't talk or make a noise.'

Now, as poor Christie had no one to talk to, this was rather an unnecessary speech. However, he went in very meekly, and sat down on one of the front benches.

Then the congregation began to arrive; old men and little children; mothers with babies in their arms; old women with shawls over their heads; husbands and wives; a few young men; people with all kinds of faces and all kinds of characters, from the quiet and respectable artisan's wife to the poor little beggar girl who sat on the form beside Christie.

And, as seven o'clock struck, the door opened and the minister came in. Christie never took his eyes off him during the whole service. And, oh! how he enjoyed the singing, the last hymn especially! A young woman behind him was singing it very distinctly, and he could hear every word. Oh, if he could only have remembered it to repeat it to old Treffy. The words of the hymn were these:

'There is a city bright, Closed are its gates to sin, Nought that defileth, Nought that defileth, Can ever enter in.'

Saviour, I come to Thee, O Lamb of God, I pray, Cleanse me and save me, Cleanse me and save me, Wash all my sins away.

Lord, make me from this hour Thy loving child to be, Kept by Thy power, Kept by Thy power, From all that grieveth Thee.

Till in the snowy dress Of Thy redeemed I stand, Faultless and stainless, Faultless and stainless, Safe is that happy land.

And after the hymn came the sermon. The clergyman's text was Revelation xxi., 27. 'There shall in no wise enter into it anything that defileth.'

He spoke of the Heavenly City of which they had just been singing, the bright, beautiful city, with its streets of gold and gates of pearl. He spoke of the river of the water of life, and the trees on either side of the river. He spoke of those who live in that happy place, of their white robes and crowns of gold, of the sweet songs they ever sing, and the joy in all their faces.

The clergyman also told them that in that bright city sorrow was never found. No weeping there, no tears, no sighs. No tired feet on that golden pavement, no hungry ones there, no hot burning sun, no cold frost or snow. No sickness there, and no death, no funerals in heaven, no graves in the golden city. Perfect love there, no more quarrelling or strife, no angry tones or discordant murmurs, no rude, rough voices to disturb the peace. And all this for ever and ever, no dread of it coming to an end, no gloomy fears for the future, no partings there, no good-byes. Once there, safe forever. At home, at rest, with God.

'Would you like to go there?' asked the clergyman's voice. And a quiet murmur passed through the room, a sigh of longing, an expression of assent. And little Christie whispered softly to himself, 'Like to go there! ay, that I would, me and old Treffy and all.'

'There shall in no wise enter into it anything that defileth,' said the clergyman's voice. 'Closed are the gates to sin.' My friends, if there is one sin on your soul, heaven's gates will be closed against you. 'Nought that defileth, nought that defileth, can ever enter in.' If all my life I had never sinned; if all my life I had never done a wicked deed, or spoken a wicked word, or thought a wicked thought; if all my life I had done everything I ought to have done, and had been perfectly sinless and holy, and yet to-night I was to commit one sin, that sin, however small a sin in man's eyes—that sin would be quite enough to shut me out of heaven. The gates would be shut against me for that one sin. No soul on which there is a speck of sin can go into that bright city.

'Is there one in this room,' asked the clergyman, 'who can say that he has only sinned once? Is there one here who can say that there is only one sin on his soul?' And again there was a faint murmur round the room, and again a deep-drawn sigh; but this time it was the suppressed sigh of accusing consciences.

'No,' said the clergyman, 'there is not one of us who can say that. Every one of us has sinned again, and again, and again. And each sin is like a dark blot, a deep ink-stain on the soul.'

'Oh!' said little Christie, in his heart, as he listened to these words, 'whatever will me and Master Treffy do?' And Christie's thoughts wandered to the lonely attic and to old Treffy's sad, worn-out face. 'So it was all true,' he said to himself. 'Miss Mabel's words, and Master Treffy's dream; all too true, all too true.'

If Christie had been listening, he would have heard the clergymen tell of the way in which sin could be taken away; but his little mind was full of the one idea of the sermon, and when he next heard the clergyman's words he was telling his congregation that he hoped they would all be present on the following Sunday evening, as he intended then to preach on the second verse of the hymn, and to tell them, more fully than he had time to do to-night, what was the only way to enter within the gates into the city.

Christie walked home very sadly and sorrowfully; he was in no haste to meet old Treffy's anxious, inquiring eyes. And when he reached the dark attic he sat down by Treffy, and looked away from him into the fire, as he said, mournfully:

'Your dream was quite right, Master Treffy. I've heard it all over again to-night. He preached about it, and we sang about it, so there's no mistake now.'

'Tell me all, Christie, boy,' said Treffy pitifully.

'It's a beautiful place, Master Treffy,' said Christie; 'you'd be ever so happy

and comfortable if you could only get there. But there's no sin allowed inside the gates; that's what the clergyman said, and what the hymn said, too:

'There is a city bright, Closed are its gates to sin.'

'Then there's no chance for me, Christie,' said the old man, 'no chance for me.'

And hours after that, when Christie thought Treffy was fast asleep on his bed in the corner, he heard his poor old trembling voice murmuring again and again; 'Closed are its gates to sin, closed are its gates to sin.'

And there was another ear listening to old Treffy's voice. The man at the gate, of whom Bunyan writes, had heard the old man's wail, and it went to his very heart. He knew all about old Treffy, and he was soon to say to him, with tones of love, as he opened the gate of rest: 'I am willing with all my heart to let thee in.'

The Alphabet of Summer.

- A is for the Apple-blossoms Coming with the spring, B is for the Buttercups The merry May will bring. C is for the Crocus buds, Pushing through the mould. D is for the Dandelions, With their crowns of gold. E is for the Elder-blooms, White as driven snow. F is for the Flower-de-luce, That 'mid the rushes grow. G is for the meadow-Grasses, Waving everywhere. H is for the Honey-suckle, Scenting all the air. I is for the Idle hours Spent in gathering posies. J is for the lovely June, With her wreath of roses. K is for the Katy-dids, And all their endless chatter. L is for the Lily pads Floating on the water. M is for the Morning-glories, Flowering high and low. N is for the downy Nests Where the birdies grow. O is for the Orioles gay, Singing loud and sweet. P is for the Poppy-heads, Flashing through the wheat. Q is for the Quinces, hanging, Golden in the sun. R is for the little Rills Laughing as they run. S is for the Silver glory Of the harvest moon. T is for the Tender light Of nature's afternoon. U is for the Under-brush, Where hazel-nuts are browning. V is for the luscious Vines, With their purple crowning. W is for Woodbine, when The green and golden blends. X is for the EXodus Of robins and for wrens. Y is for the Yellow leaves That set the woods aglow, Z is for the gentle Zephyrs Vanished long ago. —Mrs. J. M. Dana.

When you are reading your Bible, if you come to the seventh chapter of Job, you will find in the second verse the words, 'As a servant earnestly desireth his shadow.' And you will not be very likely to see any sense in that unless you know that in those days, when people did not have watches or clocks as they do now, the way they used to tell the time was by measuring the length of the shadows. Thus the servant knew that when his shadow got to be a certain length it was time for him to stop work for the day, and now you see how the words become an illustration. Job, in his suffering and sorrow, looked for the passing of the nights and days and the coming of relief, as a servant would look eagerly for his time to rest and enjoy himself. This practice of measuring shadows still prevails in some of the Eastern countries where modern watches have never been seen, even, though the sun-dial is known to most all peoples. But we would think it pretty hard if we had no better way of telling the time than by watching the sun-dial; to say nothing of the trouble of getting along when the sun happened to be behind the clouds, as he so often is.

Be thou like the bird perched upon some frail thing, which, although he feels the branch bending beneath him, yet loudly sings, knowing full well that he has wings.—Madame de Gasparin.

Beyond Price.

A writer in Golden Days tells a 'true story' of one Mr. Blank, who occupied a confidential position in a great railway corporation. It was rumored that the company was about to assume charge of a languishing railroad. If so, the stock of the latter would rise in price.

Now one bold speculator—or operator, as they are called in brokers' parlance—was an intimate friend of Mr. Blank.

After long reflection, he came to the conclusion that the best thing he could do was to call on Mr. Blank, ask in confidence for some definite information on the subject, and offer to share with Mr. Blank the profits of any venture that he might make on 'points' given him. This he did.

'Mr. Blank,' said he, 'if I knew that the transaction which it is rumored is about to take place in a few days were really to occur, I could, by buying up the stock of the company that is now in the market, make both you and myself rich men. Can you not, by a word, say whether the rumour will be realized or not?'

'I cannot say,' Mr. Blank replied. 'But a word,' the broker persisted; 'it shall be share and share alike.'

'I cannot say,' Mr. Blank repeated, as before. 'You need not speak, then,' the broker said, excitedly. 'Lift your arm and your head, lift your eye-brows.'

'I cannot,' Mr. Blank replied, as calmly as was possible. 'Do you not understand your own interests?' the broker burst forth, hotly. 'Mr. Blank, you are a poor man. Now, if you will only heed me, you may become a rich one in a day. Are these reports true? If so, I can clear three hundred thousand at a stroke! The half of that sum shall be yours. I do not ask you for a word; you need not open your mouth. Only wink your eye. It is possible for you to make one hundred and fifty thousand dollars, simply by winking your eye!'

How vast a sum to Mr. Blank, who, though entrusted with grave secrets, was still only a clerk, receiving but a moderate salary! He was staggered for a moment, but soon regaining his composure, he looked the eagerly expectant broker in the face, and answered,— 'I cannot do it,' and left the room instantly.

The broker went away crestfallen. In the absence of all definite information, which always attend speculating in the dark: and did not invest any of his money. In a few days however, the whole matter was settled. The great company really did take in the smaller and the stock almost doubled in value. A few days after that, the broker met Mr. Blank on the street, and, smarting keenly under the feeling that an enormous gain had slipped through his fingers, just for the want of a word, he rashly upbraided Mr. Blank for what he called his 'obstinacy.' Mr. Blank, like all men of true power, kept his temper, and turning to his rash reviler, he said,— 'The temptation with which you assailed me was great, indeed, but I had a trust to fulfil, and my honor is beyond price.'

The world is full of winking and squinting,—of signs, and grips, and cheats, and ciphers and hypocrisies, and a man can make himself a rascal by a wink or a nod, as well as by a forgery or a falsehood. Thank the Lord, an honest man can do his business without winking about it; and a man who sells his winks for money, may find that he has sold his reputation and his soul also, and has made a poor bargain, even if he has received a high price.

'Did not Paul tell Timothy to take a little wine for his stomach's sake and his often infirmities,' and the strong stalwart clergyman looked triumphantly into the face of the quiet little woman, who had come to persuade him to join the ranks of the total abstainers and set his example against the drinking habits of his town. He smiled all over his face, for he thought he had utterly discomfited her, and effectually stopped her woman's nonsense. But he hadn't. The quiet little woman held her ground and quietly replied,

'Yes sir, he did, that is Paul did; and he gave the prescription as you stated, but—to Timothy; and Timothy was not strong and stalwart, but was troubled with dyspepsia and subject to frequent infirmities. Now, sir, when you get to be troubled as Timothy was and as good a man as Paul gives you the prescription, you may take a little wine; but it is not quite exegetically correct for you to plead the single restricted prescription in support of a well man keeping his cellar stocked with liquors, and using them as a common beverage.'

If any but the quiet little lady had been by, the laugh would have been on the other side.

In connection with the Portsmouth branch of the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals, a show of donkeys and goats was held at Portsmouth recently. Lord Mount Temple, in addressing the exhibitors, congratulated them on the excellent appearance of their animals. Never had he seen animals so kind, so good-natured, and so friendly. That proved that their masters and drivers had been kind to them. He (Lord Mount Temple), like Lord Shaftesbury, belonged to a band of costermongers. He had a cart of his own, and a donkey. Not that he was able to go round with it. That was done by a costermonger who was more active, and perhaps more useful, than he was; but the object of the society was to teach men to be kind to their animals, and to prove that the right way to get the most work from them was to act kindly to them. The only way to manage a donkey was to be kind to him.

There is a past which is gone for ever, but there is a future which is still our own.—F. W. Robertson.

Braith's Department.

Original and Selected. Scripture Enigma. No. 200. Find out the following names, and their initials will give the name of a friend of the sweet singer of Israel:

- 1. The good boy whose coat made his brothers jealous. 2. The most minor of the minor prophets. 3. A member of the Sanhedrin who came to Jesus. 4. The young rebel whose hair caused his death. 5. The good boy who was taught by his grandmother. 6. Queen Esther's Jewish name. 7. Her husband. 8. The king who lived as a beast.

CURIOUS QUESTIONS.

Literary Amusement.

- 480. Form a word diamond: 1. The head of rat. 2. A fishing bag. 3. To put to—a word spelled backward and forward alike. 4. Half a score. 5. The end of an hour.

481. Four Charades.

- 1. First full of joy; 2nd Peter's name. Whole a leading English statesman. 2. Ist A mariner's friends; 2nd a space for cultivation. Whole a literary statesman. 3. Ist Phonographic, to look; 2nd Three-fifths of Sally's proper name. Whole a Roman Emperor. 4. Ist Phonographic, a beast; 2nd We. Whole. He who would called himself 3's friend.

- 482. A square of words in which the centre letters are the name of a good book; the same read vertically as horizontally. 1. Abigail's husband. 2. A juvenile. 3. The charter of all our blessings. 4. The son of Zippor who went to war against Israel. 5. A good medicine for hunger.

Find answers to the above—write them down—and see how they agree with the answers to be given next week.

Answer to Scripture Enigma.

No. 199. 'Be not afraid, only believe.' Mark v. 36.

ANSWERS TO CURIOUS QUESTIONS.

- 476. Missionary Acrostic: 1. Andover; 2. 'Devoted for life'; 3. October; 4. Newell; 5. Irrawadi; 6. Rangoon; 7. Ava; 8. Malden; 9. June 27, 1819; 10. Utica; 11. Dictionary; 12. Salem; 13. Ocean; 14. Nau-Moong. ADONIRAM JUDSON. 477. 1. Pearl; 2. Diamond; 3. Garnet; 4. Ruby; 5. Agate; 6. Amethyst. 478. Where, here, ere, re, e. 479. Bed-la-mite.

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How... There... breedin... horses