THE

BIRD'S NEST

RELIGIOUS TRACT SOCIETY

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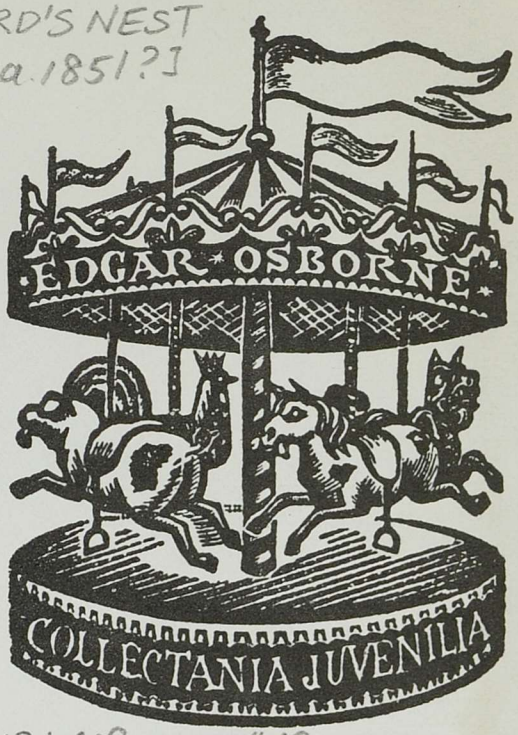
BIRD'S NEST
[ca. 1851?]



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THE BIRD'S NEST.

THE RELIGIOUS TRACT SOCIETY;
56, PATERNOSTER ROW; 65, ST. PAUL'S CHURCHYARD;
AND 164, PICCADILLY, LONDON.

THE BIRD'S NEST.

One fine day in spring, little Edgar and his sister Mary walked out with their nurse

Jane. The sun shone, and the air was fresh and sweet. Edgar and Mary ran along the road, and peeped into the fields to see the sheep and lambs.

"Let us open the gate, and walk in the field," said Edgar to Jane.

Jane.—No. The grass is wet. The sun has not yet dried up the dew. Do you not see the drops on the grass?

Mary.—But the little lambs do not mind the wet.

Jane.—They have wool, to keep them dry and warm. The dew-drops do not get through that, as they would into your shoes. You might take cold if you were to run about in the damp as the lambs do.

Edgar.—I wish I could get some flowers.

There are some in the field; but they do not grow in the road.

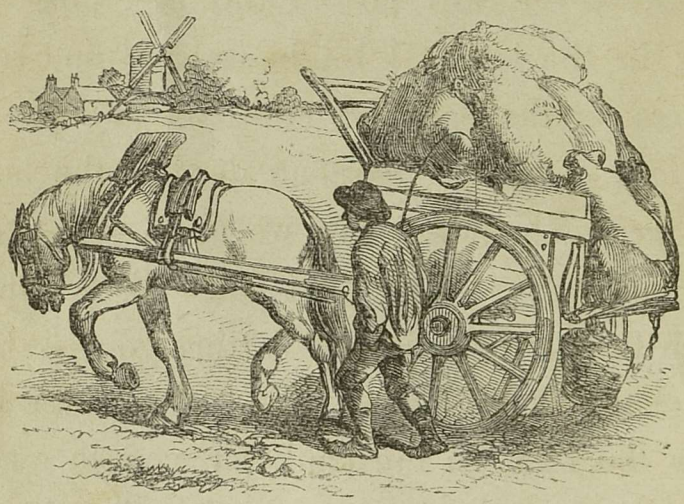
Jane.—We will go up the hill, and then walk in the lane. I think we shall find some flowers on the banks.

Mary.—And is there no dew in the lane?

Jane.—No, not where we shall walk; and the banks are so steep that you will be able to reach the flowers without wetting your feet by stepping on the grass. I will gather those that grow too high on the bank for you to reach.

"Thank you, thank you, Jane," said the little boy and girl; and away they ran up the hill. It was not a very high hill; but they ran so fast that they were tired when they got to the top of it. Then they sat down to rest on the root of a large tree.

Edgar and Mary saw many things from the place where they sat. A horse passed



by drawing a heavy load in a cart; a long way off, the little girl and boy saw the sea. It looked blue; and some ships on it looked like little white specks. In the trees near them some little birds were singing. They

seemed very happy, as well as the sheep and the lambs, and the cows.

"Why do the birds sing?" Mary asked.

Edgar.—They sing for joy, I think. I dare say they are glad that warm weather is come. Do they mean to thank God, I wonder?

Jane.—If they knew as much as we do, I dare say they would thank him as well as they could. But they do not know, as we do, who it is that feeds them and makes them happy.

Edgar.—I wish you would say those verses again, Jane, which you tried to teach me one day. Will you, Jane, now we are sitting here?

Jane.—Yes; if you will attend while I repeat them. And you too, Mary.

Mary said she would listen and mind; and Jane began:

"Who gave the sun its warmth and light?
Who made the moon that shines so bright,
And all the stars that glow at night?

Who made the earth that gives us grain?
Who feeds it both with dew and rain?
Who made each beast that treads the plain?

Who, by his will, in bounds doth keep
The great and wild waves of the deep?
Who made all things that swim or creep?

Who gave the air, and made the sky?
Who form'd the bird that soars on high?
Who taught its wings the way to fly?

Who gave us life and all we prize?
Who shields us when we close our eyes?
Who guards us when at morn we rise?

Who sends the sweet sleep to my bed?
By whom are all the wild birds fed?
Who gives to me, each day, my bread?

Who knows each thing, by night or day,
I dream or think, or do or say?
Who hears me when I kneel to pray?

Who gave his Son, for me to die?
Then raised him to his throne on high,
And bids me in his name to cry."

"Thank you, Jane," said Edgar; "I think I shall soon know the verses. They are very pretty."

By this time the little boy and girl were rested; and they all walked on to the lane. You shall be told what they found there.

There was a high bank on each side of the lane. A hedge was on the top of each

bank, and a few trees were in the hedges. On the banks were many pretty flowers. There were daisies, and kingcups, and primroses, and violets. Edgar and Mary plucked many of them, and Jane helped them.

Then Edgar ran down the lane before Jane and Mary. He saw a fine daisy on the bank, and he stopped to gather it. Then there was a loud noise in the bushes, and a bird flew out of them. Edgar did not know what it was, and he felt almost afraid. So he ran back to Jane.

Jane had seen the bird fly; and she said that there might be a nest in the hedge.

"Oh, how I should like to see it!" Edgar said.

Mary.—And so should I.

Then they went to the place that the bird flew from; and Jane looked into the bushes.

At first she could not find the nest; but soon she said, "Oh! here it is."

"Please to let me look;" "and me too,

Jane—do, do, Jane," called out Edgar and Mary. And the kind nurse-maid lifted them both, one by one, to peep into the nest.

There were two small trees in the hedge; and their roots and stems made a snug place for the nest. The bushes which grew around hid it, but Jane parted these while Edgar and Mary looked in.

It was like a little round basket, made of moss and twigs. When the little folks looked closely, they could see that the nest was partly made of clay, but the inside was nicely lined with soft hay. There were four eggs in the nest. They were blue. Edgar took one in his hand; it was smooth and light. It was warm, for the bird had been sitting in the nest.

"May we take the nest home?" Edgar asked.

Jane.—What will the poor bird do, if we take her nest away?

Mary.—Oh, the bird is gone; she has left the nest for us.

Jane.—No; she did not leave it for us. She will come back when we are gone. She flew away from fear of us.

Edgar.—What will she do with the eggs?

Jane.—She will sit gently on them, to keep them warm; and in a little time, the inside of them will become young birds, which will break through the shells. Would you like to see them then?

"Oh yes; that we should," said the little boy and girl.

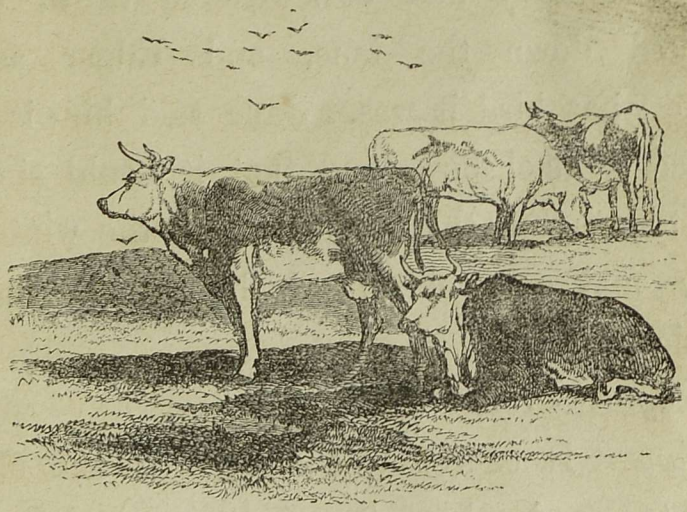
Jane.—Then you must put the egg back into the nest, and we must go away now. The bird is not gone far away, and she will soon fly back to her nest. We will come and look at her when we come this way again; but now we must go home.

Then Jane lifted Edgar up, and he put the egg back into the nest. They picked a few more flowers, and then ran home, and told mamma what they had seen.

The next day, Jane took Mary and Edgar to the lane. As they went along they saw in a field four cows; one cow was red, two were black, and one was red and white.

Jane told Mary and Edgar that they must make no noise while they went down the lane, or the bird would fly away again. So

they were very quiet, and did not even speak There was a little hole in the hedge, just



by the nest. They peeped in there, and saw that the bird was sitting in it. It was a larger bird than a robin or a canary, and it had a black head and back. It had very bright eyes, and it looked at Edgar

and Mary; but as they were so very quiet, it did not fly away.

When they had both looked at it, they walked down the lane, and Edgar asked Jane what bird it was. Jane told him it was called a black-bird, and that it could sing a pretty song in the summer. In the winter it only makes a chirp, which has not much music in it.

Edgar.—What does it eat?

Jane.—It eats worms and slugs, and many insects; and when the fruit is ripe it will come and eat some of that. We can spare a little, but if it takes too much we must drive it from the garden.

When the next day came, mamma walked with her little girl and boy, to see the

bird's nest. But they were so pleased to show it to her that they forgot they must not make a noise. They ran very fast down the lane, and Edgar called out, "Here it is, mamma!" Away flew the bird, and its wings made a loud noise, so that little Mary was quite afraid, and was almost ready to cry. Edgar was very sorry, and mamma told him he must take more care next time.

They looked at the nest and eggs; and then they walked down the lane, and into the fields. There was no dew on the grass now, so Edgar ran quite across the field. Mary stayed with her mamma, and plucked as many flowers as she could carry in one hand. Mamma told her that it was God who made the flowers, and the grass,

and the trees, and the birds; and that God made all things, and is kind to all things,

for, as the Bible tells us, "His tender mercies are over all his works." He feeds the birds, and the cows, and sheep, and takes care of us too He makes the birds happy, and he will make us happy if we love him and pray to him. We must ask him to

take away our sins, and make us holy, by giving us his Holy Spirit to live in our hearts; and we must ask it all for Jesus Christ's sake, who died and rose again for us, and will save all who believe in him with their hearts. All this and more did Mary's mother say.

Then mamma told the little girl to run about the field with Edgar. When they were tired, they sat down on the grass for a little time, and then went back into the lane. When they came to the nest, they were quite silent, and mamma lifted Edgar up on the bank, and took Mary in her arms. The bird was in her nest, and she did not fly away. Edgar was glad that mamma could see the bird now.

Then came some cold and wet days, and Edgar and Mary could not go out. When it was fine again, Jane took them to the lane. The hedge was become quite green, for the leaves had grown large and thick Edgar said they would keep the rain from the nest very nicely. But the bird was not in her nest, and there were no eggs to be seen when they peeped. Three little birds were there—little, soft, brown things, not much like their mother.

"Where is the old bird gone?" said Edgar. "Why does she leave the little birds alone?"

Jane.—She is gone to find food for them. See how they open their mouths when we move the leaves. They seem to think it is their mother coming to them. We will

go to the other side of the lane, and stand quite still. Then we shall soon see her come.

When they had stood a little time, they saw the bird coming. She had a small worm in her beak, and she flew into the hedge with it. Very soon she flew out again, and away into the field. Jane told Mary and Edgar that the bird had fed one of the little ones with the worm, and that now she was gone for more food.

Mary wished that she could see the little birds fed; but the hedge was too thick for that.

Edgar.—How does the old bird know where to find food for her little ones?

Jane told him that God had given her

the skill and power to find it; and also to make the nest, and to take care of the young birds until they can fly.

Mary and Edgar went many times to see the little birds. They stopped to look at the sheep and lambs in the field, as they

went along. Then they ran down the lane. Each time they saw the birds they were

larger than before, they grew so fast. When the old bird was near, the little girl and boy were quiet, as they did not wish to drive her away. But when she was gone, Jane would take a little bird from the nest, and let Edgar and Mary hold it for a minute.

One day Jane was going to take one out of the nest, when it spread its little wings, and tried to fly away. But it was not strong enough, so it rolled quite down the bank, piping sadly.

"Oh! poor little bird! it will be hurt," said Mary.

Edgar took it up, and said, "Please to put it into the nest again, Jane. We will not take it out any more."

Then Jane put the little bird into the nest. She did not think it was hurt. Then they went away to the end of the lane. Edgar looked back, and he saw the old bird fly into the hedge. He was glad she was come to take care of her little ones.

The next time they went to the lane, the nest was empty. The old bird and the little birds were all gone. Jane said, that the young ones could fly now, and they might be gone to look for food.

Edgar.—Will they come back to the nest again?

Jane.—They may come back at night, so we will leave the nest for them. When they grow older, they will sleep in the trees, and then we will take the nest home with us.

Mary.—But will not the old bird want it again?

Jane.—No; next year she will make a new one, in some other place most likely. If we leave this, it will be quite worn out with the wind and rain. And if the young birds are alive then, they will have a nest. How kind is God to teach the little birds, and take care of them! And if he cares for the birds, we are sure he will take care of us, if we trust in him. The Bible tells us so.

In a few days, Mary, and Edgar, and Jane walked to the lane once more. Edgar had a little basket in his hand. Jane pushed the leaves away, and took the nest from its

snug hole. Then the little boy and his sister could see how nicely it was made, with sticks, straw, clay, hay, and moss.

Mary wished her papa could make one like it; but she did not suppose he could: and Edgar thought it would be of no use for him to build a nest if he could. It would not do for *them* to live in.

Edgar found the nest was heavy when Jane put it into the basket. He said that the bird must have worked a long time to make it, and that he should have been tired before it was made, if he had been the little bird.

Jane.—We must not get tired of our work. What is proper for us to do, must be done. But the bird did not work alone.

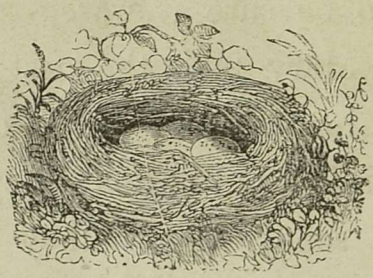
She had her mate to help her: and though we did not see the other bird when we went to the nest, it was not far off, I dare say; and it helped the mother to get food for the young ones, and often sat beside her to cheer her with a song.

Mary.—Then that was the father bird?

Edgar.—To be sure it was.

Edgar and Mary took the nest home, and kept it for a long time. They often talked about the birds, and when they heard a black - bird's song, which they were soon taught to know from the song of other birds, they said: "Perhaps that is one of those I had in my hand, or the little one that rolled down the bank. Oh! we love to hear their pretty song."

This was better than though they had taken the nest with the eggs in it when they first found it. Do you not think so, my young reader?



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