True Stories About Dogs and Cats

Eliza Lee Follen

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In a pretty, quiet village in New England lived Mary Chilton. She was a widow. She had two sons; and it was the occupation and the happiness of her life to do all she could to make her boys good and happy. I should say to help and teach them to be good and happy; for boys and girls must make themselves good; and then, of course, they will be happy; and no one can be made good or happy against his will.

I hear some boy or girl who reads this say, "How old were they, and what were their names?" No boy can get along with another boy till he knows his name and age, and so, that you may be sure that they were real, live boys, I will tell you these important facts. The eldest was called Frank, and was nine years old. His brother was called Harry, and was seven. They were very much like other boys, somewhat disposed to have their own way in every thing, and a little vexed when they could not do as they pleased; sometimes really wishing to do right, and be obedient, and make their mother happy.

The little fellows were fond of saying to their mother that when they grew bigger they should take care of her; and the idea that she depended upon them for her happiness often made them stop and think when they were disposed to do a wrong thing.

When Harry said to Frank, "Mother will be so sorry if we do it," Frank would stop and think, and that was enough.

Stop and think. Grand words, and worth attending to. I believe that, if boys and girls would only keep these words well in mind, there would be only a small number of really naughty children.

It was a custom with this good and faithful mother to have a little talk with her boys, every night before their bed time, of what had passed during the day. Sometimes she told them stories, sometimes they repeated poetry.

The hours they passed in this way were the happiest in the whole day. Some of their twilight talks and stories Mrs. Chilton wrote down, thinking they might amuse some little cousins, who lived at a distance. Perhaps some other little boys and girls may like to hear them too.

One evening, early in November, when tea was over, and the tea things were removed; when the nice hearth was swept clean, and the great wood fire was blazing brightly, and sending forth its cheering light and heat through the whole room, Frank and Harry had taken their accustomed places, one on each side of their mother who was sitting on the old−fashioned sofa. Each one appropriated a hand to himself, when they both, almost in the same breath, said to her, "You promised us, Mother, if we were good boys, to tell us a story this evening. Now, have we not been good boys all day?"

"Yes, you have," she replied; "you have not quarrelled, and you have got your lessons well; and I will gladly perform my promise. But I hardly know whether I can remember or make up any story to tell you. However, I will do my best. What sort of a story will you have?"

"I," said Frank, "should like a real good true story about a dog, or any other animal."

"And I like a made−up story best," said Harry.

"I have an anecdote of a dog for you, Frank, which a friend related to me the other day, and which I determined to remember to tell you, as I recollected your love for dogs. The lady who told me the story is an English woman. She was in the place where the thing happened, at the very time, and knew the dog and his master.

An English gentleman had a small dog, I think a terrier; he took it with him across the English Channel to Calais which, you know, is in France. He had business there, and remained some time. One day his poor little dog was severely treated by a French dog, much larger than himself.

The little terrier knew that he could not punish the big French dog. For some days you might see him with his head hanging down as well as his tail, and a most melancholy expression in his face. At last, he disappeared. His master, who was very fond of him, made every inquiry after him. In vain—his little four−footed friend was nowhere to be found.

One day, not long after, in walked the terrier, bringing with him a dog much larger than himself. He and his big friend looked very busy and important, as if they had on hand some weighty affair to transact. They showed how seriously they were cogitating, by curling up their tails even more than common.

The terrier, after receiving gratefully his master's caresses, and taking care that his great friend should receive his full share of the food which was given them, led the way, through the court yard, to the front of the house. There they took their place, and sat for a long time, looking as solemn as two judges hearing a cause, or two deacons at church watching some troublesome boys.

It seems the little terrier had been to England, and told of the bad treatment he had received from the large French dog, and had brought over a great dog friend to avenge the insult.

Patiently they sat for some time, looking up street.

At length, the terrier began to prick up his ears, and, in dog language, he told his big friend that the enemy was approaching. They waited quietly till he was near them, and then they both sprang upon the cowardly fellow, gave him a good drubbing, and sent him off with his tail between his legs.

After this, the big English dog, without looking round to see what they did, and said, and how they looked in France, wagging his tail with great satisfaction, and perhaps saying to the little dog that he could not understand French, and pitied him for having a master who could endure living in a foreign land, especially France, his dogship walked aboard a packet, and, with a solemn face and self− satisfied, triumphant air, without paying his passage, and with his tail turned towards France and the ship's company, placed himself in the forward part of the vessel, and so returned to his native land.

"Hurrah for dogs!" cried Harry, clapping his hands. "I say they are as good as men any day. They say, Mother, that the Indians believe their dogs will go to heaven with them. Will they, Mother?"

"We know nothing of the future state of animals, Harry. We only know that they are more gentle and intelligent the more kind we are to them. The most savage animals are tamed by constant kindness. Who does not remember Sir Walter Scott's pet pig? The reason why the pig was so fond of his master was that Sir Walter had not treated him piggishly, but humanely.

You have been told of Baron Trenck's spider. Men have had pet lions and tigers. When I see a fine, gentle horse, or an intelligent, loving dog, I find myself repeating Miss Barrett's beautiful words,− −

"Be my benediction said With my hand upon thy head, Gentle fellow−creature."

Now I have a funny story for you of a dog and a hen which a friend told me that she knew to be true.

A small dog had a litter of puppies in a barn close by a hen who was sitting on her eggs, waiting patiently, as hens do, for the time when her chickens should pop their pretty heads out of their shells into this pleasant world.

The puppies, however, came first, and, as soon as they were born, she left her nest, and insisted upon brooding them.

The little dog, no doubt, thought her very impertinent, and barked at her, and tried to drive her away; but she would not go. They had always been good friends, and the dog was unwilling to hurt her; and so Mrs. Dog, after showing, in every way, her desire to get rid of her troublesome acquaintance, and finding that Madame Hen would not budge one inch, let her alone.

From that time, the hen brooded the puppies. She let their mother suckle them, but the rest of the time took charge of them. The poor dog mother felt cheated, but she went off and amused herself as well as she could.

The poor chickens never showed their heads outside of their little oval prison, for they missed the gentle warmth of their unnatural mother's wings."

"She was a real funny hen," said Frank; "but she could not have had much brains, not even so much as common hens, and that's little enough; but, as for the dog, she must be as lazy as Dick Doolittle, to be willing to have such a stupid nursery woman as a hen take care of her own puppies. Dick lets Tom Jones do all his sums for him, but then he never hides it, so we only laugh at him. He says, What's the use of being named Doolittle and yet have to do much?

But, Mother, it is not bed time yet. Have you not some more stories of animals"

"Yes, Frank; but Harry wants his story now. It is his turn to choose.'

"I can wait till to−morrow evening," said Harry; "and I like the dog and hen stories very much."

"Harry shall have his turn, then, to−morrow," said Mrs. Chilton; "and I will tell you some more stories of dogs, for I now remember some more that are perfectly true.

You never know how intelligent an animal is till you treat it with kindness. All animals are easily frightened by human beings, and fear makes them stupid. Children naturally love animals, but sometimes a foolish boy loves to show his power over them, and so learns to be cruel.

A little boy of my acquaintance, when he was told that he might ask some friends to pass his birthday with him, and was asked who should be invited, named over all the dogs in the neighborhood, and was much grieved when his choice was greeted with laughter.

I have seen a little fellow of three years of age with his hand in the mouth of a large, hungry dog, trying to get a piece of bread out of it, and the dog not resenting the liberty at all, but merely trying to retain his share of the bread, and allowing the child to take a part.

We all know that dogs have chosen to die upon the graves of their masters, refusing food even when it was brought to them. We look at such animals as if we saw in them an angel in prison. We feel as if such a nature could not die.

There is no doubt that dogs understand language. My friend, Mr. S. P. Miles, who was remarkable for his tender love for animals, as well as for many other noble and lovely qualities, told me some remarkable facts which came under his own personal observation, and which I am, therefore, sure are true, showing that intelligent dogs understand language.

He said that in his father's house was an old dog, to whom they were much attached, who however became liable to fits. The dog was very fond of hunting, and the moment he saw any one take the gun, to go into the woods, he would show his ecstasy by leaping about.

Mr. Miles's mother one day, when caressing the dog and lamenting that he was subject to these fits, told her son that he had better shoot him the next time that he went out hunting with him. A few days after, Mr. Miles went hunting; but the moment he reached up for his gun, which was laid up on hooks in the wall, the dog, instead of showing joy by jumping about, ran directly to the good lady who had condemned him to death, got under the table at which she was sitting, looked up in her face, and would not move from that place. Never after could the poor fellow be induced to go out with any one who had a gun in his hand.

The same friend told me of a still more remarkable instance of intelligence in a dog, though I confess it does not prove that this dog had much conscience.

Mr. Miles said that he knew the man who owned the dog, and knew the truth of the whole story. He said that a neighbor had an uncommonly fine dog, well trained, and, as it seemed, perfect in all things.

One day, a man came and complained that the dog killed his sheep. The owner said he was sure that it was impossible. Hero was so well trained, he was always in his kennel at the right hour, and he knew that he must not kill sheep. After a while, the neighbor came again with the accusation. The dog was then tied in the barn. The man came again with the same charge against the dog.

Hero's master now told the accuser that the dog was tied in the barn on the very night when the sheep were killed. He now made much of his dumb favorite from the feeling that he was unjustly suspected.

He was, however, much surprised when the owner of the sheep came again and declared that he had seen his dog kill a sheep that very night; that he knew the dog, and was sure of the fact. He, of course, thought he must be mistaken; but said he would watch the dog. He did so.

At a certain hour of the night, when the dog supposed no one saw him, the cunning fellow put up his two fore paws, pushed off the collar to which a chain was attached, darted through the open window close by, and made for the sheep pasture. He returned in good season, put his nose into his collar, pushed it down into its place with his paws, and lay down to sleep.

The master returned to his bed with the painful conviction that he must kill his intelligent but unprincipled four−footed friend. It is said nothing will cure a dog of the habit of sheep killing.

In the morning the sorrowful master went to the stable. As he approached, he said, "O, Hero, how could you do so wrong? I must have you killed." Quick as thought, the dog pushed his collar over his ears, darted through the window, and flew like lightning away. No one in that town ever saw him again.

Mr. Miles told me also that he knew a dog that would carry letters to persons when told their names; and that no one dared touch the letter but the person to whom it was directed. No bribe, no coaxing would induce him to stop when going on these errands. If other dogs annoyed him, he would not notice them, but run the faster, and take care to chastise them at another time.

Creatures that show such intelligence, who can understand our language, and are capable of what is best in our nature, that is, of self−forgetting love, should be treated with the greatest tenderness. We know not what they may be capable of till we have tried the influence of constant justice and kindness. It is questionable whether poor Hero could have been cured of his fault. But I would give all a chance."

"I should like to have Hero for my dog," said Frank, "and live with him in a place where there were no sheep; and then, after many years, he might forget his bad tricks."

"I must say something in favor of the much−abused cat. Doubtless she would be a much better member of society, if she were better treated, if she had a better example set before her.

Sportsmen are very angry because she catches birds, and because she is sly. They will themselves lie down in the grass so that the birds may not see them, and be as sly as the very slyest old puss, and yet they cannot forgive her for watching noiselessly for birds. Has not she as good a right as any sportsman to a little game? She takes only what she wants to eat. She does not kill them in order to boast to another cat of how many she has bagged.

They say she must be bad, for she kills singing birds. Do not sportsmen kill larks and thrushes? Were you once to see a lark rising up into the blue sky higher and higher, and hear him singing as he rises louder and louder, as if he saw heaven opening, and wanted to tell you how beautiful it was, and call you up there; and then to think of killing and eating him, you would say, What cat can be so unfeeling as a man? Who, with any music in his soul, could do so? Yet men do eat larks for dinner, and then scold at the poor cat who treats herself with only one perhaps. Why should she not be a little dainty? Men, women, and hoys and girls are often cruel and unreasonable, not merely cats. The cat is as good as she knows how to be."

"So you are, pussy," said Harry, taking up his pet cat in his lap, and stroking her. "You never do any harm, but catch the mice in our mother's barn. But you are a little sly, and, if you should catch birds, right or wrong, I'm afraid I should box your ears. You must learn to do without birds for your dinner."

"When I was in England," said Mrs. Chilton, "I saw, exhibited in a cage about five feet square, rats, mice, cats and dogs, a hawk, a guinea pig, a rabbit, some pigeons, an owl and some little birds, all together, as amiable and merry as possible. Miss Puss sat in the midst, purring. The others ran over her, or flew upon her head. She had no thought of hurting them, and they were not afraid of her.

I found, on inquiring, that the way the keeper establishes such peace and harmony is by systematic and constant gentleness, and by keeping the animals all well fed. They are called the happy family.

The cage was always surrounded by a crowd of people curious to see such natural enemies so happy together. Nothing but the law of kindness could make all those creatures so civil and well behaved to each other. But I must not forget my anecdotes of that respectable animal, the cat.

You need not smile; I mean to make you respect, as well as love cats. There are some men, and many boys who say they are domestic tigers, that they are sly, that they steal, that you cannot trust them; that the cat heart is bad, and that there is no harm in boys' teasing them, since it is no more than cats deserve; that they were made for us to plague; and that the only good thing they do is to catch rats and mice.

Now, if this were true, and they were really ever so bad, they ought never to be treated cruelly, never teased and tormented. None but the meanest boy will ever torment any animal.

He who created us created also the little fly that crawls upon the window pane. I am not now thinking of those boys who do not remember, or have never learned this truth, but of those who have a cruel prejudice against cats, of those who are kind to dogs and horses, but unkind to cats. I shall speak to you of the poor cat with almost as much respect and seriousness as if I were talking about any of my fellow− creatures who were injured and ill treated.

We take it for granted that cats have no love in them, and so we never act towards them as if they had any; now I believe they have, on the whole, pretty good hearts, and, if they were treated with justice and kindness, would be far more respectable members of society than they are. To show this I will mention some facts of which I have heard, and, some which I have witnessed.

In the first place, the cat is accused of never caring for the inhabitants of a house, but only for the house itself.

Now I knew an affectionate cat who manifested much disturbance when the family were making preparations for moving; at last, all was gone from the house except herself and the cook. The cook, in order to make sure that the cat should not escape from the carriage on the way, put her into a cage and fastened her in.

When they arrived, the cat walked quietly out of her cage, looked at her old friend the cook, went into another room where she met another friend, and began forthwith to purr her satisfaction.

Two years afterwards, this family moved again. As soon as the cat saw the preparations making for moving, she showed great uneasiness, and went down into the cellar, where she remained during all the confusion.

When all else was gone, the cook went to the cellar stairs, and called her. The cat came up directly. The cook stroked her, and showed her a basket just big enough to hold her, and said, "Get in, get in, pussy, and take a pretty ride!" The cat got in, and, without the least resistance, allowed herself to be shut into the basket by a cloth tied over it. As soon as she saw the different members of the family in the new house, she manifested her contentment.

In six months the family moved again. The cat again submitted herself, and showed her preference to her friends over their house.

A cat has been known to nurse and bring up a rat with her own kittens. I once took a little rabbit who was starving to death from the neglect of its own mother, and placed it before the same cat who preferred the people to the house. She had just come from nursing her kittens, and when she saw the little trembling rabbit before her, her first thought was, evidently to make a good meal of it. I took up the little thing and caressed it, and then put it down again. She now approached it in a motherly way, and looked at it; its ears seemed evidently to puzzle her. After a while, she tried to take it up as she did her kittens, but saw she could not safely; then she went to her nest and mewed, and then came to me and rubbed herself against me; and then went to the rabbit and licked it tenderly; I now ventured to put the rabbit in with her kittens, and she nursed, and took the best care of it.

A friend of mine who killed a squirrel not knowing that she had young ones, took all the little squirrels, brought them into the house, and put them before his pet cat who had lost all her kittens but one. Pussy looked at them for a while; probably her cattish nature thought a little of eating them; but her better nature soon prevailed, for she took them, one after another, and carried them all to her nest, and proved a faithful nursing mother to them, and ere long there was no part of the house in which the old cat and her roguish adopted children were not to be found.

What will not cats submit to from a loving child? I have seen a child lie down with a cat for its pillow, and the cat merely move herself a little, so as to bear the weight as easily as possible.

A cat can be taught to stand and walk on her hind legs, which seems at first very disagreeable to her.

I remember, when I was a child, seeing a Maltese cat come in every morning and wait till my father had finished his breakfast, then, at a certain signal, rise up on her hind legs, and beg for her breakfast, and take just what was given her with the utmost propriety, asking for nothing more.

I will tell you a well−authenticated anecdote which I read the other day. A cat had been brought up in close friendship with a bird. Now birds, you know, are the favorite food of cats. One day she was seen suddenly to seize and hold in her claws her feathered companion who happened to be out of the cage.

The first thought of those who saw her was that, at last, her tiger nature had come out, and that she was going to make a meal of her little trusting friend; but all the cat did was to hold the trembling bird still, and, on looking around the room, it was discovered that another cat had come in, and that catching the bird was only the means the friendly cat used to keep it safe till the intruder should leave the room. As soon as the other cat was gone, she let go the bird, who it was found was not in the least hurt.

A cat who had been petted and always kindly treated by a family of children, was present one day when the mother thought it necessary to strike one of them for some bad action; the cat flew violently at the mother and tried to scratch her, and from that time she never could strike one of the children with impunity in the presence of their faithful, loving friend.

A friend related to me that they had a cat in her father's family who was a great favorite, and who was particularly fond of the baby; that one day this child was very fretful, and sat for a long time on the floor crying, and that nothing would pacify her.

The cat was by her side on the floor, and finding herself not noticed, and perhaps wearied at the noise, she suddenly stood up on her hind legs and boxed the child's ears in exactly the same way in which she was in the habit of boxing her kitten's.

It seems that this cat was not so amiable as the other, and did not object to giving a box on the ear to a naughty child.

I have another story from a good authority which is still more in favor of poor pussy, and puts her upon a par with the most faithful dog.

During a hard snow storm last winter, a kitten with a broken leg and almost frozen hopped into the hall door of a gentleman's house in Brooklyn, New York, and set up a most piteous mewing.

The master of the house ordered the servants to throw the kitten into the street, when his little daughter, a child eight years of age, caught up the poor little creature, and begged to be allowed to keep and nurse it. The father, at first, refused. The child, however, begged so earnestly that he at last allowed her to keep the kitten.

The little girl, whom we will call Emma, nursed her pet until it got quite well. The kitten returned, in full measure, all the love of her gentle nurse, and was never quite happy away from little Emma.

Some time afterwards, the loving child was taken severely ill, and was confined to her bed. Kitty had grown into a cat. It was found impossible to keep her away from the bed of her suffering friend. The cat would watch at the door when turned out of the room, dart in again, and mew, and jump upon the bed where little Emma lay. There Kitty was quiet.

As the child grew more ill, it was impossible to get the cat out of the room; until, at last, when little Emma was dying, pussy stretched herself out near the bed, and seemed to be dying too.

The cat was taken into the next room, and put gently upon a rug.

"Take care of my poor kitten!" said the kind little Emma, as she saw them take it away; and her loving spirit went to the land of loving spirits.

When the sorrowing friends went into the adjoining room, the life of her "poor kitten" had departed too.

Does not the fact that love and kindness can make such an irritable animal as the cat so loving and grateful, teach us all their heavenly power? Ought we not to do all which we can to bring out this better nature?

We have made cats our slaves. We have taken them from the woods, that we may have them to catch our rats and mice. We make them do just as we please, and ought we not to make them as comfortable and happy as we can?

Can we not be patient with their bad or disagreeable qualities, and encourage all their good dispositions? We never know the true character of any living being till we treat that creature with entire justice and kindness. I therefore am the friend of the poor, despised, abused, neglected, suspected, calumniated cat. I confess she is sometimes a little disposed to thieving, that there are strong reasons for supposing that she is somewhat addicted to selfishness, that she may justly be suspected of occasional hypocrisy, and that she is to blame for too readily using her claws.

These are, all of them, human as well as cattish faults; but, if pussy has in her the capacity for something better, for self− forgetting and devoted affection, we must treat her with such patient, enduring kindness and perfect justice as may cherish all that is good in her nature. In short, can we not overcome her evil by our good? Let us try, boys!

One thing I have not yet told you in relation to cats, and that is what pets they are made in France. No drawing room seems complete without a beautiful cat. The cats are well trained and are very gentle.

The Angora cat is most prized. She is fed with the greatest care, and, in all respects, is treated like a respected member of the family; and noticed, of course, by visitors. I have seen a beautiful cat go from one guest to another to be caressed like a little child.

These pet cats are playthings. They are not expected to catch rats and mice, but are idle creatures, and only amuse themselves and others. It is considered a special attention for any gentleman or lady to make a present of a pet cat."

"What's the use of cats who can't catch rats and mice?" said Frank. "Do the French pet the mice, too? I wonder what comes of the bread and cheese?"

"O, the people have another set of cats, whom they call gutter cats, who catch rats and mice. The gutter cats never come into the drawing room; but they are treated well in the kitchen, and made as happy as possible.

I was told that these working cats were far more intelligent than the pets of the drawing room.

I knew a French seamstress who had a gutter cat, of which she was very fond. One day the cat fell from the roof of the house. She seemed dead, but her faithful friend put her upon a soft bed, gave her homoeopathic

medicine, and watched all night by her to put a drop of something into her mouth if she moved. At last the cat gave signs of life, and by good nursing her life was saved.

I saw once in Paris a man carrying about a splendid large mouse− colored cat, dressed up with ribbons.

The creature was twice the common size, and gentle as a lamb. He was for sale; the price, sixty francs, which is twelve dollars. Every body who was not too busy, stopped to stroke Master Puss."

"He would have done to wear boots," cried Harry. "I should like him right well. Such a big cat would be worth having."

"The French are very humane to animals, and never inflict unnecessary pain upon the meanest. In the street in which I lived in Paris, there was a hospital for cats and dogs."

"Is not a hospital a place where sick folks go to be cured, Mother; and do they like to have dogs and cats there?"

"This was a hospital devoted to sick cats and dogs."

"Do they have cats and dogs for nurses?" said Harry, giggling as he spoke.

"I never heard they did, you little goose. But I could not help being pleased with such an evidence of the kind−heartedness of a people in their treatment of animals."

"Mother," said Frank, "where did dogs and cats come from? Have men always had them living with them? Did Adam and Eve have a dog and cat, do you suppose? Was there an Adam and Eve cat and dog?"

"It would take more knowledge than I can boast of, Frank, to answer these questions. I will tell you all I have been able to learn. It is supposed by some persons that the domestic dog is the descendant, that is, the great great great grandchild of a wolf."

A man who wanted to see if a wolf could be gentle, and faithful, and loving as a dog, took a baby wolf, treated him with the greatest kindness, and fed him on food that would not make him savage.

The wolf was always gentle, and much attached to his master. If the sons and sons' sons of the wolf were always treated in the same manner, you may suppose it possible that, in time, they would be as loving and good as our dogs.

There seems, however, to be more reason to think that our domestic dog is descended from a wild dog; as there are wild dogs in various parts of the world; in Africa, Australia, and in India. The dog of the Esquimaux was a wolf. There is a distinct kind of dog for almost every part of the world, each sort differing in some things from the wolf.

The earliest history of man speaks of his faithful companion, the dog. Every schoolboy has read of the dog of Ulysses; and how, when Ulysses returned, after a very long absence, so changed as not to be recognized in his own house, his dog knew him immediately.

Cuvier, the great French naturalist, says that the "dog is the most complete, the most remarkable, and the most useful conquest ever made by man."

"Every species has become our property. Each individual is altogether devoted to his master, assumes his manners, knows and defends his goods, and remains attached to him until death; and all this proceeds neither from want nor constraint, but solely from true gratitude and real friendship."

"The swiftness, the strength, and the scent of the dog have enabled him to conquer other animals; and, without the dog, man perhaps could not have formed a society. The dog is the only animal which has followed man into every part of the earth."

"The Exquimaux employ their dogs as we do horses. The dogs are made slaves; but are docile and faithful, particularly to the women, who manage them by kindness and gentleness. In Germany you often see dogs drawing carts; and in London dogs are harnessed into little carts to carry round meat for the cats."

Here Harry expressed his opinion that this was abusing the dogs.

"I am told," continued Mrs. Chilton, "that when the driver of these dog carts cries 'Cats' Meat,' all the cats look out from their holes and hiding−places for their accustomed piece."

"We," said Harry, "give pussy something out of our plates all cooked and nice, and so I suppose she is a better cat, and less cattish."

I dare say you know that there are a great variety of dogs. The Newfoundland dog not only drags carts and sledges, but has a sort of web foot that makes him a particularly good swimmer. He often saves the lives of his human friends.

The Lapland dog looks after the reindeer, and drives them with the greatest gentleness to their homes or away from any danger.

The shepherd's dog does the same for the flock. He runs after any stray sheep, and just says, with a very amiable little bark, "Friend sheep," or "My little lamb, that's not the way."

Then there is the terrier to catch our rats; the mastiff and spaniel to guard our houses; the lapdog for ladies to play with; the poodles to laugh at; and once there was the turnspit to roast our meat for us.

Besides these and many I have not mentioned there are all the different hunting dogs; the pointers and setters for birds; the hounds for hares, rabbits, foxes, and deer.

When I was in England, I saw the start for a deer hunt. The hunters, with their red jackets, were assembled on horses longing to start. The dogs were all fastened together and held still by the keepers. A large open heath was before us.

Presently a covered cart was driven up. One end was opened, and a stag leaped out.

He stood still, and looked up and all around him, as much as to say, "What are we all about?" He had, apparently, no thought of running any where.

At last, they sent a little dog to bark at him, and soon away he scampered over fences and through fields; like the wind, he flew.

When he was out of sight, the keeper let his dogs loose. They did not run at first, but smelt all around, one dog leading the others. At last, he pricked up his ears, and they all set up a race after him, like a streak of lightning, as our Jem would say.

Now the huntsmen started, and they followed as near as they could. The dogs leaped over a hedge, a pretty high one. Away went the huntsmen after them.

I saw one man thrown as he tried to leap the hedge, and away went his horse and left him.

I saw two, three, four go over as if they were flying. O, how beautiful it was to see them!

Then I saw a rider and his horse both fall into a ditch they were trying to leap. Then came another, and over he went, all clear, as a cat might jump.

The hunter in the ditch scrambled out, but his horse was hurt and could not move.

Some men from the farm house, before which I was sitting, looking at the hunt, took ropes and went to help the maimed horse.

By this time, we heard but faintly the huntsmen's horn and merry shouts; and soon they were all out of sight, save the four or five men who were aiding the poor horse to get out of the ditch.

I returned home, thinking that, after all, hunting tame deer was a poor amusement. But I am an American lady; and were I an English gentleman, I might feel very differently.

"I think I should like hunting right well. It would be real good fun," said Harry.

"And so should I," said Frank.

The dog of the St. Bernard, who is called the Alpine spaniel, you have heard and read of; and you have that pretty picture of one of those dogs with a boy on his back.

I have, as you know, been among the Swiss mountains; and the thought of the good monks living in those awful solitudes through the storms of winter, with the avalanches for their music, and only an occasional traveller for society, and with these gentle, loving dogs for companions, gave me a new love for these excellent animals.

I thought, too, of the poor traveller who had lost his way, and found his strength failing. I imagined his joy at the sight of one of these dogs with a cloak on his back, and a bottle of cordial tied to his neck.

I saw, in my mind, the good "fellow−creature" showing the way to the shelter which his truly Christian masters are so glad to afford.

These monks, it is said, keep a bell ringing during storms. It seems to me I can see one of the old monks sitting over his fire, putting on more wood, and making his tight chalet as warm as he can, in case a traveller should come.

Presently he hears a cheerful bark from one of the dogs. He opens his door; the poor, frozen, half−starved traveller enters.

The monk takes off the wet garments; he rubs the stiff, cold hands; he speaks kind words to the stranger, and gives him something warm to drink.

Meanwhile, the good dog lies down on the floor, looking with his big, kind eyes at the wayfarer, and seems to

say, "I'm glad I found you and brought you here to my master. Eat and drink, and be comfortable; don't be shy; there's enough here always for a poor traveller."

It is a sad thing to turn from this pleasant picture to the history of the bloodhounds in the West Indies. Who would believe that the good and great Columbus employed bloodhounds to destroy the Indians who made war against the Spaniards?

"When the Indians were conquered, the bloodhounds were turned into the woods and became wild, so that there are now many of these wild dogs on the islands. I grieve to say that, here in this civilized land, bloodhounds are sometimes used to catch runaway slaves."

"Runaway slaves, Mother? Do you mean men, like Anthony Burns," asked Frank. "He was a slave, was he not?"

"Yes, Frank, men like Anthony Burns, when they try to get their freedom, if they are known to be hiding in a wood, are often hunted with dogs."

"O, it is very wicked, Mother!"

"So I think, Frank; let us hope that the time will come when every man and woman and child in our land will think so, and then there will be no more slaves."

"And now, let us turn away from the history of bloodhounds to some pleasant thoughts before we finish our twilight talk."

"The poet Cowper was a great friend to animals. Many of his most beautiful letters to his friends have very pleasant passages about his pretty tortoise shell kitten, and his distress that she would grow up into a cat, do what he would."

"He was a lover of tame rabbits and hares, and speaks of all these animals as if they were his friends and fellow−creatures. In one of his little poems he tells a pretty story of his spaniel Beau. I was so pleased with it that I learned it by heart unconsciously, from reading it over so often."

"Do repeat it, Mother," cried both the boys.

Mrs. Chilton then repeated the poem; and, as some of my young readers may not be familiar with it, they shall have a copy, too.

"This, also, boys, is a true story," said their mother.

THE DOG AND THE WATER LILY.
NO FABLE.

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The noon was shady, and soft airs
  Swept Ouse's silent tide,
 When, 'scaped from literary cares,
  I wandered on his side.

My spaniel—prettiest of his race,
  And high in pedigree—
 (Two nymphs adorned with every grace,
  That spaniel found for me—)

Now wantoned, lost in flowery reeds,
  Now, starting into sight,
 Pursued the swallow o'er the meads,
  With scarce a slower flight.

It was the time when Ouse displayed
  His lilies newly blown.
 Their beauties I intent surveyed,
  And one I wished my own.

With cane extended far, I sought
  To steer it close to land;
 But still the prize, though nearly caught,
  Escaped my eager hand.
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Beau marked my unsuccessful pains,
  With fixed, considerate face;
 And, puzzling, set his puppy brains
  To comprehend the case.

But, with a chirrup clear and strong
  Dispersing all his dream,
 I thence withdrew, and followed long
  The windings of the stream.

My ramble finished, I returned;
  Beau, trotting far before,
 The floating wreath again discerned,
  And, plunging, left the shore.

I saw him with that lily cropped
  Impatient swim to meet
 My quick approach; and soon he dropped
  The treasure at my feet.

Charmed with the sight, "The world," I cried,
  "Shall hear of this thy deed.
 My dog shall mortify the pride
  Of man's superior breed."

But, chief, myself I will enjoin,
  Awake at duty's call,
 To show a love as prompt as thine
  To Him who gives me all.
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"I think that's a right pretty story, Mother," said Frank, when his mother had finished reciting it; "but will you tell me what 'high in pedigree' means; for I'm sure I don't know. I never heard the word before; and who are nymphs, who found the spaniel for Cowper?"

"'High in pedigree,' Frank, means nothing but that he had a very respectable grandfather and mother."

"Then, Mother, we are high in pedigree; for I'm sure that grandfather and grandmother—, at the farm, are the very best and most respectable people in the world, and send us the best butter and cheese. But what are nymphs?"

"There was, in olden times, Frank, before the birth of Christ, and among many people since there is a belief in a sort of fairies, or fanciful existences. They thought that in each stream, and wood, and grotto lived a beautiful young woman, invisible to common eyes, and these lovely fairies were called nymphs. So it became common to call any beautiful young woman a nymph."

"The best line in it," said Harry, "is, 'And, puzzling, set his puppy brains.' That I can quite understand."

"Now," said Mrs. Chilton, "it is time to light the candles, and for little boys to go to bed."

"I have still a little more to say to you about animals," said Mrs. Chilton, one evening, to her two boys, "as you seemed pleased with what I told you, some time ago, about dogs and cats."

A friend told me, the other day, that, when she was at Hopkinton, where she went for the benefit of the baths, the mistress of the hotel told her that their cat understood language; for that a gentleman, who was there and was going fishing, told the cat to go and catch him a frog. The cat disappeared, and, a little while after, brought in a frog. She added, that the next day he told the cat again to go and catch him a frog. The cat again set off on the same errand, and brought in two frogs; but she had bitten off the head of one of them, as if to pay for her labor."

"Do you believe that story, Puss?" said Harry. "See, Puss shakes her head. Do you believe it, Mother?"

The authority was very good. I could not easily disbelieve it. The more we notice animals the more we shall be astonished at them, and interested in their history; the more we shall see in them evidences of the wisdom and the goodness of the Power that created them.

I knew a good, great man who would never tread upon the meanest flower he met in his walks; who would not wantonly destroy a shell upon the sea shore.

When I was very young, I was walking in a garden with one of the true lovers of God in His works: suddenly he bent his head very low, and bade me bend mine also. "See," he said, "that beautiful web: do not break it; the little creature who made it has worked very hard; let us not destroy it."

This lesson was given many years ago. I have forgotten many things since then; but this will last me through life, let it be ever so long.

Who does not love good Uncle Toby who, when a troublesome fly tormented and tickled his nose and sipped his wine, put him tenderly out of the window, saying to him, "Go: there is room enough in this world for thee and me"? But to my stories. One is a sad one, but it is true, as are also all the others.

A gentleman was once travelling in France, on horseback, followed by his dog; presently the dog began to show great uneasiness, and run and jump up at him and bark violently. The man saw no one near, and could not understand what was the matter.

The dog persisted in barking. At last, the man scolded him. This did no good. The dog still barked and jumped up trying to get hold of his master's legs; the man scolded the animal repeatedly, but all in vain. The dog barked louder and louder. At last, the man struck him with the butt−end of the whip harder than he intended; for he only wished to silence the dog.

The thoughtless man went on satisfied. After a while, he found that he had lost his purse. He went back some miles, till, at last, he saw his dog lying dead in the road with one paw over a purse.

The poor creature had staggered back to the place where he had seen it fall, and, faithful to the last in spite of his master's cruelty, even in death, guarded his property.

A knowledge of character, comprehension of language, or some other faculty, beyond what we can explain, is often discovered in dogs.

There was a family who had given leave to two poor men to come and saw wood, do chores, One of these was very honest; the other often took what did not belong to him.

The family dog took no especial notice of the honest man, and treated him in a friendly way, but the thief he watched all the time, to guard the property of the family.

Another dog was on board a vessel bound to some place in Europe. The vessel was driven in a storm against a rocky coast, and struck under a steep, perpendicular cliff perfectly inaccessible. It was evident that if relief was not soon given, the vessel must go to pieces, and the men all perish.

The dog leaped into the angry sea, and with some difficulty swam ashore. He ran on till he came to the dwelling of a poor man, and then barked loudly, till the owner was roused and came out.

The dog showed great joy at seeing him, ran towards the shore and then back to him, and leaped upon him and licked his hands; this he did repeatedly till the man followed him.

It was some distance to the shore; and, after a while, the man was tired, thought it was foolish to go after the dog, and turned to go home. The dog immediately showed great distress, and tried the same arts to entice him on; but the man seemed resolved to go home.

At last, the dog stood upon his hind legs, put his paws upon the man's shoulders and looked him in the face, with such a human meaning, such a piteous expression, that the man determined to follow him.

The dog led him, not to the cliff under which the vessel was lying, as there she could not be seen, but to a distant place on a point where she was visible.

Ropes were immediately obtained, the crew were all hoisted up. and every life saved; and this was by the intelligent love of this faithful fellow−creature—we cannot call him a brute.

These true stories were told me by Mr. W. R. of New Bedford, who gave the name of the captain of the wrecked vessel, and said he was sure they were true.

A fact of this kind fell once under my own observation. One night, our dog Caesar made a barking at the door, till, at last, he brought some one out. The dog then ran towards the road, and when he found he was not followed, came back and barked, and then ran to the road and back again, and so on till we understood he wanted to be followed, and some one went with him.

Caesar immediately led the way to a ditch over which there was a bridge without any guard. There a horse and wagon had been upset. The wagon had fallen upon the driver in such a way that he could not move. The men

came immediately to the aid of the poor man, took him out, put him in his wagon and new harnessed his horse, and set him off comfortably on his way again. The dog sat by and saw it all. Who shall say how much of the compassionate love of the good Samaritan was in his canine heart? Who shall exactly measure and justly estimate the joy of the other faithful, intelligent animal who saved the crew of the wrecked vessel?

One more story of a dog I remember which is too good to be forgotten; as it shows, not only the sagacity, but the love and self−denial of one of these faithful creatures.

A shepherd, whose flocks were in the high pastures on the Grampian Hills, took with him one day his little boy who was about three years of age. They had gone some distance, when he found it necessary, for some reason or other, to ascend the summit of one of the hills. He thought it would be too fatiguing for the child to go up; so he left him below with the dog, telling the little fellow to stay there till he returned, and charging the good and faithful dog to watch over the boy.

Scarcely had the shepherd reached the summit, before there came up one of those very thick fogs which are common among these mountains. These heavy mists often come up so suddenly and so thick that it is like a dark night—you can see absolutely nothing.

The unhappy father hurried down the mountain to his little boy; but, from fright and from the utter darkness, lost the way.

The poor shepherd for many hours sought his child among the treacherous swamps, the roaring cataracts and the steep precipices.

No little boy, no faithful dog could he see or hear. At length, night came on, and the wretched father had to return to his cottage, and to the mother of his child, and say the sad words, "He is lost. My faithful dog is gone too, or he might help me find the boy."

That was a sad night for the poor cottagers. At break of day, the shepherd, with his wife and his neighbors, set out to look for the child. They searched all day long, in every place where it seemed possible that lie could be, but all in vain. No little boy could they find. The night came on, and again the poor shepherd and his wife came home without their child.

On their return home, they found that the dog had been there; and, on receiving a piece of oatmeal cake, had instantly gone off with it. The next day and the day after, the shepherd renewed the search for his child. On each day when they returned, they heard that the dog had been to the house, taken his piece of cake, and immediately disappeared. The shepherd determined to stay at home the next day and watch his dog. He had a hope in his heart that the dog would lead him to his child.

The dog came the next day, at the same hour, took his piece of cake, and ran off. The shepherd followed him. He led the way to a cataract at some distance from the place where the father had left the child.

The bank of the cataract was steep and high, and the abyss down which the water rushed was terrific. Down the rugged and almost perpendicular descent, the dog, without any hesitation, began to make his way. At last, he disappeared into a cave, the mouth of which was almost on a level with the cataract.

The shepherd, with great difficulty, followed. What were his emotions, who can tell his joy, when he beheld his little boy eating, with much satisfaction, the piece of cake which the faithful animal had just brought? The dog stood by, eying his young charge with the utmost complacence.

The child had doubtless wandered from the place where he was left by his father; had fallen over the precipice; had been caught by the bushes near the cave, and scrambled into it. The dog had either followed or found him by the scent, and had since prevented him from starving by giving to him every day his own food.

The faithful, loving creature had never left the child day or night, except to get the piece of oaten cake; and then the dog went at full speed, neither stopping by the way, or apparently reserving any of the cake for himself.

Shall we not, all of us, learn love, fidelity and self−forgetfulness from such an affectionate and faithful creature?

"I don't believe I could be as good as that dog," said Frank.

"I know I could not," said Harry. "How the shepherd and his wife must have loved him! If I had been in their place, I should have treated him like the little boy's brother, and kept him always in the parlor."

"I dare say they did," said Mrs. Chilton.

There is an anecdote I have lately read, which shows that dogs have compassion for other dogs, and will help a fellow in distress.

When the ice suddenly melted on a river in Germany, a little dog was seen on a small piece of ice in the middle of the river. It was not known how he got into that situation. He set up the most piteous cries. A large dog who saw him dashed into the river, soon reached the poor spaniel, seized him by the neck, and brought him safe to shore, amidst the shouts and praises of the spectators.

Animals, when treated kindly, attach themselves to human beings. Birds build their nests near the habitations of men. In the wild, distant woods all is still. One hears no song of birds. In England, where the robin is courted and made much of, he comes into the house and takes his food from the table.

In many parts of Europe storks build their nests on the roofs. Swallows, martins, sparrows and wrens often make their nests under our roofs. They confide in us, and trust in our friendship and care. Let us never, my boys, betray or abuse their confidence.

There is a kind of birds who travel all over the United States. They go from South to North, from North to South. They have not, like the martins, the bob−o'−links, and some others, regular times for going and coming; but travel more to obtain food than to escape the winter, and, when once settled in a place with enough suitable food and water, remain there till it is exhausted, and then take flight to some other place.

"Are you telling us a made−up story, Mother?" said Harry.

"No, Harry, it is really and truly the wild pigeon of America of which I am speaking. Indeed, if it were not for their great power of flight, they must, many of them, starve to death. A proof of their swiftness is the fact that a pigeon has been killed in the neighborhood of New York, with rice in his crop that he must have swallowed in the fields of Georgia or Carolina."

"How could any one know that?" asked Harry.

"By remembering the fact that in one of those states is the nearest spot at which the bird could have found rice growing. It is a well ascertained fact that their power of digestion is so great, that their food is in the course of twelve hours so entirely changed, that one cannot know what it was. Now the distance of the rice fields from New York—that is, the number of miles travelled in twelve hours—is such that the pigeon must have flown at the rate of about a mile in a minute; so that if he pleased he might go to England in two days; but, Frank, if you will give me that pamphlet that lies on the table, I will read the account of the wild pigeon of America from the book itself."

"It was written by the celebrated Audubon, who resided a great many years in America, and who most faithfully watched the birds he described."

After giving an account of the speed of the pigeon, he goes on to say, "This great power of flight is seconded by as great a power of vision, which enables them, as they travel at that great rate, to view objects below, and so discover their food with facility. This I have proved to be the case by observing the pigeons, as they were passing over a barren part of the country, keep high in the air, and present such an extensive front as to enable them to observe hundreds of acres at once."

"If, on the contrary, the land is richly covered with food, or the trees with mast, (the fruit of the oak and beech trees,) the birds fly low, in order to discover the portion of woods most plentifully supplied, and there they alight. The form of body of these swift travellers is an elongated (lengthened) oval steered by a long, well−plumed tail,"—just as you know, Harry, you steer your boat by the rudder in the great tub of water; "they are furnished with extremely well set muscular wings. If a single bird is seen gliding through the woods and close by, it passes apparently like a thought, and the eye, on trying to see it again, searches in vain—the bird is gone."

The multitudes of pigeons in our woods are astonishing; and, indeed, after having for years viewed them so often, under so many circumstances, and I may add in many different climates, I even now feel inclined to pause and assure myself that what I am going to relate is fact.

In the autumn of 1813, I left my house in Henderson, on the banks of the Ohio, on my way to Louisville. Having met the pigeons flying from north−east to south−west in the barrens or natural wastes, a few miles beyond Hardensburgh, in greater apparent numbers than I had ever seen them before, I felt an inclination to count the flocks that would pass within the reach of my eye in one hour. I dismounted, and, seating myself on a little eminence, took my pencil to mark down what I saw going by and over me; and I made a dot for every flock which passed. Finding, however, that this was next to impossible, and feeling unable to record the flocks as they multiplied constantly, I arose, and counting the dots already put down, discovered that one hundred and sixty−three had been made in twenty−one minutes.

I travelled on, and still met more flocks the farther I went. The air was literally filled with pigeons. The light of noonday became dim as during an eclipse. The continued buzz of wings over me had a tendency to incline my senses to repose.

Whilst waiting for my dinner at Young's Inn, at the confluence of Salt River with the Ohio, I saw, at my leisure, immense legions still going by, with a front reaching far beyond the Ohio on the west, and the beech wood forest directly on the east of me. Yet not a single bird would alight, for not a nut or acorn was that year to be seen in the neighborhood.

The pigeons flew so high that different trials to reach them with a capital rifle proved ineffectual, and not even the report disturbed them in the least. A black hawk now appeared in their rear. At once like a torrent, and with a thunder−like noise, they formed themselves into almost a solid, compact mass, all pressing towards the centre.

In such a solid body, they zigzagged to escape the murderous falcon, now down close over the earth sweeping with inconceivable velocity, then ascending perpendicularly like a vast monument, and, when high up, wheeling and twisting within their continuous lines, resembling the coils of a gigantic serpent.

Before sunset, I reached Louisville, fifty−five miles distant from Hardensburgh. The pigeons were still passing, and continued for three days. The banks of the river were crowded with men and children, for here the pigeons flew rather low passing the Ohio.

The whole atmosphere, during the time, was full of the smell belonging to the pigeon species. It is extremely curious to see flocks after flocks follow exactly the same evolutions when they arrive at the same place. If a hawk, for instance, has chanced to charge a portion of the army at a certain spot, no matter what the zigzags, curved lines, or undulations might have been during the affray, all the following birds keep the same track; so that if a traveller happens to see one of these attacks, and feels a wish to have it repeated, he may do so by waiting a short time.

It may not perhaps be out of place to attempt an estimate of the number of pigeons contained in one flock, and of the quantity of food they daily consume.

We shall take, for example, a column, one mile in breadth, which is far below the average size, and suppose the birds to pass over us, without interruption, for three hours, at the rate we have mentioned, of one mile in a minute. This will give us a line one hundred and eighty miles long by one broad, and covering one hundred and eighty square miles. Now, allowing two pigeons to the square yard, we have one billion, one hundred and fifteen million, one hundred and thirty−six thousand pigeons in one flock. As every pigeon consumes fully half a pint of food a day, the quantity required to feed such a flock for one day must be eight million, seven hundred and twelve thousand bushels.

As soon as these birds discover a sufficiency of food to entice them to alight, they fly round in circles, reviewing the country below, and, at this time, exhibit all the beauty of their plumage. Now they display a large glistening sheet of bright azure, by exposing their back to view. Suddenly turning, they exhibit a mass of rich, deep purple.

Now they pass lower over the forest and are lost among the foliage, for a moment, but reappear as suddenly above. Now they alight, and then, as if affrighted, the whole again take to wing with a roar equal to loud thunder, and wander swiftly through the forest as if to see if danger is near.

Hunger, however, soon brings them all to the ground, and then they are seen industriously throwing up the fallen leaves to seek for every beech nut or acorn. The last ranks continually pass over and alight in front, in such quick succession that the whole still has the appearance of being on the wing. The quantity of ground thus harvested (moissonee) is astonishing, and so clean is the work that no gleaners think it worth while to follow where the pigeons have been.

During the middle of the day, after the repast is finished, the whole settle on the trees to enjoy rest, and digest the food; but, as the sun sinks, the army departs in a body for the roosting place, not unfrequently hundreds of miles off. This has been ascertained by persons keeping account of the arrival at, and departure from the curious roosting places, to which I must now conduct the reader.

To one of these general nightly rendezvous, not far from the banks of the Green River, in Kentucky, I paid repeated visits. The place chosen was in a portion of the forest where the trees were of great height with little under−wood. I rode over the ground lengthwise upwards of forty miles, and crossed it in different parts, ascertaining its average width to be a little more than three miles.

My first view of this spot was about a fortnight after the birds had chosen it. I arrived there nearly two hours before sunset. Few pigeons were then to be seen, but a great number of persons with horses and wagons, guns and ammunition, had already established different camps on the borders.

Many trees two feet in diameter I observed were broken at no great distance from the ground, and the branches of many of the largest and tallest so much so that the desolation already exhibited equalled that of a furious tornado. The sun was lost to our view, yet not a pigeon had arrived. All on a sudden, I heard a general cry of, "Here they come!"

The noise which they made, though distant, reminded me of a hard gale at sea passing through the rigging of a close−reefed vessel. As the birds arrived and passed over me, I felt a current of air that surprised me. The stream of birds still kept increasing. Fires were lighted, and many people had torches, and a most magnificent, as well as wonderful and terrifying sight was before me.

The pigeons, coming in by millions, alighted every where, one on the top of another, until masses of them, resembling hanging swarms of bees as large as hogsheads were formed on every tree. These heavy clusters were seen to give way as the supporting branches, breaking down with a crash, came to the ground, killing hundreds of birds beneath, forcing down other equally large and heavy groups, and rendering the whole a scene of uproar and distressing confusion.

I found it quite useless to speak, or even to shout to those persons nearest me. Even the reports of the guns were seldom heard, and I knew only of their going off by seeing their owners reload them. It was past midnight before I perceived a decrease in the numbers arriving.

The uproar continued, however, the whole night; and, as I was anxious to know to what distance the sound reached, I sent off a man, who told me afterwards, that at three miles he heard the sound distinctly. Towards the approach of day, the noise rather subsided; but long ere objects were at all distinguishable, the pigeons began to move off in a direction quite different from that from which they had arrived the day before.

The place they choose for building their nests, is very unlike the scene of confusion the roosting place presents. There you see the tenderest affection. The birds find some forest where the trees are very high and large, and at a convenient distance from the water. To this place myriads of pigeons fly. There, in harmony and love, they build their nests with parental care. Fifty or a hundred nests, made of a few dried sticks, crossed in different ways, and supported by suitable forks in the branches, may be seen on the same tree. The two birds take turns to sit on the eggs; but the mother sits the longest. The male feeds her from his bill with the greatest tenderness, takes care of her, and does every thing he can to please her.

Now it is bed−time, so good night!"