

and the quiet which reigned during that time was most remarkable.

We had also a cage full of love-birds, a sort of parroquet which comes from Carthage in South America; but though these pretty little things were very affectionate to each other and to us, I must confess they were rather stupid pets. They sat close together in pairs all day long, occasionally uttering a little chirrup and caressing each other with their tiny bills; but they either had very deli-

cate constitutions or else they were very greedy, for they all died one after another from fits caused by over-eating themselves and swallowing their food in a hurry. One love-bird of a stronger digestion than the rest survived some months, but he also had a daily fit in the middle of his dinner. I was so accustomed at last to this performance, that it was quite a surprise to me one day to observe him lying by the side of his little saucer longer than usual, and to find on a



closer examination that he had shared the fate of his brothers and sisters.

Jessie's especial favourites among our birds were her own white doves, and certainly they were lovely creatures, so soft and snowy; perfectly tame, and never so happy as when nestling close to their beloved little mistress. I have often thought since what a pretty picture might have been made of Jessie, in her white dress, seated on the marble step of the verandah, its arch festooned with creepers

forming a frame for her figure, her dark hair twisted into a thick coronet round her head, with generally a wild flower stuck into it, her guitar with its broad ribband lying on her knee, and these white doves on her shoulder, listening apparently with great attention to her sweet voice *crooning* some quaint old ballad for the delight of the younger children who were seated on the grass at her feet. These doves met, however, with a most tragical fate, and I must tell you all about it.