

"Kind children," thought the swallow, as she pecked up the crumbs and flew with them to her nest among the vine-leaves.

"Sweet birdie," said the children. "Mamma, is it not tame? Do you think it knows us and loves us that we give it crumbs?"

After a while the swallow bethought her to consult the bees anent the blindness of her young one. "They are wise and learned," she said, "and travel a great deal, so they must acquire much knowledge. Stay quiet, my child, I shall return soon," and she winged her way to the garden where stood a large wicker hive.

"Gentle bees," she said sweetly, tapping with her beak at the hive, "I crave to speak with one of you."

"What is it?" demanded a drone, issuing forth; "why do you disturb us? We are busy, and have no time to talk to such as you."

The swallow rapidly told her misery.

"Oh, indeed," said the bee; "and you come to us for help. In sooth, that is cool of you. What! do you fancy we are likely to care for the welfare of your child when you and yours have devoured so many of our brethren and friends? Adieu, and consult some one of your own kind. The eagle is your king; go to him," and saying that, the bee vanished.

"Go to the eagle, he is your king," repeated the swallow sadly. "Nay, I cannot do that; I cannot leave my child so long alone. Then, too, I fear him, he is so large and strong; and very fierce, they tell me. He might kill me if I went, and then what would become of my child?" The swallow began to weep, but her weeping only sounded to the children like a repeated chirp; they fancied she was hungry, and fetched her crumbs.

"I will go and ask the ants," thought the swallow; "they travel much also, and perhaps they are not quite so stuck-up as those bees. I wonder if the little sparrow whom I found in my nest had a mother, and if she grieved at his long absence. I wish I had not murdered him."

It was curious how much that fancy had occupied her lately, and would not quit her head. She was so unhappy herself now, forsaken of her mate, alone with a blind child, that her heart was full of sympathy for others. Formerly she had been too glad to feel for others' grief.

Her mission to the ants was no more successful than that to the bees. They also taunted her with the injuries her fellows had done them. "Ask of your friends," they said, and returned to their hillock.

Sad and dejected, the swallow once more

wended her way to her nest. The little one missed all the merry chatter and kind words he had been used to that day.

"What if I apply to the owl!" suddenly thought the swallow. "She always looks so wise and learned, she will surely know. Only I am afraid she is too wise, and will not condescend to me: still I will try."

"Mistress Owl," asked the anxious mother, "I have come to you for advice; pray give it me. I know it must be an easy matter to you with your vast learning." And she told her tale.

"Can you find your way here again at eve?" sleepily answered the owl. "I can help you, but I want to rest now. Good-night," and she had dropped her head on her breast again and closed her tiny eyes.

Here was hope at least, and the swallow returned more cheerfully to her nest, quitting it again at dusk in mortal dread lest that horrid cat should spy her in the dark when she was less able to elude his grasp. However, she reached the owl's roost in safety, and found her friend just awakening.

"Good evening!" she said. "You come for my advice. I assure you I feel sincerely flattered. But you do right to apply to me; I know much, and will help you. I am always glad to help, but I am undervalued—undervalued. Good people always are; do you not think so, Mistress Swallow?"

"Perhaps so," said the swallow. She was impatient at the owl's slowness, and wished she would come to the point. But she knew from experience that it was not wise to hurry her.

"Yes, always undervalued, my dear friend. To speak of our business, however, for no doubt you are very sleepy and want to go home. You swallows do sleep at such ridiculous hours. The best hunting-time, my dear friend, believe me, the best hunting time; it is a pity you should lose it by idle slumber."

"Not for us," ventured the swallow.

"Ah, well, perhaps not. You are inferior animals. But, as I said, to come to the point. Your little one is blind; you wish a remedy? Well, listen to me. You know the old garden-wall that divides the orchard from the flower-garden?"

"I do."

"Go there at break of day to-morrow, and you will find growing in a large clump a plant mortals call the larger celandine. You will know it by its flowers. They have four petals of a yellow colour, and large pods that hold their seeds. The leaves are large, thin, divided into three, notched at the edges, of a bluish green. Can you remember all