

its purpose it was strained, and then was ready for use again. Kitchen paper was always at hand, and whatever had been fried was laid on this before it was dished, in order to free it from grease. The fact is, lard is about the most greasy thing that can be taken for frying, and it should never be used where it can possibly be helped. Yet, as a matter of fact, in the majority of kitchens it is more used than anything, and bought at 9d. or 10d. per pound, whilst the dripping, that would be so excellent for the purpose, is sold by the cook for 4d. or 6d. per pound. When mistresses understand cookery for themselves their eyes will be opened to one or two of these facts, and then the abuse of "perquisites" will cease.

At last my course was completed, and I left the school. I had enjoyed it very much, and I think pro-

fit by it also; and of course what was left to me now was to practise what I had learnt, and so make it thoroughly my own.

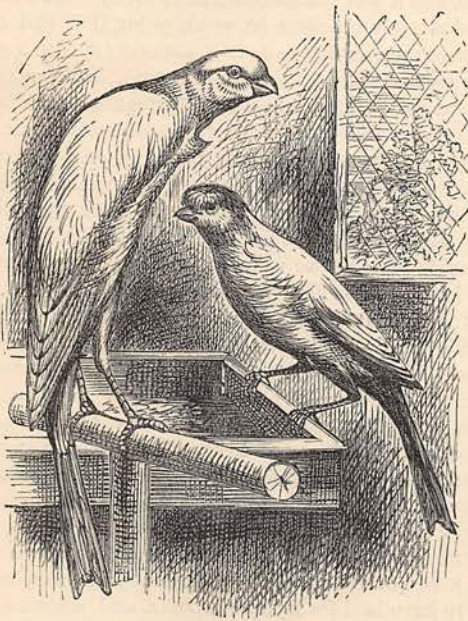
"Well," said my husband, "what do you think—has it been worth while?"

"Yes, on the whole, I think it has. I only wish I had gone many years earlier. But there is something that would be worth while, and that would be for every girl to go through the course as soon as she leaves school. Whatever position she is to occupy, it certainly cannot hurt her to know how to cook properly, and it may prove of such very great service, both to herself and to others. I should like all our girls to go."

"Well, we must think about it," said my husband; "there is time enough yet."



OUR AVIARY; OR, HOW WE KEPT CANARIES.



WE have certainly always been a wonderful family for pets. When we were quite little, in the old merry days, before our money made to itself wings and flew away, we kept tame pheasants, and bantams, and Muscovy ducks, and every variety of fowl under the sun. Father had his horses and hounds, and mother her white Arab, and many a joyous pilgrimage we children made with them after breakfast to the stables and kennels. And when the evil days came, and father could not keep even his favourite Black Bess, I think that it went to his

heart more than all the rest of the losses; and on the morning before the sale, when mother went round to say good-bye to the creatures, to give Araby her last bit of sugar and Bess the last apple, and the pretty Alderneys lowed and came crowding up to the paddock gate as she passed, it broke her down more than all the partings and packings of the previous days.

We children thought it would be rather fun living in a small house, and were overjoyed at the idea of being near a large town, and plunging into the world of school instead of having tutors and governesses at home. At this distance of time, I really believe that the change was the making of us, although I did not at the moment look so far ahead as to realise all its importance. We were sorry, however, to lose our kind, gentle Miss Morrison, who had taught us whatever we knew with infinite patience and amid endless interruptions; but as mother assured her that she would always be able to find room for her in her holidays, it was anything but a final parting.

A few of our best-beloved pets went with us. Tom took his own particular Skye terrier, I had a couple of my favourite canaries out of the aviary, and Jennie saw her dear white Persian cat consigned to a basket, with many promises that she would take him out and nurse him in the train, which he appeared to understand and rely on. Mother said baby was quite enough for her, and father shut us into the carriage that was to take us to the station, with a wistful look that said how much rather he would come with us than stay behind for even the few days that were necessary.

We all begged him to settle his business and follow his *impedimenta* as soon as possible, and mother assured us that we should find our time well occupied till

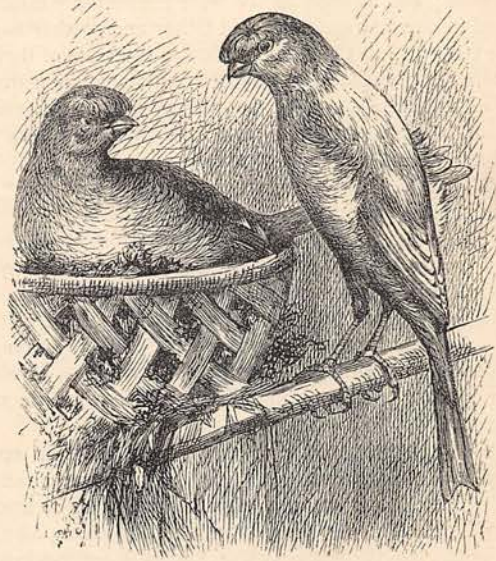
he came, as she should expect us to fetch and carry all sorts of things for her, as well as minding baby while nurse unpacked and arranged.

So we drove down the avenue, looked our last at the ivy-covered gables of the old hall where we were born, and were busy chattering about our new prospects before mother had wiped away the tears that would come as she quitted the only home her happy married life had ever known, and where she had hoped to end her days in peace and honour.

However, things might have been worse, for it is no tale of poverty I have to tell. We merely exchanged affluence for a modest competence, and a picturesque rambling old house on the banks of the Wye for a comfortable villa near Bristol, where we had a nice though not a very large garden, and were as healthy and blithe as could be wished. The house, which was called Glanville, was in reality part of a much larger structure which had fallen into decay and been pulled down, while the best rooms were left and a few modern conveniences added. Tradition said Prince Rupert had been quartered there during the siege of Bristol; and from a paved terrace we could look down upon the city, and soon learned to distinguish the church towers, and know each of them by name. Part of our garden was high ground, but a portion of it consisted of an old stone quarry full of early-flowering plants, where spring was always seen and felt a month or six weeks before there was any sign of it elsewhere, and this became in due time the abode of many of our family favourites.

Within a stone's-throw of our gate was the wide expanse of Durdham Down, so that we had plenty of fresh air and room to exercise both our limbs and lungs

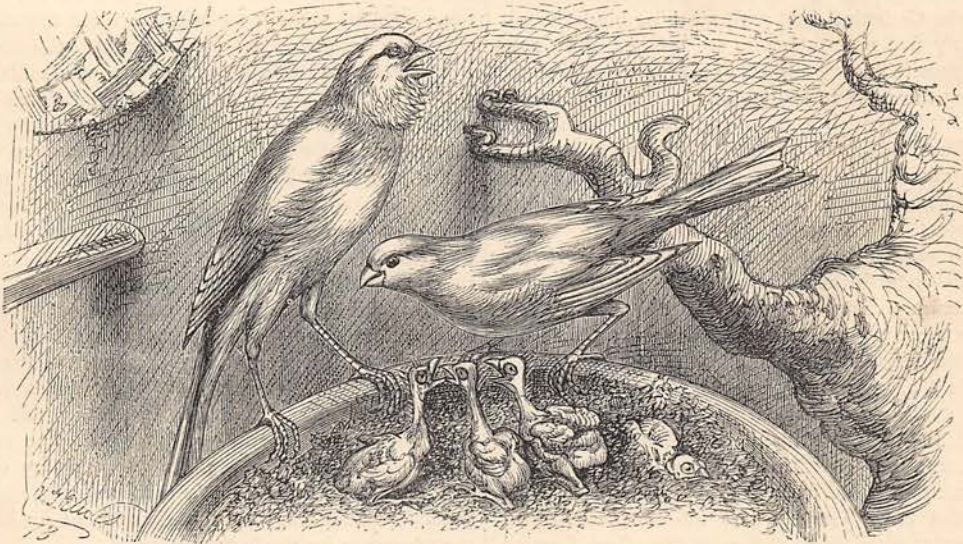
I went to a ladies' college at Redland considerably nearer home, and father occupied himself after a time in superintending the laying out of two or three acres of land left him some time before by a distant relative



"MRS. CHIP WAS A CAPITAL MOTHER" (p. 91).

and which, though formerly considered almost valueless, now bade fair to be worth something for building purposes, and which he proposed calling after his own name.

This sketch of our family affairs is all that I need give, as my main object is to relate the history of the



"SHE AND HER HUSBAND FED THE FAMILY" (p. 91).

as much as we pleased. It was arranged that Tom should go to the great school then recently established at Clifton, and looked upon in those early days as a sort of offshoot of the one at Cheltenham; Jennie and

birds and beasts we brought with us to Glanville, as well as of those who succeeded them from time to time, and held very warm places in our affections, besides giving us a good deal of occupation, and sometimes

bringing in what children so highly prize—a little extra pocket-money.

My two canaries, Pip and Chip, had not enough room in the small cage in which they had travelled to Redland; and as soon as we were comfortably established in our new quarters, and father and mother had time to devote to the small cares and interests of their children, I broached the subject of buying a larger one out of the little store in my own private purse, and coaxed father to take me down into the city (which I had not yet visited) for that purpose.

"If you buy a breeding-cage, Emmie," said he, "I must indulge you with a couple more birds."

"Two are as many as I shall have time to attend to," I answered, "and besides, you know mother says we must not be extravagant."

He laughed at my precocious economy, and said, "My dear little woman, if you are to have any young ones strong, healthy, and flourishing, you must divide your present pair and mate them with a couple of strangers."

So on the first fine afternoon we set forth on our journey, which to Jennie and me had all the charm and excitement of novelty. An omnibus took us from the "Black Boy," at the bottom of our garden, along the whole length of the White Ladies Road, and put us down at the top of Park Street, which we descended leisurely, looking in at the windows of the gay shops, and hearing from our father how they were all private houses when he was a boy. On one side he showed us where Mrs. Hannah More of pious memory once lived, on the other where Mrs. Southey and Mrs. Coleridge gained an honest living by their own exertion before their marriage to the two poets. Then we could not be expected to go through College Green without a peep at the Cathedral, and with all these hindrances it was nearly five o'clock before we crossed the draw-bridge opposite St. Augustine's Parade, and wended our way along the quay to a shop well stocked with every kind of birds, British and foreign, to say nothing of mice, white and black, rabbits, guinea-pigs, puppies, a single melancholy-looking mongoose, half a dozen chattering monkeys, two or three hedgehogs, and sundry tortoises.

First of all our father chose the birds, showing us how to distinguish the different varieties. We looked at the common English canaries, and thought them rather homely in appearance; and were then shown some little delicate German ones with red eyes, but were told that their constitutions were anything but strong; and consequently went on to a collection of beautiful Belgians. A cock of the latter breed was selected, and a splendid fellow he was, measuring no less than eight inches from the tip of the beak to the end of the tail. The feathers on one side of his pretty breast overlapped those on the other, forming quite a shirt-frill. He cost ten-and-sixpence, which seemed to us girls a great deal of money, and when father expressed his intention of buying three hens we thought he was going in for birds wholesale. One of them was five shillings, and we should have hardly taken her for a canary at all, for she was of a bright

grass or parrot green, with a dark beak, legs and claws, a little black in her tail and wing feathers, and yellow on the underneath parts of her body. The dealer told us that she and her companions had just been brought by a sailor direct from Teneriffe, and were some of the original wild native canaries. The other two were much cheaper, only half-a-crown a-piece, one being a slim French bird, which we were assured was slender enough to go through a ring, and the other a Jonque or bright yellow, without a single blemish about her.

We had plenty to tell when we got home that evening, and mother said our tongues went a great deal more than nineteen to the dozen till bed-time. Tom had not been idle in our absence, nor yet forgetful of our probable wants, for he had gone with a trowel to the foot of the hill below our house, and scooped up a quantity of the coarse drift-sand that had been washed out of the roads by heavy rains, and put it into the oven to dry. He had also visited the bricklayers, and begged a little old mortar, with which he had mixed some salt, and then made it up into small lumps about the size of a walnut.

It was now the end of March, and though some of our acquaintances told us we were very late with our birds, father said it was all in good time, as the young broods frequently died if hatched too early in the spring.

When the cages came home, the cock was in one by himself, and the three hens in the other; the two birds I already had, which were pretty creatures, with saucy little tufts on their heads, were separated, the hen being placed with the other three, and the cock—Pip as we called him—left alone in his glory. The cages were hung well in sight of each other in a sunny lean-to conservatory; and in about a week, as the inhabitants seemed anxious to improve their acquaintance with one another, Mr. Pip was put with the little French hen and the yellow Jonque, while Mrs. Chip was introduced to the company of the Belgian canary and the grass-green hen. We made some nets to hold the materials for their nests, which consisted of fine elm-root fibres broken small, the white reindeer moss (*Cenomyce rangiferina*), which grows on the trunks of trees, common moss carefully dried, and a little rabbit's-down for lining. Father told us to ask the servants for the ends of cotton wicks cut off dip candles, and told us that the little tallow to be found on them would prove almost a specific against the red mites which plague both young and old canaries so terribly. To guard against these pests he had all the crevices anointed with turpentine and grease, and told us to supply our birds with the reindeer moss, which contains a white powder very destructive to such insects. Tom's drift-sand was spread on the floor of the cages, and one or two of his lumps of mortar put in for the hens to peck at.

When they began to build their nests, which they did in a very few days, we got cook to boil an egg quite hard every other morning, and chopped half of it up very fine each day, shell and all, mixing it with a little crumbled bread, a tea-spoonful of moist sugar, and a small quantity of crushed rape or maw seed.

This mixture of soft food was divided into two portions, placed in the pan with which each cage was provided, and given fresh every day until the last young ones of the season could shift for themselves. The grass-green hen laid three eggs, the Jonque four, Mrs. Chip five, and Frenchy, as we called her, sat diligently on her nest, but looked very ruffly and puffed out, could not keep her poor little eyes open, and finally fluttered to the bottom of the cage, where we thought she was going to die. Father said he had very little hope of her recovery, but he took her out, administered a small dose of castor-oil with a quill, wrapped her in a bit of new flannel, and put her in the little old cage before the fire. All the evening she was motionless, though we could see a faint panting and heaving of her breast when we looked at her, and she was left in her warm place all night. In the morning, however, the housemaid found her hopping about and chirping merrily; and when father put his hand in and took hold of the piece of flannel, an egg rolled out of it, which he put into her nest and then restored her to her home. She laid three more, and sat upon them, but Pip did not feed her as diligently as he did his other wife, and one day there was an appearance about her beak that made us watch for an opportunity when she left her nest for a minute, to examine the contents, and there we found an empty broken shell, which told only too plainly that the wicked little thing had been devouring her own unhatched offspring. We immediately took away her nest, and left her to build another, which she set about at once; but when her eggs were laid she recurred to her naughty propensities, and was therefore separated from her spouse and hung in the window in a cage by herself. The Jonque hatched four healthy little squabs, and then we supplied her with some seedy chickweed, groundsel, or a dandelion-head every day, with which she and her husband fed the family, in addition to the soft food from the pan. Mrs. Chip and the grass-green lady were capital mothers, and brought off their eight nestlings without any mishaps. All three of the latter's children were prettily marked, when they got their feathers, with a little ruff or cape of greenish-grey ones round their necks, and the same in their tails and wings; while Chip's were pure yellow, like their father, but inheriting from her the tufts on their dainty heads, which made them the admiration of all beholders. When the young birds were about a fortnight old, however, these exemplary parents not only relaxed their attentions, but began to peck at the juveniles. So, as they were all very tame, father told us to offer them some bread and egg on a quill, which they came and ate readily; and a week later he brought us home another cage, into which he removed all the new generation, telling us to supply them with the same mixture of food, with occasionally a little rape seed scalded and bruised, and when they had attained the age of one month, some crushed canary seed in a separate vessel.

We then removed every vestige of the old nests from the boxes, filled the nets with a fresh stock of

materials, and in a few weeks had the satisfaction of seeing all our birds bringing up their second broods, which were quite as handsome as the first. Frenchy was taken to the dealer on the quay, with an account of her bad behaviour, and he very kindly gave us in exchange for her what he called a "mealy" hen, which, though not so elegantly slim, he assured us we should find to be stronger and less likely to be addicted to bad habits. So Pip was once more provided with a second wife, with whom he lived happily all the rest of the season, doing his duty to her and her children as a good husband and father ought.

Once or twice our young birds died soon after beginning to feed themselves, but it was from giving them too much crushed rape and hemp seed, and we soon learned to steer clear of that error. Maw seed we found rather expensive, and a German friend gave us some "Gold of Pleasure" seed (*Myagrurn sativum*), which proved to be, in the long run, cheaper and more suitable. Of course we could not keep all the members of our numerous family, but, after selecting a beautiful cock, and giving it in a smart cage to mother on her birthday, and sending another to our old governess, we kept a few of the best songsters which had sufficient individuality to enable us to remember which broods they belonged to, and then asked our friend at the shop on the quay to relieve us of the rest. There were two dozen, and he bought them indiscriminately at two shillings a head, telling us he should be happy to make a similar bargain with us another year.

Before the next spring arrived, father wired off a portion of the conservatory so as to make us a regular aviary, and brought us a few pretty birds when he came home one day from London, so as to secure a proper infusion of fresh blood among the old stock. Every nook and cranny in floor and walls was filled up with cement to keep out the mice, which not only devour the food, but have a *penchant* for small eggs, and often frighten young birds to death, if they do not actually kill them. A few boughs were nailed up as the most natural kind of perches, and some long thin pieces of wood fastened against the wall in tiers and at a distance of about an inch from it. Behind these were stuck some cedar branches, which our kind father had considerable difficulty in procuring, and they formed quite a thick bush or hedge for the canaries to build in. In later seasons we used furze or gorse for this purpose, but, being so prickly, it is not pleasant to handle, and besides has no aromatic qualities. Pine boughs, if cut in February, do not shed their leaves, and are the very best substitute for cedar, but even these are not always obtainable. How our little favourites prospered in their new abode, what others we added to them, and with what manner of success and profit, I must tell you another time; for, with the acquisition of roomier quarters, we entered on quite a new phase of bird-keeping, and became pòted among our neighbours for the hardihood of our experiments, and the novelty of their results.

ELIZA CLARKE.