

THE STORK AND THE WIDOW'S CAPTIVE SON.

A widow and her only son, Konrad, lived in a little village in Norway. Each summer storks nested on a little building near that in which the mother and son had their home. The two were kindly disposed to the birds; fed them and played with them. When Konrad whistled, a stork came and ate food from the boy's hand.

Each spring the mother and son awaited with longing the return of the storks, and the birds seemed glad when they again saw Konrad and his mother. They manifested this by chattering with their beaks and flapping their wings—as the dog does by wagging his tail and licking the hand of his master.

When Konrad grew into manhood he became a sailor, and went out on ships that went to far-away ports. He was anxious to earn much money, that he might be able to support his

mother. He was so busy that he could not do heavy work, as she had grown quite old. The boy saved his wages, and as soon as he had a fair sum he sent it home, as it was a great joy to him to feel that he could ease her labors. The time came when Konrad's ship visited a strange land, and on the way it was overtaken and captured by sea robbers. These men not only took the ship but carried the ship's officers and crew into the far east and sold them as slaves. Konrad could send neither money nor anything else back to his mother.

A long time passed and the sorrowing mother had no word from her son. She feared that he had been lost at sea, and she sorrowed for him as for the dead and the people of the village expressed their sympathy with the poor widow. Each year the stork returned with the returning spring-time, and when she looked at the birds, tears filled her eyes as she remembered how much her Konrad had liked them and how great was the pleasure he had found in their presence.

As Konrad one day was toiling away at a piece of heavy work given him as a task, a stork alighted near him and began to approach. At once the tired toiler thought of his mother and his home. Before he had time to think, he whistled, as was his habit in other days to call the bird. To his great joy, in response to the whistle the stork walked up to him and signified that he wanted something from the hand. Konrad shed tears of joy and thanked God; his old friend had found him in the strange land that was to him a prison. The young white slave took of his own food and gave it to the most welcome visitor, and for some days the bird remained with its friend.

stork, and that very soon the heat of the country in which he toiled would drive the bird to the distant North. He was sorry to lose his company; but as he could not have it otherwise he thought to use the stork's flight at a venture to try to get news into the land into which it would go. He hunted up a piece of paper wrote on it where he was, how he had come there, and that he was held a slave. He wrapped the paper around the leg of the stork and fastened it well with a pack thread. The stork accepted it all patiently, as though he understood the man's design and was a willing agent to bear his message to other lands.

The days passed, and in the village of the North the children cried: "The storks are here! The storks are here!"

They also reached the village in which Konrad's mother lived, and as they are wont to do, the old storks returned to the old nest and the old home. The aged widow called them to her, and they received food from her hands. As they ate, she noticed a paper tied to the legs of one. She coaxed the bird to her, loosed the pack-thread, opened the paper, and to her inexpressible joy, learned that it bore news of her boy. She read it, then ran with it to her pastor.

The next Sunday the pastor read the letter in church, and all the people joined the widow in her rejoicing. They discussed Konrad's condition, and resolved that they must buy his release. Each contributed something, and put the matter in the pastor's hands for further action, beseeching him to act at once for the release of the poor slave. The pastor appealed directly to the king, telling him of the widow and the message

of the stork. The king was a ready listener and a willing helper, and at once opened communication with the officials of the land in which Konrad was held. Before the storks were ready for the next journey south, the late slave was a free man, at home with his mother and with the bird that, without knowing it, had played so important a part in his release.

When Konrad reached home bells were rung, the people gathered in the church and with full hearts thanked God that He had used the stork as a letter-carrier through whom the old mother received her son again almost as if from among the dead. That the village may not forget the story, the authorities have placed above the church door a stone on which there is chiseled out the image of a stork. Many of the farmers around the village also had like stones placed over the main entrance to their houses, that their children and their children's children may be reminded of the slave the stork, the message, and the wonder-work of God.—Lutheran Church Visitor.

THE SEED GRAFT.

When my congressman through interested kindness leads me to expect that I shall have a patch of juicy turnips I am quite as apt to find myself subsisting on a few meces of woody radishes. When the package says I shall have lettuce, bee's turn up. It's a dead-beat game. That kind-hearted statesman may have a good opinion of himself, but why should he place so small an estimate on my intelligence? Reading between the lines, he writes me as follows:

"I mail you today under separate cover 5 cents' worth of seeds. Please remit vote and a few howls on next

Cheap? Dirt's nowhere. Does he think a few seeds will gain or retain my allegiance? But, what can I do: If he doesn't send seeds he sends speeches, and I find myself between the devil and the turnip (?) patch. Hereafter I shall plant his speeches in my garden with the other dead-beats.

If our congressmen think we farmers are all "nutty," why don't they send us some kind of nuts instead of seeds—peanuts, for instance?

—Correspondent to the Record-Herald.

"I trust, Miss Tappit," said the kindly employer to his stenographer, "that you have something in reserve for a rainy day." "Yes, sir," answered the young woman: "I am going to marry a man named Mackintosh."

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