

THE
COCKCHAFERS.



LONDON:
RELIGIOUS TRACT SOCIETY,
Instituted 1799.

SOLD AT THE DEPOSITORY, 56, PATERNOSTER ROW,
AND BY THE BOOKSELLERS.

tippet. What a pity it is that pretty children should have ugly passions!

But what was it that made the children stop and look up so earnestly when they came under the oak-trees? The leaves were very green, and here and there a red oak-ball might be seen among them; but it was not the green leaf, nor the red oak-ball, that the children looked at: what, then, could it be? Do you know that these three children went into the lane to do a wicked deed? Yes! though they were young children, and looked so gentle, they had cruelty in their hearts, and they had all set out together to spin cockchafers.

After some time, John picked up a long stick out of the ditch, and began to beat the boughs of the oak-trees, and presently after several poor little cockchafers fell to the ground. I should think the poor insects were much hurt by the fall, but the children seemed to have no pity, for they scuffled one with another, trying who should first lay hold of a cockchafer. Ann took out her thread, William bent

the pins, and John said that he would have the biggest cockchafer.

Now though these children were in a lonely, shadowy lane, over which the oak-boughs hung, yet God saw them as plainly as if they had been out in the open field, for he sees everything, and everybody, and every sin that dwells in every heart.

The children were too busy to look about them, or perhaps they might have seen Mr. Barlow; for he was at the time walking in the field, not many yards from them.

Mr. Barlow was a man who feared God, and loved God's creatures. He had been taught by the Holy Spirit that Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners; and, knowing that mercy had been extended to himself, he felt a desire to be merciful to every creature. When Mr. Barlow saw what was going on, he walked to the gate of the field, and came into the lane towards the children, who, as soon as they saw him, hid the pins and the thread, and shut their hands, for every one had got a cockchafer. They were

sadly frightened, for those who act sinfully feel fear. Mr. Barlow came up to the children with a smile, for he loved young people.

“And so, my little dear,” said he, patting Ann on the head, “you are come out walking with your brothers, and they, I see, have got cheeks as red as a cherry. How good God is to us all to give us such fine weather, and so beautiful a sky, and such green trees! How sweetly the birds sing! and how busily the gnats dance about in the air! God has made them very happy, and it is a pleasure to see them so. Why, look here! here is a poor cockchafer lying on his back on the ground: let us examine him.”

Mr. Barlow picked up the cockchafer, and, placing him on the palm of his left hand, he sat himself down on a piece of timber.

“When we look on a cockchafer,” said he, “with attention, we must be struck with the care with which God has formed it, and well may we wonder how any one can be so cruel as to find pleasure in putting it to pain.”

Here little Ann's heart beat pit-a-pat, and John and William held down their heads.

“Look well, now, at the poor insect in my hand; see its fine brown-coloured wings, and the straight lines upon them; it has a lighter pair of wings beneath them, which we cannot now see. Observe its breast marked so prettily with black and white, its downy neck, and bright black eyes. Then look at its many-jointed legs, and its feet, furred over with small hairs. This little creature was made by the same great God who made you, and you have no more right to hurt it than a giant would have to seize and torture you.

“I know that there are children in the world who indulge in the cruel and sinful sport of spinning cockchafers; but how would they like to be run through the arm or leg with an iron spike? How would they like to be spun round on a spit, and be laughed at when they were screaming with agony?”

John and his brother and sister were very uneasy, for they felt the words of Mr. Barlow.

“You have,” said Mr. Barlow, “my little friends, sinned against God many a time, but he has never suffered any one to run an iron spike through you, while you writhed in agony, and called for help in vain! There are some children who do these cruel things, not because they love wickedness and cruelty, but because they are thoughtless. They have never had it explained to them how much pain they cause, or they forget that when the poor insect whirls its wings, and spins round and round, the great pain it feels makes it spin.

“Children who can spin cockchafers, when they know the pain which the poor insect endures, may be compared to Satan, who delights to inflict pain and torment! How little do they consider, who are tempted by him to be cruel, that they will be tormented by him without pity for ever, unless they repent and obtain God’s forgiveness through Christ, who died on the cross to save sinners.”

The children could hardly hold the insects any longer. The cockchafer in little Ann’s hand had poked its head be-

tween her fingers, and she was obliged to put her hand up under her tippet, lest it should be seen.

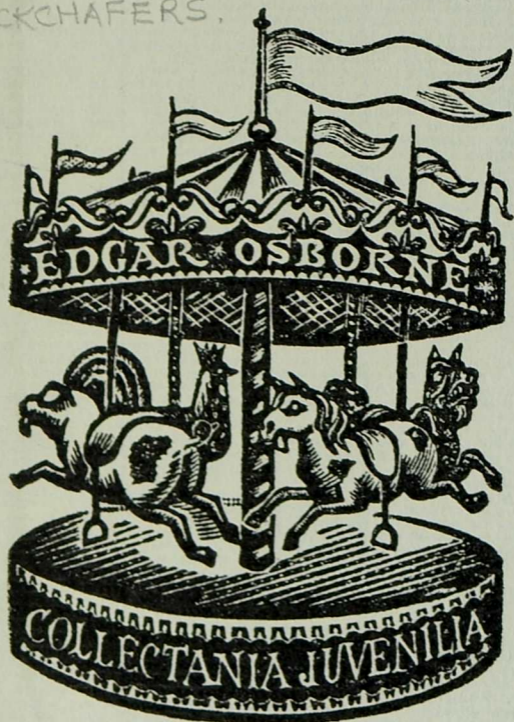
“I feel sure, my dear children, that *you* would not wish to be like the wicked one, as a tormentor of God’s creatures here in this life, nor to live, being tormented by him, in endless misery in the life to come; but if you would escape that dreadful doom, you must strive to become like our blessed Saviour Jesus Christ. He loves children who are *kind* and *tender-hearted*, but looks with displeasure on those who hurt and give pain to any of his creatures without cause. Go to him, then, dear children; ask him to forgive your past sins and cruelties, and to put his Spirit into your hearts, even the spirit of gentleness and love; then you will be kind, not only to each other, but also to the *smallest insect*, for the sake of that great and merciful God who made both it and you.”

Here Mr. Barlow placed the cock chafer which he had on his hand gently on the grass, and, wishing the children a pleasant walk, he passed on.

It was very well for little Ann that Mr. Barlow left them just then, for her cockchafer had pushed his way through her fingers, and was crawling along the back of her hand. The children, when left to themselves, looked at each other as though they had escaped some great danger, and felt ashamed and sorry on account of the evil and cruel deed they had intended to do. They threw away the crooked pins and pieces of thread; they placed the cockchafers gently and tenderly on an oak-leaf which lay on the ground, and walked away with their hearts much lighter than they were while Mr. Barlow talked with them. They found, indeed, more pleasure in that hour wherein they showed compassion and kindness to the cockchafers, than they could have obtained by the sinful sport of spinning them for a month; and I am happy to say, that from this time they were never guilty of treating anything cruelly.

SB dr.
COCKCHAFERS.

(TB)



37131 048 628 259



**JESUS ascends on high,
And sits upon his throne ;
Attending angels round him fly,
And all his greatness own.**

**Still for the young he prays,
And blesses them above ;
"Forbid them not," he kindly says,
And offers them his love.**

**His heart is still the same ;
To him may children fly ;
His gracious promise let them claim,
And on his word rely.**