

one bed and harvested one crop, he will discover that he is still only on the threshold of this branch of horticulture. Many of them are the fruit of subsequent experience, while much of all I ever learned is the result of careful study of as many authorities as I was able to consult. Study combined with practice and close observation, together with a passionate determination to learn, and hope ever stimulating to perseverance, has been with me the secret of success. I was now at the close of my first year's experiment. My whole acre was in the best condition. The plants set out the first year were certain to produce twice the former yield, such being the universal experience with the strawberry; while now, with double the extent of ground, and the first half-acre stocked with many times the number of

plants originally set, the promise was highly encouraging. I could think of no possible chance of disappointment but a pinching frost that might destroy the blossoms, or a parching drought that might blast the fruit. No work that I had been required to perform had been too hard for me. Most of it had been recreation, while all had been healthful to the body and grateful to the mind. It is true that now and then my hands had been a little roughened by wielding the heavy garden-tools; but we had already determined that our next year's profits should furnish us with new and lighter ones. Thus, satisfied with myself, and buoyant with hope, the winter came upon us; but I passed through it without impatience or anxiety, both my sister and myself continuing the while steadily at the factory.

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### SCIENTIFIC FARMING.

I WENT out one morning to build a barn. Not that I knew exactly how to build a barn, but I knew very well how to keep up a mighty clatter, till some one should come that did know, which amounts to the same thing. There was, indeed, already a barn on our plantation. It was there many years before we were. I ought to say, a part of it; for the barn is a conglomerate, the further end stretching far back into antiquity, and the hither end coming down to a period which is within the memory of men still living. Of course its ancient history is involved in obscurity; but as we read in the rocks somewhat of the earth's otherwise unwritten story, so in our barn are many marks which point out to the curious student the different eras of its creation. The main line of demarcation comes in the centre, and consists chiefly of a kind of bulge. That part of the front which dates back to the Lower Silurian epoch ran south-southwest, but at some

time during the Drift period it turned to the right about and drifted to the north-northeast. The result is a bold front, subtending an obtuse angle. People who have nothing else in the world to annoy them might afford to be annoyed by this departure from a right line; but unless one is reduced to such straits, he will do well to call it a bow-window, and be at rest,—which, indeed, it is, only the window is a little to the windward of the bow.

Viewed in certain aspects, an old barn is far superior to a new one. If you build a new barn, you have no resources. It is all finished, and you know where you are. There is a place for everything, and everything in its place. There is no use in looking for anything. If it is not where it belongs, it will not be anywhere. An old barn, on the contrary, is a mine of wealth. It has nooks and corners full of rubbish waiting to be turned to all manner of beautiful use. Do you want a shingle,

a board, a door, a window, a log, a screw, a wedge? There are heaps and piles of them somewhere, if you do not mind cobwebs. The old barn has a sort of sympathy with you, welcomes you to secret recesses, and never snubs you with primness when you are at a pinch: not to mention the dove-cotes, and the martins' nests, and the mouse-holes, and the lurking-places loved of laying hens.

I will tell you a very romantic story, too, about this old barn. — Once, a great many years before any of us were born, there lived on this plantation a charming young princess, beloved by all who knew her. One day the king sent word that he was coming down to sup with her. But it so happened that on the day the king was to come to supper, the princess and all her household were to be away on an excursion which was called in the somewhat homely language of that day a "clam-bake." However, the princess concluded to go to the clam-bake, and come home in season to sit with the king at supper. So they cooked mightily beforehand. For it was the fixed law of royal suppers in that day to have cream-toast, the cream flowing in rivers, cheese and jelly, pound-cake and plum-cake, and cranberry-tart, and three kinds of pie, mince, apple, and squash, or die! Whereat the people of other countries laughed; but they ate the suppers, for all that, — the starvelings, — and came again. So the pies were all made with elaborate scalloped edges, and the hoarfrost of the cake; and all was set carefully away, awaiting the eventful hour, and the princess and her household went forth and locked the door behind them, the princess taking the front-door key, and her chief steward the postern. And when the time was fully come, the princess left the clam-bake, and waited by the roadside till the king came by, and then they both went together to the princess' house. And as they went up the steps to the house, the charming young princess, who never drank tea herself, said seductively to the king, "Do you mind, if you don't have tea?

It is a great trouble every way, and the self-denial will do you good." And the king, lured into a wrong story by the music of her voice, suppressed a rising sigh, and said no, it was no matter. And then the princess unlocked the door, and essayed to go in; but though the door was unlocked, it refused to open. And suddenly the unhappy princess bethought herself that she had locked the door upon the inside, and bolted it, and herself passed out through the postern-gate, of which her lord high-steward still held the key. So there they were. Then, troubled, they marched hither and thither around the house with stately and majestic step, trying every door and window, and finding every avenue of approach barricaded except the sink-nose, which Libby prisoners might try, intent on getting out, but not a constitutional monarch, however anxious to get in. As two mice, lurking near the full cheese-safe, prowl around the crevices, braving cold and darkness in the middle of the night; safe on the shelf the cheese reposes, unmindful; they, fierce and heedless with anger, rave against it out of reach and emit a squeal; a rage for eating, collected from a long fast, and throats dry from curd, urge them on: not otherwise anger inflamed the king and princess surveying the walls, and anguish burned in their bones; by what way they might obtain access; in what manner they might dislodge the rations shut up in inaccessible places. *Nequicquam!* They could only look at each other with a wild surmise, and then, unfriended, melancholy, slow, be-take themselves to the rude shelter and frugal fare of the barn. Then the scene was suddenly changed. The westering sun came serenely in. The dreamy mist of graceful cobwebs, festooning and fantastic, and many a tiny window all adust, softened his brilliancy to a dim, religious light. The brown old rafters shone, amber-hued, in that mellow glory. The rough floors were fretted gold. A hundred summer sunsets glowed in the yellow corn that lay massed in ridged and burnished splendor. Mounds of ap-

ples, ruddy and round, loaded the air with their rich fragrance. Innumerable clover-blossoms, succulent with evening dews and morning showers, impurpled in the dusky silence of June nights, and cut down with all their sweetness in them, treasured up their dense deliciousness for balm-breathed cows, but did not disdain to flood our human sphere with tides of pleasant perfume. Meeting and mingling with these dear home-scents came gales from far Spice Islands and Araby the Blest, breathing over wild Western seas, to be tangled in pungent grasses and freight with welcome burden our rustic gondolas. (I mean English hay and salt hay.) And there, soothed into exceeding peace by Nature's subtile lullaby, borne into ethereal realms on her clouds of unseen incense, all through the golden afternoon sat the king and princess, discoursing dreamily of the time

" when men

With angels may participate, and find  
No inconvenient date, nor too light fare ;  
And from these corporal nutriments perhaps  
Our bodies may at last turn all to spirit."

While ever and anon a squat old hen or an elegant young rooster would hop up the steps and tread into the rooms, looking curiously at the unwonted sight, whereat the king would rise from his throne on an old cider-cask, and make a right royal speech, "Go to ! Base intruder !" — emphasizing his peroration by hurling an ear of corn at his visitors, which, as our wayward sisters were wont to say, when our generals had done them a particularly bad turn, was just what they wanted. So the afternoon sang itself peacefully away ; only the princess was of an evil mind, and would mar the king's pleasure, when he was solacing himself with a remainder-biscuit brought in the princess' basket from the clam-bake, by saying, "Do you see that window? There is the closet where the cake is kept. Just behind that clapboard stands the jar of jam. Two feet to the right, I should think, reposes a cranberry-tart, the crust flaky and fantastic as a January snow-wreath, the jelly rich and red as the curve of

Fantasima's lip"; and then the king would roll his eyes around at her in a fine frenzy, and gnaw his crust with a still more wrathful despair. — And that is the end of my romance of the barn.

Still, it must be confessed, an old barn is not without its disadvantages, which the impartial historian must not pass silently by. It shakes wonderfully in a high wind. You hardly dare drive a nail anywhere, for fear the whole edifice should rattle down over your head. We desired to set up in the loft one of Dr. Dio Lewis's jumping-machines ; but, upon minute investigation, Halicarnassus said no, — with the first antic we should find ourselves in the barn-cellar. In short, an old barn, in an advanced stage of disintegration, must be treated as tenderly as a loveress. (There seems to be a movement nowadays towards the introduction of feminine nouns ; so I venture to make my contribution.)

When the seeds were to be sown, it became necessary to shut up the hens, — necessary, but difficult. I closed the door myself every night with unwearied assiduity, but bright and early every morning came the homely hens and the stately-stepping rooster, treading and pecking as innocently as if they had never suspected they were on forbidden ground. I instituted a search one day ; and no wonder they got out. We might have barricaded the door to our heart's content, and they would have tossed their crests in scorn. For there, directly under their perch, was a great hole in the side of the edifice. Hole do I say? It was many holes run into one. Hole was the rule, and barn the exception. It was vacancy bounded by a rough, serrate-dentate coast of decayed boards. It is little to say chicken, — an elephant might have contemplated imprisonment there undismayed. Of course reparation must be made, or farewell, dream of early peas ! At the same time, the evil to be remedied was so overgrown, and a monster evil to be disposed of is so much greater an undertaking than a mere new measure to be carried, that I think it no exaggera-

tion, but at worst only what we classic writers call synecdoche, to say, as I did at the beginning of this paper, that I went out to build a barn.

What brilliant success would have crowned heroic effort, if knowledge had been, as the old copy-books used to say it was, power! It was clear enough what needed to be done, and there was abundance of material to do it with,—plenty of boards, a little rough, to be sure, and plenty of nails, a little rusty. But boards are so uncommonly heavy! and a ladder affords a footing at once so contracted and so uncertain! and a hammer has such a will of its own, coming down with ill-timed fervor in the most unexpected places! And when a board has been lifted and pulled and balanced by main force into position, it takes both hands to hold it there; and then how are you going to drive in the nails to make it stay, I should like to know, especially with your ladder continually threatening a change of base? I am confident, moreover, that our boards were made of mahogany, or some other impenetrable substance; for when, by dexterous manipulation, by close crowding up against them, and holding them up with my elbows, I at length proceeded to strike an effective blow, do you think the nail went in? Not in the least. It did everything else. It skewed off to one side, it doubled up, it snapped short, it plunged about frantically whenever it was touched, to say nothing of the not innumerable occasions on which the stroke aimed at its unprincipled head fell with crushing force—elsewhere. Then my strength would begin to fail, and the board would slowly, slowly slide away from me, till I let it go, and it dashed with a crash to the ground.

Then, to use the language of the poet,—

“A man I know,  
But shall not discover,  
Since ears are dull,  
And time discloses,”

was aroused to unwonted activity by the pounding, and sauntered out into the midst of the *mêlée*. I do not know

how long he had been watching me; for I was so absorbed in my architectural problem as to be dead to the outer world; but into the recesses of my complications penetrated a sound which seemed very much like what the world's people call a—a—a—snicker! I looked around, and there he was. Very sober, very blameless, having very much the air of being just arrived; but could my ears deceive me? Then up spake I, cheerily, “O Halicarnassus, you are just in time to hold this board steady while I hammer it on,”—as if I had that moment adjusted it for the first time. He took his stand under the ladder, and held on as I told him, with a beautiful docility. I did not hurry in selecting a nail; for he was strong, and I thought it would do him good to be in an uncomfortable position a little while, particularly as I was not quite satisfied about the—half-suppressed, broken laugh (definition of *snicker* given by “The Best”).

Carpentering was far easier after this, yet progress was not what you could call rapid. The ladder was short, and I had to reach up painfully; but I should not mind my arms aching, I informed my companion, if it were not, that, having to look up so, all the splinters and dust and *débris* that my hammer struck from the old boards marched straight into my eyes.

“You might keep your eyes shut,” suggested he.

“But then,” I responded, “I could not see how to strike.”

“Never mind,” said he, tenderly; “you would hit just as well.”

“Oh, that way madness lies!”

The upshot of it was, that H. bestirred himself, and turned that barn into a marvel of art. It had been a barn: it became a villa. An immense wooden sarcophagus,—only nobody had ever been deposited in it,—perhaps it was a horse-trough,—he set up “on end,” and made a three-story house of it. Fresh, sweet-smelling hay he piled on each floor, and scooped out such attractive little nests that a hen of a domestic turn of mind would go

there and lay, just for the fun of it, you might suppose. Then the porticos, and the palisades, and the sliding-doors, and the galleries, and the hospital, and the vistas, and the inner and outer courts, every arrangement that heart of hen could wish, both for seclusion and for society, — why, those fowls might have dreamt they dwelt in marble halls every night of their lives, and not have been very far out of the way. And the summer residences that he made for them, — little Gothic cottages built for a single family, with all the modern conveniences, and a good many more improvised on the spot, and with this signal advantage over similar structures at Newport and Nahant, — that you can take them under your arm, and carry them wherever you please.

Before finally leaving my hen-coop, will a generous public pardon me for recurring to the subject of crowing hens? It may possibly be remembered that in a late number of this magazine I hazarded a doubt as to the existence of any such *lusus naturæ*. Since that time proof has accumulated upon me from different quarters that crowing hens do exist. But let it be noted that the gist of my remarks was the inconsistency of the tyrant man. Now let us see whether an admission of the disputed fact relieves him from the guilt charged upon him.

Observe once more the couplet,

"A whistling girl and a crowing hen  
Always come to some bad end," —

a couplet which, I affirm without fear of contradiction, endeavors to affix a stigma upon the character of crowing hens: for what sinister and ulterior purpose I scornfully refrain from designating. Fourteen crowing hens have reported themselves to me: one from Maine, two from New Hampshire, three from Massachusetts, one each from Connecticut, New York, New Jersey, and North Carolina, and four from Pennsylvania. Of these fourteen,

Number One is "Bobby, an excellent Bidy. Lays nice, large eggs, and brings up her families well."

Number Two, named Queen Mab.

Always crows to the music of a sweet-voiced Steinway. Is in all other respects an amiable and exemplary hen.

Number Three is a black hen, now three years old. Has laid eggs.

Number Four crowed regularly every morning, when the cock did. When she was a little over a year old, she and her seven babes were stolen from a wild cherry-tree, where they went to bed, by a fox, who came up on an old log.

Number Five crowed irregularly. Raised several broods of chicks. Lived to be four or five years old.

Number Six crowed chiefly in the fall, when the young chicks were practising (no doubt to encourage them). Lived to the remarkable age of nine years, and was then decapitated.

Number Seven raised a large brood of chickens. Their papa was killed at about the time for them to begin to crow, and one morning she flew up on the fence and crowed with all her might. Continued it until they had learned, and then stopped. Was called Old Sam. Her end was the soup-pot.

Number Eight, an old speckled hen. Took to crowing after a raid on the poultry-yard had deprived it of every rooster. Crowed as well as anybody.

Number Nine lived twenty-five years ago. Witness has forgotten whether she ever did anything but crow. Had a wicked name, which I shall not give.

Number Ten laid eggs.

Number Eleven crowed repeatedly and often spunkily after the roosters had been killed, never while they were alive.

Number Twelve crows sometimes in the presence of the rooster, chiefly when alone. Most energetic in crowing.

Numbers Thirteen and Fourteen have simply the fact of their existence recorded.

Now, mere proverb-mongers, bear in mind: In the whole country only fourteen well-defined crowing hens, — at the worst, not a very crying evil.

Of the fourteen, only one is recorded as having come to a bad end, and that

end had no connection with the crowing, but occurred while she was engaged in the faithful discharge of her maternal duties.

Seven are reported as bearing an excellent domestic character, a blessing to the society which they adorned. Against the remaining seven not a syllable of reproach is breathed; but if there had been any evil thing in them, who believes it would not have been learned and conned by rote and cast into our teeth?

In the case of five, their crowing was not only innocent, but a preëminent virtue, a manly crown set upon every feminine excellence.

Inconsistency? It is a white and shining word for the black quality to which I applied it.

Men, the indictment is quashed. You are ruled out of court. Take your couplet and depart, giving thanks that you are not prosecuted for defamation of character.

While the architect and the hens were thus revelling in the halls of the Montezumas, I turned my attention to the more modest purpose of providing accommodations for the tomatoes. All our efforts in that line hitherto had been comparative failures. "It is a good thing to take time by the forelock," I had remarked to a subordinate, as early, I should think, as February, perhaps January, and begun planting a great many seeds in boxes, which were set in the sunshine under the kitchen windows. A great many plants came up, and then a great many flocks and herds of little green things oozed out of them and began to creep over them, evidently with the design of eating them up. This would never do. I borrowed a bound volume of the old "New England Farmer," from a young New England farmer, — the worst thing in the world to do, let me say to all amateur farmers. Use every lawful means of perfecting yourself in your profession, but on no account touch an agricultural journal. They bewilder an honest heart into despair. They show the importance and the feasibility of so

many things, every one of which is full of interest, profit, and pleasure, that you know not where to begin; and instead of doing one thing, you dream of a dozen. I sent the "New England Farmer" home, and, according to advice, bought a handful of tobacco, put it on a shovel and set fire to it, and smoked the young shoots thoroughly, — as well as the house and all that therein was. The experiment succeeded perfectly. Any way, it killed the tomatoes. I am not so sure about their colonists, but I do not believe they long survived the destruction of their Arcadia. "It is just as well," I said, to encourage one whose spirits depend upon me. "It is, indeed, far better. There are many kind people in cities, who will sow the seeds, and tend the plants, and take all our trouble, and give us as many plants as we want, for fifty cents. Which, indeed, they did, — and I set the plants out mathematically, in a square. But they are delicate, and need protection from untimely summer frosts. Thriftless people set up stakes, bushes, and such hand-to-mouth contrivances, and perhaps throw an old apron or a fragment of a table-cloth over them. Practical, but prosaic people, cover them with pots and pans during their fragile infancy; all of which makes an unsightly feature in a landscape. I built a conservatory. And here let me say to all my young friends who may design to devote themselves to rural pursuits, Do not be narrowly content with the utilities, nor count the hours spent upon the beautiful as time lost. For aught we know, the fields might be just as fruitful, if they put forth only a gray and dingy sedge. Instead of which, we have their green and velvet loveliness starred all over with violet and daisy and dandelion. A hen-house is no less serviceable because built in the Gothic style with suites of rooms. A rough nomadic tent of poles and rags gives no surer protection to your tender herbs than the stately and beautiful conservatory. That is why I built a conservatory. The walls were of brick: there was a pile of bricks in a corner of the barn. The roof was

of glass: there was a pile of *passtes* windows, ditto, ditto. The edifice was not quite so firm as might be desired, owing to the circumstance of there being no underpinning nor cement. Nor did its sides not sometimes deviate from strictly right lines, as they were obliged to yield to the undulations of the soil; but it was at least classical,—brick and windows. The only serious trouble with it was, that one fine morning it ceased to be conservative at all, but became revolutionary to the last degree,—utterly subversive, in fact, of the existing order of things. Why, the calves got in overnight and turned everything topsyturvy. Their hoofs crushed in the walls and roof, and the walls and roof between them crushed the tomatoes, so that architecture and horticulture were involved in a common ruin. We knew it was the calves, because their juvenile tracks were all about. Besides, there were the calves. It turned out to be of no account, for that proved to be a bad year for tomatoes, so we should have had none in any event, and were saved all the trouble of cultivating them, while the calves had a free frolic, poor things. To be sure, they have a fine court-yard for exercise, a vestibule for noon-day lounging, and snug quarters for sleep and shelter; but, as it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be,

“Fredome is a noble thing!  
 Fredome mayss man to haiff liking:  
 Fredome all solace to man giffis:  
 He levys at ess, that frely levys!  
 A noble calf may haiff nane ess,  
 Na ellys nocht that may him pless,  
 Gyff fredome failyhe: for fre liking  
 Is yharnyt our all othir thing.  
 Na he, that ay hass levyt fre,  
 May nocht know weill the propyrte,  
 The angyr, na the wrechyt dome,  
 That is cowplyt to foule thyrdome.  
 Bot gyff he had assayit it,  
 Than all perquer he suld it wyt:  
 And suld think fredome mar to pryss,  
 Than all the gold in ward that is.”

And if these wayward children of the earth could find any way of escape from their gilded fetters, and wander out under the beautiful star-sown heavens into the wilderness of night to taste the sweets of liberty, and, if you please, of license, who can find it in his heart to

blame them? Farmers ought not to restrict their thoughts to human motives. We should endeavor sometimes to look at things with the eyes of a cow, an ox, a chicken, and so learn to have more consideration for and sympathy with these younger brethren of ours, these children of a common Father. The earth is theirs, as truly, if not as thoroughly, as it is ours. The good God makes grass to grow for the cattle, as well as herb for the service of man. All the beasts of the field are His. Undoubtedly He enjoys the happiness of every lamb frisking on the hill-side; and not a blue-bird flashes through the morning, not a swallow twitters on his spray, but the Creator smiles on its glistening beauty and listens lovingly to its song. “Doth God take care for oxen?” asks Paul, and looking into the Bible, as well as abroad over the fertile fields, we can but answer, yes; though Paul himself seems to incline to the negative, and to consider the command not to muzzle the ox when he treadeth out the corn as given altogether for our sakes. Partly for our sakes, no doubt, but partly also for the comfort of the toiling patient oxen; and so, probably, would Paul say, were the question fairly put to him from the bovine side. So, indeed, in effect he does say, when writing to Timothy with another end in view. Perhaps that “Original Greek,” to whom commentators and expositors are so fond of appealing in an emergency, may yet be found to help us out of our difficulty by proving, past a cavil, that *no* means *yes*. At any rate, the Bible shows that God does take care of all dumb, uncomplaining lives, and all humble human creatures,—and shows it so conclusively, so minutely, and so practically, that we can hardly be said to need any supplementary revelation on that point, though the Reverend Edward C. Towne, evidently thinking otherwise, has written what he modestly terms “a scripture” about Timid Tom and Old Gurdy,—very tender and touching, yet he will pardon me for saying I still think Matthew rather better adapted to the rural districts.

So we will remember that to the birds our cherry-trees are a true Promised Land, where Nature herself invites them to enter in and take possession. We will ever bear in mind that Molly and Brindle have no forecast of full granaries to console them for present deprivation, and that the waving corn-field rustles for them, and for them the rich rye quivers, and they do but obey their highest law, when they pass through the carelessly swinging gate and feast on the fatness of the land.

In fact, our three little calves always wrought their mischief with such winsome grace as disarmed anger and amply repaid us in amusement what they cost us of trouble. They were a source of unfailing interest and wonder, —

“A phantom of delight,  
When first they gleamed upon our sight,  
A lovely apparition, sent  
To be a moment's ornament.”

And every day heightened their charms.

Mr. Henry James, illustrating some false conception of the relation between God and man, somewhere says, “You simply need to recall the relation of irksome superintendence on the one hand, and of utter indifference on the other, which vivify the intercourse of a farmer and his calves.”

Now to Mr. Henry James, as a general rule, it would be difficult to award too much praise. The river of his speech, rippling through summer shadows, or rushing over rocky ways, still flows, like Siloa's brook, fast by the oracles of God. And though it winds sometimes through inaccessible places, and you tell its course only by its music, and not by its sparkle, and though it channels a path sometimes through murky valleys whose every vapor is laden with pestilence, yet you know that pure and purifying, singing through its leafy solitudes and shining heavenly clear in Tophet as in Tempe, the burden of its song is peace on earth, good-will to man, while it hastens on to mingle its crystal stream with the waters of the river of life.

But, Mr. Henry James, good and wise as you are, I am certain you never owned

a calf. At least, you never stood in confidential relations to one. “Irksome superintendence?” You did not witness the welcome we gave our poor little favorite, torn all trembling from its mother's side by the stern demand of some greedy purse. How we stroked him, and patted him, and — begging your pardon — scratched his head, and so soothed away his sorrow ere he was aware! how we stayed his staggering limbs! and because he was too young and knew not how to drink, but only stared at the basin and at us and vacancy, in an uncertain, moonstruck way, did I not put my own fingers into the milk and draw his mouth down to them, and, deceived by the pious fraud, did not the poor little hungry, innocent, like Dido of old, drink large draughts of love, in happy ignorance that it was not Nature's own arrangement for such case made and provided? No, Mr. James, — where it is a question of absolute philosophy, ordinary cosmology, noumenal force, instinctual relegation, and the fundamental antithesis of Me and Not-Me, you shall have everything your own way; but when it comes to live-stock, you must ask me first!

Such a mistake, however, is not unaccountable. Farming, it must be conceded, is in some respects a hard-hearted business, little calculated to cherish the finer feelings. Separation of families is so common a thing among farmers that the sight of sorrow ceases to sadden. Calves are taken from their mothers at a tender age, to the great trial of both mother and child; and a sufficient excuse for this trampling upon Nature is supposed to be concentrated in the one word, *Veal*. All last night the air reverberated with the agonized moanings of a bereaved cow in a neighboring pasture, and with the earliest dawn there she stood forlorn, pressing her aching breast against the cold, dew-damp gate, and gazing with mournful longing up the road last trodden by her darling's lingering feet. But it is all right, because — *veal!* A hen may be suddenly wrested from her infant brood and brought back from her private nest into the dreary



phalanstery, because Mr. Worldly Wiseman thinks the laying of eggs a more important thing than the cultivation of domestic virtues. To the exigencies of "profit" everything else must give way. The result can but be deleterious. The peach-bloom of sensibility is presently rubbed off by constant trituration of harsh utilities. Only yesterday I received an invitation from a gentleman of standing and character to visit a famous farm, and one of the inducements expressly held out was the pleasure of seeing a hundred sheep from Canada, with a hundred little lambs, all their respective little tails cut off short. What a request was there, my countrymen! For why were those little tails cut off, in the first place? and if they were cut off, why should any humane person be invited to see such a spectacle of man's rapacity? It must have been sheer wantonness. You sometimes prune away sundry branches of a tree, to make the rest of it grow better; but will there be any more to a leg of mutton because it had no tail? No, Sir. When I go a-sheep-gazing, I want to see the sheep walking about with dignity and comfort, and coming home, as little Bo-Peep wanted hers, bringing their tails behind them.

What we can we do to stem this dreadful tide of demoralization. We have never set our hearts upon taking the first prize at any fair for anything. We do not count upon deriving great pecuniary strength from contact with our mother Earth. But upon this one thing we have determined, — that every creature on our plantation, which is allowed to live at all, shall live as far as possible in the enjoyment of every bounty which Nature bestowed upon him. No dumb life shall be the worse for falling into our hands. We do not disdain to study the nature of our calves, nor to gratify their innocent whims. One refuses milk and chooses water: water is always provided. Another exults in apples, bread, and fried potatoes, and eats them from your hand with most winsome confidence and gratitude. They dislike the confinement of their parade-

ground, yearning to roam over the grassy knolls, to snuff the scent of the clover-blossoms, to drink the dew from buttercups, to lie on the velvet turf and let the summer soak through their tough hides and penetrate their inmost hearts. How calm then are their beautiful mazarine blue eyes! What deep content relaxes every fibre of their breathing bodies! How happily the days of Thalaba go by! They seem to have attained to a premature tranquillity, the meditative mood of full-grown kine. But if sometimes the morning wine of June leaps through their veins with a strange vigor in its pulse, you shall see how bravely their latent youthfulness asserts itself. Frisking with many an ungainly gambol, they dash across the orchard, bending their backs into an angle, brandishing their tails aloft, jerking, butting, pushing, and jostling each other, in joy too intense for expression.

Driving in Natick one day, I observed, in some of the pleasant grounds which ornament that town, a very nice little contrivance; — a coil of fence you might call it, made of iron wire, capable of being rolled and unrolled, and so enabling you to make an inclosure when and where you chose. Set your fence down on one part of the lawn, turn in your lambs, and when they have cropped all the grass, remove the establishment to another place. I represented very ably and vividly to — the person mentioned before — the advantages of such a fence to our calves and to ourselves. It gives them at once the freedom of the turf, yet does not loose them beyond our control. And then it looks so picturesque!

"Yes," said he, briskly, "we must have one."

"That we must!" I responded with enthusiasm, delighted at his ready acquiescence. Not that a non-acquiescence would have made any difference in the result, but the process would have been more tedious.

The next morning he called me out, with great flourish of trumpets, to see The Iron Fence.

"It is not possible," I said, in aston-

ishment. "You have had no time to send."

"No, — I made it," he replied boldly.

"You!" I exclaimed, still more astonished. "I knew there was a tangle of iron wire in the barn, but it looked rusty."

He made no reply, only whistled me on as if I were his dog, — he often does that, — and I followed, musing. The iron fences that I had seen showed a fine tracery, delicate and graceful, seemingly, as the cobwebs on the morning grass: could they, like these, be woven in a single summer night? The sequel will show. I appeared upon the scene. A single, slender iron pole was driven into the ground: one end of a piece of rope was fastened to it; the other end encircled the neck of our little, black, woolly calf, Topsy, who was describing great circles around the pole, in her frenzy to escape.

"Sir," said I, after a somewhat prolonged silence, "it is the old crow-bar."

"No," said he, confidently, "it is an Iron Fence, — such as they have in Natick. Only," he added, after a short pause, and as if the thought had just occurred to him, "perhaps theirs is the old-fashioned centripetal kind. This is the New Centrifugal Iron Fence!" (?)

Kindness to animals is, like every other good thing, its own reward. It is homage to Nature, and Nature takes you into the circle of her sympathies and refreshes you with balsam and opiate. We, too, delight in green meadows and blue sky. Resting with our pets on the southern slope, the heavens lean tenderly over us, and star-flowers whisper to us the brown earth's secrets. Ever wonderful and beautiful is it to see the frozen, dingy sod springing into slender grass-blades, purple violets, and snow-white daisies. The lover deemed it a token of extraordinary devotion, that, when his mistress came by, his

"dust would hear her and beat,  
Had I lain for a century dead;  
Would start and tremble under her feet,  
And blossom in purple and red."

But no foot so humble, so little loved, so seldom listened for, that the earth will not feel its tread and blossom up a hundred-fold to meet her child. And every dainty blossom shall be so distinctly wrought, so gracefully poised, so generously endowed, that you might suppose Nature had lavished all her love on that one fair flower.

As you lie on the grass, watching the ever-shifting billows of the sheeny sea, that dash with soundless surge against the rough old tree-trunks, marking how the tall grasses bend to every breeze and darken to every cloud, only to arise and shine again when breeze and cloud are passed by, there comes through your charmed silence — which is but the perfect blending of a thousand happy voices — one cold and bitter voice, —

"Golden to-day, to-morrow gray:  
So fades young love from life away!"

O cold, false voice, die back again into your outer darkness! I know the reaper will come, and the golden grain will bow before him, for this is Nature's law; but in its death lies the highest work of its circling life. All was fair; but this is fairest of all. It dies, indeed, but only to continue its beneficence; and with fresh beauty and new vigor it shall blossom for other springs.

Fainter, but distinctly still, comes the chilling voice, —

"Though every summer green the plain,  
This harvest cannot bloom again."

False still! This harvest shall bloom again in perpetual and ever-increasing loveliness. It shall leap in the grace of the lithe-limbed steed, it shall foam in the milk of gentle-hearted cows, it shall shine in the splendor of light-winged birds, it shall sleep in the baby's dimple, toss in the child's fair curls, and blush in the maiden's cheek. Nay, by some inward way, it shall spring again in the green pastures of the soul, blossoming in great thoughts, in kindly words, in Christian deeds, till the soil that cherished it shall seem to seeing eyes all consecrate, and the Earth that flowers such growths shall be Eden, the Garden of God.