Victorian Times

Vol. II, No. 11 November 2015

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An Englishman "At Home" in Paris • A November Dinner Party
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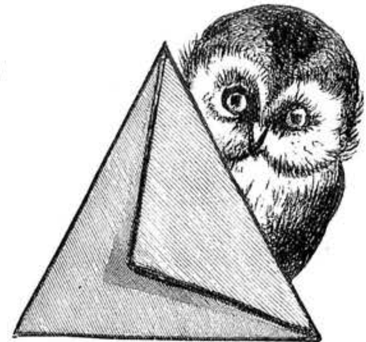

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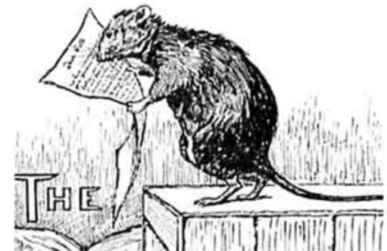

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* *The Girl's Own Paper* ***Cassell's Family Magazine*

Cooking a Victorian Thanksgiving

Since most of the magazines used for *Victorian Times* are British, it's not easy to find information on "Victorian Thanksgiving." Even American magazines tend to publish recipes and the occasional poem, but little more. So I thought I'd take this opportunity to share a bit of a glimpse of what cooking a Thanksgiving dinner in the Victorian style was really like—because that's exactly what we did during most of my childhood!

My grandparents purchased a farmhouse in Mendocino County, California, in the early 1940's, and this was our regular and joyous destination for weekends, holidays, and long weeks of summer. Cooking at "Vinegar Hill" took place almost entirely on a great, beautiful Monarch wood stove—complete with warming ovens, and room underneath for the cats to sprawl out and enjoy the warmth. (In later years an electric plate was added, but the house wasn't even wired for electricity until 1959!)

To cook a Thanksgiving feast on a wood stove requires patience and planning. One also hopes for a *cold* November day...

Pumpkin pies were generally done a few days early, since you can't bake a pie and roast a turkey at the same time (or temperature). We often had an apple pie as well, made from apples from our own trees. Another task that might be done a day or two early was the cranberry sauce. This was my domain; I'd carefully sort the berries, discarding the unripe and the overripe, and piling the rest into a kettle with water and sugar. Then, too, I hoped for a cold November, because making cranberry sauce meant quite literally "slaving over a hot stove" for at least 20 minutes! Some of the sauce was destined for the table, but most went into canning jars to be stored for the winter. At least our jars had modern vacuum-seal lids; we didn't have to resort to the Victorian technique of scraping a pig's bladder membrane clean and thin to seal the jars!

On Thanksgiving morning, the first task—as the oven grew warm while we made coffee and cooked breakfast—was to dry bread slices for the "stuffing." I'd then crumble this into bits in a large bowl. We always made too much, perhaps on purpose, so after the stuffing was made, my sister and I would take the leftover bits and spread them along the fence posts for the birds. Thanksgiving was for everyone!

In those days, we also had chestnut trees (not yet destroyed by the blight), and felt there was only one acceptable kind of stuffing: Chestnut stuffing! This also meant a bit of early preparation, which was the one Thanksgiving chore my sister and I truly hated: Blanching chestnuts. Chestnuts were generally gathered in October, and allowed to dry. On Thanksgiving we'd pry them out of their shells, pop them in a kettle of water, and set them to boil for an hour or so. Eventually they would have cooked enough that we could fish them out and peel off the bitter inner membrane—a task that resulted in quite a few burned fingers, and hands that felt dry and sticky from chestnut starch. (Letting them cool was not an option, as they'd no longer "peel.") But we agreed that the joy of chestnut stuffing was worth the pain.

Eventually the turkey would go into the oven. Nowadays, for most of us, that means it's time to leave the kitchen and go watch the game or whatever. Not when you're using a wood stove! The key element in roasting a turkey in a wood stove is temperature—and temperature isn't controlled by a dial. It's controlled by *wood*. That meant someone (i.e., my sister or I) had to be on duty pretty much the entire day, stoking the firebox every 15 minutes or so and keeping a sharp eye on the thermostat. If the temperature was dropping, you looked for a "hot" wood—usually a hard wood like oak or chestnut. If it was getting too high, you looked for a softer wood, such as redwood or fir, to let the fire cool down a bit. Another reason to hope for a cool November day!

By mid-afternoon, the rest of the cooking would begin, and every inch of the stove would be covered with pots and pans. Bread or rolls would be warming in the warming ovens that flanked the stove-pipe. Gravy would be simmering in a pan toward the back ("cool") part of the stove, while potatoes might be boiling over the hotter section. Vegetables would be cooking somewhere near the middle. Since there isn't room for more than one cook on such a stove, my grandmother would be managing it all, waving utensils as if conducting an orchestra.

And at last it would be done, and the final challenge would be finding a place for all the fixings on the table. My last task for the day would have been to gather autumn leaves and create a centerpiece around a pair of candles, while my sister laid the table and set out gleaming glasses and snow-white napkins.

Cooking Thanksgiving "Victorian-style" was a lot of work—and hot work if November chanced to be warm, as it often is in California. But somehow, it always seemed to remind us all the more of what we were thankful for—perhaps the more so because it didn't come easily. Someday, I hope to find a wood stove and do it again...

—Moira Allen, Editor
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A "TENDERFOOT" IN TEXAS.

Written and Illustrated by STANLEY L. WOOD.

AFTER leaving Kansas city and shaking hands with the man in the pointed shoes and the assistant state marshal—a gentleman with a pleasant manner and a big revolver, whose "seeing me off" suggested in a comic manner that I was being shown out of the State by armed force—after leaving Kansas city, I say, life rapidly became made up of a series of reverberations and railroad joltings, twenty minutes' stoppages for refreshments, dining-car experiences, of falling to sleep to the accompaniment of arguments on free silver versus gold, of railroad-book agents, and alas! of dust and cinders galore.

Hours slipped by along with the receding landscape until one lost all account of time. All I knew was Texas and cowboy life lay before me, and that the immediate cigar was good.

However, the best of things—cigars even—must end at last. So, late one evening, when dining-cars had lost their charm and a longing to stretch one's legs had become a wild craving, the train rolled up to what appeared in the semi-darkness to be a collection of cigar-boxes lying around on a desert. May Texas forgive me, but this was a town; nay, a city!

I alighted on the platform of the wooden station among a crowd of hats, under which were men. I think this is a better definition than a crowd of men in large hats, because the general effect anyhow was—hat first, man afterwards.

No one greeted me; the man I had hoped to meet was not there. And the train left.

I asked one of the hats for him.

"Fightin' fire!" was the reply.

Had he said "Fightin' fire-water" it would have been the same to me. He was not there, but miles away, as I afterwards learned, far out on the cattle ranges with his full muster of cowboys, trying every means known to cope with the terrible onrush of the ranchman's great enemy—a prairie fire.

I found out there was an hotel, so-called; and a sun-burnt youth with high-heeled shoes and a cowboy hat having taken my bag, I followed him in the darkness through the sand for a few yards or so to the hotel—a two-storied wood affair. That hotel! Well, there, as I'm not going to write up "Hotels of Texas Cattle Towns," I will not say much about it. Was it rough? There are various degrees of roughness the world over; but looking back now, it seems to me I had many good times there, and memory returns with very pleasant recollections of the inmates. The free, big-hatted, long-legged cattle-men, with their great friendly hearts and large nature; the host or "boss," the Chinese cook, the ex-cowboy waiter, and all of you—you'll never be forgotten by the Englishman you treated so well.

Everyone I discovered who ate at the hotel, or "loafed" (apparently without any aim in life save to lounge into the nearest saloon or bar) along the one short street of this prairie town, was, or had been at some time in his life, connected with cattle. Picturesque cowboys on their still more picturesque ponies dashed into the town to pull up with a jerk at the saloon doors, or else cantered lightly down the street. Brown-faced men sat before the stores, with chairs tipped back and cigars in their teeth, discussing the one all-important subject — Cattle. At every meal the price, the breed, and the condition of Texas stock was discussed; and I hadn't been fifteen minutes in the town before I was asked if I was out there to buy cattle.

When I denied the soft impeachment and appeared in my true colours as an artist, I was at first apparently regarded as a mild form of lunatic, and then endured as a played-out notion from the effete East, not to be reckoned with such a genius as the local waggon and sign painter. Still the inhabitants treated me well, and one morning I learnt that the man I wanted was "in town."

This was a ranch manager, and when I met him and stated to him that I wished to play at cowboy for a few weeks, I honestly think he regarded me as an escaped idiot. There was no trace of mirth in his sallow face as he inquired if I possessed a gun (i.e. a revolver), also a saddle. My few belongings being stowed into his two-horse buggy (by the way, my belongings consisted in the main of a sketch-book, a flannel shirt, tobacco, cigars, a pair of socks, and a bottle of whisky), we started across the prairie for the home ranch.

That forty-mile drive across those sun-dried prairies, with the warm pure wind blowing in great gusts and the white dust whirling past, was a ride not likely to be easily forgotten. Jack-rabbits rose at times from

nearly under the horses' feet, and "loped" a few yards away, crouching under the mosquito bushes. Prairie dogs sat up on their haunches and with nose in the air regarded us from their raised burrows. Away in the distance the mirage played tricks with the sand-dotted plain, and fooled one into the notion of cool lakes and groves of trees; and ever and anon a bunch of antelopes rushed along (always out of range), or a skulking coyote wolf shambled like a vagabond away to the low sand-hills. Many-coloured lizards raced us on the dusty track, and locusts flashed by with much to-do and fuss. Were I a poet I would like to burst into song over those great wild prairies; but as I am not I'll stick to plain facts.

By two o'clock we had reached "home"—a wooden building with a veranda running round it, and a tame deer doing the same thing. A sun-tanned gentleman in a silk shirt (albeit the worse for wear and dirt), and with his legs encased in long kid boots finished off with solid silver spurs, grinned us a welcome by exhibiting the finest set of white teeth I have ever seen.

This was the under foreman or "wagon boss." Big, strong, and brown, quiet and gentle as a woman, but with nerves and muscles like steel, I shall always retain a memory of Jim as I saw him one day pressing his horse at full speed through the immense herd of cattle to "cut out" a certain steer that was wanted. Well, we went in to dinner, and there it was left to me to introduce myself. I informed the twelve brown men of muscle and sinew that I was S. L. Wood, lived in London, and was the greenest kind of a "tenderfoot" (or greenhorn), and would they please pass the steak.

With a good deal of jovial profanity and grins they told me who they were, or rather one of the cowboys called out to me their various names and nicknames in much the same manner that they cut out cattle and stamp a brand on them.

"That's Red Jack, 'cause he's got red hair!" "That's the Kid, 'cause he's biggest!" "That's Indian, 'cause he's like one!" And so on.

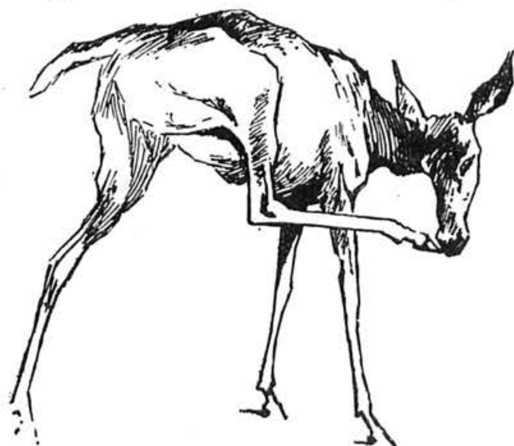
My informant also went on to state that this "outfit" wasn't much on etiquette, and if I wanted anything I was to howl. Being carefully brought up, I replied that if I saw what I wanted I'd yell for it and I wouldn't be happy till I got it; and ere we had fairly started on the rough but clean food with appetites well sharpened with the prairie air, we were all on the best of terms with jokes and unrestrained laughter.

On either side of a long rough table was placed an ordinary school bench, on which we sat, and of food there was plenty, beef being the staple article, and we had it in various forms. Jugs of milk, hot bread, and stewed "canned goods" constituted the rest of the meal.

That afternoon I "loafed" on the porch in the shadow, chatting to Jim the wagon boss, and trying to sketch Billy, the tame deer and universal pet of the ranch. Away out over hundreds and hundreds of acres of wild rolling prairie the pitiless afternoon sun beat down, and even the lizards seemed to pant under the shade of the "skeet" bushes. Jim's eyes would close for a minute, and from the interior of the house I heard the manager snoring like a foghorn. Billy, the deer,

"BILLY."

became so friendly that he started licking my face (not an unmixed blessing by any means), but soon he too dozed in the grateful



"BILLY" MAKES BOTH ENDS MEET.

shadow of the porch. It seemed to me, lazily puffing at a well-seasoned pipe, and without the formality of a white shirt or boots that had to be blacked, that London was indeed very, very far off, and that "Dr. Nikola" and the WINDSOR MAGAZINE must have, as regards illustrations, passed through somebody else's life and certainly never entered into that of the sun-tanned tramp smoking a pipe on a Texas ranch house porch.

Well, I fear I should have become an ærial architect, and heaven only knows how many stories I should have added to my castle had not two little dots appeared on the horizon. Approaching and at last arriving in good view, they turned out to be a rider with a spare horse. Now this was an incident at last! It was an afternoon caller come to stop as long as he pleased.

The clink, clink of crockery within the house and the lengthening of the shadows on the plains announced the coming of the evening meal—a repetition of the former in every respect saving the presence of the stranger who, in the intervals between apparently trying to swallow his knife, jerked out items of what appeared to be interesting news. He had seen three dead steers in pasture No. 4. Billy Howland was sick in town; the doctor guessed he'd peg out. Jack Somebody else had gone down to El Paso on a "tare," and got put in prison at Juarez by the *Mexican authorities*, which my newly-made friends considered absurd of the said Jack to allow, "seeing as how he allers carried a gun."

"Wal, must be goin'," the stranger at length remarked; and with a drawled out "So long" he mounted and rode away.

That evening the boys, after milking the few cows set apart for that purpose, lay around on the grass, each puffing a cigar (which I had brought as peace offerings), and spoke of the morrow's work, and joked until the spirit moved them to seek their blankets and cowboy dreamland.

Now, *à propos* of the afternoon caller, you must know that in Texas it is the good frontier custom never to turn the stranger from the door, unless of course he takes an undue liking to the householder's property, when he runs a risk of taking with him a conical leaden souvenir. But "hospitality" is a great word in Texas all through the State, and no mere idle word at that, but a thing to be lived up to. This particular ranch-house has as its owner a millionaire, and is considered with its female cook, four bed-

"RED JACK."

rooms, and a back yard of 350,000 acres, "way up" in the social scale, as ranches go.

Perhaps therefore it is not surprising if a weary herdsman, on his way across the plains,

sensible of the fact that they make good biscuits here, "drops in to tea" more than is really necessary. But then hot biscuits and butter, with coffee and steak, are always preferable to stale bread and alkali water *neat*.

"Dog on them pesky loafers, anyhow!" would exclaim the leather-faced lady who did the cooking, and who, by the way, was related to Red Jack. "Every son of a gun of a cow-puncher who's within twenty miles o' this yere ranch has got to kem a-ridin' in to supper. All mighty fine, but this ain't no *ho*-tel. Guess I'll hang out a sign and jist charge 'em two bits (twenty-five cents) for a meal, anyhow. Most on 'em got the appetite o' a coyote too," and she would gaze out with wrath in her eye over the distant ranges, possibly looking out for the next hungry caller.

Poor soul! Hers was no "picnic" of a life, as they say out West. Yet although she was ugly and dried up to the consistency of tanned buckskin, and passed her days in frying meat and making biscuit, she did her duty well away out there in that great lone land, and she was good to this tenderfoot too.

She had a girl with her—at least, I think it was a girl—built like a boy of fourteen, but with girl's hair and an old face and steady, unflinching gray eyes, like most Western people. She—we will call her she—inquired of me once in all sincerity if Italy was in London; and one Sunday, without being asked, proceeded to read me, with many hitches and spelling of words, a cheerful poem of a drunkard's death, and all his children starving and his invalid wife going raving mad.

But to return. That first evening Red Jack, acting as chambermaid, took me into the house, and after removing five Winchester rifles from a bed, spread a couple of blankets on it, wished me good-night, and strolled away to his own rest, the moonlight touching his immense clinking spurs as he walked.

I must tell you that the room in which I was left had a blanket hanging in front of each window, consequently it was pretty dark. I forget just what it was I wanted from my valise, after laying awake an hour or so, but I thought I knew where the bag was, and started for it. Of course I couldn't find it, and ere I was fully aware of it I found myself in total darkness, far from home, in a strange ranch-house, wading about in a tangle of ropes and cartridge-belts, and hitting my bare toes against rifle-stocks, or treading on their cold barrels, with a jump that brought wild thoughts of rattlesnakes up before me.

"Tenderfoot," forsooth! Why, after five minutes, during which I danced and shuffled about over loose cartridges, and old spurs (which are sharp), belts, lassoes, and guns, my feet *were* tender, and I groped and limped back to my blanket bed—without having found the said bag by the way—muttering many strange words I had picked up on my way West. When I awoke next morning, of course I found nothing like the number of rifles and ropes I had allowed for during the night, but one is apt to make miscalculations at times.

After our five o'clock breakfast next morning we all trooped down to the corral. This was a large, fenced-in enclosure, in which already a score or more of semi-wild horses were moving, having been "rounded up" and driven in half an hour or so previous.

And then began what to me is always a sight to live for—cowboys catching the mounts. The "boys" took their lassoes (or ropes, as they are always termed out West), and whirling the ever-widening circle above their heads, flung it out and caught the horses they wanted. Sometimes, as the noose settled around the animal's neck, the horse would make a plunging rush for liberty, but the cowboy would brace back, rope behind him, and literally sitting down on it, would settle his heels in the dust, and in the end of a very few seconds show the horse who was the master.

The saddling was not always an easy job. These prairie horses, called bronchos in the West, have in the main pretty "mean" tempers, and the saddling *and* riding of a vicious buck-jumper or "pitcher" is a "Wild West Show" worth seeing. Granted the big Texan saddle is firmly "cinched" (or girthed) on the animal's back, and the cowboy gets the reins in place and one foot in the stirrup, *that* is only the beginning. Up goes the broncho on his hind legs, runs back, curves his spine into an arch enough to burst any ordinary girth, and during these manœuvres the cow-puncher, if he can, flings his right leg over and settles into the saddle. Then the wild plunging, bucking, and lashing out of fore and hind feet. Buck, buck, buck! The audience yells, whoops, and cheers all the time with laughter-choked advice to the rider to "stay with him!" and not "to go to leather!" that is, hold on by the saddle-

ONLY THE BEGINNING.

A BUCKING BRONCHO.

horn. Then the big Spanish spurs come into action, and any horse less tough than a broncho would have a pretty bad time of it. Eventually he will sober down, and do his day's work with only now and again a vicious buck or plunge, just, as they say there, to "show there's no ill-feeling."

Well, by now nearly all the boys had caught their mounts, and so interested had I become in watching the various antics of men and animals that I awoke suddenly to a very grim fact when the manager cheerfully invited me to "pick my broncho."

Ay, pick my broncho! I had my choice of picking out any one of those long-tailed bits of equine viciousness and getting bucked off; no one would hinder me, and if I wanted to break my neck, *here* indeed was my right royal chance. There was grim humour, too much of it in fact, but no pity in the face of each and every one of those loose-limbed centaurs; and three stepped forward instantly to rope for me any horse I might venture to point out.

I looked at the mob of wild-eyed bronchos pacing round the corral, looked, and being merely a struggling artist and no rough rider or "broncho buster," am not ashamed to state I looked with all my eyes to see if in that crowd I could discern any well-defined saddle galls, marking the fact that the owner had been ridden *well*. Presently a gray caught my attention—surely there were the marks I wanted—wanted oh so badly, for with the wicked eyes of those cow-punchers upon me I felt much like the late Maid of Orleans when she saw her persecutors getting the firewood ready, only alas! I lacked her faith. In a twinkling (too soon, in fact, for I would have liked to postpone matters, to have written to my mother, made a will, and fixed other little arrangements in case of my non-return to England) the rope whizzed through the air, and Red Jack led up my "fiery untamed."

The mare was bony, also she had red eyes. And that's about all I had time to notice, for the saddle was cinched on in a jiffy.

"You'd better stick yer finger in her eye as you mount," quietly drawled the man in the buckskin gauntlets, "'cause she's a daisy to buck."

"Jist git on and hang by yer spurs and make her waltz a bit," suggested another youth, and I mounted.

She did nothing terrible despite the fact that I kept my fingers from both her eyes, and I found that going on the safe plan of choosing a horse with "saddle marks" on it had raised me a peg in Red Jack's opinion, and so with mute thanks to the red-eyed mare for not bucking, away we all galloped in the bright morning sunshine.

Again, as on the preceding day, the jack-rabbits jumped away into the low bushes; and again the prairie dogs sat on their burrows with elevated noses. The boys grew frisky with the freedom of the pure air, and the fresh animals beneath them. Comic spirits among them fell to sharply pulling hairs out of the tail of a comrade's horse, thereby causing the animal to buck; and my friend in the buckskin gauntlets burst into song as we cantered along the cattle trail. There was pure boyish joy in that fellow's heart, one could hear, and he had to show it somehow. The tune was "Sweet Marie." But, bless him! he thought no more of the actual words which he was whooping out over those unbounded plains, than a man thinks of the agony he is causing to others when he practices the violin with the window open. No; that great lump of muscle and bone was happy, and he let the jack-rabbits and the distant coyote wolves and all of us know it. It was contagious; and we all felt happy too—just a set of great children going out for fun. Trouble and "the blues" come quickly enough in this life, and incidents like this when one feels on good terms with oneself and all creation, and wants to run around and shake hands with the universe, are times worth looking back upon. There are a few thousand miles now between that long-legged Texan and this tenderfoot; but may the gods send that Western rider and his mates as happy hearts each time they "gallop o'er the lea," as on that bright May morning, when the jingle of spurs and the champing of bits formed a fitting accompaniment to the song which caused the prairie dogs to pause in their burrowing, and startled the hawks in their sedate wheeling in the blue overhead!

But though the boys joked and played with their horses, causing many strange evolutions to take place on the bronchos' part, they were "out on a business trip," and from a hardly audible word drawled out by the manager the spurs would go back with a quick movement, and away would dart a rider at breakneck speed after a distant bunch of cattle—for we were out to "round up" and to overlook some stock, and to separate some for market purposes. The herd by now moving before us increased every few minutes by bunches driven in, and soon we

halted before a large cattle-trough. In this section of the country creeks and streams are conspicuous by their absence; and as cattle must drink, water is pumped up through the sandy soil by means of a species of windmill, which I trust and firmly believe brought the almighty dollar in abundance to the inventor. The water being pumped up from a narrow well, flows through a pipe into a raised open tank from six to ten feet deep, and from thence again through a pipe into the cattle-trough. Surrounding the tank is the inevitable barbed wire fence to protect it from the cattle. Well, having moved together what the manager considered a sufficient number of cattle, the boys commenced to bunch them,—that is, keep them together in one great herd,—while Jim the waggon boss started to "cut out" those required to be set apart for market purposes.

And what a picture he made! Here were horse and man moving together as one and the same creature. Now Jim, seen sitting in the ranch-house porch, or Jim lazily scraping tunes from an old fiddle, was a totally different person to Jim the cowboy, slightly leaning forward in his Texan saddle, with his wide hat-brim flapping back, with his silver spurs touching his horse's barrel, twisting and turning his foam-flecked steed through the press of semi-wild cattle at full speed, with his clear eye fixed on the one animal he was after. And Jim's horse too—a large white-legged dun, springing like a buck beneath the spur, wheeling at a touch, disappearing for a moment into the sea of tossing horns, always to emerge again out of the rising dust, following closely at the rear of the "cut-out" steer!

The impression made on my mind during that morning's "round-up" was a series of pictures of the finest and most active movements of horses and men and cattle. And it was catching too, and almost unconsciously I found myself in company with some sun-tanned son of the "Lone Star State," racing after and turning back into the main herd some animal that was trying to break away. After a sufficient number of cattle had been cut out, the rest were allowed to spread, and we started back with the market-bunch.

At dinner that day Red Jack informed me he was "a-going to grease windmills" that afternoon. I didn't know quite so much of that pastime as I do now, so I went with him. I hadn't backed a horse for some time before that morning's ride with the cattle, and we had been in the saddle since six, so after about ten miles or so I grew intensely interested as to the time it would take to get to windmill number one. "Oh, merely a matter of about another ten miles," said Jack, "and thar's a coyote; let's run him." Away we went. Old Blood Eye, my steed, seemed to know what was wanted, and the way she tucked her legs up and bolted after that wolf, dodging or jumping the prairie dog holes, was a caution. That wolf was apparently just *strolling*, with a yard and a half of tongue hanging out of his jaws; but in a second he, as Mark Twain describes it, "made a hole in the atmosphere" far away out of range of any revolver that is made.

At last we got to the windmills, and Red Jack took his oil-can, climbed up, and oiled the works. I remember this well, because the wind was blowing, and what oil the mill lost I got! Again we mounted, and again crossed miles of sand and "skeet" bush to the next barbed-wire surrounded prairie pasture, talking of many things, and occasionally varying the monotony of the ride with a breakneck race or a chase after the wily and seductive coyote. Three windmills were oiled that afternoon, and when the job was finished we turned to a small clump of trees, the only grove I ever saw on those arid Texas plains, and lay down in the grateful shade. I won't say I was tired—that's not the word for it. I lit my pipe, and Jack told of incidents "by flood and field." Of Indian outbreaks, when the Navajoes "jumped out on the war path"; of encounters with these gentry, and their ghastly work; of settlers butchered and homesteads burnt; of "big fights," as he called them; of Mexican horse-racing; and of other things both wild and tame, for Jack knew his South-West well and had "seen things." We discussed civilisation, which Jack voted a fraud (though, personally, I could have done with a soft padded chair just then), and of the various subjects that men speak of whenever they are thrown together, be it in a city club-room or away out in the wilds.

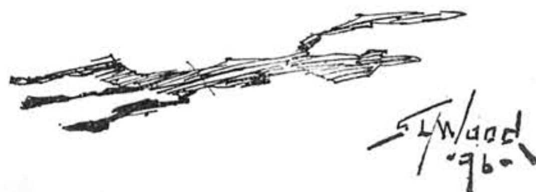
There was little romance about this red-haired son of the West. He didn't tell me any love stories, like the cowboy in the novel generally does when he is alone with a tenderfoot chum; there was no "only one girl in the world for me" touch to add sentiment to the conversation. In fact, he expressed in a pretty outspoken way a good all-round unblushing devotion to the whole of the gentler sex. And all the while the Western wind blew, as it only *can* blow, on

"JIM THE COWBOY, SLIGHTLY LEANING FORWARD IN HIS TEXAN SADDLE, WITH HIS WIDE HAT-BRIM FLAPPING BACK, TWISTED AND TURNED HIS FOAM-FLECKED STEED THROUGH THE PRESS OF SEMI-WILD CATTLE."

those Texan plains, and the hawks wheeled overhead, and the two horses swished at the flies with their long tails and wondered at the smoke-wreaths curling from an English pipe.

We rode home in the glow of sunset, *personally* very happy, very tired, very hungry, and very, very stiff. The branding at this ranch had taken place the week before my arrival, and the days slipped by with incidents very similar to those already mentioned. One morning, hearing that a cattle owner was "in town" and short-handed for someone to help at the branding of his stock, I forthwith stuffed my few belongings into my bag, bade farewell to my cowboy friends who turned out *en masse* to say good-bye, again climbed into the two-horse buggy, and started back to the settlement.

This time I offered my very feeble services as amateur cow-puncher, artist, or "friend, philosopher, and"—but no, *not* "guide"—to a man whose name I didn't even know, for Experience, with a big E, and for "fun"—the fun of drinking alkali water and eating fat underdone bacon mixed with dust, of sleeping in the sand to a lullaby of prairie wolf howls; the fun of galloping after cattle and punching the brand on colts and calves. And taking it all together, it was fun, real fun too!



HOW *not* TO DO IT!

Fig. 2.

Fig. 1.

THE subject of book-markers, which at the first glance seems to present so little field for inquiry, on investigation opens out much that is distinct and interesting.

There are few of us who have not seen and laughed at the modern advertisements that take this form. Catch up any magazine or new volume, and from its leaves will fall out some kind of book-marker; either it is a long printed strip of paper or a picture card. The coloured cards are generally the most amusing. We meet with three black babies reposing upon downy pillows, or three fair Saxon children looking pictures of health and beauty. An Indian seated on the top of a palm tree under the shade of a red umbrella invites our attention to a cordial, which if we consume we may venture to hope that we too will be given strength to climb palm trees and obtain 1e1 umbrellas. Again we come across the stalwart policemen, or poodles black before using a certain soap and white after its application, men's heads whose bumps indicate a hereditary craving for certain inventions, and many other amusing designs. Besides the above-mentioned there are the magic book-markers that give us pictures of pretty children asleep before their dinners; but hold the picture to the light and all are awake and hungry, or a ragged boy rushes madly along with a missing word competition, which word can be found out by holding the papei in one particular way. The beauty and novelty of many of these designs are so good, that were it not for the disfigurement they suffer from the enormous announcements on them of the article they advertise, they would form an excellent collection of well-executed drawings; but this defect in them prevents their being available for permanent book-markers, and still leaves that field open for ladies and children to show their skill in.

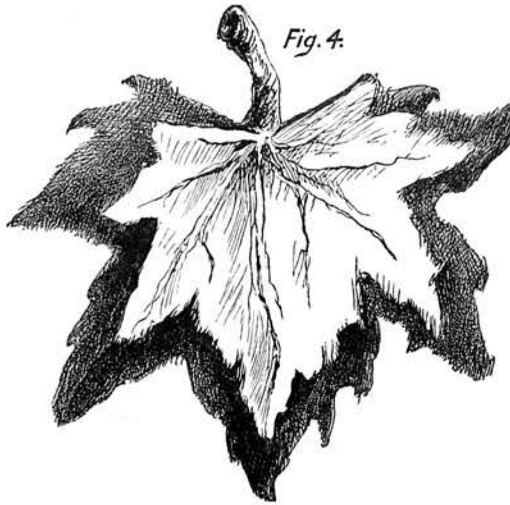


Fig. 4.

We believe that the practice of using ornamental book-markers dates from the time when the law ordained that the daily lessons should be read from the Bible in churches in the English tongue, and that Bibles should be accessible to the people in all churches. In some old churches (such as Wimborne) a large Bible chained to the wall is still to be seen, whose worn and browned leaves are evidence of how it was consulted when books were only within the reach of the wealthy, and which were so prized that in the sixteenth century they were worn suspended by leathern straps to men's girdles. In an old wardrobe account of Queen Mary of England, a little book to hang to her girdle is mentioned. This book is bound in gold, set with rubies and clasped with a single diamond. Books so scarce and precious to their owners needed no book-markers; they had but one book to study, and remembered where they left off in it. It is the multiplication of books and the habit that has grown upon us all of reading several simultaneously that has weakened our memories and created the modern demand.

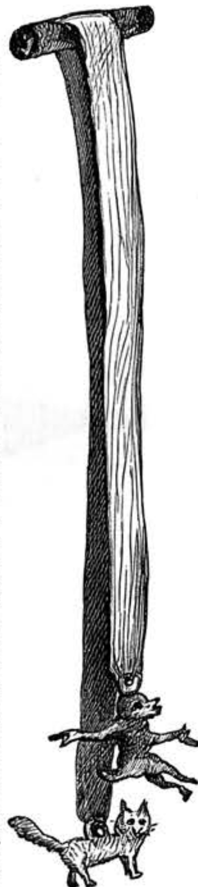


Fig 3.

Fig. 5.

In our illustrations we have endeavoured to put before our readers both religious and secular specimens, and some of the very earliest kinds as well as the latest Parisian novelty. With the exception of Fig. 2, every one of these designs can be carried out by home-workers. Fig. 2 is introduced as a type of book-marker used in the eighteenth century. It is of silver, very thin and well finished, and is seven inches long. It slips into a book without hurting it, and combines a cutter and a marker in one. Fig. 1 is a copy of the latest French craze, and to be met with in most Parisian shops with gold or silver pendants, and costing forty-five francs. It is easily made in much cheaper materials. Its two pendants are a cutter and an ancient and rather heavy coin. The cutter can be bought in metal for sixpence, in silver for two shillings, and needs but a ring obtainable at any jeweller's soldered on to it. A silver coin, such as a George III. shilling or five shilling piece makes the second pendant. The ribbon is made long enough to pass twice through the book, so that two places are marked, and both ornaments hang clear of the leaves.

Fig. 6.

Fig. 7.

Fig. 3 is a marker somewhat like the last-mentioned. This is made of a long piece of ribbon affixed to an

Fig. 8.

ivory roller, and for its pendants little tiny animals are used. These little animals can be bought in china, in metal, in bronze, and in silver, according to the taste and means of the purchaser. In some cases the rings are already attached, in others they have to be soldered on.

Fig. 4 is a form of book-marker much used in America; it is either made from natural maple, oak, or lime trees, or from thin leather. The natural leaves require picking before they show any signs of decay, and drying between sheets of blotting-paper. When quite stiff they are sized with a coating of isinglass size and tied together at their stems with fine invisible cap wire. For making them in leather, take a piece of basil leather and outline upon it from natural leaves the two pieces required, taking care to make one leaf larger than the other. Cut the outline out with sharp scissors, and then put the leaf into cold water until it is moist. Place the damp leaf on a drawing board and copy on to it all the veins of the natural leaf, either using a knitting-needle or fine embroidery scissors. Having marked out the veins, pinch them up at the back to make them stand up in the front. The veins pressed over a hot knitting-needle will generally turn out successfully. Where they are too fine for this process the leaf should lie face downwards in the hand, and the veins be pushed out with a blunt stiletto. Let the leaves dry and then stiffen them. The easiest stiffening is made by dissolving gelatine in enough warm water to make it liquid and brushing this over the leaves. When they are both stiff and dry, glue with strong glue their two stalks together, and finish with a little bow of China ribbon tied round the stalks.

Fig. 9.

Fig. 5 can either be executed with leather, brass, or woodwork. Both these arts are well-known, but as they can only be practised by ladies who have learnt them and possess the right tools it would be waste of space to describe the processes necessary.

We now come to the very large number of markers that can be made from cardboard or thick cartridge paper, and that can be painted in oil or water-colours, etched with pen and ink, or formed by coloured scraps being pasted to strong paper and cut to shape. Many of our readers may not be aware that tube oil colours can be employed in painting brown paper, the difficulty of preventing the oil they are mixed with from running beyond its correct margin being done away with, either by mixing the tints with Miss Turck's Florentine medium, or by using a good deal of turpentine. Fig. 6 and Fig. 9 are specimens of flat book-markers that merely lie between the pages. They are cut out in duplicate from thick white or brown paper, and coloured upon both sides, either giving the back of the dog as well as his face, or two faces, the first being the most effective. The dog is coloured white with tan-coloured ears and markings; the fence he is looking through should be painted in shades of brown and green. The little mountebank of Fig. 9 requires very gaily-coloured clothes. When the cartridge paper is painted and dry, glue the back and front together. Figs. 7 and 8 are artistic varieties of the old book-marker cut from a piece of cardboard and doubled. In both the width at the top of the marker is

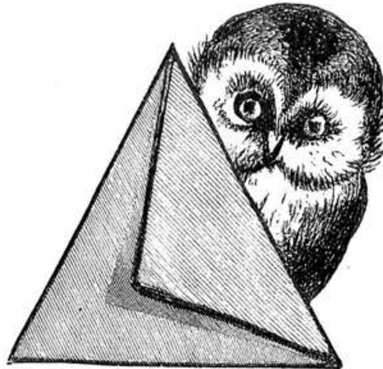


Fig. 10.

carefully preserved, and the ends graduated. These markers look best etched in pen and ink, and they can also be carried out by pasting scrap pictures on to their cardboard and cutting them as shown. Animals' heads of all shapes and sizes, full-faced and in profile, will form a finish to this description of marker, it merely being necessary to select a fairly broad head. Fig. 10 is not a doubled book-marker, but is made of a single sheet of cartridge paper cut as shown in the centre of the triangle. The owl looks well etched, and its back given on the wrong side. It also is effective painted in brown or sepia shades of colour. Fig. 11 is the picture of a fan, and is intended for little children to manufacture. These kinds of fans and many similar designs are constantly given us in tradesmen's advertisements, and it amuses and keeps a child quiet, to paste such prints upon paper and cut them out when dry, and as there is only a very simple outline, this is not difficult. To keep children interested as well as amused, there is no incentive greater than telling them that they are employed in useful work, and in finding for them something they can accomplish, and that can be utilised when completed. Fig. 12 s another design for a folded card. The under part of the card is a plain square, the upper only cut out as shown and painted in water-colours. The margin is coloured a pale soft-green or gilded with gold powder. The flowers are white, shading to

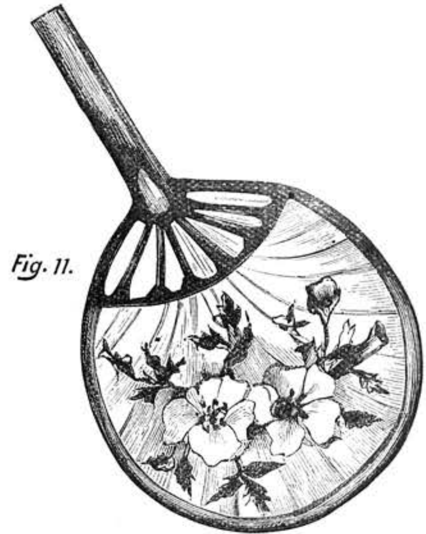


Fig. 11.

yellow pink, the centres are yellow, shading to brown. The buds are pink, white, and rose shades. This is a very pretty shape for a marker, and can be adapted to most flower designs. Such flowers as lilacs, acacias, wisterea, tulips, roses, and carnations all look well when sketched falling down from one side across an open space. A certain knowledge of painting is necessary to correctly colour flowers, but the copies obtainable from Christmas cards and guides to flower-painting are numerous.

We now turn to the book-markers used for religious books. Fig. 13 is one of a series used to mark a masonic Bible. It belongs to a set of six markers, and each is adorned with one of the well-known masonic emblems. (The star, lyre, cross, triangle, double triangle, and death's-head and cross-bones.) Below the emblems are printed directions as to the verses in the Bible to be read at consecrations, processions, and on ordinary occasions, also short homilies upon the duty and godly living required from members of this ancient religious community.

Fig. 15 is a book-marker made with perforated cardboard in the form of a Maltese cross. It is intended for use about devotional works, and is attached to a long and broad ribbon fringed out at the ends. Besides the Maltese cross, the nine-pointed star, the double triangle, and the archbishop's cross are made in this material. The aim of the worker is to cut out layers

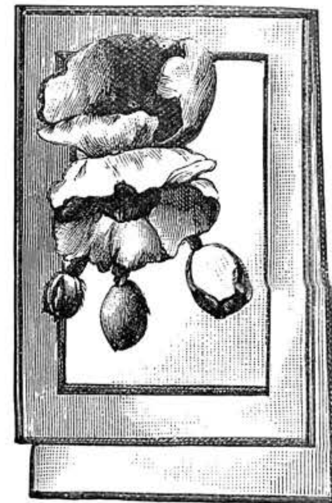


Fig. 12.

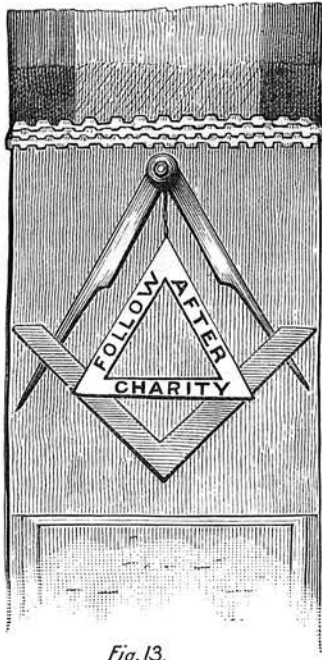


Fig. 13.

upon layers of perforated cardboard, each layer slightly smaller than its predecessor, and to gum these one above the other together, so that the design is highly raised in the centre, and much smaller there than at its base. A certain amount of care is needed when gumming these pieces to each other, as without great neatness the bits do not lie straight, and unless colourless gum (made by melting the white pieces of gum arabic in warm water) is employed, marks are left on the design should it overflow, but as these markers are very handsome when made, and are not expensive, they take a high place in their sphere.

We now come to church book-markers, which are in reality a study in themselves, so beautifully and carefully are they now made. The stout ribbed ribbon on which they are embroidered or applied, varies in width from one to three inches, and must be of one of the five ecclesiastical colours—crimson, blue, green, white and violet. To complete a set of church book-markers, three double book-markers of each of these five colours are necessary, as the markers are changed at the various church seasons with the altar cloths. White is the colour used for the greatest of the church festivals, namely, Christmas and Easter, red, for martyrs and Pentecost, violet for Advent and Rogation days and Ember weeks, and green for all Sundays and weekdays that do not fall upon any of the above periods or days.

The length of ribbon and its width is governed by the size of the church book; thus an altar book only requires a yard of ribbon, a Bible a yard and a quarter. All the markers are double, and have a barrel or register dividing them equally into two ends. This register is generally bought at a church embroidery shop for four shillings and sixpence, as it is covered with a network of silk or gold made over a wooden mould, and could not be neatly imitated by private hands. The devices used for ornamenting church markers should be very simple, but must be kept strictly to devices known to be used by the church. The I. H. S. surrounded by an oval, the cross of Calvary, the Latin, or Maltese cross. The cross combined with the anchor of hope, the single or double triangle, the crowned I. H. S. are some of the best known. They can generally be bought in cardboard cut to the right size for working, and as it is most important that they should be well and accurately drawn before they are embroidered, a good outline of them is a necessity. To work a church book-marker, frame a piece of strong fine linen in an embroidery frame. Tack well down to this foundation the last ten inches of the ribbon, sewing the ribbon to the linen only at the former edges, sew the cardboard design to the ribbon, five inches from the edge, and then cover the cardboard with even lines of gold thread or purse silk. Embroider the other end of the ribbon with some other device but in a similar manner; the embroidery on this must be on the reverse side of the ribbon. Cut away the linen foundation first from the frame and next from the under-side of the work where it is not required, and turn back the piece of ribbon left at the edge over the wrong side of the work so as to completely hide it. A little of the ravelled-out silk from the ribbon itself should be used for hemming it together, as extreme neatness about the joining is necessary. A fringe of gold or silk matching the materials used on the embroidery is sewn on to the ends of the ribbon. Some people embroider both sides of the ribbon, and need no turned backpiece when this is done. Each device is worked on linen in an embroidery frame, is cut from the frame and the ribbon being carefully stretched, the work is *appliquéd* to it, and a line of gold cord fastened or couched round the outlines to hide the fine stitches that secure the linen and silk together.

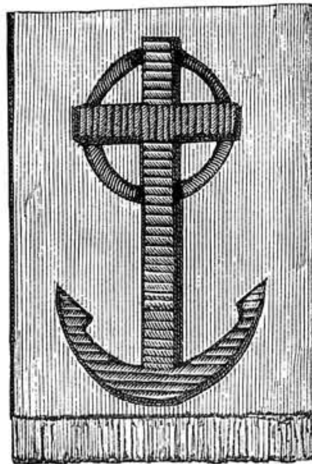


Fig. 14.

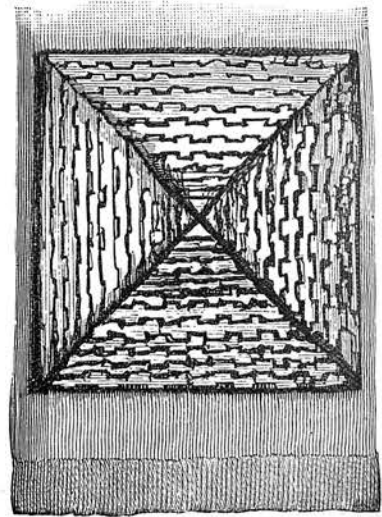


Fig. 15.

B. C. Saward.

SOME FOREIGN SWEET DISHES, AND HOW TO MAKE THEM.

FRIED RICE.

Prepare rice and milk with a little salt, as for a rice pudding, and cook till firm. Then sprinkle a wooden board with flour, spread on it the rice about the thickness of a finger, sift over it flour, and then lightly roll with a rolling-pin so that the rice is quite even. When it is cold cut it into squares, and fry a golden colour. As soon as they are done sprinkle with sugar, and serve hot or cold, with a spoonful of apricot jam on each, or with a cream sauce handed in a sauce-boat.

CLARET SHAPE.

Stew five ounces of sago in three-quarters of a pint of claret until the sago becomes quite transparent, add to this, when done, as much wine, sugar, and rum as is liked for flavouring, and cook these together until the mixture begins to get thick; then pour into a mould and let it stand all night in a cool place. Turn out on a dish and serve with whipped cream round it.

"AUFLAUF" OF JELLY.

Take a quarter of a pound of good jelly—the remains of a shape will do—and two ounces of sifted sugar; beat them well together for half an hour. Take the whites of nine eggs, beat them till stiff, stir into the jelly lightly, and immediately put into a silver or china dish and bake in the oven (which must not be too hot) for nearly half an hour, until it becomes a nice golden colour. One can tell best that the "Auflauf" is done if, when the dish is held a little on one side, it does not run out, but remains firm.

ITALIAN CREAM CHEESE.

One and a half pints of thick sweet cream, three lemons, of which the rind must be rubbed on sugar, as much sugar as is liked, and the juice of the lemons pressed through a cloth, and four tablespoonfuls of rum. Whisk altogether in a basin until it is firm, then spread a piece of muslin in the colander, and pour the mixture in, spread it quite even with a spoon, and stand for a night in a cool place. The colander must be stood on a plate to catch the liquid that will drop from the cheese, and before serving the cheese it must be carefully turned out of the colander on to a flat plate.

MY SCHOOL-DAYS.

By E. NESBIT.

PART XI.

THE happy memories of that golden time crowd thickly upon me. I see again the dewy freshness as of an enchanted world, that greeted us when we stole down, carrying our shoes in our hands long before the rest of the household was astir. I smell the scents of dead leaves and wood smoke, and it brings back to me the bonfires on autumn evenings when we used to play at Red Indians and sit round the fire telling stories, and when that palled, dig out from the grey and red ashes the potatoes we had put there to roast, and eat the half-cooked, blackened, smoke-flavoured dainties with keenest appreciation; the rare days when we went to Dinard and paddled in the shallow waters of the bay between blue sky and gold sand, picking limpets from the rocks and wishing for wooden spades, which Dinard then, at least, did not produce.

A part of the infinite charm of those days lies in the fact that we were never bored, and children are bored much more often and much more deeply than their elders suppose.

I remember an occasion when some well-meaning friends persuaded my mother that my education was being neglected. I was sent to a select French school, Mademoiselle Fauchet's in Dinan, but owing to some misunderstanding I arrived five days before the other girls. Mademoiselle Fauchet kindly consented to overlook the mistake and keep me till the other girls arrived. I had a paint-box which pleased me for the first day, but the boredom of the other four days is branded on my memory in grey letters. Mademoiselle Fauchet was busy in visiting her friends and receiving them. She took me out for a serious walk every day. We walked for an hour, and then Mademoiselle Fauchet returned to her visiting and I to the bare schoolroom. I had brought few books with me and these I devoured in an hour or two. There were no books in the schoolroom but lesson-books, thumbed, dog's eared and ink-stained. There was no one to talk to save the severe cook, who was kind to me in her way but didn't understand children. There was a grey-walled garden full of fruit that I must not touch, and a locked book-case in Mademoiselle Fauchet's *salon*, full of books that I must not read.

I was not conscious of being unhappy, only bored, bored to extinction. On the fourth day I persuaded Mademoiselle Fauchet to vary our prim walk round the town. She asked me where I would like to go, and I said La Fontaine.

Mademoiselle Fauchet meant to be kind according to her lights, but she was the ideal schoolmistress, grey-haired, prim, bloodless; however she conceded this to me and I was grateful. We started for La Fontaine.

La Fontaine is one of the show places of Dinan, as it has a natural fountain of mineral water. There is a casino where balls and *fêtes* and merry-makings are held, where bands play and little coloured lamps glimmer in the trees. All this awakened no associations, stirred nothing in me, for I had never been to a *fête* at La Fontaine, but below the platform on which the casino was built, ran a stream, our stream, our Nile, on its way to join the river ——. The sight of it was too much for me. I remembered our happy exploring parties, the muddy dams we had built across it; I thought of the rabbits and the garden at home, and my brothers and my mother, and in the midst of one of mademoiselle's platitudes on the beauty of the scene, I began to run. Mademoiselle Fauchet called after me, she even ran a little, I believe, but the legs of fifty are not a match for the legs of ten. I ran faster and faster down the avenue of chestnuts. I reached our meadow where our stream ran just the same as in the days when I was free to make a paradise of it. I ran on and on, up the slope over the cornfield, across the road, through our own meadow, and never stopped till I flung myself into my sister's arms. Then, and not till then, the fact dawned upon me that I had run away from school. I don't recall the explanations that must have followed on my return. I know that I cried a great deal, and felt that I had committed an awful crime. I couldn't explain my feelings to myself, but I knew that in the same circumstances I should have done the same again, though I wept heartfelt tears of penitence for having done it at all. I think my mother must have understood something of what I went through, for she did not send me back.

Another period of acute boredom came to me some years later when I went to stay with some friends of my mother's in the north of London. They lived in a dreary square apart from the main thoroughfare, so that if you looked out over the brown wire blinds you never saw anything pass but butchers' and bakers' carts. If I went for a walk, the sordid ugliness of Islington outraged the feelings of a child who had always found her greatest pleasures and life's greatest beauties in the green country. The people with whom I was staying were the kindest-hearted people in the world; they would have done anything to please me if they had only known what I wanted, but they didn't know, that was just it.

The dining-room was mahogany and leather with two books in it, the Bible and Family Prayers. They stood on the side-board, flanked on one side by a terra-cotta water-bottle oozing sad tears all day into a terra-cotta saucer, and on the other by a tea-caddy. Upstairs in the drawing-room, which was only used on Sundays, were a few illustrated gift-books, albums, and types of beauty arranged on a polished, oval, walnut centre table. The piano was kept locked. There were a few old bound volumes of *Good Words*, which I had read again and again.

The master of the house, a doctor, was, my mother tells me, a man of brains, but I only saw him at meals and then he seldom spoke. The lady of the house had a heart full of kindness, and a mind full of court circular, she talked of nothing else. Her daughters were kind to me in their way, and the games I had with them were my only relaxation. The doctor talked very occasionally of his patients, and this interested me. One night I went into the surgery and found the bottles of medicine which his assistant had made up, standing in a row waiting for their white paper wrappers. I didn't in the least realise what I was doing when I thought to escape from my boredom by mixing the contents of these bottles in a large jug, and then in partially filling up the bottles again with the mixture. When I had filled and corked them all, I slipped away; it was done in pure mischief with no thought of consequences; but when I woke that night in bed and suddenly remembered that I had heard that medicines that were given for some complaints were bad for others, and absolutely harmful, my heart stood still. Suppose some poor sick person died, whom Dr. —— would have cured, because I had mixed his medicine with something else. I fully resolved to own up the next morning, but the next morning I reflected that perhaps some of the people that had taken my mixture might die of it and then I should be hanged for murder; it seemed to me wiser to wait and see what happened. If any one did die, and Dr. —— were accused of poisoning his patients, I would come forward in the court of justice, as people did in the books, and own that I, and I alone, had been to blame, making my confession among the sympathetic tears of usher and jury, the judge himself not remaining dry-eyed. This scene so much appealed to me that I almost forgot that before it could be enacted somebody would have to die of my mixture. When I remembered this I wept in secret; when I thought of the scene in which I should nobly own my guilt, I secretly exulted. I was not bored now. Whatever else might be the effect of my mixtures, they had certainly cured my boredom. Day after day passed by in spasms of alternate remorse and day-dreaming; every day I expected Dr. —— to announce at dinner that some of his patients had breathed their last in inexplicable circumstances, but he never said anything of the kind, and when a week had passed, I was convinced that so good a doctor never gave anybody any medicine that could do them any harm in any condition, and that one of his medicines was as good for any complaint as any others. Whether this was so, or whether someone had been a witness of my act in the surgery, and had re-made the mixtures, I shall never know, but in the re-action following my anxiety, boredom settled down upon me more heavily than ever. I wrote a frantic letter to my mother begging her to take me away, for I was so miserable, I wished I was dead. Not having any stamps, I gave this letter to Mrs. —— to post. I don't suppose she thought she was doing any harm when she opened and read it, and I hope she was gratified by its contents. She added a note to my mother begging her to accede to my request, and to take me away at once. It was years before I forgave her for reading that letter, and to this day I am afraid she has never forgiven me for writing it.

My mother was at Penshurst at the time; I was sent down to her in deep disgrace, and my mother received me with gentle reproaches that cut me to the heart. My sister was exceedingly angry with me, perhaps with some cause, and pointed out to me how ungrateful it was to repay Mrs. —— by writing such a letter. I defended myself stoutly.

"I wrote it for mamma and not for her," and though I was sorry for having hurt the feelings of one I knew had tried to be kind to me, yet I fear the verdict of my unregenerate heart was, "serve her right." I felt that I was being unjustly blamed, and though I was sorry I would not say so, and the next morning I wandered up through Penshurst churchyard, and through a little wicket-gate into the park, where the splendour of a blaze of buttercups burst upon me. The may-trees were silver-white, the skylarks singing overhead; I sat down under a white may-tree. The spirit of the spring breathed softly round me, and when I got up to go back I was in love and charity with all men and all women except Mrs. ——.

"I am sorry if I have been naughty," I said to my sister; "I didn't mean to be, but——"

"That will do," she said, skilfully stopping my confidences; "now I do hope you are going to try and be a good girl, and not make dear mamma unhappy."

"I will be good," I said; "oh, I will indeed!" And as long as I stayed among the golden buttercups and silver may-bushes, I believe I was moderately good.

(*To be concluded.*)

THE ENGLISHMAN AT HOME IN PARIS.

BY A LATE RESIDENT.

COMMUNICATION with Paris is now so rapid, frequent, and inexpensive, that Britons from the most remote parts of our islands contrive some time or another to visit it, and some are as well acquainted with its beauties as they are with those of London, Dublin, or Edinburgh. Comparatively few, however, know it as a place of residence, and many are disposed to picture it to themselves as a sort of earthly Paradise—a very Utopia of delights. A few facts, from the experience of one who not long since spent some years in the French capital, may be of some utility and interest to any that think of making it their abode. Few things more astonish the untravelled Englishman, when he first issues from the railway terminus in Paris, than the gigantic height and size of the ordinary abodes of the Parisians. Towering Babel-like to six or seven storeys, built of solid white stone around a court-yard, which in the more aristocratic quarters is entered by a wide and handsome doorway, they present a very imposing and in many cases palatial appearance. At first we wonder where the poor, or even people of limited means, can find a lodging. But we soon discover that these lordly mansions are the common abodes of from twenty to forty families, who occupy separate suites of apartments on the different floors, and that, contrary to the usual order of things, the poorer they are the higher they rise in the world.

The tenants of the first three storeys (*étages*) are more or less wealthy in proportion to the character of the quarter. Lifts have unhappily not yet been introduced into private houses, so that all who can, generally spare themselves the pains of mounting to the upper storeys, while artisans with their families, if employed in the neighbourhood, as well as domestic servants, have to be content with small rooms under the roof.

Such are the homes of most of the Parisians. Only millionnaires can afford the solitary grandeur of an *hôtel* or house of their own. But an *appartement*, it will be understood, is a set of rooms—often spacious and lofty—on one floor; drawing-room, dining-room, bed-rooms, kitchen, &c., are all found together.

This is evidently a great change from the typical Englishman's ideal of a home. It is not that well-secured castle in which he delights to entrench himself. If he be a University man, perhaps his thoughts are carried back to college days, when, bent on hard work, he was wont to "sport his oak" and banish all intruders. But then he was not the happy Benedict with a merry tribe of playful youngsters ready to burst in upon his hours of business or study, through one of the many doors of this domestic labyrinth. No doubt it is very convenient to have all one's belongings thus within easy reach. Once, too, we have performed our daily pilgrimage up the public staircase, we have no more painful steps to climb before we retire to rest, nor on our way to dinner. The servants also are within easy reach—perhaps sometimes too near, when they take refuge from their diminutive kitchen in the *salle-à-manger* during the intervals between meal-hours. Then there is the perfect immunity from the solicitations of beggars, street musicians, *et hoc genus omne.* Nor on a fifth or sixth are you likely to be disturbed by unexpected callers, except they really desire your society or help. But there is another side to the question. The postman never pays you a visit, except to deliver a registered letter for which your receipt is required. All letters, &c., are left in the porter's lodge, of which more anon. And if you value a quiet life, you must reckon with your neighbours, who are all round you, above, below, and at your side. Should you be of a contemplative disposition or in delicate health, this is no light matter. One may be given to loud vociferous talking; an unhappy couple may keep you awake at night with their noisy bickerings, or a more amiable household may entertain you at unseasonable hours with their not too harmonious music, while a fourth may be of unpleasingly convivial habits. The writer has a distressing remembrance of two such cases in his own experience. In the one, his next-door neighbour was a Russian count (?) mysteriously mixed up with French politics, who occasionally gave entertainments of an extensive and decidedly fast character, which lasted till "the rosy-fingered morn appeared." In another house he was the helpless victim of the incessant wailings of the peculiarly fretful child of a poor family above his head, which could never be pacified until he sent up a franc to pay, as he said, *pour tranquillité.* Such are some of the drawbacks to life in an *appartement*, and most domesticated Englishmen will agree with the writer in deciding against the arrangement.

But we turn to another feature of French home life. Good *servants* are universally admitted to be a prime factor in domestic comfort. At home we hear loud and

frequent complaints about the shortcomings of the race. Certain it is that we seldom meet with those zealous, devoted attendants, not uncommon in the days of our fathers, whose interests were so bound up with their employers' welfare that nothing but death could part them from the family which they had entered in their youth. Their successors, it is said, are more selfish, self-sufficient, grasping, not to speak of graver faults. These charges we need not here attempt to discuss. There is, of course, another side of the argument. There is hope that a good master or mistress will sooner or later obtain good and faithful servants, or will succeed in moulding the raw material in some measure to their tastes. But in Paris the difficulty is much greater. The system of engaging them on a week's notice from either side tends to make the connection much more official and less binding, while it disposes both sides to too easy and frequent changes. Very slight misunderstandings provoke a hasty rupture, and the offending or aggrieved Charles or Marie instantly prepares to go in search of pastures new, and soon obtains another situation. Amongst ourselves, on the other hand, the month's notice gives time for cooler reflection, and allows the parties to come to a fresh agreement that may result in a lasting attachment.

Another element of weakness is the common practice of sending the cook each morning to purchase in the market or shops the provisions required for the day's consumption, and allowing her to obtain a five per cent. commission, or a sou in the franc. This offers a strong temptation to make bargains prejudicial to her master's interests, and accept inferior articles. Many a servant, far too honest to pilfer even a sou, much less anything of more value, will think herself perfectly justified in defrauding her employers in this way. In fact, the code of ethics amongst the lower orders of the French is very peculiar. Lying is regarded as quite a venial sin, if a sin at all. With regard to the veriest trifles they will invent the most plausible stories, and smile with perfect innocence and self-complacency if found out.

A girl from the country, who had repeatedly shocked her English mistress by her deliberate falsehoods, was seriously asked whether she did not think it wrong to deceive her, and with the utmost *naïveté* replied, "Well, madam, I was taught so when I was a child, but now it's quite another thing."

Some English families, finding such principles very objectionable, endeavour to overcome the difficulty by importing English servants. But the wisdom of this course is very doubtful. The best prefer to remain at home, and if any of a better sort are induced to come, their ignorance of the language and customs is a serious bar to their usefulness. One whom the writer brought over, being English to the backbone, would make no effort to learn French, and regarded the natives as ignorant barbarians with whom it was hopeless to converse. Once she thought she had achieved a great feat in mastering the French for turnips (*navets*), and when asked on her return from the market how she had sped, she said, with an air of mingled triumph and contempt, "Oh! yes, ma'am, I asked for *ruffians* (navvies), and they gave them me at once." This same remarkable genius appeared the first Sunday arrayed in a bonnet of bright ultramarine blue with white feathers, and a necktie of the most flaming red. She was much surprised and not a little flattered at the admiring gaze of all beholders, which she took as a compliment on her personal appearance, and was a good deal mortified on learning afterwards that her tricolour costume was the true source of the interest she had attracted, and that as she sailed along the boulevard the crowd had everywhere greeted her as "a good Republican."

We pass to a third peculiarity of French home-life of even greater importance. I refer to the *concierge*. His office is very closely interwoven with the whole of the social fabric. To say that he is a house-porter would be to give a most inadequate idea of the real meaning of the extent of his influence on domestic comfort for weal or woe. He is that and very much more. If we add that he is the landlord's resident representative, the nature of his functions will be better understood. All complaints about defects in the building—a tile off the roof, smoky chimneys, deficient water supply, a drain-trap out of order, and the like—must in the first instance, and often the last, be laid before him. He is the sole arbiter of differences amongst the tenants. Moreover, all letters, parcels, cards, messages, &c., are left with him, or—what is often worse — his wife, and according as they are favourably disposed or not will be the degree of punctuality and accuracy with which the commission is executed. Are you in want of a new servant, it is to the *concierge* that he or she will first apply for *your* character. And then alas! for the family that have failed to propitiate this potentate. They may wonder in vain why they can never get "suited," until they discover this dread secret.

But more than this. These men have a yet greater depth of influence. In the complicated web of Parisian society they often act as political spies. The *gardien de la paix*, the policeman of the quarter, may not unfrequently be seen in the closest consultation with them, and contrives to worm out of them full particulars about the antecedents and doings of each family. It is clearly, then, the part of wisdom to conciliate one in whose hands such power is reposed. This an independent Englishman is at first slow to understand. He naturally kicks against what he feels to be a violation of his rights as a subject of the British Crown. But the sooner he submits with a good grace to the inevitable, the better for him. If on first engaging an *appartement* he forgets to slip at least twenty francs into the functionary's yielding palm, he will probably find his verbal agreement null and void. From time to time, and especially each New Year's Day, a similar offering is looked for. If it be withheld, the consequences will be disastrous in the extreme. It is, however, only fair to add that, although the *concierges* hold a position eminently invidious and liable to abuse, not a few of them are on the whole honest,

sensible, obliging, anxious to do their duty well towards their landlord and his tenants alike. One notable instance I may mention from my own experience. Being obliged, in my absence from Paris during the sieges, to leave all my goods and chattels to the sole care of a *concierge* whose conduct had not always been above suspicion, I naturally felt a good deal of anxiety about them. But my fears proved groundless, for I found everything intact. The worthy fellow, to whom I had committed the key of the outer door, having patiently endured the privations and perils of those terrible months, had at the risk of his life baffled the attempts of the Communists to pillage the rooms. Had I kept the key, and not relied upon his honour, the result might have been very different.

A word on another practical matter of no slight importance may fitly close this brief sketch. I refer to the question of *economy*. There is a mistaken notion still common on this side of the Channel that one may live in Paris less expensively than at home. In some cases it may be so. Those whose position in their own country obliges them to keep up large establishments, and whose claims for hospitality are in proportion, may considerably reduce their expenditure by living where they are comparatively unknown. *Noblesse oblige* in such cases. But persons of small or even moderate means will be grievously disappointed if they think to make both ends meet any better there than at home. Their difficulties will be rather increased. Provisions of all kinds, and especially fuel, are much dearer in Paris than even in London, partly in consequence of the heavy *octroi*, or duties, levied on their admission within the city gates. Rents of *appartements*, even on the upper storeys, are higher than those of houses of corresponding size in our metropolis. Taxes, in the absence of income-tax, being chiefly indirect, except that levied on the value of the *appartement* and its furniture, are certainly lower. The scale of servants' wages, on the other hand, has risen there even more than with us. On the whole the cost of living is undoubtedly heavier. The idea that a franc is equal to a shilling is a myth long since out of date. Its value is more nearly represented by a sixpence. And, whatever other motives may induce our countrymen to emigrate to Paris, a desire to economise ought assuredly in most cases to have no weight. Higher considerations, such as the lower moral tone and the loss of many religious privileges, may well be added to the adverse side of the balance. The superiority of the climate, the peculiarly pure and bracing air, the freedom for the most part from the dismal fogs and mists for which our islands are so notorious, as well as the peculiar charms and convenience of this beautiful city, are indeed most attractive features; but they must be enjoyed by a resident at the sacrifice of many substantial advantages.

W. Burnet, M.A.

A "NICE LITTLE DINNER."

BY A. G. PAYNE, AUTHOR OF "COMMON-SENSE COOKERY," ETC.

THE present season of the year is essentially one of good cheer—of the good old-fashioned English sort, consisting more of substantial dishes suitable to cold weather than of light French entrées, which are in reality adapted for warm climates rather than an English Christmas. It is not often that our cold season sets in so early as it did this winter; and of all dinner parties given throughout the year, perhaps none is so well known as the nice little dinner given on the 9th of November last to a number of distinguished guests assembled at the Guildhall on the occasion of that feast of feasts, the Lord Mayor's dinner. But here let me pause—I say that feast of feasts; and let me at once explain that the chief feature of this feast, and the one that makes its reputation so world-wide, is not that it gratifies the mere animal appetite, but that it affords a far higher enjoyment, namely, "the feast of reason and the flow of soul." It is not, however, my province now to enlarge upon the real *bonne-bouche* of the entertainment, the eloquence of the distinguished statesmen who annually accept the well-known hospitality of the chief of our great City dignitaries, but simply to run over the bill of fare which was placed before them on the last occasion of this almost national event, and to consider if we cannot ourselves pick up some practical hints that may benefit our own more humble establishments.

I will first give the bill of fare exactly as it was presented to the guests, who, I believe, numbered somewhere about 900 at the last great City feast on Lord Mayor's Day :—

GUILDHALL, TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 9th, 1880.

MENU.

Potages.
Tortue, et Tortue Claire.

Rôts.
Dindes à l'Anglaise.
Perdreaux. Faisans. Pluvieurs d'Or.
Oisons.

Relevés.
Petits Poulets Rôtis. Dindonneaux Piqués.
Chapons en Galantine. Dindes Braisées. Pâtés de Pigeonneaux.
Pâtés à la Périgord. Jambons de York.
Langues de Bœuf à la Moderne. Roularde d'Agneau.
Quartiers d'Agneau. Barons of Beef.

Entremets.
Salades de Homard. Buissons de Crevettes.
Gelées à la Séville, Gelées au Vin.
Crêmes à la Vanille. Chartreuses aux Fruits.
Petits Pâtés de Noël.
Meringues à la Crême. Gâteaux à la Bagatelle.
Croûtes à la Nemours. Pâtisserie à la bonne Femme.
Fruits et Glaces.

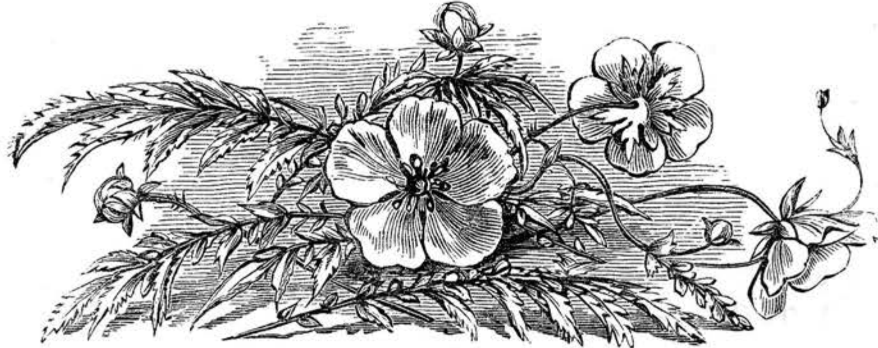
Our first impression may possibly be, why is it always necessary to have our bills of fare in a foreign language? There is, however, one crumb of comfort to John Bull, particularly seasonable, and that is that the most substantial of all the dishes in the *menu* in question seems to have no foreign equivalent. Let us first, at the present beef-eating season, congratulate ourselves on the fact that the distinguished *chef* who prepared the above repast cannot find the French for "baron of beef." Unfortunately, I observed, I wish to be practical—and while priding ourselves on our "baron," what would Mary Ann say were we to bring home a "baron of beef" for to-morrow's dinner? A good-sized "baron of beef" is like a gigantic saddle of mutton, being two sirloins joined, the weight sometimes being as much as 100 lbs.—a joint that would, to say the least, be somewhat inconvenient to roast in an ordinary close range. So let us return to our bill of fare. First, the two soups, thick and clear turtle, are, like our "baron," not easily prepared in private establishments, except turtle made from dried turtle-flesh, a description of the proper mode of making which would require an article all to itself. The next point we notice is that we have no fish, and I think those who really appreciate "turtle" will admit that this delicious amphibious creature is quite fish enough in itself for all practical purposes. Then we see that game follows. The old fashion of serving game and poultry —to many the nicest part of the dinner—after a long series of entrées, followed by joints, is here departed from, and rightly so. The *rôts* are as follows:— Turkey, roasted English fashion, partridges, pheasants, golden plover, and goslings, or, as they are more often called, green geese. I would here remind you that a green goose has no stuffing, but is cooked like a wild duck; indeed, sage and onion would be terribly out of place early in a big dinner. Next come the *relevés*— roast chickens, young turkeys larded. Turkey is a dry meat, and is much improved by being larded. Larding, I need scarcely explain, is threading little strips of fat bacon through the flesh so that a little piece of each end of the strip of fat sticks out, the centre being in the meat. This is, of course, done before roasting, and has the effect of keeping the meat moist. Remember, in larding, to think of which way the meat will be cut, and lard across, so that the strips of bacon are cut across and do not appear whole, otherwise you would have lumps of fat appear on your plate.

The next dish—*Chapons en Galantine*—is, I fear, beyond the ordinary cook's art. I will briefly describe it. It is a boned capon, stuffed with a forcemeat made from veal, fat bacon, calf's udder, mushrooms, eggs (mixed with truffle), and tongue, and a good deal of seasoning. It is tied up tight and allowed to get cold; it is then cut into thin slices, and aspic jelly is usually served with it. Braised turkey is a turkey cooked in a large stew-pan or braising-pan, the turkey being first covered over with very mild fat bacon— bacon that has never been smoked—and some stock being added, with onions, carrots, a little garlic, thyme, bay-leaves, &c. The turkey should be cooked slowly, and the liquor in which it is cooked should be strained off and reduced by boiling, and poured over it. Some vegetables boiled in the liquor may also be served with it. This is a good way, though a troublesome one, of cooking an old and tough turkey—not that we mean to insinuate that old turkeys were used on the occasion to which we refer. *Pâtés de Pigeonneaux* are simply patties made with young pigeons, and we may learn from this the well-known fact to good cooks that good pigeon-pie cannot be made from old pigeons. The young pigeons must, however, be sufficiently old to be plump. *Pâtés à la Périgord* depend chiefly upon the *Périgneux* sauce. The flesh of a young hare is very good for the purpose, simmered with sliced truffle. The sauce is made from truffle trimmings, which can now be cheaply bought in tins; these trimmings are allowed to simmer gently in some good gravy, with some lean ham, thyme, and one or two bay-leaves. The whole—*i.e.*, the meat cut up small, and the sauce, which must be reduced and thickened —is mixed up, and the patty-cases filled with it.

The ham and tongue need no comment. *Roularde d'Agneau* is a saddle of lamb boned and stuffed with forcemeat, rolled and tied up, then covered with fat bacon, and braised for some time in rich stock, in which some sweet herbs, celery, &c., have been placed. This should be allowed to get quite cold in its liquor, so as the flavour of the liquor settles in the meat, on the same principle that a ham should be allowed to get cold in the liquor in which it has been boiled. When quite cold, take out the roll, remove the stock clinging to it as well as on the fat bacon, and smooth it over with some strong stock nearly set till the outside presents an even surface. When this is again cold, egg and bread-crumb the whole, and make it hot in a very brisk oven. Some of the stock in which it was cooked can be strained and served with it, being poured round and not over it. I will pass by the quarter of lamb, the baron of beef, and the lobster salad; next follow *Buissons de Crevettes* or, literally, a bush of prawns. The best way of serving prawns, so that they look ornamental, is to cut off the end of a lemon so that it stands upright, and then stick in the prawns by the prong from the head side by side, till they assume a bell-like shape and entirely conceal the lemon. Little pieces of double parsley may be used to fill in the chinks, and parsley placed round the base of the dish. The orange jelly, wine jelly, and vanilla cream we will pass, and simply explain that *Chartreuses aux Fruits* are preserved fruits served up in a shape—*i.e.*, they are placed in a mould and turned out. The chief point to be observed is to make them keep their shape without being too much set. The next dish is very seasonable. *Petits Pâtés de Noël* is simply another name for Christmas-pies, or rather mince-pies; and as by this time the mincemeat is already made in every well-ordered household, any recipe for making it would be out of place. *Meringues à la Crême* are cases of whipped white of egg and sugar baked, hollowed out, and filled with cream. *Gâteaux à la Bagatelle* are cakes of some sort, but what sort I do not know. Probably *à la bagatelle* means they are very light

—possibly sponge-cakes. *Croûtes à la Nemours* are pieces of bread fried in butter a light brown, nice and crisp, like rusks, with a slice of some rich preserved fruit placed on them. *Pâtisserie à la bonne Femme* is another sweet about which I am not certain. Perhaps our "maids of honour" will translate it—*i.e.*, a rich sort of cheese-cake for which Richmond is famous.

I have described this famous national feast of November last to the best of my ability from simply perusing the bill of fare. I trust that I have been able to give my readers a fai: idea of it as a whole.



HOME-MADE SWEETMEATS.

I THINK to most young folks the sweetstuff made by themselves at home tastes indescribably better than that which comes from what Scotch children call a "sweetie" shop. It has, at any rate, the merit of being more wholesome. With this idea I have written out some successful recipes, which have been duly tried and approved of by an appreciative circle of girl friends, and I think, if you carefully follow them, you also will be pleased with the results.

My first shall be for that time-honoured favourite, *Toffee*. Take one pound of brown sugar, two ounces of butter, and half a teacupful of cream or milk. Put these materials into a nice clean pan, and boil, without stirring, for twenty minutes. At the end of that time find out if it is sufficiently boiled, by dropping a little into cold water, when, if it "sets," the mixture should be poured into a buttered dish or tin. The addition of five or six drops of essence of vanilla, just before it is poured out, is a great improvement.

Toffee Balls are made by taking a little of the toffee off the buttered dish before it gets too cold, and rolling small pieces tightly into balls in your fingers. When you have thus shaped the balls, roll them about on a cold plate until they are perfectly hard and cold.

If you want to have *Almond Toffee*, blanch four ounces of almonds, split them into strips, and throw them into the toffee just before it is dished, omitting the vanilla flavouring. To blanch the almonds, throw them into a basin of slightly salted boiling water, and leave them to soak for two or three minutes. Then pour off the water, and you will find the skins slip off between your fingers. Drop each almond into clear cold water, then strain and lay them in a shallow dish to dry slowly in front of the fire before using.

Everton Toffee.—For this, half a pound of golden syrup, half a pound of Demerara sugar, lemon juice to taste, and from five to six ounces of butter are required. Mix carefully the sugar and syrup, and then add the butter in little bits, stirring slowly till it is all thoroughly mixed. Then cease stirring, or the toffee will "sugar," let it boil gently till a tiny bit thrown into cold water sets. If everything is satisfactory it will be beautifully crisp, and the whole should then be poured into a tin previously well rubbed with sweet oil or butter. When it is half cold, mark it into squares.

Butter Scotch.—Put into a very clean pan one pound and a half of soft sugar, two ounces of butter, half a teaspoonful of cream of tartar, and half a teacupful of cold water. Let the whole boil for about ten minutes without stirring, then dip a spoon in cold water, pop it into the pan, and back again with its contents into cold water, when if the mixture hardens it will do. You may add, if you like, a little powdered ginger or vanilla essence just before pouring it out. Mark it into neat squares when it cools a little.

Marzipan.—Procure half a pound of almonds, two ounces of bitter almonds, and half a pound of sugar. Blanch the almonds and pound them in a mortar; clarify and cook the sugar slightly, then remove it from the fire and stir into it the almonds. Warm all together, stirring well, and taking the greatest care that it doesn't burn. When it is cooked enough (that is, when it won't adhere to the fingers), pour it out on a board sprinkled with sugar. As soon as it is cool cut it into tiny fancy shapes, stars, rings, and fingers; and, if you are anxious to make it a very "swell" goody, decorate it with preserved cherries or other dried fruits.

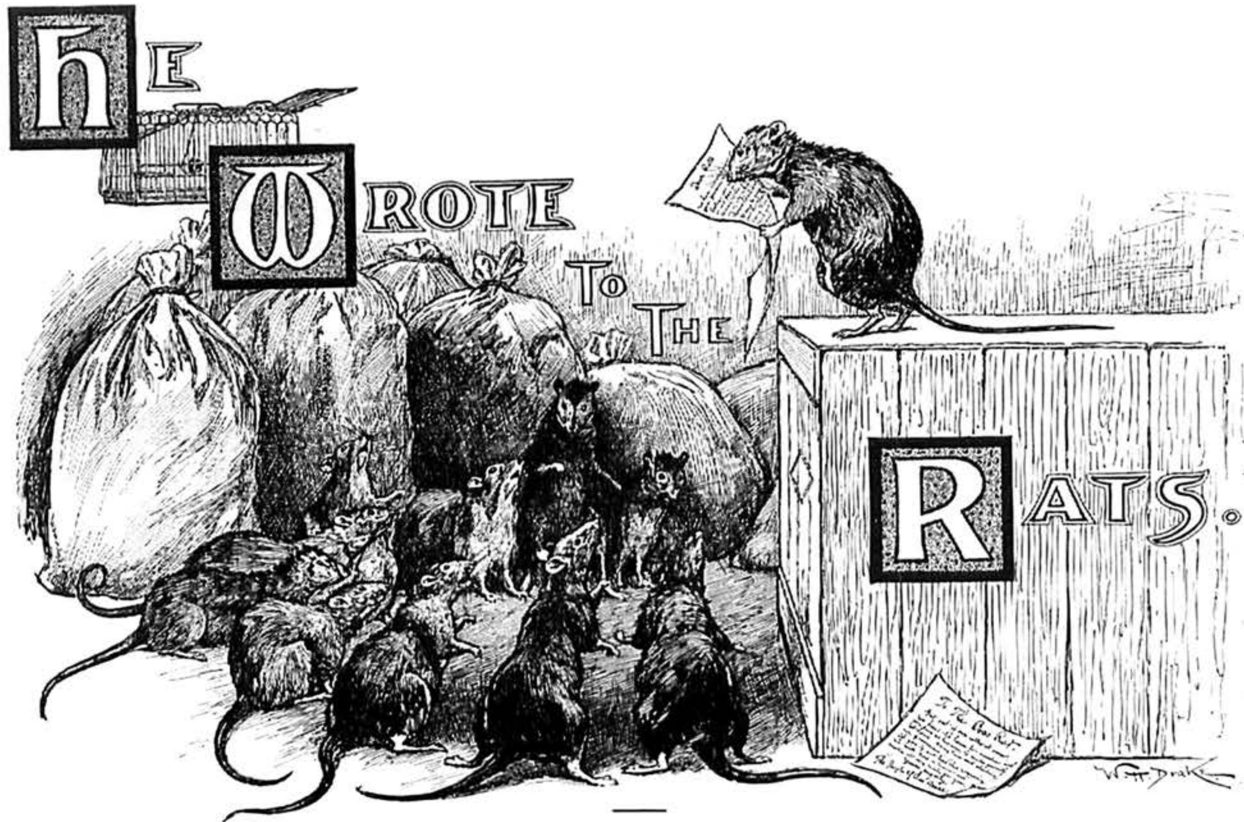
Chocolate Creams.—Take one pound of loaf sugar, put it into a saucepan, and pour some good milk or thin cream over it, as much as the sugar will absorb. Let the latter dissolve, then boil it gently for a time, until when you drop a little into cold water it candies. Do not boil it too long, or, in place of smoothly creaming, the sugar will go into minute sand-like grains. Be most careful, too, that it doesn't stick to the pan, but do not stir it till it is taken off, when it must be continually stirred until it creams. Then beat until cool, when it has to be rolled into little balls, which form the inner cream of the sweetmeat. Now put half a pound of vanilla chocolate into a jar, and place over a saucepan of boiling water to dissolve; when melted, dip the creams into it, and place them on a buttered paper to get cool.

Cocoa-nut Tablet.—Get a small fresh cocoa-nut, open one of the holes at the top, and pour out the milk into a cup; crack the shell, take out the kernel, and pare all the skin from it, then grate about half of the kernel. Dissolve half a pound of loaf sugar in a large cupful of cold water, and when it is dissolved put it on a clear moderate fire, without flame or smoke, to boil; a little of the cocoa-nut milk may be added. Allow it to boil for five or six minutes, carefully removing evcy particle of scum that rises, when the sugar should look like a thick white cream; then add the grated cocoa-nut, and let it boil for a few minutes longer, stirring it continuously from the bottom with a wooden spoon to prevent it catching. Try if it is ready by pouring a teaspoonful into a cup of cold water, when if you can gather a little soft lump at the bottom of the cup, it is sufficiently boiled. Remove it from the fire, pour it out upon a buttered plate, or sheet of clean, common note-paper previously laid in front of the fire to warm. When it is thoroughly set, but not quite cold, cut it into neatly shaped blocks. If you would like the tablet to be pink, add some drops of cochineal to the syrup while boiling, stirring to see the required tint.

Barley Sugar.—For this you require one pound and a half of fine loaf sugar broken into very small lumps and boiled over the fire in a pint of water. Keep on skimming it carefully till it looks like glue, and becomes so brittle when dropped into cold water that it snaps. Now add the juice of a lemon, and a few drops of essence of lemon, and boil the sugar up once. Stand the pan in a basin of cold water till the contents have somewhat cooled, when they may be poured out upon a shallow buttered tin; to prevent the sweetmeat spreading too much, draw it together with a knife. When it has cooled sufficiently to be handled, cut it into small pieces, and roll them into round sticks, which you can twist a little so as to make them look more like the barley sugar one buys in shops. All that remains to be done is to sift sugar lightly over the sticks when they have become perfectly cold and hard.

Fig Rock.—For this take one cupful of sugar, three-quarters of a cupful of water, and a quarter of a teaspoonful of cream of tartar. Boil till the mixture becomes an amber colour, but do not stir during the process; add the cream of tartar just before taking from the fire. Wash the figs, split them in half, and lay them flatly on a dish, pour the mixture over them, and let it stand till cold.

EDITH A. BRODIE.



By Julian Ralph.

OUR suspicions were first aroused by the disappearance of a whole beefsteak. Before that we did not know we were entertaining any rats in our cellar. When we made the discovery, we were at a loss to know how to act; but one day there came to the house a poor old woman who lives mysteriously by offering needles, and thread, and pencils, and candy of sizes and kinds that nobody likes and nobody buys. At our house she gets a cup of tea and ten cents, and, to ease her conscience, she leaves a peppermint stick for the little ones. The kitchen-girl told her of the loss of the steak.

"Well," said the mysterious old woman, "I would write a letter to the rats and they will go away. That is what we used to do when I lived at home in Germany."

Fancy the surprise of the kitchen-maid! She thought the old woman had lost her mind.

The rats became an intolerable nuisance, and the news of what the old woman had recommended was brought to me. The children were anxious to have the experiment tried.

"It can do no harm," I said, and at once drew up the following letter:

To the Boss Rat: Get out of our cellar at once. We hired this house for ourselves, and you have no business to make yourselves at home, living here and stealing our provisions. If you do not heed this warning we will keep a terrier and make it very lively for you. Yours angrily, The People of this House.

I quite prided myself on this missive. I thought it was at once logical in its argument, firm in tone, and very generous, inasmuch as the rats could see that we might have hired a terrier first and written the letter afterward. I at first put the letter in an envelope; but we all agreed afterward that even if rats could read they might not know anything about envelopes, and so I tore the cover off and laid the letter on the cellar floor with its written side up.

We then waited to see what effect it would have. Alas! the rats behaved worse than ever and robbed us of everything that suited their tastes. Then the poor old German woman came again on her rounds, and the children saw her and informed her of the failure.

"Read the letter to me," said she.

It was read to her.

"Oh, dear, dear, dear!" she exclaimed. "What an impudent letter to send to the rats! It is a mercy they have n't attacked some of the people in the house and bitten them in their beds. I could not sleep a wink in a house where such a letter had been sent to the rats."

She spoke very gravely and with evident alarm.

I inquired very particularly about her manner afterward and was told that it seemed far from a mere pretence of being vexed.

"Why!" she exclaimed. "Rats are *kings*, in their way. At least they are in Germany. They must be treated very politely. Tell your parents to write another letter at once and let it be soft and gentle and very respectful. Call them, 'Dear rats' or 'Dear friends,' and find no fault with what they do — only be sure to recommend some other place for them to go to, for it is a rule that rats will never leave a home unless they are told of a better place close by, to which they can go. Oh, dear, dear, dear! — I wonder you are not afraid to stay in the house after such a letter."

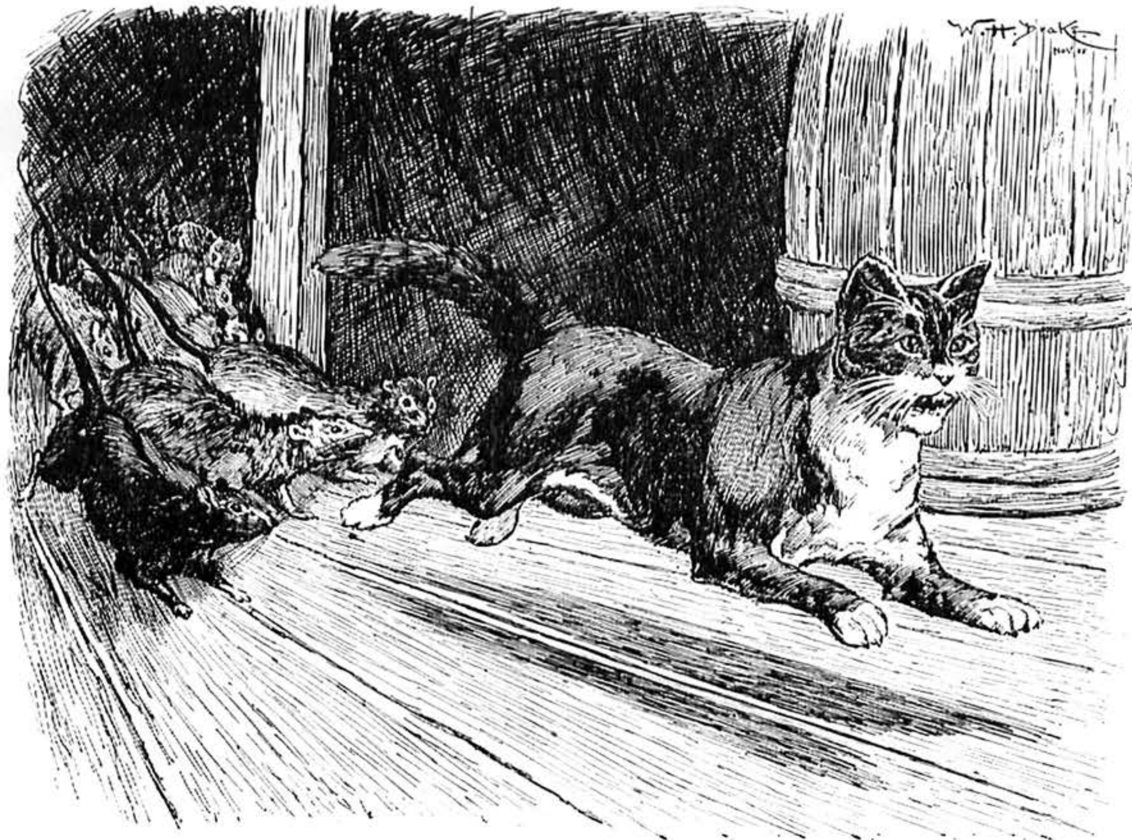
When I reached home I thought, as before, that there could be no harm in doing as the old woman said; and I confess I felt guilty of some stupidity in not having known, as every one ought to know, that politeness is always better than rudeness. There is a wealth of wisdom in the homely saying, "More flies are caught with syrup than with vinegar." It costs nothing to be kind and courteous, and as we know that more can be done among men and women by gentleness than by anger, why might not the same be true with regard to rats? Thus I reflected, and therefore I wrote this letter:

Dear Rats: We have discovered signs of your presence in our cellar. Perhaps you mean to honor us and pay us a compliment in coming to this particular cellar in a city where there are a hundred thousand such resorts. It may be news to you that there lives not far away a French family, much given to rich gravies, sweetmeats, delightful pastries, rare and high-scented imported cheese, and various other luxuries of which we know you to be fond. If you should go there, you would fare better than in our cellar. Of course, we should miss you, — but we feel certain we could bear it.

Believing, from what we see of your activity and appetites, that you are all very well and happy and that you have been benefited by our having the plumbing attended to the other day, we beg the right to sign ourselves, Yours politely,

The People of this House.

That touch about the plumbing was my own; but the phrase, "yours politely," was dictated by the children, who assured me that the word "polite" must be somewhere in the letter, in some form or other. It really took me a long while to make up my mind where to tell the rats to go, and I felt no little ashamed when at last the thought of the rich gravies and pastries led me to recommend my neighbors, the French folks. To be sure, I do not know them, and no one will ever tell them what I did; but I must confess I never would have been guilty of such an unneighborly act had I really believed the rats would have paid any attention to the letter.



"OUR TOM CAT WAS SENT INTO THE CELLAR TO DRIVE THEM OUT."

They did not. They grew more and more at home, and even became so noisy that the ladies

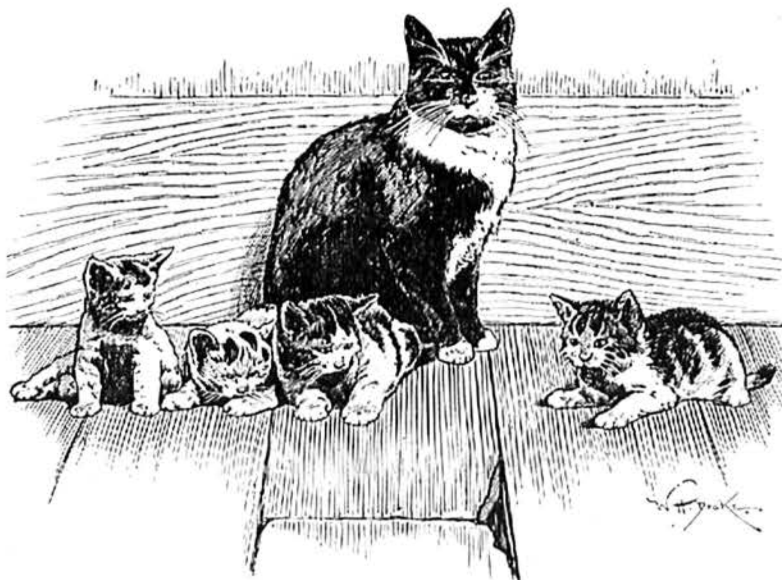
more than once thought that burglars had broken in downstairs. "Master Fitz," our Tom-cat, was sent into the cellar to drive them out; but after the first encounter he bounded back into the kitchen, bleeding on one cheek and one leg; and if ever a cat said anything, he plainly spoke, and very indignantly, too. "I am a tremendous mouser," was what he meant to convey, "but when it comes to eating up rats that are bigger than I am, I must beg to be excused!"

We all waited for the old woman, and when she came the children eagerly informed her of the failure of even the most polite letter-writing where rats are concerned.

She is a shrewd old woman. She did not like to admit she was wrong, so she said she was sure that if we had n't written that very rude first letter the rats would have gone.

"I know they would if they were German rats," she said; "but I never wrote to American rats, and perhaps they are different."

The four-footed robbers are still at home in our cellar, and not even the children believe it worth while to write to them again.



A Song for Thanksgiving.

A song for Thanksgiving. The corn's garnered in;
The wealth of the wheat-field is safe in the bin;
The cellar is fragrant with odors that rise
From Greenings and Sweetings and plump Northern Spys
There is hay in the loft: there is wood at the door;
Of all things there's plenty, and shall we ask more?
Nay, not so, my neighbor. Be thankful, and pay
Earnest tribute to God for his mercies to-day.

A song for Thanksgiving. To-day they will come
To gather once more by the hearthstone of home,
The "boys" and the "girls" who can never forget
The place that is home of all homes to them yet.
They will gather to day round the bounty-spread board
And each heart will be glad and give thanks to the Lord
For blessings that sprang up like flowers by the way
And gladdened the hearts that are grateful to-day.

A song for Thanksgiving. The "boys" and the "girls"
Who have frost on their temples and snow in their curls
Bring back to the old home their girls and their boys,
And the old rafters ring with their frolic and noise.
But grandfather laughs with them over their fun,
And grandmother smiles at the mischief that's done,
And it seems that all hearts have forgotten the gray
And grow young in the gladness of Thanksgiving Day.

A song for Thanksgiving! The old clock strikes one.
There's a stir and excitement,—the turkey is done!
It steams on the board and makes fragrant the air
With odors a rose might be happy to share.
The gold of the pumpkin gleams out in a pie
That makes little mouths water and gladdens the eye
Of the old boys and girls. O be thankful, I say,
For God's best day of all—and that's Thanksgiving Day

A HIGHLY RESPECTABLE FAMILY.

SHE WHO MUST BE OBEYED.

THE BREAD-WINNER.

THE SON AND HEIR.

THE DAUGHTER OF THE HOUSE.

A HIGHLY RESPECTABLE FAMILY—(*continued*).

MISS ELIZABETH.

MASTER GEORGE.

UNCLE PARKER.

AUNT JANE.

"WILL IT RAIN TO-MORROW?"

"I RECKON we'll have to stop hay-carting to-morrow," said a labourer to me, one splendid cloudless July day.

"Why?"

"'Cause I heerd one o' them old wood-peckers hallerin' fit to bust hisself while I was a-gettin' my dinner."

Next morning the daily paper spoke of settled fine weather, but the rustic was right—it rained heavily. Here was a man utterly uneducated, who, without reference to any scientific instrument, could forecast the morrow's weather with accuracy, when the Meteorological Office, with all its appliances, was at fault. "Hinery" was only a specimen of hundreds of his fellows who can predict to-morrow's (and often longer) weather with unerring accuracy, merely from noticing common details of natural phenomena open to every one. The newspaper forecasts are generally correct as applying to large areas, several hundred miles square; but, as a rule, at fault with respect to localities. Take, for instance, to-day's newspaper forecast, "N.W. winds, moderate or fresh." "Fair as a whole." The direction of the wind is correct, but it is now, and has been since midnight, raining heavily and continuously. Any observant countryman could have foretold by three o'clock yesterday there was not the faintest prospect of "fair" weather. To ninety-nine in every hundred the barometer is of but little value. Its proper use requires long and careful training—merely noting the fall and rise being comparatively valueless. But, with a little practice, any one living inland can, from the following signs, correctly prognosticate for his own neighbourhood.

The man who is out of doors at sunrise can form a pretty accurate opinion of what the day will be. If just before sunrise the sky—especially in the west—is suffused with red, rain generally follows in the course of the day. In winter, often snow. If, however, it be frosty weather, the downfall is sometimes delayed. On the other hand, if the sky be a dull grey, and the sun rises clear, gradually dispersing the vapours, it will be fine. If he retires behind the clouds, and there are reddish streaks about, it will rain. Should the sun, later in the day, shine through a grey watery haze, it will probably be a rainy night.

The sunset is very unreliable. Often a beautiful sunset will be followed by a bad day. After a rainy day, suddenly at sunset, in the far west, will appear a magnificent streak of crimson (not copper-colour)—this generally foretells a fine day. A tinted halo round the sun at setting occurs in long-continued rainy weather. A halo round the moon, especially if some distance from it, is a sure indication of downfall at hand.

Rainbows are unreliable, except they occur in the morning, when rain may be expected. Sun-dogs, and fragments of prismatic colours during the day, show continued unsettled weather. A dazzling metallic lustre on foliage, during a cloudless day in summer, precedes a change.

Huge piled-up masses of white cloud in a blue sky, during winter, indicate snow or hail. If small, dark clouds float below the upper ones, moving faster than they, rain will follow, as it will if, in the morning, low-hanging, pale brown, smoke-like clouds are floating about. Red-tinged clouds, high up, at evening, are followed by wind, occasionally by rain.

Mists at evening over low-lying ground, or near a river, precede fine and warm days. If a mist in the morning clears off as the sun gets higher, it will be fine; but if it settles down again after lifting a little, rain is at hand. No dew in the morning is mostly followed by rain; and a heavy dew in the evening by a fine day. Rain follows two or three consecutive hoar frosts. A shower of hail in the daytime is usually followed by frost at night. If, after rain, drops of water still hang on the branches and twigs, and to window-frames, the rain will return; but if they fall, and the woodwork dries, fine weather is at hand.

Stones turn damp before wet; at the same time it must be observed that the fact of their doing so does not invariably indicate rain, for they will do so occasionally before heat.

Smoke descending heavily to the ground is a sign of very doubtful weather.

Objects at great distances, which are generally indistinctly seen, or even not seen at all, sometimes loom out clear and distinct. When this happens, bad weather or change of wind ensues. A well-known instance of this is the Isle of Wight, as seen from Southsea. If the opposite shore is clearly seen, there is rain about. If, at night, after being blown out and exposed to the outer air, the wick of a candle continues to smoulder a long time, the next day will be fine. Green-coloured sky betokens unsettled bad weather, often long continued.

If, on a fine day, the dust suddenly rises in a revolving, spiral column, rain is near.

The howling of the wind indicates, in most houses, but not invariably, that downfall is near. In some houses, owing to their construction, the wind always moans. Wherever the wind is at the time of the vernal equinox (March 21, and thereabouts), that will be the *prevailing* wind throughout the next three months.

If the stars appear unusually numerous, and the "milky way" very clearly defined, with the surrounding sky dark, or if there be a misty appearance over the stars, rain is coming; while if there be but few stars, and those very bright and sparkling, in a pale steely sky, it will be fine.

Swine, before rain, are unusually noisy and restless. Swallows in fine weather will fly high, and at the approach of rain, close to the ground; but the latter does not apply if the day is cold, in which case they hawk very low.

Common sparrows washing vigorously in a puddle on the road, or at the edge of running water, is a sure sign of rain. A baker, who kept a parrot in the dry atmosphere of the bake-offices, noticed that a few hours before rain the bird took an imaginary bath, fluttering, as if splashing water, and preening her feathers.

The woodpecker before rain becomes uneasy, uttering its cry, "Yoo, yoo—yoo, yoo, yoo," although at other times the most silent of birds. Rain generally follows within the twenty-four hours, often very soon. This may be accepted as an infallible sign. On no occasion, except in the dry summer of 1884, did I ever hear the woodpecker call without downfall following. Then one called on two separate occasions, and no rain followed, although in a few hours threatening clouds rose from the west, but dispersed without rain; still in that year heavy rains fell in one parish, while the adjoining one was left dry, so that after all there may have been rain within a very short distance. If domestic fowls keep out feeding in rain, it will continue; but if they run under shelter directly it comes on, there will probably be only a shower. Rooks, before stormy weather or gales, tumble and pitch in the air, and if they croak as they fly, "Kerk, ke-rack, kerk," instead of their usually long-drawn "Karr-r," stormy weather is coming.

If flocks of fieldfare and redwing suddenly appear on the ploughed land, sharp, hard weather follows. Robins singing at night on the topmost branches of trees, or on the tops of tall buildings, is a pretty sure sign of a fine day on the morrow. If they keep low, the contrary may be expected.

Before rain or thunder, flies are unusually troublesome in stinging. Sometimes on a summer day, without warning, all the cock-pheasants in a wood will start crowing—very often because *they* hear thunder too far distant to be perceptible to the bystander.

Should moles, after dry weather, commence throwing up their mounds and working briskly, rain will follow. In a frost, this foretells a thaw.

Gnats flying in columns in the setting sun portends a fine morrow; but sometimes the winter gnat will do so if the rain only ceases for an hour or two.

The opening of the pimpernel has been given as a sign of a fine day, and its keeping closed the reverse. No reliance can be placed on it. Sunshine causes it to open, while in cloudy weather it keeps closed, even if it be dry.

Besides the foregoing, there are numerous weather signs; but among those mentioned will always be found one or more by which a coming change can be predicted.

USEFUL HINTS.

CREWEL CRACKERS.

TAKE a piece of cardboard about 6 inches long and 3 wide, and cover one side with thin silk or material. Then sew it up lengthwise, with the silk inside, to make a cylinder, or paste a strong piece of paper round it. Paper is preferable, as the join in sewing is apt to spoil the shape. Then cut a piece of figured silk or satin about 12 inches long, and sew very tightly round the cardboard, leaving about three inches of material at each end, half of which must be fringed out. Take two skeins of crewel wool, cut once and double, and insert one skein from each end, drawing gently in opposite directions till the cut ends are level with the end of the fringe.

Tie a piece of gold cord or ribbon very tightly round the silk just beyond the cardboard at each end. This gives it the appearance of a cracker, if made in suitable material. Large ones made in plush, the ends trimmed with lace, are very pretty for music cases, and also for work tidies. In the latter case they should have a round piece of cardboard sewn in at one end, and have cords or ribbons fastened from each end and tied in the centre, by which to hang them against the wall.

G. M.

PIED A LA POULETTE.—Take some sheep's feet (they can be bought prepared at tripe-shops), stew them very gently in sufficient water to cover them until they are tender enough for you to remove the bones. Then make some white sauce, in which put a dozen small button mushrooms which have been soaked in vinegar and water. Put the boned sheep's feet in this sauce, make them quite hot, add the juice of a lemon, and serve. The liquor that the feet have been boiled in makes good broth. Calves' feet that have been used to make jelly can be served up in this way. In France sheep's feet dressed à la poulette are much esteemed. They make an elegant little dish at a very small cost.

CHEESECAKE PUDDING.—Take three ounces curd, two eggs, well beaten, and sufficient milk to make the mixture the consistency of a batter; add a few currants and some grated lemon peel, sugar to taste; line a pie-dish with paste, pour in the mixture, and bake in a rather quick oven.

POLISHING FLOORS.

Floors polished with beeswax and turpentine are both agreeable to the eye and healthy. The floors should be thoroughly well scoured with strong soda, and then gone over with vandyke brown (which can be bought *ground in water*), mixed with a little size. If the boards have never been previously stained go over them twice with the brown. The beeswax will melt in turpentine, if the turpentine be warmed. When cold it forms a kind of jelly, and this must be well rubbed over the boards with flannel, and then polished by friction. If the boards when once stained and polished are occasionally rubbed over with beeswax and turpentine, a very polished surface can in time be obtained. In places where the stain wears off, re-stain with vandyke brown, and polish.

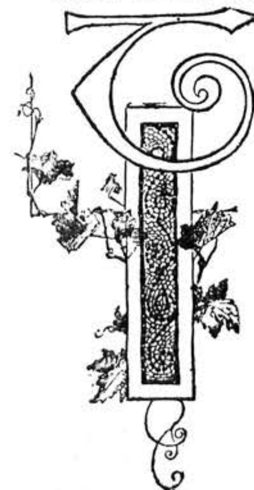
St. Nicholas Magazine, 1889

CHRONICLES OF AN ANGLO-CALIFORNIAN RANCH.

By MARGARET INNES.

CHAPTER XII.

THE RESERVOIR—CHINESE MEDICINES—DUST—ADVANTAGES OF THE LIFE—THE RAINS—FLOODS.



That summer, our first on the ranch, we made a large reservoir to hold 200,000 gallons. There was a convenient gulch or dip, which drained a fair stretch of hill slope, and which lent itself well for the purpose. We meant also to run our share of the flume water into this reservoir whenever it was not being used on the ranch.

Many waggon loads of sand from the Silvero Valley had to be hauled up by the little grey team, and endless barrels of cement from the station at El Barco five miles away. It was a long tiresome job. There was plenty of rock, with which to build the dam, lying about on the hills, but to lift these pieces on to the sledge, improvised for this purpose, and bring them over hill and dale to the reservoir site and there unload them, was both very hard work and at times a little dangerous, for the rocks were often so large that they were not easily controlled, and were always threatening to roll over on to the feet or hands of the "master builder" and his men.

There were some bad bruises before all the names of the workers were written on the cement top of the wall as an artistic finish to the dam.

That was a very dry year, the summer extending till December 5th, and after a dry winter too. For this reason the breaking up of the ground was all the harder, especially that part which had been trodden hard by cattle grazing for many years.

Again the ranchers went to work to manufacture some implement that would help in this difficulty, and a "clod masher" was made out of some of the furniture cases, and it did very good work.

We planted cypress trees too, all along the windswept side of the ranch, as these grow very fast, and we wanted to break the face of the wind.

The rabbits, squirrels, and gophers gave us some anxiety that first year by nibbling at the bark of the young lemon trees. This had to be stopped at once, for if the bark is badly peeled off right round the stem of a young tree, the tree will probably die. The approved remedy is to paint the bark with blood, a most disagreeable job, especially in glaring hot weather. However, the trees were not touched after that, for the rabbits are dainty people.

A good store of firewood had to be hauled from the Silvero Valley before the rains should come, and some months earlier we had stored away our winter supply of hay in the barn. In the winter we also planted an orchard of all varieties of fruit for our own use—pears, apples, prunes, figs, apricots, peaches, vines, strawberries, and raspberries. Altogether we were very busy and worked very hard, though we took our pleasures too, sandwiched in between. We did a great deal of driving and riding about among the different mountain paths, and we still enjoy this distraction as much as ever.

To take our lunch with us and stay away all day, the boys riding ahead, with the dogs following them, darting in among the brush, wildly happy over every pretence of a scent, leaping high over every obstacle, and adding so much to our enjoyment by their evident delight, is a pleasure without flaw. I must not forget also a gun or two, stowed away in the bottom of the carriage, for something worth killing may cross our path. Jack-rabbits are not good eating but are good sport, and as they injure the trees, every rancher shoots them when he gets the chance. The dainty elegant road-runner must never be hurt, and woe be to the "tenderfoot" who is tempted to shoot that pretty, impudent-looking little fellow, the skunk, who flourishes his handsome black and white tail in your very face. If you were a Chinaman, you would secure him on any terms, even his own. All Celestial medicines and cordials seem to be compounded of the most offensive abominations that can be discovered; it follows, of course, that the skunk is a highly-prized treasure in their pharmacopœia. What deceits we have practised and what lies we have told during Wing's reign in the kitchen! He was for ever wanting to doctor us, and had always just the right remedy by him for whatever complaint was to the fore. We soon became

very wary indeed of showing any sign of physical trouble before him, for we were at once pounced upon with hot drinks of villainous compounds and rank smell, and we had to be very diplomatic so as to escape drinking them there and then, and thus get the chance of pouring them down the bath sink when his back was turned.

We always felt this to be a very dangerous business, for the smell threatened to betray us.

For rheumatic pains he eagerly recommended a sort of rattlesnake jam, which is made with chunks of that attractive reptile cooked in whisky, and potted for seven years, when it is ready for use, and, according to Wing, is an infallible cure.

But though these various animals are spared for different reasons on our little excursions, the Californian quail are very delicate food, and a most welcome addition to the ranch larder, where variety is a little difficult to get. They also are very good sport. Wild pigeons, too, are not to be despised.

These driving expeditions are best, however, in the winter, spring, and early summer, when the sun is not so hot, and when the roads have been rained upon, and the terrible dust is laid. Is there any dust like the Californian dust after a dry season, I wonder? My husband insists that in Australia and the Cape, and other places where he and I have never been, the dust is infinitely worse than in California; he also reminds me of the dust in railway travelling at home, and insists that this was quite as disagreeable and much more dirty. We do not agree on this point. But as I said before, one accustoms oneself to almost anything, and though we certainly take fewer pleasure drives at the end of the summer, waiting rather always for the first rains, yet when I remember my first horror at San Sebastian, on driving through waves, and clouds, and curtains of dust, then I know by comparison that I have reached a very philosophical state of mind about this, one of the necessary and undeniable evils.

What one enjoys most in this life is, I think, the absolute freedom; that and the great stretches of space around one are a constantly increasing delight. To look across these great sweeps of mountains, range after range, and see in the distance the silver line of the Pacific, and to feel the clean, pure wind in one's face, is like a baptism of new life.

At first the strange bareness of these mountains almost wounds one's eyes, and their true beauty is not recognised. But as one learns to know them better, their charm grows more and more striking, and I almost doubt if after a few years one would wish for any change in their bold bare lines. In the full midday sun they are not lovely, and in some moods one would call them almost ugly, so uncompromising are they in their grimness and bareness: but their time of triumph is when the changing lights of sunset begin, when they are flooded with such matchless colouring, so delicate and rich, that they seem positively unreal.

During the winter rains all the odd jobs of repairing are done: soldering, harness-cleaning and mending, painting of waggons or carts, and carpentering.

Most Americans are clever-handed, and can turn from one job to another with unusual facility. To see a man, who earns his living by driving a delivery waggon, turn to in his spare time and build a neat and comfortable addition to his house, an extra bedroom, and perhaps an enlargement of the sitting-room, with a nice bit of verandah out of this, and all well planned and well finished, is apt to knock the conceit out of the young fellow from home, who prides himself on being so "clever with his tools."

Our first winter was a very dry one, to our great regret. The rainfall was much below the average and much below what was needed for the land. Less than seven inches fell during the whole season, and an average good fall is about fourteen inches. So the land was never thoroughly soaked, and what was a more anxious matter still, the storage of water "way back" in the mountains was too scant, and pretty certain to run short before the long dry season should be over. So, indeed, it proved, and we were greatly harassed, when the water company began to cut down our rations, leaving us barely enough to keep our young trees going; and certainly not enough to give them a chance of doing their best, however diligently the "cultivator" might be kept at work.

All that summer we were busy, tending the trees and adding further improvements to the ranch. When the second winter came, we were hopeful then all our anxieties about water would be set at rest by a good generous rainfall.

The dry season had extended unusually far into the winter months, no rain having fallen till December 5th, when we had a few small showers. Within three weeks of this, it seemed as though we were to get our desires to the full, for the rain came down in torrents.

The Silvero river, which was supposed to flow in the pretty valley below us, of which we got such a charming glimpse from our verandahs, had hitherto appeared to be a dry sandy stretch more like a rough country road than a river, and we had laughed at the very notion of a bridge being ever needed to cross its dangerous waters.

Wonderful tales of the miraculous possibilities of the land are of course told here to the credulous tenderfoot, and we did not feel inclined to believe our friends' accounts of that very river's deep and dangerous waters during some rainy winters.

We had to make an apology that second winter. For nine days the waters poured down in an almost solid sheet; and with hardly any cessation night or day. We were all anxious and excited over this storm; and constantly on the watch to see what would happen. At the end of the first twenty-four hours, we had rather a scare over our reservoir. The sudden inrush of water from the hill slopes around had filled it so quickly that when my husband went up in the driving rain to see what state it was in, he found, to his dismay, that the water had reached the very tops of the dam, and was just beginning to sweep over, making at once a deep and widening cut all along the lemon trees below.

The new wooden floodgate was so swollen with the rain that it was as though riveted into its place, and refused to open. In a few moments my husband had darted down to the barn, and returning with an axe, broke the floodgate in pieces, when the danger was over, and the water rushing away in a great heavy mass found its way into a gully where it could do no mischief. We saw, from the deep cutting made in those few moments by the water when it swept over the dam, what terrible damage might be worked by these rains. But we could hardly believe our eyes or ears however, when we saw in the valley the glistening of the water in the broad river-bed, and heard the roar as though of a cataract.

During the first lull that occurred we all hurried down to the valley to examine more closely what was going on. We found such a turbulent, dangerous-looking river tearing down the valley, that we were perfectly fascinated, and would fain have stayed and watched it for hours.

The river had already cut a great deep bed for itself out of the wheat-sown meadows of the valley, and every moment a great slice of the bank would give way and silently slide down into the water, which swallowed it up relentlessly as it rushed past.

Great trees were lying in the river, in some places all across it, making rough dams where the water fought and leapt even more fiercely; and as we stood there, we were horrified to see one of the dear trees, so highly prized in this bare land, go trembling down into the flood. The sound of their roots straining and cracking as the rushing floods tried to sweep them away from their last bit of anchorage, was most painful; it seemed almost like a human struggle. All the ground was more or less like quicksand, and we had to be careful where we stepped, lest we should be "mired." As the rain came on again heavily, we were forced to return home, though very unwillingly; it was a scene of such wonderful excitement.

We were very anxious, too, about friends whose ranches were some miles further up the valley, and whose land lay mostly rather low down and near the river-bed. We found afterwards that both had suffered considerable loss, besides great anxiety. On one ranch the river had in one night swept away eight acres of beautiful olive-trees that were in full bearing. This was a very cruel blow, over which the whole neighbourhood, I think, mourned, but which the young rancher and his wife bore with the brave cheery spirit which is, I think, a noticeable charm in most Americans. The young wife gallantly carried the heavier share of the blow, by dismissing her servant, and herself doing the housework and cooking.

(*To be concluded.*)

NOVEMBER.—GUY FAWKES DAY.

Please to remember the Fifth of November
Gunpowder treason and plot;
I know no reason why gunpowder treason
Should ever be forgot.—*Old Ditty.*

NOVEMBER brings with it Guy Fawkes Day, which, twenty years ago, in the country, was a common holiday; and not to burn Guy at night, and spend all the money got during the day in fireworks, would in our boyish days have been considered treason by the worthy parson, churchwardens, overseers, and every other "good man and true." We had some very misty notions about Guy Fawkes and King James and King William—not that we obtained our knowledge from history so much as the Common Prayer Book, which, although it taught us to pray for our enemies, said not a word against the burning of Guy Fawkes; indeed, this we considered the most important proof of our paying "due observance" to the day. Our notions of the aforesaid Guy were also very peculiar. We believed him to have been a very ugly sort of a fellow, with a long red nose, who levied black-mail, in his day, by being carried about from house to house, with a lanthorn in one hand, a match in the other, and we knew not how many pounds of gun-powder in his pockets; and that people gave him money to prevent him from blowing up their houses; further, that he at last grew so bold as to beg of Parliament, which was, in itself, a not very uncommon act; that they either refused to relieve him on the spot, or to grant him a pension; and that he threatened to serve King, Lords, and Commons, as he had threatened to serve all other liege subjects, and at last became so overbearing that all London rose up against him as one man; that he was banished the kingdom, and then burnt in effigy for having been found prowling about the vaults, into which no end of small casks had been smuggled; that some said they contained gunpowder; others that Guy knew as well as the members themselves what the concealed casks contained; and that a nose like his would never have been allured into such places had there been nothing better than gunpowder. Then the plot grew too thick for our boyish comprehension; there was something about hush-money, trap-doors, drinking-cups, honourable members slipping one after another into the aforesaid vaults, and not able to get out again without assistance, and, finally, that they were blocked up; and in the course of time Bellamy opened, who still carries on a snug business. That the whole affair obtained the name of the Gunpowder Plot, through the train that was laid to get at the barrels and quench the spark which the dry orations of King James created in every throat. As to the story about burning, torturing, and so on, of course we knew better than to believe a word about the matter—well aware that in a Christian country, like England, such brutal scenes could never take place. Having thus settled these "Historic Doubts" to our satisfaction, of course

We knew no reason why gunpowder treason
Should ever be forgot:

so at once commenced making a Guy, or sometimes stole one ready-made, which saved much trouble, for it was useless for the weaker party to offer resistance at a season when bon-fires, crackers, squibs, and powder in every form, were blazing and banging all over the country. It was a day dedicated to Invasion, and not a scarecrow could be found in the fields or gardens for miles around. Nor was this all: we established a committee of enquiry, days before this great annual firing, and they went round to see that all gates, fences, railings, posts, &c., were firmly secured, according to statute passed. They were entitled to bring away all that were loose, decayed, or broken, or could by any lawful means be torn off, up, or down. These were offered up at the shrine of Guy on the evening of the Fifth of November, and for this purpose were hoarded up in such places as the secret committee in their wisdom chose to appoint to be used for the "due observance of the day."

The best receipt we knew for making a Guy was, first to steal a coat—if nearly new, so much the better, it gave Guy a more respectable look. The village tailor was generally in the secret, and he so cut, altered, and trimmed it, after having cabbaged a waistcoat out of the skirts, that we could safely defy the original owner to swear to it again, even when it had undergone the most rigid examination. A pair of good leather breeches also formed a capital accompaniment to the above, and these we generally obtained by "hook or crook." Top-boots were then pretty plentiful; and as the old shoemaker had generally five or six pairs on hand to repair, all round-toed, and as like as two cherries, it was difficult to discover whose were lost. Hats were plentiful as blackberries, as every high wind blew off one or two at the church corner, and the best was invariably selected. We just knew enough of the laws to understand that horses, waggons, &c., were in cases of emergency to be pressed into service in the King's name; and, under the same plea of loyal necessity, we stuck at nothing for the honour of our country, and the celebration of the Fifth of November. Pity 'tis, 'tis true, but sometimes a real living Guy has been detected in the fact of wearing the lost boots, unmentionables, &c., and been compelled to throw down his matches and lanthorn and run for it, and that our friends have been mulct to the full value aforesaid. But such mishaps rarely befel us.

Oh! what blazing and firing was there in those good old times: men drank and swore beautifully in those days, to prove their dislike to Popery; and what if a rocket now and then alighted upon a corn-rick, and burnt up a few scores of quarters of wheat, was it not a proof that in our very zeal we neither respected persons nor property? Then what good we did for trade, breaking every window that was not illuminated, without inquiring whether the indwellers were Catholics or Protestants!

It was one of those blessed days in which all loyal subjects who had allowed their nails to grow to a goodly length were expected to scratch, bite, shout, and blaze away at everything they came near. Alas! there are now "most biting laws" against the celebration of Guy Fawkes day. Into that very House which was all but blown up little more than two centuries ago, men of all sects and creeds are admitted; there is now no burning, no drawing, nor quartering in the name of religion; no traitors' heads grinning on London-bridge; no burning in the bars of Smithfield. Men seem to have lost that spirit of sweet savageness, and to have laid aside the charms of former cruelty. Poor Guy is himself doomed to be numbered amongst the things that were; and the time will come when the remembrance of Gunpowder Treason, and the martyrdom of Charles I., will not be found in our "Forms" of Prayer, nor be allowed to mingle with that holier incense which is alone worthy of ascending to Heaven. We shall then leave "the dead past to bury its dead," and destroy every trace of those old barriers that have so long separated man from his brother man.

As painters of the past, we have glanced at an old custom which is now fast sinking into desuetude, and which, excepting as an amusement for children, will ere long die away—a consummation devoutly to be wished.

But we must now turn to where

Autumn rends her yellow hair,
And weeps the more that tears were vain to save;
The sorrowful robin sings her requiem,
And strews her hearse with all his favourite leaves;
The sprightly lark somewhere in silence grieves
And will not chant his wonted matin hymn;
And Nature, her proud mother, mourns her child
With that unutter'd grief which is not soon beguiled.—WEBBE.

Although the close of autumn is somehow associated with the images of decay and death, there are fitful and cheerful glimmerings thrown around, "like hope upon a death-bed;" and we feel that this natural destruction of the remains of the beautiful summer is necessary for the production of another and a fairer spring. There is also something pleasant in the appearance of the well-filled rick-yards and barns; and we seem armed against the coming winter when we look upon the stores that have been gathered from field, orchard, and garden, and garnered against the time when "the wind and rain beat dark December." Nor do we seem to care so much to see the leaves rotting and the long grass withering, and the low leaden-coloured sky ever raining, in these busy autumnal days, as we should in the almost nightless season of summer; the lengthened darkness brings with it the very necessity that confines us within doors.

There is something very beautiful about the great high heath-covered hills in autumn, that come dipping down with crimson-clad feet into the open valleys. Scott used to say that he could never live unless he set his foot upon the heath once a year; and we know few spots that retain their dry elasticity so long as those on which the heath-bell waves; for, when all besides is saturated with moisture and decay, these are comparatively dry. Some such spot we once knew that ran high above the surrounding woods; for, saving one narrow field-like entrance, woods encircled it every way. It had never been cultivated within the memory of man, nor probably ever had been. When the ling and heather had withered on the more open hills, here it remained as fresh as if it had but just bloomed; and even when December began to draw the curtain upon the close of the year, we have still found it as fresh as it seemed to have been in other places a month or two before.

The following humorous description of autumn was written between two and three hundred years ago, but by whom we know not, though we think it is attributed to Decker:—"Autumn's the barber of the year, that shears bushes, hedges, and trees; the ragged prodigal, that consumes all and leaves himself nothing; the arrantest beggar amongst all the four quarters; and never well, but always troubled with the falling sickness. This murderer of Spring, this thief to Summer, and bad companion to Winter, seems to come in according to his old custom, when the sun sets, like Justice, with a pair of scales in his hand, weighing no more hours to the day than he does to the night, as he did before in his vernal progress, when he rode on a ram. But this bald-pated Autumn will be seen walking up and down groves, meadows, fields, parks, and pastures, blasting of fruits, and beating leaves from their trees. When common highways shall be strown with boughs in mockery of Summer and in triumph of her death."

The resemblance the seasons bear to life, death, and resurrection, have not escaped the eyes of our old poets. They ever compared spring to youth; the blowing and blossoming of the buds and flowers to the promises of future manhood, the fruits which the full Summer would bring forth and ripen. Autumn, which brought perfection, was also the forerunner of dissolution; the same which caused the rose to shed its beauty as soon as it was attained, for such was ever Nature's course. Winter was that sleep in the grave which awoke to life in another spring, whose flowers were eternal, and where there was neither death nor change again. Even so far back as the days of Homer, we find the decay of autumn suggesting these very images, nor have we in any way been able to improve upon them. Shelley seems to have felt this when he said:—

Oh! wild West Wind! thou breath of Autumn's being—
Thou, from whose unseen presence the leaves dead
Are driven, like ghosts from an enchanter fleeing,
Yellow, and black, and pale, and hectic red—
Pestilence-stricken multitudes. Oh! thou
Who chariotest to their dark and wintry bed
The winged seeds, where they lie cold and low,
Each like a corpse within its grave, until
Thine azure sister of the spring shall blow
Her clarion o'er the dreaming earth, and fill
(Driving sweet buds, like flocks, to feed in air)
With living hues and odours plain and hill!
Make me thy lyre even as the forest is.
What if my leaves are falling like its own:
The tumult of the mighty harmonies
Will take from both a deep autumnal love,
Sweet though in sadness! Be thou spirit-fierce.
My spirit, be thou me, impetuous one!
Drive my dead thoughts over the universe,
Like wither'd leaves, to quicken a new birth.

How wild and solemn must have been the autumns in our primitive old English forests, three or four thousand years ago! when there was no human voice to cheer the solitude; but, according to the earliest records we possess, nothing but bears, wolves, and the oxen with the high prominence. The badger is another of that ancient family, which has outlived the mammoth and the mastodon; for we find his fossil remains side by side with these huge and extinct monsters. He is the only representative of our cave bear, and seems not to have bated a jot of bruin's valour. It appears that in the present day the badgers migrate from one part to another in large companies, sometimes numbering from ten to seventeen; that they move along in the night, rank and file, in seemly and marching order, placing their young ones in the centre. In one or two instances, when they have been confronted, both man and dog were compelled to beat a retreat.

The favourite haunt of the badger is the gloomy centre of a wood, or that part where the thicket is impassable; possessing long powerful claws, he there digs for himself a deep den, forming a somewhat winding and intricate entrance, into which he works his long hardy body, not caring a straw for rubbing his coarse skin against the outer brambles or rugged sides of his subterranean dwelling, so long as he has but plenty of room to turn himself when he reaches his inner chamber. Here he couches all day long, and never ventures out to feed until late in the evening, or late in the night. Though dull, heavy, and lazy, it is, upon the whole, a harmless brute, doing no injury to any one, but feeding upon roots, pig-nuts, acorns, beech-mast, and occasionally a long-tailed mouse or two, or even a few frogs or insects when nothing better may be had. Some naturalists assert that he is a great destroyer of wasps'-nests, and feeds upon the larvæ. He is, beyond doubt, the strongest jawed animal of his size in Britain, and, even when baited by half-a-dozen dogs, if he once chances to get fairly hold, woe be to the assailant. When taken young he is said to be easily tamed, and to become as attached and affectionate as a dog; ready, also, to follow his master anywhere. Glad we are that the cruel custom of badger-baiting is now abandoned. Almost every inn-yard in the country had, a few years ago, its badger-tub, or box, in which dog and badger were mutually tortured, the dog which seized the badger the oftenest, and still retained his hold each time he went in until he was drawn forth by the tail, when the badger was made to release its hold, and the dog again sent in, according to its "bottom," was the winner. The method used for capturing the badger is by placing an open sack, with a running noose, in the earth where he harbours. This is done while he is out feeding. When all is prepared, a loud hooting and whistling is made, and half a dozen dogs are also turned loose. The badger, alarmed, hurries off home, rushes into the sack that closes behind him, and is regularly "sacked."

SOME HINTS ON ECONOMY IN DRESS.

ONE of the most difficult problems of the day, especially for ladies, is how to dress well without spending too much money: how to make the best appearance at the least cost. The necessary fabrics grow dearer instead of cheaper, and the style of dress has, until very recently, involved such a multiplicity of flouncings, kiltings, &c., that a vast quantity of material has been required, and an extraordinary number of hours have been consumed in the making. Time is money with those who earn their money by dressmaking as well as by any other business, and of course this has added considerably to the cost. It is to be hoped, however, that with the advent of "housemaid," or, as we used to say, plain skirts, an era of comparatively modest expenditure has set in, as they can certainly be completed in far less time, and with half the labour required by their more ornate predecessors.

The maxim that in dress "the best is the cheapest" is so old as to be almost trite, but it is nevertheless quite true. Dark stuffs, however, need to be of better quality than light ones. A very good rule for those ladies who are obliged to study economy is to confine themselves to one or two colours, as, for instance, black or blue, or brown, and white, so that one set of ribbons, waistbands, &c., and one hat or bonnet, may be worn with two or more dresses. It is almost *de rigueur* for every one to possess a black costume, and for every young person to have a white one, which is always new and fresh after being washed or cleaned. Good taste and a few dainty etceteras will suggest a good many changes and combinations even with only these two dresses, and if to them can be added a dark and a light brown or blue, the semblance of a tolerably extensive wardrobe can be managed. A tailor-made navy blue serge, with jacket bodice and waistcoat, is the best possible dress that any lady can wear for walking during the greater part of the year, and may be varied with one or two different waistcoats. The three young Princesses of Wales have recently had such costumes made for them, and their royal mother frequently wears something similar.

A most important point in keeping an out-door dress presentable for a very long time is being careful not to wear it in-doors more than can possibly be helped. If each dress is kept ready to wear, with frilling in neck and sleeves, or collar and cuffs, fastened in their right places, very few minutes need be occupied in changing; and though it may with many be necessary to put on a good walking-dress at breakfast-time and wear it till night-fall, the custom of exchanging it for something lighter for the evening is not only civilised, but economical. An old velvet or velveteen is most valuable for this purpose throughout the winter, as none of its imperfections, short of actual holes, are visible by gas or candle-light, and a lace fichu, and something of the same nature at the wrists, or, better still, the sleeves cut short at the elbow, and finished off with a deep piece of lace, always make it look elegant and dressy. And by way of a word to the wise, here is a suggestion for those who cannot afford velvet, and shun velveteen as being heavy and clinging. Save all remnants of silk dresses, and have the velveteen lined with them. It will look as good again, and will slip on and off with the greatest ease, and always feel lissome and pleasant in wearing. For a thinner dress there is nothing like a good black net bodice and tunic worn over an old silk or satin skirt. It can be freshened up by ribbons of various colours, and is wonderfully tough and serviceable. Grenadine wears so quickly under the arms that, though very pretty and soft, it has disadvantages well-nigh insuperable where the purse is not well furnished.

A great deal of economy may be practised in minor matters, though it sometimes involves some extra outlay in the first instance. The frilling that has long been so popular costs a great deal of money, and though it keeps clean for several days, is utterly useless when dirty. A few yards of real lace—Maltese, English pillow, Torchon, or Valenciennes—bears washing a great many times (always supposing that it is done at home by a careful hand), does not show the mending which at length becomes inevitable, and when quilled into the dress, with a strong white thread catching the pleats at the top to keep them in place, is more becoming, and in the long run cheaper than any frilling.

Out-door boots and shoes should never be worn in the house; nothing tends to make them rusty and shabby so rapidly as this bad practice, and the continual friction of the hem of the dress wears out the upper leather. Slippers are the prettiest and most economical for in-door wear, because they can be so easily renewed. For this purpose, satin or prunella slippers should be chosen in the first instance, and when the tops are worn out, any one with nimble fingers and a rather long needle can re-cover them with small pieces of black satin, velvet, or velveteen, fastening it down close to the sole with rather large hemming stitches, binding the opening with a bit of crossway silk or ribbon, and making all smart with a ribbon or satin bow on the instep. The number of times that a pair of slippers can be made to undergo this process before the soles are demolished would hardly be believed by any one who has not tried it, and

even the sole lasts as long again as it would otherwise do if a cork one is used inside it.

Gloves, again, are most expensive items, and yet the outlay for them may be considerably reduced by a little care. Good kid gloves must be sparingly used by the economically-minded, watched at the tips of the fingers, so that the first stitch that gives way may be repaired, and always pulled out when taken off, instead of being turned inside one another and made into a little ball. None but the best are worth buying, and light ones will clean once or twice, though it is next to impossible to perform this operation at home. With Suéde gloves the case is quite different; the light undyed colours soil far sooner than they wear out, and it is advisable to have a pair of boxwood hands of the right size on which to wash and dry them. The mixture for the purpose should be made of white curd soap cut up small, and boiled in a little milk, and the dirty gloves should be well rubbed and cleaned with a little bit of flannel dipped in it. After being sponged over with warm—*not* hot—water, to remove this, they should be wiped with a towel, and left on the boxwood stretchers until quite dry.

The great trouble with silk gloves is the tendency of the finger-tips to wear rapidly into holes, and the very best way of avoiding it is to put a tiny bit of cotton wool or wadding into the extreme end of each finger. Some people, before beginning to wear them, tack a tiny bit of an old glove in, but the stitches, however carefully done, have an unpleasant trick of showing, and the wool is far preferable.

Those who wear silk handkerchiefs round the neck in cold weather will find pale pink the best colour, because it will bear washing, and always look new and good afterwards. The same can hardly be said of any other tint, for though a light blue will sometimes stand soap and water, it is but rarely, and white handkerchiefs turn yellow.

Winter coats, cloaks, and mantles are expensive articles, and it is true economy to buy them very good, but not of any striking pattern or colour. A plaid coat or Newmarket will soon look remarkable, but one of plain cloth may be worn year after year, and look well to the last. A cashmere or smooth cloth mantle, when shabby, may be taken to pieces, covered with a silk or broché, which, though thin by itself, looks good when it has so substantial a lining, put together again and re-trimmed, and will be to all appearance new and handsome at a very small outlay.

Though last, not least, the jersey bodices may be purchased with immense advantage by all women who are neither old nor stout. They are made now in many colours and varieties, and with a well-hung plain skirt to match, a costume is complete without much expense in dressmaking, or if the wearer be clever enough to make her own *jupe*, without any.

The foregoing are only a few hints on economy in dress, but most people who are obliged to practise it, and wish to do so with a good grace, will call to their aid "Messrs. Hook, Crook & Co."—as a clever woman once called her domestic devices—and will have reason to rejoice over numerous pence and shillings saved, and pounds either laid by for rainy days, or spent on objects of more intrinsic importance than those which our French neighbours call by the generic name of *chiffons*.

MODERN DINNER-TABLES.

I SUPPOSE that never were decorative articles of every description to be had in such variety, and at so small a cost. Certainly this is the case with those suitable for dinner-table adornment.

It must be taken for granted that many are unsuitable for middle-class families, at the same time they are subject to modifications, and all who are anxious to improve the appearance of their dinner-tables may gain many ideas from those of a more elaborate kind.

Just now there is a rage for plush of every colour, and it is, unquestionably, one of the most lovely fabrics for the table. Rich shades of crimson, claret, old gold, myrtle and moss greens are all in good taste, and generally chosen, though it is easy to substitute others when these would clash with the dinner service or general surroundings.

In combination with plush, plate-glass plays an important part, and, if bought judiciously, is not so expensive as many would suppose. Very good quality may be had from a glass merchant (not at a retail shop) in any large town for about half-a-crown per square foot; thus a piece six feet long and eighteen inches wide would cost but twenty-two shillings and sixpence, and—it is almost needless to remark—could be converted to other uses eventually.

At a recent dinner for ten, the table was arranged as follows:—A sheet of plate-glass, seven feet by eighteen inches, occupied the centre of the table, the latter being sufficiently large to leave a good margin for the dinners. *On* the glass the dessert was placed in such a way as to give every guest an uninterrupted view of the rest of the company.

The centre-piece—very little higher than the others—was an exquisite little fountain, which discharged sweet-scented water; round the base, moss, ferns, and various grasses, with pieces of ice, were artistically grouped.

The dessert service consisted of shallow glass dishes of varied sizes and shapes, of shell-like, ever-changing hues. The time of the year being late autumn, an exquisite garnish for the fruits was obtained from ferns, ivy, marguerites (both white and yellow), and gracefully arranged sprays of the leaves of the blackberry briar, elderberry, and wild geranium; their vivid

orange, scarlet, and dark crimson tints contrasting charmingly with the pale star-like flowers and the varied greens of the other foliage. Nothing artificial, it will be noted, found place here! To proceed: down the sides and at the ends of the sheet of glass, strips of plush, about six inches wide, were laid. The colour was a rich ruby, and all round the outer edge what may be termed glass troughs were set to form an entire border. These were two inches high and about the same width, and in them more of the flowers and leaves before mentioned found place, in addition to scarlet and white fuchsias, which were placed among the dark leaves, and hung carelessly over the edges of the troughs.

On the margin of plush, viz., between this outer arrangement of flowers and the fruits in the centre, were ferns of various kinds, alternating with maiden-hair, growing in natural shells, the supports for which consisted of three sticks silvered over.

The finger-bowls were novel in shape—rather as if a square piece of glass had been gathered in the hand by the four corners, so that the middle formed an irregular half-sphere, the flat parts resting on the table; and, the opening being small, the four corners standing out from it in irregular curves and peaks. They were of ruby glass, the salt-cellars, water-jugs, &c., being all of the same rich hue.

The dinner service, of the shade of cream known as "Queen's ware," just relieved by a band of ruby and gold, and a monogram and crest of the same colours, was harmonious and unobtrusive.

The room was entirely lighted by wax candles, a tiny ruby shade over each shedding a softened glow, and adding to the general effect.

We may mention another dinner, where the guests numbered thirty. Here the prevailing tone was a rich golden-brown. The middle of the table was covered with plush of this shade, edged with a heavy gold lace. All round, close to the plush, were narrow sheets of plate-glass, at each edge of which, on the glass, was a moss border, out of which, as if growing, peeped waxen bells of stephanotis and superb Christmas roses alternately, sprays of golden jessamine fringing the edge of the moss on each side. The time of year was Christmas, but, of course, other flowers could be substituted to suit the various seasons; we may mention that white jessamine and plumbago would make a very effective border if dark claret plush were used; wild strawberries and white field roses would look equally charming placed in proximity to myrtle or olive-green plush. The flowers mentioned may be varied indefinitely, but care must be taken in selection, only such as will lie tolerably flat on the moss being suitable for the purpose.

The same floral specimens, which we have named as used on this particular occasion, reappeared in tiny pots, each encased in gold wicker-work, and were placed plentifully about the table. Nothing was set *upon* the plush; the dessert, in rare old china of gold and white, being put on the glass, between the borders of moss and flowers.

Perhaps it may seem superfluous to remark that in each case the damask cloth and serviettes were faultlessly placed, and of exquisite quality.

If any of our readers care to adopt this style of decoration, but do *not* care to go to the expense of the plush and plate-glass, they may yet make their table "a thing of beauty" without these adjuncts by careful arrangement of the moss and flowers alone, or by using strips of cloth of rich colours (in the place of the strips of glass), bordering them on each side with the moss (on which the flowers must be arranged as before directed), and placing the pots of flowers at regular intervals down the centre of each strip.

In table-linen, like all else, fashion has wrought many changes. It is often embroidered somewhat largely with the monogram or crest of the owner; sometimes both are seen. The colours are generally gold or crimson, or a combination.

Dinner-mats—used by those who cling to the old custom of carving on the table—of "Lincrusta Walton" are a good deal used. This material is produced in plain colours, as well as in richly embossed designs, and is both durable and inexpensive.

Dessert d'oyleys of plush, edged with lace, find favour, while hand-painted satin ones are equally popular. We saw lately a set of a delicate shrimp-pink, edged with a deep coffee lace. In the centre of each a spray of white flowers was painted, there being twelve varieties in all, as follows:—Hawthorn, black-thorn, pear-blossom, snowdrop, convolvulus, jessamine, stephanotis, spiræa, field rose, anemone, crocus, and ox-eyed daisy. White plush, edged with lace, looked suitable and rich at a wedding *déjeûner*; they were a present from, and made by, the bride's sister.

Equally pretty decorations for the table may be made from the thick gold paper which is now so much used for artistic purposes; it may be cut to any shape, but must be mounted on stout cardboard, or something equally strong, before being painted upon; gold American cloth is used for similar purposes, and both look well if placed down the table in long strips, bordered with natural flowers, and plenty of foliage.

Of *menu* and guest cards there is an endless variety, hand-painted on china, porcelain, or card, being equally popular according to position and requirements.

For ordinary home dinners, the tinted cards, with gilt or silvered edges (such as are used for birthday or Christmas cards), are sufficiently elaborate, and there are few homes where, in this artistic age, there is not at least one member capable of giving the required embellishment. Simple sprays of flowers may be painted on these, either in oils or water-colours, or small landscapes etched in one corner in Indian ink or sepia. Even caricatures, if well drawn and in good taste, make a pleasing variety. We would suggest, however, that it is well to adopt the same style of decoration for *menu* cards and dessert d'oyleys; not, for instance, to have flowers painted on one set and landscapes etched on another.

Many comparative novelties might be enumerated if space permitted; one is a dish in shape similar to a vine-leaf, divided into three sections, for cheese,

butter, and bread or biscuits. The cheese should be cut into small pieces, and the butter moulded in tiny shapes, as varied as possible. Antique glass and silver, and when these are unobtainable, imitations of the antique are becoming general.

Most delicate in design and workmanship are the small lamps so much used for dinner-tables, and, although very pretty shades may be bought, many ladies find pleasant occupation in making some tiny original ones. Perforated cardboard, gold, silver, or white, is a good foundation; it may be lined with a contrasting colour, and worked with a monogram to match. Some of the Japanese designs, too, are striking, and may be worked very quickly with crewel wools. Many satteens and muslins (Oriental) would make novel and pretty shades. Or here, again, the gold paper referred to would be useful; it should, to be effective, be lined with some bright colour, and may be turned to account by artistic fingers in any way which is suitable, at a nominal cost. Tiny stew-pans of silver, in which to serve *ramakins* and *soufflés*, are another innovation; their price, necessarily, restricts their adoption, but ere long we shall probably see the same shape in a cheaper material.

We hope that these slight suggestions may prove of such use to our readers that they will, at least, be able to adapt them to suit their own needs, as there are so many little ways by which a dinner-table may be lifted from the commonplace, and made fit to rank among really artistic objects.

At the moment of going to press we saw a plush centre-piece, made to order, as much in design and colouring like a Turkey carpet as it well could be; and although more uncommon and expensive than the self-colours we have referred to, we liked it far less; the general appearance, as it was fringed at the ends, being suggestive of a hearth-rug.

THE DINNER-TABLES OF THE PAST.

"SUBTILTIE" OF PASTRY.

IT is really interesting to take a retrospective glance at our dinner-tables; it is curious to trace the gradual changes which have taken place, to notice the marked advance that was made as one century glided into another, and yet how long a time elapsed before the actual requirements, as we should now term them, appeared upon the table. I verily believe that much less is generally known concerning the habits at table of the Early English than of the Early Greeks and Romans.

Faithful descriptions and illustrations of our dinner-tables in the olden times are to be found in our old libraries—the British Museum, the Bodleian, and others—and it is from these sources that I have drawn the information and drawings, which I hope will afford you, my readers, as much interest as the subject has given to me.

Let me introduce you to a dinner-table of the tenth century (Fig. 1); whether it is in a town or country house I cannot tell you, but in that day I fancy there was no distinction between the two.

The table looks bare, but it is ready for the three people who are going to dine. The table itself is not of polished mahogany but of rough wood, and of rude construction; probably it has been shaped out of the trunk of a tree. It is only brought into the dining-hall for meals, and then removed. On it there is placed a knife (in shape like a modern razor), two salt-cellars of much larger dimensions than any we can show, a solitary dish, and two flat cakes of bread—*voilà tout*.

The scene which follows would certainly shock our feelings, but then we must remember there were extenuating circumstances. Two serving-men approach, each holding a spit, on one of which fish are impaled, on the other some pieces of meat. These spits are held to each person, who, if fish is preferred by him, takes it off with his fingers; if he wishes for meat, then he takes his knife and cuts off a portion. Fish-bones and scraps are thrown indiscriminately on the

Fig. 1.

table and floor. There are no glasses to be seen, nevertheless our Saxon ancestors drank, and drank deeply; but their glasses being literally tumblers, they they were not put on the table. A serving-man came with an ornamental bucket full of ale or mead, filled a tumbler, and handed it to his master or mistress, who of course was obliged to empty the glass before it could be laid down. There is clearly not much for us to observe at that period, so we will at once pass on to the thirteenth century, and see if time effected any improvements during the intervening years.

Instead of a rude block of wood we have boards laid on tressels (Fig. 2); our forefathers are still without plates, for the round objects are flat cakes of bread; these were frequently ornamented by having a cross or flower imprinted on them.

The spits are now made of silver, and the thick glass tumblers have given place to cups, of which their owners are very proud; they place much value on

Fig. 2.

them, and generally make mention of these possessions in their wills.

There were cups of silver, cups with "fringed edges," wooden cups variegated with gold, wooden-knobbed cups, and other kinds; these were ranged on the dressoir or cup-board, which at this epoch became one of the principal pieces of furniture in the dining-hall.

We will now take another stride, and peep at them in the fifteenth century. The first change we find is that of a "table dormant" (Fig. 3)—namely, one that remains in the hall—and it is covered with a cloth, or to speak in the parlance of those days, a "nappe," which is a luxury only to be found on the tables of knights. Even yet there are no plates to be seen, but the good folk were becoming a little bit more civilised in their notions about things, for they made pieces of bread serve for plates whereon to put their meat. The only ornament which adorned the table was the salt-cellar, which graced the centre. One in use at this period was made in the form of a ship.

At this time it was the custom to lay the cloth after the guests were seated. In a metrical code written for the direction of servants, this duty is described; and they are also strictly enjoined to place the salt first on the table, "invariably and in all places."

Very soon after this period plates were invented, if we may use the term; first, platters of wood, square in shape and having a hole sunk in one corner for the salt; next came pewter plates and dishes, and the platters were only used by the commonalty. There was but a scanty

Fig. 3.

supply of these luxuries, however, for as a rule one plate served two people; hence the saying, to "eat in the same dish," became a proverbial phrase for intimate friendship.

And now, but for the absence of forks, all the actual requirements for comfort would appear to be assembled; spoons there are, and a knife for each person, provided each brings his own, but forks for use at table there are none. It is not our province to speak of culinary art, but at this stage it had to do largely, we may say almost entirely, with the decorations of the table, and therefore it must needs be mentioned. At this time the meats were put on the table, and there was much display. On great occasions a roasted peacock, in all the glory of tail and feathers, appeared to grace the festal board, or a boar's head decked with rosemary, and many another uncommon dish; these were followed by "subtilties," which subtilties were marvellous representations of castles and giants, of knight and fair ladye, of saints and patriarchs, of birds and beasts, raised in a wondrous way in delicate pastry. One of these subtilties, which formed the centre ornament at a banquet, represented a ship filled

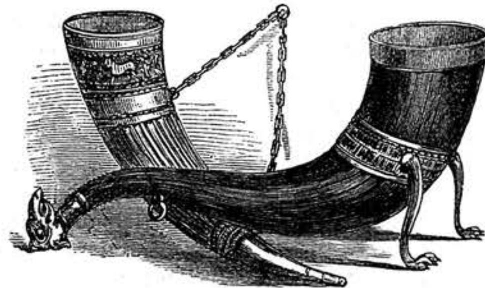
ANGLO-SAXON DRINKING VESSELS.

with birds, surrounded by a sea full of fishes, having a tall mast, with a sail of silk and ermine, surmounted by a figure of Venus. A wonderful construction this, as the drawing will show you.

We must not stop to describe all the curious and fanciful objects made by those clever cooks, but step on

to the seventeenth century, in which the principal event surely was that of the introduction of forks on to the table. The custom came to us and to others from Italy —so it appears from the observation of a traveller, one Thomas Coryate, who having visited that country, says that "the Italian, and almost most strangers who commorant in Italy, doe alwaies at their meales use a little forke when they cut their meate;" and then he proceeds minutely to describe how this wonderful performance was managed, and concludes by remarking: "I think no other nation of Christendom doth use it but only Italy." He had the honour of teaching the English its use. But the chief objects of consideration were the drinking cups and vessels, of which, it would appear, our ancestors had apparently as great a variety as of liquors. There were noggins and piggins and whiskins, ale-bowles, wassell-bowles, tankards and kannes, small jacks and great black jacks—the use of which latter caused the report in France that the Englishmen drank out of their own boots! There were cups "made out of the horns of beasts, of cocker-nuts, of goords, of the eggs of ostriches, others made of the shells of divers fishes brought from the Indies." There were "tankards and flagons and wine bowls, some white, some purcell-gilt, some gilt all over, some with covers and some without, of sundry shapes and qualities." What a goodly array, to be sure!

During this, the eighteenth century, the fashion for gold and silver table utensils and ornaments grew apace, and it became the ambition of many to exhibit as much plate as possible, so that every article that could be made of gold or silver was made of those metals. It therefore came to pass that in time the accumulation was great, and we had silver salt-cellars and mustard-pots, cream-jugs and sugar-basins, butter-dishes and meat-dishes, épergnes and wine-



DRINKING HORNS.

coolers, till the tables fairly groaned beneath the weight of all these costly and heavy decorations. The effect of all this glittering grandeur was striking, it is true, but on the other hand it looked ponderous and solemn. By-and-by there came a revulsion, and most if not all of our silver decorations were swept off our dinner-tables. But this was done for the purpose of putting china and glass in the place of silver. The arrangements of the table in this our day are increasingly augmented and varied, and show a complete and striking contrast to the bare boards at which our early ancestors ate their repasts. E. C.

Illustrated London Almanack, 1850

MISS LUCINDA'S THANKSGIVING.

But why do I keep Thanksgiving,
Did I hear you aright, my dear?
Why? When I'm all alone in life,
Not a chick nor a child to be near,
John's folks, all away in the West,
Lucy's, across the sea,
And not a soul in the dear old home
Save a little bound girl and me!

It does look lonesome, I grant it;
Yet, strange as the thing may sound,
I'm seldom in want of company
The whole of the merry year round—
There's spring when the lilac blossoms,
And the apple trees blush to bloom,
There's summer when great moths flit and glance,
Through the twilight's star-lit gloom.

Then comes the beautiful autumn,
When every fragrant brier,
Flinging its garlands on fence and wall,
Is bright as a living fire;
And then the white, still winter time,
When the snow lies warm on the wheat,
And I think of the days that have passed away,
When my life was young and sweet.

I'm a very happy woman
To-day, though my hair is white,
For some of my troubles I've overlived,
And some I keep out of sight.
I'm a busy old woman, you see, dear,
As I travel along life's road,
I'm always trying as best I can
To lighten my neighbor's load.

That child? you should think she'd try me,
Does she earn her bread and salt?
You've noticed she's sometimes indolent,
And indolence is a fault;
Of course it is, but the orphan girl
Is growing as fast as she can,
And to make her work from dawn till dark
Was never a part of my plan.

I like to see the dimples
Flash out in the little face,
That was wan enough, and still enough
When first she came to the place.
I think she'll *do*, when she's older;
A kitten is not a cat.
And now that I look at the thing, my dear,
I hope she'll never be *that*.

I am thankful that life is peaceful;
I should just be sick of strife,
If, for instance, I had to live along
Like poor Job Slocum's wife,
I am thankful I didn't say "yes," my dear—
What saved me, I do not see—
When Job, with a sprig in his button-hole,
Once came a-courting me.

I'm thankful I'm neither poor nor rich,
Glad that I'm not in debt;
That I owe no money I cannot pay,
And so have no call to fret.
I'm thankful so many love me,
And that I've so many to love,
Though my dearest and nearest are all at home,
In the beautiful land above.

I shall always keep Thanksgiving
In the good old-fashioned way,
And think of the reasons for gratitude,
In December, and June, and May,
In August, November, and April,
And the months that come between;
For God is good, and my heart is light,
And I'd not change place with a queen.

Margaret E. Sangster.

ENGLISH SURNAMES.

By the HOME PHILOSOPHER.

WHAT'S in a name? Why, everything. We are so accustomed to the fact that ourselves and our neighbours are possessed of names, that we never ask how they came to us or to them. We rarely inquire the why and wherefore of the most familiar things in our lives, and yet the history of names is brimful of interest, as I, the Home Philosopher, am about to try and show you.

In the early days of the world's history people were content with one name, such as Homer and Hesiod, but by-and-by, as the population grew larger, there came to be many Homers and Hesiods to be distinguished one from the other. Then they were defined as Homer, son of Hesiod, or as Homer the Tanner, or whatever his calling might be; or as Homer who lived by the Mill; until these additions worked themselves into the name itself. Centuries after, certain English folk became Richardson and Williamson, Taylor, Turner, or Smith, "from the smith that forgeth in the fire," or Seton and similar cognomens, the original word being Sey, but the family becoming possessed of certain lands in Scotland, it was corrupted to Sey's town, or the inhabitation of Sey, and in time Seton. Our names "teem with the story of our lives," you see!

The Norman Conquest brought a flood of new names to England, names of the noblest and most distinguished families of our day, and "familiar in our mouths as household words."

I will turn to some of our ducal houses. The Dukes of Hamilton are said to be descended from William de Hamildon, son of Robert de Bellemont, fifth Earl of Leicester. The Dukes of Westminster derive their family name of Grosvenor from the office they held in the Norman Court—Le Grosveneur, or huntsman. The Dukes of Ormond are Butler because Henry II. bestowed the Chief Butlerage of Ireland on their ancestor. The title was attainted, and is now represented only by a marquisate.

But there are higher names even than dukes. The Plantagenets were so called from the bunch of heather *(Planta Genesta)* they wore on their helmets; and the Stuarts, because Walter, High Steward of Scotland, married the daughter and heiress of Robert Bruce, he was called Le Stuart, hence the corruption. The bride's dower was the Barony of Raths, Terre de Maths, subsequently corrupted to Marjoribanks, another well-known family.

This study of names opens out a wide field of investigation. The Chaloners are so called because their ancestor, Le Seigneur de Chalôns, came over with William of Normandy; the Rokebys from Le Seigneur de Rochefort, which in time became Rochford, and then Rokeby; the Sacheverells were originally Saint-de-Chevren; the Godfreys derive their name from the Count of Anjou, who was husband to the Empress Maud. The Stubs were once St. Aubyns, and earlier Saint Oben. You will agree with me, time has dealt harshly with them. Grace, on the contrary, has improved with time, the original name being Le Gros or Le Gras. The Thynnes, among them the Marquis of Bath, derive their patronymic from John o' th' Inne, who lived in one of the Inns of Court. The familiar name of Turner comes from Le Seigneur de la Tour noire— Lord of the Black Tower. So much for the Normans.

The period 1580 to 1620 recalls some of the most curious names, for which we have to thank the Puritans.

"O my lord,
The times and titles now are altered strangely."

There were few Scripture names at the Conquest. In the course of generations Simon Peter, John, Thomas, etc., abounded. A Puritan incumbent, in Sussex, baptised his two children "Fear Not" and "Much Mercy." Faith, Hope, and Charity were bestowed on a triplet born together. Love, Harmony, Clemency, Prudence, and Patience were by no means uncommon; their owners fared better than a certain Lamentation Chapman, often quoted in the Cromwellian days, or Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, Ichabod, or Dust and Ashes. Even more quaint were such names as "Sorry-for-Sin," and "Faint Heart." Surely those who bore them must have thought there was much in a name—too much, I fear.

These were Christian names, but some in time originated surnames, and the two were so intimately associated that their story comes to be told together. The Romans bore usually three names—the pre-nomen, like our baptismal one; the second denoting the gens; the third, or cognomen, like our hereditary name—Marcus Tullius Cicero, viz., a member of the Cicero family which belongs to the gens Tullia. In Saxon and Celtic times there was but one name. When baptismal ones were first introduced, they could be changed at confirmation; the youngest son of Catherine de Medicis only took the name of Francis at the second religious rite. It would merely confuse our social life more if this rule obtained now. The change of name at marriage is often perplexing enough. The lower orders adopted surnames much later in history than those in higher stations.

In the present day many Christian names are used as surnames, and *vice versâ*. Johns, James, Andrews, are familiar family names; while the latter are also perpetuated at the font. A certain Judge, for example, christened his three sons Hampden, Russell, and Sidney.

"Good name in man and woman, dear my lord,
Is the immediate jewel of their soul,"

wrote the immortal bard; and it is a sentiment that I am sure the young girls will re-echo from their hearts' depths. We are proud of our names and the honour attached to them; but in earlier days, before the Conquest, they died with their owners. Names did not become hereditary till the eleventh, twelfth, and thirteenth centuries. This was necessary, and the addition of Christian names also, as the population became larger and less isolated.

Some names were given on account of personal peculiarities—Good, Wild, Quick, Short, Little (or Liddell), Silverlock, and so on, and these remain to us still. Many names to be found in our peerage are derived from occupations, notable among them Cooper, Carpenter, Taylor, Portman, Bridgeman, Forester, Gardener, Parker, and Roper. They need no explanation.

An old distich gives the origin of some West country names:—

"By tre (town), ros (heath), pol (church), caer (castle), and pen (forest),
You know the most of Cornishmen."

and there are few Cornishmen that do not claim one of those as a component part of their cognomens.

The names of places are far less variable than those of families; the former are almost imperishable; the latter not only get corrupted, but are often exchanged when property has been acquired, and from other causes, though places have given many patronymics. Being of a place, in time its owner came to be called after it.

The history of names is a study that supplies plenty of food for thought. Dawe and Dawson came from David; Goodwin, Godard, Goodred, etc., from Good; Pringle, from Pilgrim. Names ending in "ins" are diminutive, hence Dickins, Hopkins, Watkins, means the child, or younger. Perkin and Parkin are derived from Peter. Children born at the festival of St. John, St. Peter, St. James, or other familiar Saints, were apt to be called after them, and other names were derived from the Christian name of father and mother.

The instances of local English names are curious, Bridge, Chapel, Flood, etc.; and others ending

"In ford, in ham, in ley and tun——"

which according to the verse,

"The most of English surnames run,"

come under that name.

Smith is the most universal, because it was applied not only to Smiths, but to Wheelers, Cartwrights, and all other wrights, whose name were legion.

Names derived from the animal, mineral, and vegetable kingdoms include Beresford, Baring, Bear, Wolfe, Harris or Harrison (from hedgehog in French, Herisson), Rose, Primrose, Steel, Goldsmith, Oak, Elm, Beech, Birch, and Wheat.

There are two names more that I think you will care to remember the meaning of. Adam, the oldest of all, which signifies End, Earth; and John, which is from a Hebrew word, the Lord's Grace. We all have our John in the family.

The Home Philosopher has much more to say on the subject, but no space in which to say it; so girls must seek for themselves for further knowledge on an interesting topic which is worthy of research.

"OUTDOOR RELIEF." BY G. B. GODDARD.—FROM "THE ILLUSTRATED LONDON NEWS."

OUR BIRDS.

By the Author of "My Great-Aunt's Cat," "Willie Hubert and his Six Little Friends," etc.

PART I.

Now that the long winter is upon us again, I am anxious to place upon record some account of observations—made with care, though having no claim to be called scientific—with regard to the ways and doings of a variety of birds that were last year more or less frequent visitors to our lawn. I think that few people are aware of the extent to which it is possible to tame wild birds without in any way interfering with their liberty, or of the pleasures to be derived from so taming them; and, in the interests of the birds themselves, I shall indeed be glad if some who have not hitherto thought much about the matter are induced, by reading this history of our experiences, to make a similar provision for the wants of their little feathered neighbours.

About this time there appeared upon the lawn two small speckled birds, robins in their first plumage, evidently just cast adrift by their parents to make their own way in the world. There is perhaps no more touching indication of the special link that seems to exist between robins and mankind, all the world over, than the way in which young robins, which cannot possibly be influenced by remembered benefits, seek instead of shun human society. A young thrush will occasionally do the same thing, but with robins it seems pretty much a matter of course. When we were children, they used every summer to come hopping up to us among the currant bushes, evidently quite convinced of our kindly feelings towards them. It is to be feared that the fate of these confiding young robins is very often to be devoured by cats, and this brings me to what is in general the main difficulty with regard to the taming of wild birds. It was fortunate for the result of our experiment that our cat is kept pretty strictly to the back premises by the joint efforts of two little dogs, who are of opinion that no four-footed animal but themselves ought to be tolerated upon the lawn. We were therefore able to throw food upon the ground for our birds without fear of the consequences, instead of placing it on the ledge of an upper window, which is often the only safe plan. It followed too that when puss did pay a rare visit to the front garden, she had the meek manners of one who knew that she was only there on sufferance. I have seen her run across the lawn in a cowed way, pursued by a chorus of shrieking birds; and I have watched her basking in the sun on the top of a low wall, apparently unconscious of, or indifferent to, the fact that a young robin was dancing in an excited manner on the same wall, only a few inches from her extended tail. (He had at least the sense to keep behind her!) How much craftiness may have been hidden under her innocent demeanour cannot of course be told, but it is a fact that, though an excellent mouser and rat-catcher, she has never been known to bring a bird into the house.

Before long the young robins I have mentioned quite took up their abode upon the lawn, living upon insects—which they caught with great agility—and upon the ripe mulberries that were just beginning to fall, as well as upon the crumbs that we gave them as they came hopping about our feet in an expectant manner. Later on we named them "Young Robin" and "Young Robin's Brother," to distinguish them from others of their kind. Young Robin became much the tamer of the two, and very soon would fly up on to our hands and take food from them. A pair of old robins—the parent birds, as we supposed—often appeared in the background, and seemed, by their notes of alarm, to be warning their children not to be so venturesome. One of these, of whom we saw a great deal at a later period, we named "Old Robin." He was a very dignified old bird, and was distinguished by a white edge to each wing, very apparent in the summer time, though not so evident in the winter, when he ruffled his feathers more.

For many weeks poor Polly's cage—open, and with food in it—was left upon the lawn day and night in the hope that when she found herself in want she might come back to it again. The robins, young and old, were delighted with the arrangement, which they appeared to regard as made for their especial benefit. They hopped easily in and out through the bars and ate the soaked bread, while one of them was generally to be seen perched upon the ring which served as a handle. Other birds, probably sparrows, carried off the maize. It was only too evident that Polly herself had not come for it, since it was carried away whole, whereas she always used to crunch the grain as she ate, dropping more on the ground than she swallowed.

Our acquaintance with Young Robin had lasted about three weeks when we noticed that he was becoming very shabby and dishevelled-looking, and then came a morning when I was horrified to find a tuft of what looked like his speckled feathers lying on the grass. It was a great relief when the little bird came flying to my hand as usual. A great change had come over him, however,

inasmuch as he had a smooth olive head in the place of his rough speckled one. Before long his red breast came into view, and a little later I heard him for the first time make an attempt at a song. He was very diffident about it, and seemed to be listening to his own voice, and wondering whether he was doing it rightly.

But after this time Young Robin was seldom seen on the lawn, Old Robin having evidently decided that now that he was a full-fledged bird he was no longer to be tolerated on his "beat." It is a point with regard to which robins are peculiarly sensitive. We had, during the winter season, a robin of the front-door and a robin of the back-door, a robin of the stables and a robin of the kitchen windows, each of which reigned supreme in his own domain, and would not endure a rival. Old Robin was the robin of the lawn, and he now began to drive away his sons whenever he saw them there. The immediate result was that Young Robin very often came into the house after us, especially at meal-times. His favourite perch was the mantel-piece, from which he would watch our proceedings with interest, flying down from time to time to take crumbs from our hands, or to pick them up from the floor; and more than once, on coming down in the morning, I have found him on the breakfast-table calmly helping himself to butter. He also took great interest in gardening operations, and whenever he saw me engaged in them would come hopping about, picking up small worms, or darting at spiders, for which he had a special liking.

It was during a spell of colder weather at the end of September, when we no longer cared to sit much with open windows, that Young Robin suddenly disappeared. Old Robin had of late taken up his post on the back of a garden seat not far from the dining-room windows, where he sat and sang nearly all day long; but we missed our little bird sadly none the less. Some days passed, and then, as one of our party was resting in a hammock under some trees in a field adjoining the garden, a robin alighted on her shoulder and began pecking at some berries that she was wearing in her dress. In this way we found out the place of Young Robin's banishment, and after this we used to visit him frequently. His was not a lonely exile by any means. Whenever we called him numerous robins answered from different parts of the field. They were, I imagine, for the most part young birds, driven out of the garden like himself by the older robins, and many of them were disposed to be friendly. But there was no mistaking any one of them for our special robin. Sometimes we found him in a hawthorn bush. More often he peered down upon us from the fork of a big elm, where he appeared to be engaged in insect-hunting. He was always interested in seeing what food we had to offer him, and generally he came down for it. What delighted him most were bluebottle flies—of which I have known him eat six in quick succession—which we fished up for him out of a wasp trap. The syrup in which they had been immersed was rather a recommendation than not, I think.

Young Robin lived his field life very happily for some weeks. But when the weather grew really cold, and insects and berries became scarce, he and his brother again drew near to the house. The garden robins were fiercely indignant, and drove them about pitilessly. Their only refuge was the house itself, and they came in at any window they found open. The two young robins, with very often a third robin that had followed in pursuit, were at this time continually to be met with in one room or other. Young Robin could always be known by the serene way in which he would sit and look at us. His brother was some degrees less tame, while the old robins always flew to the window. Young Robin was not altogether free from the faults of his race, and I am sorry to say that as soon as he felt himself safe from his enemies he was too apt to turn round and chase his brother in the same fashion that he himself had just been chased.

But I must go back a few weeks to describe our first acquaintance with some others of our birds. Two of these, a blackbird and a thrush, made their appearance a little later than the robins, and were, like them, young birds lately fledged. We often wondered what had become of the rest of their respective families, and how it was that just one solitary representative of each took up his abode on our lawn. The birds did not associate together, each living his own independent life; but neither did they quarrel. They did not come about us as the robins did, but they became very fairly tame, and would lie basking in the sun on the lawn or preen their feathers within a short distance of us, just as chickens might do. Their food consisted, no doubt, partly of worms and insects, but they also fed to a great extent on the mulberries of which I have already made mention, and which, as they ripened, attracted a good many other blackbirds to the spot.

I wish that we could believe that the blackbird and thrush that afterwards became such familiar figures on our lawn were the same young birds that I have just been describing; but if it is a fact, as stated by the best authorities on the subject, that young blackbirds never attain their full adult plumage till the end of the second autumn, then it is clear that our special blackbird "Dick," at any rate, belonged to another generation. It was towards the end of the autumn, and when the mulberries were beginning to fail, that the blackbird we afterwards knew by this name first approached the "Birds' Window." This is, I ought to explain, a window opening on to the lawn, in front of which Old Robin and some other birds were at this time regularly fed. We gave them breadcrumbs at first, but finding that they greatly preferred bread soaked in milk, which is doubtless much more nourishing, that became from that time forth their staple food. The blackbird took the bread and milk, like the other birds; but he showed a decided preference for anything of a meaty nature that was offered him, and much appreciated a piece of cake or pie-crust. He used to come close under the window and look up in a pathetic sort of way when he was hungry. I had never seen a blackbird so near before, and I was not at first favourably impressed by his appearance. Certainly at this time Dick was anything but a beauty. His head was rough and stubbly-looking, and he had altogether an ungainly look. As a matter of fact he was preparing to moult, just as Young Robin had done. Wild birds, if one may judge from these two cases, manage this process more cannily than domestic fowls, inasmuch as they do not shed their old feathers until their new ones are pretty well developed, thus avoiding the uncomfortable interval which is usual in our poultry yards. By the time our blackbird had parted with his shabby coat he was—with his jet-black plumage and his orange bill—as handsome a bird as anyone could wish to see. It was at about this time that we gave him his name of "Dick." He very soon got to know it, and would come running out of the bushes when we called him.

Dick and the robins were not the only birds whose acquaintance we made before the winter set in. There was a border just beyond the lawn, on which grew a row of sunflowers; and among them we observed in the autumn some small birds busily at work. They were grey in colour—a very pale grey underneath, and a darker grey above—and had black heads. Their voices and manners showed them to be tits of some sort, and eventually we came to the conclusion that they were cole-tits; but this was later in the season, when we had opportunities of observing them much more closely. I thought that they were engaged in hunting for insects, until, wishing one day to secure some sunflower seed, I found that several heads were quite empty. So industrious were the little birds, that they would have taken all the seed as it ripened if I had not tied up two or three heads in muslin. The tits were very anxious to get at these preserved heads when once the other heads were cleared, and always gave a pleased twitter when they saw me anywhere near, evidently expecting that I was going to help them to do so. When they found that there was really no more sunflower seed for them, then they too came to the window to see what else there was to be had. Unlike most of the birds, they did not care about the bread and milk, which they turned over in a discontented fashion. They liked fragments of biscuit or cake much better, partly perhaps because they were more easily carried away, in accordance with their habitual custom, no doubt to swell some secret hoard. What, however, they liked far better than even these were crumbs of fat or butter, which we placed for them from time to time on the cork of a wasp trap that had remained since the summer suspended to a jessamine-bough close to the window. I am not certain how many cole-tits came about the house in the first instance. My impression was that there were at least three or four of them; but they were such active little birds, and carried off so much food, returning continually for more, that it would have been easy to fancy that there were more of them than there really were. Throughout the winter, at any rate, only a single pair came to the window. These we named respectively "King Cole" and "Queen Cole," the former being easily distinguished by a white spot on the back of his neck and slight white bars across his wings, as well as by a greater extent of black under his chin.

A party of tom-tits made their appearance about the same time as the cole-tits. There were certainly five or six of them. They were the prettiest little birds imaginable, full of fun and frolic, and so good-tempered—never quarrelling among themselves or with other birds—that I began to think that tom-tits were a much-maligned race.

A pair of tits, in some respects like them in colouring, but very much larger, and with glossy black heads, often put in an appearance at meal-times. These we knew to be the greater tits. Their manners were very business-like compared with those of the blue-headed tits. We never saw them swinging or playing about. They always came direct to the food, scattering the smaller tits in all directions.

There is a yucca not far from the birds' window, to the long, spiked leaves of which some of the tom-tits or the cole-tits might generally be seen clinging; or they would hang suspended, head downwards, to the jessamine sprays in front of the window, against which the tom-tits would scrape their bills when specially hungry. Another bird that often tapped against the window as the cold weather came on was Old Robin, who would also come into the room if he had a chance and there was no one in it. He was, I should think, a fair specimen of what is usually known as "a tame robin," though, in comparison with Young Robin, we thought him rather wild. Young Robin had by this time quite taken up his abode in the yucca; where, by reason of the spikes with which he was surrounded and the near proximity of the window, he found himself tolerably safe from his father's furious onslaughts. Here he would sit for hours together, literally "leaning his

breast against a thorn," and looking the picture of innocence and sweetness, until his brother or some other robin appeared upon the scene, when he and Old Robin (it was the one point upon which they were agreed) would furiously attack the intruder. One of the two Robins it was, I have no doubt, who was responsible for the loose tuft of feathers in the back by which we were for a long time able to distinguish Young Robin's Brother, a gentle, timid little bird, that seemed entirely free from the fighting propensities of its family, until, alas! one day when both Old and Young Robin happened to be out of the way, I was eye-witness to a violent attack made by this very meek little bird on a stranger robin which ventured to come to the feeding-ground.

Young Robin never fought with any bird but those of his own kind. He ignored the other birds absolutely. I shall never forget the look of mingled astonishment and disgust with which—with craned neck—he watched from his yucca a fight that was going on between his father and a sparrow. For we had sparrows among our birds, of course—a whole troop of them. I have generally seen them described as quarrelsome birds, but this was not our experience of them. In the case I have just mentioned, it was Old Robin, who thought all other birds ought to give way to him, who began the quarrel. They lived very peaceably among themselves, as far as we could see, and never interfered with the other birds except by gobbling down as much food as they could before the others had made up their minds where to begin. They never stood upon their dignity, which gave them a great advantage over the rest. But they were comparatively very uninteresting. I never succeeded in distinguishing one from another, except in the case of one old fellow, who looked as if he wore a very big cravat, and as if he might be the grandfather of all the rest.

(*To be concluded.*)

ON GUARD.

Arabella consulted a physician, who recommended the seashore as likely to be most beneficial to her health.

Arabella at the seashore The ball-room. Dancing every night till 3 A.M. (Strange to say, her health is no better.) She consults another physician, who recommends the "Springs."

Arabella at the "Springs." Round dances, ice-cream, salads, etc. Time 2 A.M. (Her health does not improve.) She again interviews a doctor, who advises her to go to the mountains.

Spice Box

That De-pends.—A pen may be driven, but the pencil does best when it is lead.

Guess This.—What is it which, though never lost, is constantly found?—A verdict.

Irrelevant.—"And how does Charlie like going to school?" kindly inquired the good man of the little six-year-old boy, who was waiting with a tin can in his hand the advent of another dog. "I like goin' well 'nough," replied the embryo statesman, ingenuously, "but I don't like stayin' after I git there."

Enough.—Governess (desirous of explaining the word "enough"): "Now, suppose, Freddy, that you gave pussy all the milk she can lap, all the meat she can eat, and all the sweet cake that she cares for, what will she have?" Freddy (with surprising alacrity) "Kittens!"

According to the Dog.—"Can dogs find their way home from a long distance?" asks a paper. It's according to the dog. If it's one you want to get rid of, he can find his way back home from California; if it's a good one, he's apt to get lost if he goes round the corner.

The "Why and Wherefore."—A small boy whose record for deportment at school had always stood at a hundred came home one day recently with his standing reduced to ninety-eight. "What have you been doing, my son?" asked his mother. "Been doing?" replied the young hopeful. "Been doing just as I have been doing all along—only the teacher caught me this time."

What He Wanted.—A countryman, seating himself in a fashionable restaurant, summoned a waiter and made known his purpose. The waiter skipped briskly away, and finally returned with a handsomely bound bill of fare, which he opened and placed before the guest, who, pushing it away, scornfully observed, "Oh, come, now, you can't cram no literature down *me;* vittals is what I want—*vittals*, and pretty durned quick, too."

Wasn't quite Certain!—The following is told of a young gentleman who was passing an examination in physics. He was asked "What planets were known to the ancients?" "Well, sir," he answered, "there were Venus and Jupiter, and"—after a pause—"I think the Earth, but I'm not quite certain."

No Doubt!—On a honeymoon tour recently, the young husband, going across from Dover to Boulogne, grew suddenly very strange. "Are you ill, love?" exclaimed the anxious model wife. "Oh, Alfred beloved, are you ill?" He was afraid of being doubted, and faintly replied, "I think the fish I had for breakfast this morning must have been alive."

Cruel.—The surgeon-in-chief sent for one of his junior assistants, who, hastening to his superior's assistance, found him just sitting down to a superb roast fowl and a delicious *pâté*. "Ah, Smith," cries the chief, "have you breakfasted yet?" "No, doctor," replies the assistant, radiantly. "Then go and get your breakfast, and come back; you will have lots of time."

His Bet.—A censorious tutor, in lecturing to his class "On the Vice of Betting," declared that under no circumstances could a bet be anything but a sin and a shame. "But you've always gone in for one kind of bet," exclaimed the irreverent pupil. The tutor was at first stupefied with amazement at such effrontery, but, recovering his self-possession, he blandly informed the student that if he could make his statement true he should have a holiday. "Well, hav'n't you always been in favor of the alpha-bet?" asked the student. The teacher "acknowledged the corn."

Arabella at the mountains. Hops every night, midnight suppers, etc. (Her health is no better.) A new physician is called. He sends her to a country farm-house for rest and quiet.

Arabella enjoying rest and quiet at a farm-house. Small, close, hot chamber, fighting mosquitoes, etc., at 2 A.M. A bright idea comes to her. She —

Goes home. As it is out of season, there are no dancing, no amusements, no entertainments, consequently he has "rest and quiet," gets her natural sleep, appreciates the comforts of home, gains a pound a day, and gives a pound (£) (which it would have cost her if at a summer resort) to an association for carrying poor children into the country.

Odds and Ends.

GOD gives every bird its food, but He does not throw it into the nest.

GREAT things are not done, even by great men, without toil and effort.

"OUR distinctions do not lie in the places which we occupy, but in the grace and dignity with which we fill them."

"NURTURE your mind with great thoughts, for to believe in the heroic makes heroes."
Lord Beaconsfield.

"IT is only by labour that thought can be made healthy, and only by thought that labour can be made happy, and the two cannot be separated with impunity."—*Ruskin.*

SPEAKING of china, the old willow ware is now very difficult to obtain. But it can always be recognised by the pattern. On the right there should be a mandarin's house; in the foreground a pavilion; in the background an orange tree; and on the right again a peach tree. A fence encloses the mandarin's house; and through the grounds there should be a meandering brook in which there is an island high up on the left-hand side, with a cottage on it. Across the brook there should be a bridge, with three figures standing upon it, the famous willow tree and a gardener's cottage being at either end. Two birds should be flying high over head. The whole design is supposed to represent the love story of a mandarin's daughter, who is one of the figures on the bridge, the other two are her lover and her father the mandarin. There is only a faint reflection of this story in the nursery rhyme—

"Two little birds are flying high,
A little boat just passing by;
A little house across the water,
Where live the Sultan and his daughter;
A weeping willow hanging o'er,
Two little men, if not more;
An apple tree with apples on,
A fence below; that ends my song."

"CULTIVATE the habit of always seeing the best in people, and, more than that, of drawing forth whatever is the best in them."
Cuyler.

"IT is hard to personate and act a part long; for where truth is not at the bottom, nature will always be endeavouring to return, and will peep out and betray herself one time or other."

"THE most common error of men and women is that of looking for happiness somewhere outside of useful work. It has never yet been found when thus sought, and never will be while the world stands; and the sooner the truth is learned the better for everyone."

THE most costly throne in the world was the famous Peacock Throne at Delhi, which was so named from the figures of two peacocks standing behind it, with tails expanded. These birds were inlaid with sapphires, rubies, emeralds and other stones in such a manner as to give them the appearance of life. The throne itself was of solid gold inlaid with rubies, diamonds and emeralds. Above it was a canopy of gold standing on twelve pillars, ablaze with gems; the fringe of the canopy was bordered with enormous pearls. Two umbrellas, the emblem of Oriental royalty, stood at either side of the throne, with handles of solid gold eight feet in length, and studded with diamonds. Their coverings were of crimson velvet embroidered with pearls. The cost of this magnificent throne was said to be no less than £5,000,000

OPALS are regarded as unlucky by the least superstitious people, but it is not generally known why they are held in especial disfavour above all other precious stones. They were much worn in Venice, and during one of the epidemics of the plague it was noticed that immediately before the death of those who were stricken, any opals they might be wearing upon their fingers would suddenly brighten. The Venetians immediately declared that it was the stones which caused the illness, overlooking the fact that it might be the illness which affected the colour of the stones. Opals are sensitive to the least variation of heat or cold, and the fever that accompanied an attack of the plague being at its height immediately before the death of the victim, caused the colours of the stone to shine with extraordinary brilliancy. Such was the origin of the superstition. If an opal be held to the fire for a few seconds, it will turn almost red, a convincing proof of the fallacy regarding its power to bring ill-luck.

HITHERTO incubators have been regarded solely as a means for hatching chickens. In France, however, a Dr. Tarnier has applied the system to the rearing of weakly babies. At the Maternité Hospital in Paris, a "baby incubator" has been at work for some years with the greatest success. The *couvreuse*, as it is called in France, is a plain wooden box 2 feet 8 inches long and 2 feet 4 inches high and broad. This box is divided into two parts, and has a double wooden covering, the space between the two covers being filled with sawdust in order to prevent the heat escaping. The bottom half of the box is a reservoir filled with water, which is supplied from a patent boiler. The upper part is a warm chamber where a basket or a cradle, sufficiently large to hold two infants, is placed. An opening in the side permits of the cradle being withdrawn whilst a double glass top gives a complete view of the interior, so that the children and the thermometer beside them may be constantly watched. The temperature in this "baby incubator" is usually maintained at 86° Fahrenheit. The trial at the Maternité has proved so successful in rearing weakly children who otherwise would have died, that the *couvreuses* have been distributed in large numbers to other French hospitals. As time has passed many improvements have been made, especially in the way of ventilation, and as the cost is only seven or eight guineas, the invention may recommend itself to the English medical and hospital authorities.

"THE man who is waiting for opportunities is wasting opportunities."

"IT'S a long way up the hill if you think about the hill all the time."

"WHAT we must do let us love to do. It is noble chymistry that turns necessity into pleasure."—*Coleridge.*

"DISCRETION of speech is more than eloquence, and to speak agreeably to him with whom we deal is more than to speak in good words or in good order."—*Bacon.*

"THE world deals good-naturedly with good-natured people, and I never knew a sulky misanthropist who quarrelled with it, but it was he and not it that was wrong."
Thackeray.

"So many Gods, so many creeds;
So many paths that wind and wind;
While just the art of being kind
Is all the sad world needs."
Ella Wheeler Wilcox.

"LIFE is made up, not of great sacrifices or duties, but of little things, in which smiles and kindness and small obligations, given habitually, are what win and preserve the heart and secure comfort."

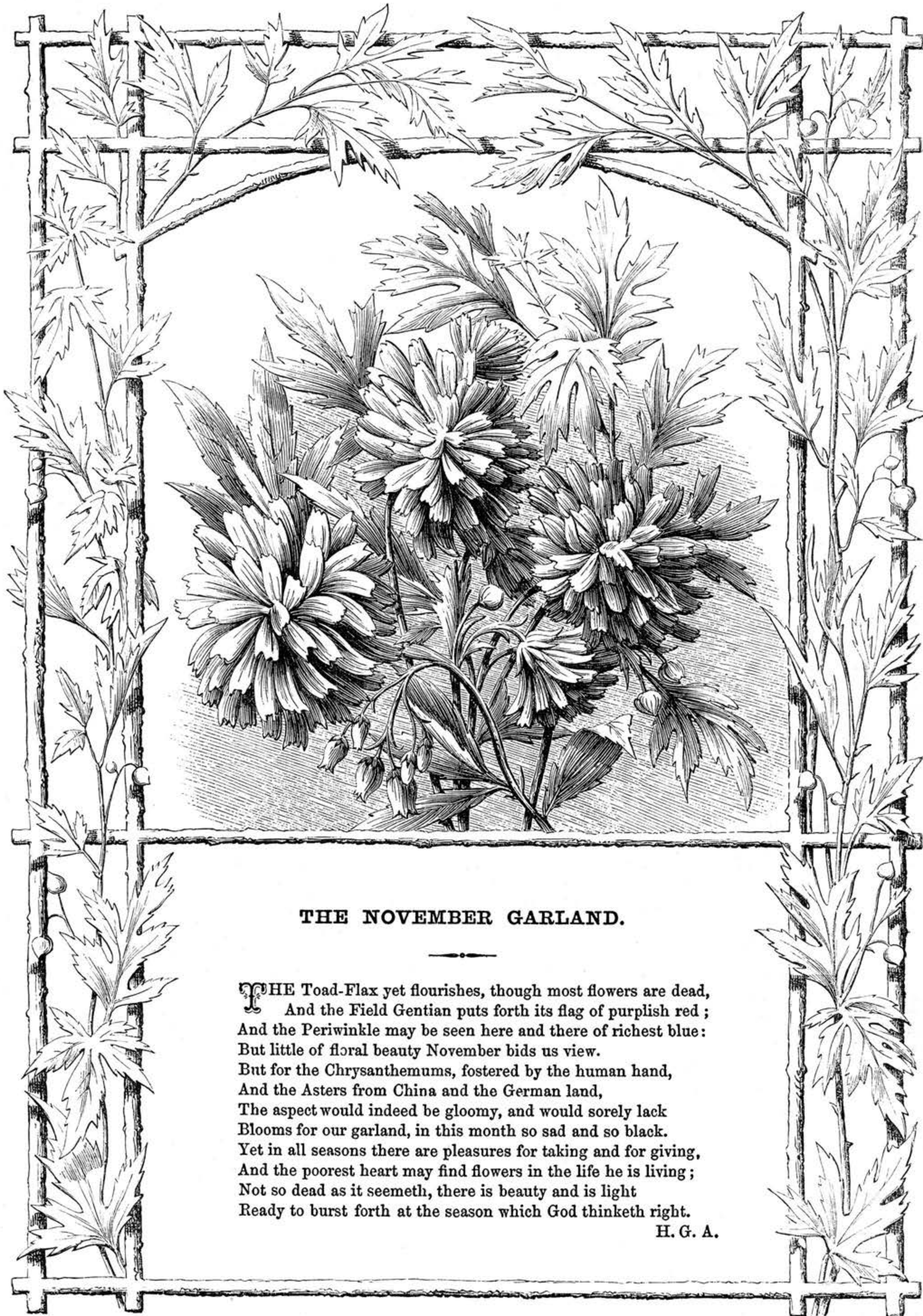
THE Princess Marie of Orleans, the wife of Prince Waldemar of Denmark, is greatly interested in the work of the fire brigades. She has had her photograph taken in the uniform of the Copenhagen Fire Brigade, with brass helmet and pickaxe, and has presented it to the corps.

ON THE VOYAGE OF LIFE.—I find the great thing in this world is not so much where we stand as in what direction we are moving; to reach the port of heaven, we must sail sometimes with the wind and sometimes against it—but we must sail, and not drift, nor lie at anchor.—*Oliver Wendell Holmes.*

NOTES ON MUSK.

There are three kinds of musk known in commerce, but the most important and valuable is a Chinese sort imported chiefly from Shanghai. Unfortunately it is adulterated to an enormous extent with dried blood, fragments of leather, leaden pellets, peas, etc., so that often little more than the smell of the original musk remains. When genuine, it fetches as high as 40s. an ounce.

Musk is a product of most enduring odour; indeed its scent is more penetrating and persistent than that of any other known substance. A grain of musk will distinctly scent millions of cubic feet of air without any appreciable loss of weight. It is a secretion of the male musk deer.



THE NOVEMBER GARLAND.

THE Toad-Flax yet flourishes, though most flowers are dead,
And the Field Gentian puts forth its flag of purplish red;
And the Periwinkle may be seen here and there of richest blue:
But little of floral beauty November bids us view.
But for the Chrysanthemums, fostered by the human hand,
And the Asters from China and the German land,
The aspect would indeed be gloomy, and would sorely lack
Blooms for our garland, in this month so sad and so black.
Yet in all seasons there are pleasures for taking and for giving,
And the poorest heart may find flowers in the life he is living;
Not so dead as it seemeth, there is beauty and is light
Ready to burst forth at the season which God thinketh right.

H. G. A.

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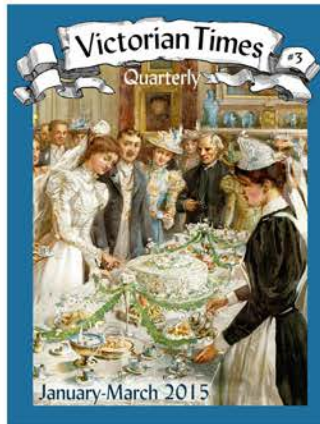

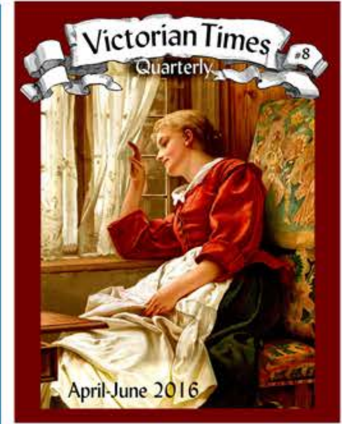

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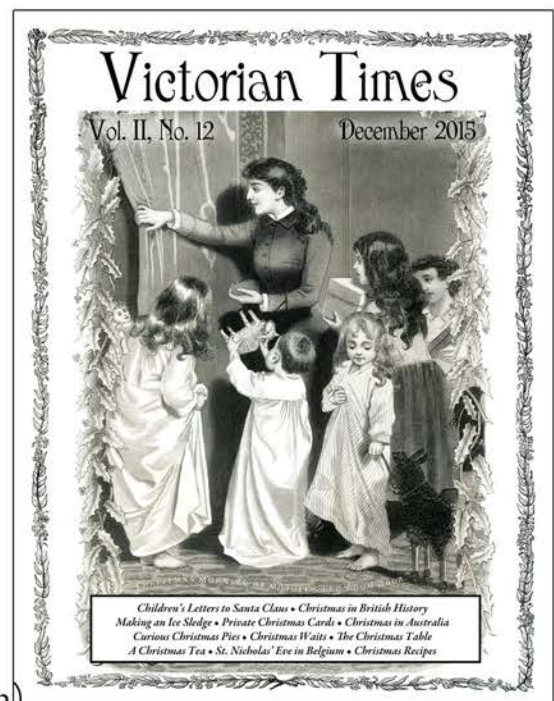

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