THE LEAP YEAR REFUSAL.

'Tis very kind, indeed, of you To offer to become my wife : To say you love me as you do And wish to share my simple life. But do not grieve at what I say, Dear Maud, I really love another ; In anger oo not go away, I will consent to be your brother.

I'm sorry, Maud, I really am, That you have learned to love me so : For me you should not care a-darn, I never meant to be your beau. Your husband, Maud, I cannot be, My heart belongs unto another : I'm sorry you've proposed to me,

But I can only be your brother If you should ever want a friend, I trust that you will send for m On me, you always may depend, I'll come to you, where'er I ve. Surely there is some better man Who'll gladly take you for his wife

So find him-I am sure you can-I'll be your brother all through life. Oh, tell us, girls, how does it sound, To hear the talk you've handed out Now Leap Year's twisted things around How does it sound when sweethearts flout Your fond proposals, as you've done,

And all your hopes are put to sleep? Dost thou think this brother talk is fun How do you like to loop the leap? -Detroit Feee Press.

HIRAM'S SON-IN-LAW.

Old Hiram Dabney was a man of few prejudices, but their fewness in number was amply made up for by strength of sentiment toward each. So intensely did old Hiram object to all that appeared to him objectionable that it would be hard to tell what was his pet aversion. It would be safe to say, however, that he hated nothing on earth more than he did a man school teacher. Yes; a man teacher might be placed at the head of the list.

In all the ten years of his School Trusteeship, this was the first time he had allowed a man to teach in his "de-strick." And it was a sort of forced choice with The development of Satan in the two Huggins boys had demonstrated that women were unqualified on muscular grounds to instruct in District Number

Therefore, when it came to hire a fall teacher, Hiram bitched up his wagon and drove off to the county seat. He interviewed the School Superintendent and filed

his specifications for a teacher.
"I want a man, by gum! I want one thet kin lick th' boots of'n two uv th' meanest little cusses in ten States. They've raised th' devil in our de-strick fer er with er gig an' red cutter, that ain't airy ol' maid er ainy other kind uv er womat thet'll skin them two boys erlive ez they'd oughter. I want er man, by Jerusby, thet'll snatch th' tops uv their heads off !

The Superintendent lant a grave and becoming attention to these remarks. He was an old-timer in his office, and well accustomed to hearing how mean the Other Fellow's children are ! He sent out Stephen

Stephen was a bright, good-looking young fellow. He had won his education by a bard fight, and had stopped short of college because of the imperative necessity to

When he arrived and stated his business old Hiram tooked him over with critical eye. He thought him too slim and pale to nake a first rate fighter, but then Hiram did not expect to find an article in men teachers that would suit him in all particulars. It was just a case of picking, the best of a had lot.
"Wal," he invited, "oum out ter th"

barn. I'll talk to ye while I polish my

Stephen balanced himself on a sawbuck while the old man took down a set of fine, nickel-plated harness that hung about the

"Naow," he drawled, holding up a bridle bit, and squinting at it with one eye "Kin you cut cord-wood?" "I dare say," replied Stephen, unsmil-

ingly. "Oh, you dare say," mimicked Hiram,

"but kin you?"
"Would that be included in my duties here? Hiram polished a knob with great atten-

tion before replying. "Nope," he answered, casually, "but 'low you'll need that heft uv forearm."

Stephen did not volunteer any observation to this, and Hiram spent another two minutes diligently scouring a buckle.
"Ever killed anybody?" he asked, pres

ently. "No," answered Stephen, shortly. was at rifle lacking in philosophical pa-tience with this type of the rural school guardian and his mental proce "Well, what kin you do?"

"I can teach your school, if that is what you want done, and manage it, too. bere is anything else-"

He had spoken with more heat than intended, but experience had taught him that there were times when a mild temper, like patience, was not a virtue; though there was but little danger of his erring that respect.

Hiram rubbed slowly and carefully up and down the length of a pair of reins. With a far-away expression, he wiped softly and affectionately around and around the big handsome collars. He appeared quite oblivious of Stephen's existence. Stephen rose and buttoned up his coat. It was a choleric eye that he bent upon Hiram. "Have you anything further to say, Mr

'About what ?" mildly inquired the old fellow, drawing his grimy fingers through a wisp of chin whiskers, and looking up at Stephen with a guileless eye. Stephen's lips were compressed thinly. "I understood that you were looking for

a man to teach your school. I did not ride twelve miles over these roads for fun. I guess you've had time enough to give me my answer," said Stephen, and turned to-ward the door. "I wish you good after-

one communicating a trivial bit of news, What?" said Stephen, looking back-

"I said you wuz hired, you an' them gimerack diplomys uv yourn," remarked

Hiram, nodding pleasantly.

For a moment it appeared as if Stephen would scorn to be hired, but after a second of half augry indecision, he faced about, and, putting one foot upon a chopping-block, rested forward on that kuee.

exactly my way or not at all. I guess you

At this Hiram's smile was almost boyish, it was so bland and guileless.
"Oh, you're hired, all right," he af-

firmed He added a bospitable invitation Stephen to stop overnight, but Stephen de-clined, saving that he had a bired horse and wanted to take it back to town that

his horse into the barn for a feed and accompanied the old man to the house for the six o'clock supper. And it was then and there that he met and fell in love with Mary Dabney. Mary was eighteen, and a delicate, feminine edition of her father.

delicate, feminine edition or ner name.
"That's my darter," was the formal introduction Hiram accorded; and Stephen took her strong, shapely hand in a brief clasp, and then turned to greet Mrs. Hiram, a good, phlegmatic soul, remarkable for nothing unless it was excellence in biscuit-making. It was plain that Mary inherited both her looks and personality from her father; and that she was spoiled was as

After supper Stephen left, to return to the district the following Sunday, ready to open school Monday morning. He rather wished it was in order that he should hoard with the Dabneys, but it was a time honored enstom for the teacher to board with a certain family who lived quite near the schoolhouse, and Stephen felt that in some respects it was just as well for him not to be domiciled with old man Dabney.

He did not know whether Mary would attend school or not. He had hoped for some expression from her on the subject, but had been disappointed; and Monday morning, as pupils of all sizes and ages arrived, and she was not among them, he felt another disappointment. He would have been somewhat consoled had he known the conditions that had operated against her so arriving. They were some-

what in this order:
About the middle of the year before Mary had "stopped school," because she had arrived at that stage of arithmetic and grammar where the then acting expounder of learning got completely stumped over the complexities of Higher Mathematics as extant in the last hundred pages of the Grammar School Arithmetic. So Mary took her books home, and stayed there.

Now, without any particular eagerness to acquire more education than incidental school life should afford, she did make up her mind that night at supper that she would attend the coming term of school. She was divided between a desire to do this and a hesitancy to let "Professor" find out how little she knew; but the very earnest expression of his gray eyes had a wonderful way of stirring her ambition for further culture. She turned and tossed half the night over the problem, and then decided that she would study so hard that she would make a phenomenal showcouple uv years, now, jis' because they've ing of intellect if she did not have much got a all fired dashiu' grown-up brother to show for it, and that the game would to show for it, and that the game would be worth the caudle. Hilda Huggins was going, and Hilda was as old as Mary. At the thought of Hilda's blackberry eyes and glossy raven braids and their possible influence, Mary sat up in bed with a start.

That determined her. Next: Mary was not accustomed to more than mention her purposes to her parents. Her reasons therefor she considered superfluous to them Moreover, Mary was deep. Old Hiram was, locally, at least, proverbially deep, and Mary was like her father in this as in other respects.

Monday morning, with her books done up in a strap, and wearing her new plaid gingham dress, which she had selected after trying on her entire wardrobe exclusive of her party dresses and her one silk for church, Mary descended to breakfast. She ostentatiously placed her hat and books on

the corner of the table.
"Well, by Jimmy Pills!" exclaimed ber father, genuiuely surprised, "where air

you off to ?"
"To school, of course," responded Mary, with an inflection that was intended to in-

dicate that that settled the matter. "Goin' to school !" repeated her father. 'Ye ain't goin' to do no sich uv er thing.' he asserted positively. "Ye shan't go to no school teached by no durn little man

"Why?" asked Mary calmly, helping herself to eggs and toast.

Hiram rauted and swore, and he the fatal mistake of twitting her with what in his heart he did not, could not, really onceive to be true-that she admired "thet

This accusation ignited such a fire of real indignation that Miss Mary, for one of the few times in her life, broke into a storm of tears as she left the room. She ran upstairs and slammed the door with a bang shook the house, and looked herself in.

At noon she would not respond to her mother's call for dinner. By the middle of the afternoon, not being able to get any response from her, nor hear a sound. Mrs. Hiram sought her husband and told him in a voice quavering with tears how uneasy she was, and then burst into crying.

The upshot of the matter was, of course that Hiram brought around Mary's pony Tnesday morning for her to ride to school Stephen looked up from his register just n time to see her as she cantered into the schoolyard. His heart gave a quick bound with the shock of pleasure that sent the blood flying to his face. He was glad he had seen her before she entered, as, it gave him time to become composed before he greeted her; but his cheeks were still flushed, and there was a corresponding height of color in Mary's face as she said "Good morning" very primly. With less pretense, Stephen came up and shook hands with her and said he was glad to see her and as

signed her a desk. That was the beginning. In the weeks that followed, not one ray of suspicion dawned on Hiram. He brought the black pony around five mornings in the week

with the regularity of clockwork. That Mary studied till past midnight every night in her room, her father was happily unaware. That she was engage to be married to Stephen Benson, her father was likewise happily unaware. It had come about upon the occasion of Stephen's first visit to the family, one mouth after

school had begun. During the month Stephen and Mary had fallen head over beels in love. It throbbed in the very air around them. It vibrated in the very air around them. It viorated in trills and waves with every look and speech. With her head bent demurely over her books, Mary would know precisely every look and 'gesture of Stephen's. Stephen, enthusiastically propounding the rule of three to a class of stupid youngsters. though looking in the directly opposite way from her, knew precisely the attitude in which Mary at that moment sat. Though, when he dismissed school, he said "Good

"Look here, Mr. Danney," he said, "if old alike, as she passed out, it seemed to when I say that I am not going to marry I am hired to teach your school, I intend to Stephen that a part of his spirit went with him," she asserted. be the teacher. I am going to do things her. Her personality so dominated him "Oh, git out," sneered Hiram, her. Her personality so dominated him that he would almost speak aloud to her after she had been gone for hours. The long wait from Friday afternoon till Mon-The day morning was a vista of lead-colored hours, made endurable only by Stephen's vivid fancies of Mary.

He must have been tactful and clever in the discharge of both his professional and social duties. The Huggins boys, those two desperadoes that had called him into Stephen thought it better not to reject this extension of the clive branch, so he led bis horse into the bern than the beautiful and the branch and the led satisfaction were beautiful. the district, either intimidated or hypno-Nobody accused him of being "partial" to anybody's big si-ter or little brother. He seemed not to have called attention to his methods, habits, clothes, or appetites. never betrayed a preference for visiting the Dabney household, and made it almost the last house on the list of district calls.

"Naow." said Hiram, after they had finished supper on that memorable Sunday night, "we'll go inter th' parlor an' hev' a

Mary played with a swing and lightness that was the gift of the born music lover. but with the faulty execution of the whol ly untaught, and this she knew, but it had ever troubled ber before "I don's want to play, pa," she objected,

without affectation. "Oh, pshaw, now, Mary!" blustered Hiram, "thet's th' way gals talk. Play them jigs an' things ye air everlastin' playin for Ben Crooker, ev'ry Sad'dy night,

when he come er courtiv'."

There was a mild and harmless pride in Hiram's hint. He had no objection to letting "Professor" Benson understand that if Mary did demean herse t by going to by f school, she had a "steady" beau all the day same, and that he was a "courtin" beau, And his words were just as effective as

ever he could have wished. They swept over Stephen like a prickly needle blast. They likewise struck Mary with an en-tirely new force, for all of their accustomedness, and she darted a lightning glance at Stephen, to meet his wide-eyed, startled ook. Then she blushed so furiously that it was mistaken by Stephen for guilt, and he turned cold and clammy with apprehension. He had hardly questioned himself if she loved him. His own love was so great that he had imagined she must in some fashion know it, and on her part respond. And now Hiram's words became a host of little imps that flew about in the air, mocking and grinning and capering, and the more Mary blushed the colder grew

Stephen. She had stumbled through two or three airs, leaving each half finished, when Mrs. Dabney's voice was heard in breathy effort, calling Hiram to come out and help her let down the cellar trap-door.

As Hiram tramped out, Mary let her hands fall from the piano keys. "I think that is enough," she said, with a nervous laugh. "Till Saturday night," said Stephen, quickly, and then wished the words un-

"That is just pa's talk !" answered Mary, vexedly, her face aflame again.
"Oh, Mary, I love you!" Stephen was actually affrighted when he heard the inopportune words; but they seemed to have tumbled out of his lips involuntarily. There was an answering flush in Mary's

spoken.

'Mary !' "Don't, Stephen ! Sit still !" cried Mary, half laughing, and wanting to cry, for very emotion. "Don't let anybody see— ob, Stephen!"

warning, and for a brief moment they clasped hands in a perfect costasy of love. Then Mary made him sit down, and protested that he must not betray them, and when Hiram returned in the course of another minute or so the "jigs and things" that were racing madly up and down the piano keys filled him with inordinate pride

in his child's accomplishments. As the weeks passed along, it seemed to Stephen that he could not keep up the constant dissimulation. He wanted to cast prudence to the winds and tell Hiram and all the world that he loved Mary, but Mary's remonstrances were almost frautic at this, and it took all her powers of persuasion to restrain this reckless impruden those brief snatches of communion that love

finds a time and way for. Meanwhile, Ben Crooker "set up" to Mary in a way that afforded her father in-finite satisfaction; and he looked forward to Ben's "speakin" to him" as a near-athand, pleasing certainty. And, in the course of events, this, indeed, came to pass. He was hanging meditatively over the pigpen fence, when Ben approached with a hangdog air that instantly revealed his

sion to Hiram. "Say, Mr. Dabney, I guess you know how it is about me and Mary," he ventur-ed at last, kicking bashfully at a fence-

post. "Wal," responded Hiram, "I ain't be'n

wai, "reponded Hiram, "I ain't be n stop'n' ye, hev' I?"

"Thank'y, thank'y," responded Ben, blushing with gratitude and embarrass-ment. "But, Mary, now—well, now, she says she don't care parthin' 'bout me, egzept," he added with great bitterness,

'A dum' fiddlesticks !" exploded Hiram. rathfully, "thet's pure gal contrariness! "I thought, mebby, Mr. Dabney, ef you

wuz ter say er good word fer me, oncet in er while," suggested Ben, hopefully. "Ben," said the old man, solemnly, when ye say thet it shows ye don't know a livin' form thing erbout gal kerickter. Say er good word fer ye oncet, an' thet would be th' last uv it, till she'd fergot th' word. No, sir-reel I'll pitch in an' blackguard ye fer everythin', high and low, good, bad, an' indifferent. I'll swear ef I ear uv her meanin' ter marry ye, I'll look her up on bread an' water!"

Ben looked vastly alarmed. "Now, jest ltave it in my hands, Ben," adjured Hiram, "an' reck'leot it don't make no dif'rence how I seem ter act. Ye jest understand I'll be doin' it ter help ye

Hiram, filled with complacency and good-humor with his own sagacity, lost no time in taxing his daughter with Mr. Crocker's intentions. Mary admitted that it was so; whereupon Hiram burst into such a torrent of wrathful disparagement of that young man's character and charms that it caused his daughter no little aston-

bment. "Why pa! I thought you liked Ben' "Liked!" mocked Hiram, sneering, "liked! Ye kin like er yaller dawg, I guess, ef he's useful to keep off ther tramps er even i' eat up th' scraps. But ez fer ye marryin' Ben Crocker, I kin tell ye right naow, Mary, I ain't goin' ter stand fer no such uv er thing !'' he snorted.

"If you feel that way about it, pa, why don't you tell Ben not to come on the place? I like him and like him to like afternoon" to her with the same formality place? I like him and like him to like that he used with every pupil, young and me, but you don't seem to believe me

wouldn't do no good ef I did shoo him off th' place. Ef you wuz uv a mind ter marry him, y'd make him elope with ye. No, I'd druther keep an eye on him.

This insidious suggestion about elope-ment was not without design, though he knew it was not necessary for anybody to put "idees into Mary's head." What sore ly puzzled him was why Mary did not want to marry Ben. What did she have gainst him? And this was the trap that at last caught the conspirator, one day after a particularly dutiful reply that she did not want to marry Ben Crocker, and for patiene' sake to quit talking about it.

"Then why don't ye?" snorted Hiram.
"Why not?" cried Miss Dabney, opening her eyes in mock astonishment "Why not, indeed! Haven't you been setting forth reasons enough? Me oy, do I want to be looked in a cold, dark cellar all the rest of my life? This was too much for Hiram.

"Yes, miss," he roared, "I should jest like to know why not. He's ez fine er fel-ler ez ye kin find in these Younited States, an' I shud like t' know why in tarnashun you don't want to marry him !'

"I will not marry a man who says 'I seen' and 'I hain't' " she said scornfully, with a toss of her head. A match to a powder keg could not have been more instantaneous in process than the inspiration which, at these words, burst

"So thet's th' reason, is it? He ain't educated to suit ye?" And with that for a start, old Hiram worked himself into a perfect frenzy, threat-ened to shoot the teacher, and wound up by forbidding her to go to school another

It was a full minute after be had exhaus ted this tirade before Mary spoke, and then it was in a tone so quiet that it gave ber father a distinct shock.

"Very well, pa, since you are so opposed to it. But may I not go and bring my books home?

"Naow, you come right erlong back, Mary," he admonished. 'Yes, pa," answered Mary. About noon she came riding back, her books tied to the horn of her saddle. She

alighted and playfully tossed the bridle into her father's hands.

Then the early spring days began to melt one into another; and no mention was made of school, and things glided smoothly in the Dabney bousehold. Mary maintain

ed an attitude of lively cheerfulness. She received Ben Crocker's visits with the same gush of high spirits. Waltzes, jigs, and reels raced dizzily up and down the piano keys on Saturday nights, and Mary's strong, lark-like voice trilled high in the old-fashioned ballads that she saug. This state of affairs bad continued for a month when the Billingses finished their

great new barn and sent invitations broughout the country for a "warmin." Three days preceding the dance, Mary spent in a whirl of excitement. She contributed so many spasmodic squeezes to her father's neck that it was like to have suffered dislocation. She raced out to the gate to talk to Ben Crocker, when she spied him riding past, till Ben was ready to fall off his horse with dizzy joy.

"Ben, how many dances do you want me to give you Friday night?" she teased. Ben got tongue-tied trying to express bimself in response to such titillation, while Mary laughed in glee.

"Listen, Ben, I'll make a bargain with you. I will give you every dance-round dances and quadrilles-from eight o'clock to twelve, if you will do what I want you to then.'

ised to put his head on a chopping block and have it cut off. But Mary would not say what it was she would want him to do, only made him promise solemnly, crossing his beart three times, and calling fire, earth, air, and water to witness the pledge. Country dances there began by eight o'clock and lasted till four in the morning. A little past seven the wagons began to ar rive and among the first was the Dabneys. Mary sprang out of the wagon almost into Ben's waiting arms, and with a flash of laughter over her shoulder at her parents, went away with him-a vision o loveliness in her new white dress which she teased her mother into buying and making for the occasion. As they disappeared, Hi-ram clawed his whiskers, delighted and

hopeful.

Mary took Ben aside to impart the prou ise to which he had so solemnly committed

"Now, Ben, I am going to give you every dance till supper-time."
"Yes, yes," he assented, eagerly.

"If you will do what I am going to on to do then." Ben gasped.
"It is this. You must go away then Slip off without letting any one see you, and go straight home, and stay there, and come over to our place as early as you can in the morning.'

'But what for, Mary?" he stammered in his distress.

Mary withdrew her band, and her smile vanished and Ben was engulfed in a great

wave of desolation.
"Of course I will," he made haste to assure her. "Ain't I already give my word ?"

Mary smiled again. "Now get it straight, Ben, and never mind the reason why. At twelve o'clock the folks will all start to the house for supper, and everybody will be all mixed up in the crowd, and nobody will notice you leave. Then slip away, get your horse, and go straight home. And be sure to come over as early as possible tomorrov

morning." If carrying out his promise was hard when the time came, at least he lived in enchantment for the next four hours. Never was Paradise more illumined than that lantern-lit barn for Ben. Heavenly music would never stir his blood like those swinging reels. Transitory seconds when Mary's hand left his for a change in the set were the only moments when he realized that he was not living an immortalized existence of radiant bliss! At twelve o'clock, with a final passionate clutch at her hand as they separated in the crowd, he rushed away and rode homeward, his head in a thick maze with just one thought to think, and that was that he would se Mary the first thing the next morning.

The dancers trooped to the honse, where was one of confusion and merry talk and laughter. It was a full hour after supper, and the fiddles were tuning for the da to begin again, before Mary's mother began to cast her eye about for her daughter

"Say, pa, have you seen anythin' of Mary?" Before Hiram had time to deride her ears, Jennie Billings came up.
"Mary asked me to give you this when
you got a-looking for her," she said, banding Mrs. Dabney a note.

With shaking fingers Mrs. Dabney oper ed the note and read:

"Dear Pa and Ma, I have eloped. Pa nce said I would if I wanted to. Mrs Dabney had no objection to her daughter's marrying, and thought she had chosen well; also, this bit of romance ap-pealed to her, but it was quite natural, of

ourse, that she should go into an attack of hysterics at the news. Hiram experienced a sort of nonplused gratification. It was beyond him why Mary should elect to elope, but since that was her way of doing it, far be it from him

to stop her. "Le's go home, Hi," whimpered Mrs. Dahney, sopping at her eyes.
"La, what for? Why not finish out the

dance ! We can't do nothin' 'bout it naow, said Hiram, piously.

If he could have had a clairvoyant vision of his daughter at the particular moment it would have been a sight to see how fast he would have set about doing something. For at that precise moment Mary and Stephen, in a livery-rig, were outling over the brow of a hill some five miles en route to the county seat. Stephen had spent the day in town, and had arranged with the minister, who was an old friend and one-while teacher of his, to he ready to receive them any time from midnight till dawn.

As late as possible he bought the license, and as night fell he drove out and waited mear the Billingses' place for Mary.

Mary had taken the greatest enjoyment in planning the elopement, and did not fear pursuit unless it was to persuade her to return home for a proper wedding, for she knew it would be understood by everybody that she had eloped with Ben. the thought she laughed aloud and gave Stephen's arm an ecstatic bug. Stephen, nervous and happy, made the moment an occasion to bestow another embrace. And here occurred one of those trying episodes that prove the unreliability of kindly fates.

It may have been that Stephen uncou sciously drew a tighter rein than usual or it may have been that the horse became suddenly conscientions about aiding and abetting such untoward proceedings and decided to stop of his own accord. Howbeit, he stopped stock still. For a moment his deflection was not noticed by the caressing lovers, and then Stephen observed what had occurred and clicked for him to move on, but he would not move. Stephen urged him, but he remained standing. He applied the whip, but the horse did not budge Meanwhile, Mary began laughing bys terically.

we will have to walk to our wedding! You can't do anything with a balky horse. I am afraid to sit here any longer. Pa might take a notion to start out and bring me home for a proper wedding, and when he finds that it is you I am eloping with it would not be so easy to do it again !"

Stephen's desperation increased. made Mary get out, and gathered some sticks and wrapped his pocket handkerchief about them, and lit the bunch and held it under the horse's belly. No martyr burned at stake ever stood with the calm indifference of this horse as the hair singed and

"Oh, come on, Stephen, dear," urged Mary. Mary. "What does a little six miles amount to? And if the pursuers come up they will think we are somewhere near

"Very well," he replied, "let's walk!"
With a final despatring look at the rooted equine, Stephen and Mary struck out cheerfully over the rough road with the gay spirits of youth and health and love.

They arrived in due course at the min-ister's house, where the family were wait ing to receive them, were married, and hos pitably entertained The next morning Hiram, looking out at

"Look out, ma! I'm goin' ter git my gun. Yander coms the dad blasted son-in law uv ourn !" He went out to the gate still chuckling, and Mrs. Hiram followed along, hysterical

night that one dissipates till four in the morning, and, in addition, has one's only daughter elope.
"Mornin', Ben," Hiram hailed, genial ly, "you great, blitherin' scamp! didn't ye bring yer wife erlong?"

twitches in her throat. It is not every

"Et ?" said Ben, foolishly. "What 'Mean? Mary, uv co'se. Thet wuz

great trick uv yourn an' hers."

"Kill me ef I know what ye're drivin'
at," said Ben, earnestly. "I ain't seen
her sence we broke up for supper last "Then who in dampashun did Mary

elope with ?" At this Mrs. Dabney burst into tears, and Ben looked as if he wanted to join her; but the excitement of the old man was such that it gave them all something to do to keep him from flying into pieces while they got him into his hat and coat and on

a horse headed for the county seat. Mary was watching and spied her father in the long distance. She went out and perched on the gate post. If she felt either qualms or fears, her roguish face did not

"Hello, pa," she greeted, blithely, have been expecting you for an hour."
Hiram drew rein and looked solemnly

"By gosh, Mary, will ye be good enough to tell me who it wuz ye eloped with last night?" "Certainly, pa," agreed Mary, amiably; 'it was Stephen Benson

There was a long and deadly still pause. "Wal, by gum," said Hiram, at last, who it wuz, wuz it ?" Mary smiled. "Wal, it can't be helped naow," com-

"You will like Stephen, pa," contributed Mary.
"Wal," said pa, philosophically, "I guess I kin git used to him. You two hed

better cum out in time fer dinner, an' we'll

talk it over."-By Lizzie Gaines Wilcoxson, in Collier's. Don't Wait.

Don't wait if you are showing symptoms of "lung trouble," but get a bottle of Dr. Pierce's Golden Medical Discovery and begin its use. Where there is weakness, obstinate cough, or spitting of blood its remedial action is marvelous. Mr. Cornelius McCawley, of Leechburg, Armstrong county, Pa., "had eighty-one hemorrhages, sometimes spitting five pints of blood at one time" to quote from his letter. He was perfectly cured by the use of "Golden Medical Discovery." When there is consti-pation the action of the "Discovery" is as-sisted by the use of Dr. Pierce's Pleasant

-In the ration fed farm animals, either alfalfa or clover should be given to balance the corn. Either one of these legumes will likewise be needed to "balance" the effects of corn on the soil. Considerable plant food, especially nitrogen, is removed from the soil by corn, while alfalfa or clover gathers a great deal of nitrogen from the air and places it back in the soil. FOR AND ABOUT WOMEN. DAILY THOUGHT.

A light heart lives long .- Shakespeare.

The teacher was young and enthusiastic; noreover, she was well beloved by her pupils. When, therefore, she proposed to and conditions of valentines by celebrating the day in the school, there was a chorus of eager assent.

The morning was to be spent in work, as usual, with the difference that there would he twice as much to do, so as to leave the afternoon free for the festivities. The class was a grammar one, composed of thirty girls, about 11 to 12 years of age. For a week before the day arrived all the

irls had been very busy making valentines at home. The rule was that each girl must make one for each classmate ; that she must have no outside assistance of any kind, and that no one should spend more than 30 cents on materials, and as much less as she could. Such a bustling and burrying as there

was in the noon lunch hour of February 14! Anxious mothers implored Mary or Dollie to eat something before she went back to school, always to receive the answer that "there were fifteen more valentines to address."

Many mysterious envelopes.-As each pupil came into the classroom she handed to the teacher thirty mysterious envelopes, which promptly found their way into a large basket on Miss Smith's desk, disclosing a fascinating pile beneath. Strange to say, there were a hundred errands to be done, preventing small brains from puzz-ling themselves too much about forbidden

things ! Miss Smith had been busy, too, all luncheom hour, and the blackboards were resplendent. The plain February calendar on the side board had suddenly become a thing of beauty by reason of much colored chalk, some appropriate stencils and a little labor. Big red hearts, provided with dancing arms and legs, adorned all the other boards, while in front was a large red chalk squire, which the children were sure portended some glorious surprise. Miss Smith herself looked prettier than ever in a new

shirtwaist and a dainty collar.

The distribution of the valentines took place immediately, as too long a wait would have produced boredom, and nothing could have received any great degree of attention so long as this important mat-ter was not attended to. Amid breathless excitement the envelopes were distributed thirty for each, every one tightly sealed and revealing no mark of identity of the sender. Some of the children bad never received a valentine before, and their de-light was pathetic. Most of the valentines were pretty, and some of them were very funny. All sorts of materials had been used in their making, and a great deal of

originality and cleverness was displayed.
All this consumed about half an hour and so Miss Smith, fearful lest there should be no time for the rest of the programme, finally called a balt. Then for 15 minutes she read them the story of Valentine's Day the origin of the custom and a sketch of the life of St. Valentine.

This done, she proposed a novel contest. In the large red square in the front of the room a class valentine was to be made. Each member of the class was to add something to it, and when it was completed the class was to vote on the most expert artist. A wonderful creation.—Never was there such an elaborate valentine as this! From the cupid in the centre, to the really artistio lace at the edge, it was a medly of tints his kitchen door, eaw Ben Crocker riding furiously down the road. He chuckled. and shades. Two girls worked at the same chalks was at their disposal, and they

made good use of it. By the time it was finished the principal came in to see it and pronounced it a work of art. By universal acclaim the prize, a fat, red little heart shaped cake, stuck through with a sugar dart, went to Bettina, the lame little Italian girl, who executed the beautiful lace paper (really white chalk

and charcoal) edge.
Finally, Miss Smith passed around a large box, from which each girl was to take out three things, and with them make a valentine. There was any amount of variety from which to choose-peanuts, candy hearts, scraps of silk and of crepe-and tissue paper, gilt and silver cord, bits of baby ribbon, tiny pictures—the selection was limitless. Ten minutes was the time limit, and by that time every one had finished. This time the prize was awarded to Bertha, the baby of the class, for a fat peanut ballet lady, dressed in red crepe paper, and holding in her twisted crepe paper arms a candy heart bearing the leg-end "I love thee !" She became the proud possessor of a small heart-shaped photograph frame, for which, after many en-treaties, Miss Smith promised her photo-

graph. The clock pointed to quarter past three, almost closing time, and Miss Smith was wondering how to fill in the extra quarter of an hour, when her own surprise occured. After many nudges and giggles, the class arose in a body, exclaimed breathlessly, "Miss Smith, will you be our valentine?" and subsided suddenly, while their leader almost hurled at her a small cardboard box. Within this was a large white satin pin-

enpervision of the sewing teacher, had written and outlined in vari-colored silk her autograph. The handmade lace edg-ing had been made by Bettina's mother, and paid for by the class. Then, since a party is not a party at all without refreshments, as the class filed out after the teacher's little speech of thanks,

oushion, on which every girl, under the

each one was handed a heart-shaped cooky and a little bag of peanuts.

Thus ended a most successful party. In all, it cost the teacher 75 cents and about two hours' labor, but she was fully com-pensated by the renewed bond between her and her pupils, and was only too glad to have found something to break the deadly monotony of the weeks between Christmas and Easter.

Even if nothing stronger than coffee be on the table, a dinner is not a dinner unmany books from which appropriate toasts may be given, and there are many old and reliable standbys.

For instance, there is the sailor toast -"Here's to our sweethearts and wives ; may the latter always remain the former, and the former soon become the latter;" and there is dear old Rip Van Winkle's sentiment :

"Here's to your health and your family's and may you live long and prosper !"

But sometimes something a trifle out of
the ordinary seems to be in order, and such the ordinary seems to be in order, and such an occasion, surely, is St. Valentine's Day. All the toasts on this occasion should, of course, treat of "the gentle passion," and the more original they are the better.

Often, if the toastmaker is elever, he or she can give the toast a personal turn. Often, too, the simpler it is the better, especially for amateur speakers.