

UNCLE JOB'S PLAN.

Uncle Job Forester was like a great many other American parents—he had perfect children.

"Them boys," he was wont to say, "wouldn't marry any woman in the county; not but what they're plenty good enough an' better, but they've other plans an' projects!"

A pretty school teacher boarded at the Forester's, and it was her apparently innocent self that was making all the trouble. Lew Forester, the younger of the boys, was hopelessly in love with her, and as he was young, with his life's work scarcely mapped out, and as May Derringer was poor, with an abundance of poor relatives, the marriage was deemed highly inexpedient. Uncle Job ruminated upon the subject as he followed his lazy, fat team along the corn rows.

"Seems to me," he soliloquized, "ef I'd jes' speak to her father—drat the weeds! I do wish I'd a check rowed this! The cockleburn is a goin' to jes' plum teetotally take hit—his'd stop hit, being so poor an' high minded. But like's not Lew'd git mad at my interfering, an' marry her anyhow, jes' to teach me a lesson, an' not a aimin' to marry her at all before. I've knowed parents to put they foot in it mightily afore this, an' I've often wondered if Mahaly Ann Briggs would a ben a better chance than Mary Ann, though I wouldn't have nuther one of 'em a sponin' that I rickelk anything about them times. No, I reckon I'd better not call on her pap for any help, seeing as I split his prospec's in our young days. Oh, you git up there, you lazy heifer! Looks like the more you feed em' the lazier they git! No, but ef I can't hatch up something 'thout showin' my hand, why, I'll jes' let 'em marry for bein' a fool."

"Lew," said Uncle Job, the following Saturday morning, "I want you to take the one seated gig an' go to Chilloothee on business, an' I want you to not pick up any passengers either goin' or comin', for that left wheel ain't any too strong, I watch an' don't go into any ruts. I'd like for that gig to last till I feel able to get another one."

"Can't Dan go?" Lew asked petulantly. "I do hate to ride to town all by myself over the hills an' through the red brush. I'd rather plow hard all day."

"Well, plow, then," Uncle Job answered, with a merry twinkle in his eye. "That medder piece becomin' monstrous bad. You an' I can plow, an' Dan'll can go jes' as well as not."

"If I was him I wouldn't drive no gig," Lew remarked, uttering the words before reflecting upon what might follow.

"I ain't agoin' to," Dan answered, with the confidence of a young man who owns a good team of his own. "I'm agoin' to drive Stell and Grace—the buggy needs a little fixin' up."

Lew hitched up his team and went to work. He despaired of having a chat with May so early in the morning, but he could come in at half past 11; she was not busy then.

"See here, Dan!" Uncle Job began, as soon as Lew was out of earshot, "anybody can see that Lew is soft on the teacher, and the jitt will marry her ef he ain't stopped; not but what she's plenty good enough for him, an' too good, as to that, but you know we've ails had other plans for Lew. I never saw sich a hard hearted creetur as he is. He can cut an' slash on live animals, an' I think he'd make a good doctor. That's what me an' your maw wants, an' of course, ef he marries the school teacher he can't never be nothing but a farmer, for you know he can't more'n write his name now, though he's learnin' considerable from her. God bless her! She's a good little thing. Well, what I was going to say is this: you make up to her. You've got your new horses and buggy and lots of nice clothes, an' you can cut him out quick as wink."

"Then s'pose I take her to town today," Dan suggested, not at all displeased at the prospect of a 24 mile ride with so pleasant a companion.

"Yes, yes! You hitch up an' I will go tell her. I'll fix it."

With that he hurried to the house, elated at the working of his plan.

"Miss May," he said in a low whisper, from the front door, "you come here a minute."

"In a moment, uncle," a pleasant voice answered.

"Come out into the yard," he murmured. "I want you to do a favor for me. I want to get the old lady two new gingham dresses, an' I want 'em to be nice an' look nice an' fit nice, and I want you to pick them out an' pay for them. I'll give you the money. I want you to go with Dan."

"Yes, certainly," May answered with a suspicious pink mantling her cheeks. "Could you tell me anything about what kind of gingham you want?"

"You jest use your own judgment—get something becomin' to old women—and you cut it an' make it an' I'll knock off a week's board for one, an' another week for another. We like to have mother look nice."

At about 10 o'clock Mr. Forester went over to see how Lew was progressing with his work. He found him busy, and cheerily whistling "Marble Halls."

"It's a plum shame to tease the boy," his father soliloquized, as he approached the grassy turning row. "But all the evils of life must be keoved with some suffering. I know I'd better keep him free to go on an' make something out of himself than to have him tied down to hard work with a wife and a passel o' little children. I see you've been a humpin' yourself," he said as Lew approached. "No need to kill yourself and the team too."

"We've taken it easy—nice dirt this—never seen better—wish you'd give me my shur on this side when you divide up."

"Maybe—but you'll be a-selling yourn," his father answered, looking with pride upon his various fields stretching away in the distance, some with wheat, some with oats, beside small patches of castor beans, flax, cane, millet, and pasture, and meadow.

"No, I'm thinking of buildin' an' settlin' right here," Lew replied, while a boyish blush dyed his downy cheek. "I've been a-thinkin' that ef you and maw was willin'—"

"Yes, a mentionin' of your maw puts me in mind that I sent by May this morning to get her a couple o' new dresses. Seems to me we don't lay enough store by the way she looks."

"Where'd May go?" Lew asked with a sinking of the heart.

"She went with Dan," looking over his fields and mercifully turning his back. Without a word Lew turned his team into the corn and began to plow. His father noticed that he was unusually gentle with the horses, and his conscience troubled him not a little as he walked toward the house.

"Ef I hadn't a-tole him," he said, contemplating the variegated sod with unnoting eye, "he would a-come in at 'leven, and when he found she want here, he'd a-went out agin jes' 's quick's he could get his dinner an' a-plowed till dark, an' that's too much on the horses."

Lew came in at a quarter past twelve, ate his dinner in silence, and was for starting back to the field.

"You musn't take the horses out till two, Lewie," his father said. "You go lie down and sleep under a shade tree—you'll feel lots better."

"I don't want to sleep," Lew growled. "Ef you don't like the horses does," said his father. "But ef you ain't sleepy, let's go out here under the trees. I feel kinder restless an' lonesome with Dan an' May gone, and I know mother don't like to have men folks around till she gits her work done. You an' Dan'll is young and free, an' I jest saw Jim Lucas pass, an' I couldn't help a contrastin' ye. Jim was young about 10 years back, an' so was Sallie, and they had ambitions. Jim was a purty good schollard for this county, an' he wanted to be a congressman or somethin'."

Sallie was purty and sweet, an' most any man in his senses would ha' loved her, an' he did, an' they married, an' now they have six children, and Jim can't do nothin' but jes' dig for them. He ain't able to hire a hand, an' he rents, and he don't get no richer every year, even ef Sallie does contrive an' save. It looks purty hard, but Jim's got to dig an' save an' scrimp until he's old, and maybe longer."

"I suppose he loves Sallie," Lew suggested.

"Oh, yes, kinder sorter; but his life ain't what he bargained for. Married life lacks a good deal of bein' a picnic when people looks high and is poor. This everlasting grind for somethin' to eat is awful hard on a feller with ambitions. Your maw an' me want you to be a doctor, an' I was a thinkin'—"

"Paw, I don't know enough!" Lew sat up and looked resolute. "You know I never was fond of books, an' I don't like nothin' but turnin' up dirt an' handling stock. I'll never make a doctor nor a congressman, nor nothin' but a plain farmer, and I want to marry May an' go to housekeeping as soon as I'm of age, which will be in 10 months and 17 days."

"Wait till you're 21, and then, ef you want to marry her, why, all right; but I'll tell you now that the day'll come when you will wish you hadn't. May's as good a girl as ever lived, but I'm afraid you'll be overrun by her kin. They're great folks to come an' stay all night an' bring the whole family."

That afternoon he confided his doubts and misgivings to his wife, and received some very sharp advice about the advisability of attending to his own business.

"Well, my heart jes' bleeds for other people's boys," Mr. Forester asseverated, "an' when it comes to my own, it 'pear like I would do anything to keep 'em from a runnin' their heads in nooses that'll keep 'em down the rest of their days."

"You'll see, paw," Mrs. Forester replied with the confidence of an observing mind. "I've knowed and heard of a good many matches a bein' broke off, and very few of 'em ever come to any good."

"Stuff!" scornfully replied Uncle Job. "You know the girls in this country are engaged lots of times 'fore they marry. Why, I know a young feller that'd jes' set down an' write to a girl an' ast her to marry him, an' he didn't have the least intentions that way. Don't you think that engagement ought to be broken off?"

"I'm not talkin' about that kind—I'm a talkin' about where they love an' want to marry."

"Well, we won't quarrel," And they didn't.

During the rest of the term Dan paid May the most marked attention. Scarcely a day passed that he did not take her driving or horseback riding, and she sat a horse with the utmost grace. May brightened and looked her prettiest during these happy days, while Lew at first sulked and then became genuinely indifferent. He kept to his work in all weathers, and it began to be noticed that his part of the crop looked much better than Dan's, although Lew had helped him more than once.

"I will plow this afternoon," he would say, "and you may help mother and May with their yard." Or, "I'll go after the cattle and you and May can drive down to Springhill and get the mail."

At first this indifference was assumed to hide his wounded pride, but it soon came to pass that he found himself happier and nearer real contentment than ever before.

Not so with Uncle Job. At first he rubbed his hands complacently, and smiled to think how easy it was to manage boys so well brought up as his were. But Dan was continuing his attentions too long, and they were too marked and too ardent. He resolved to speak to him.

"Look here, Dan!" he began one day, when they were building the new rail fence around the pasture. "Don't you think you are carrying this thing too far? May might fall in love with you."

"I hope she has, paw," Dan replied with a sheepish laugh, "for we are going to marry when her school is out, and if you'll let me I'd like to build on the west 80."

"Yes, Dan'll, jes' as you like, meekly. May's a mighty fine girl, an' I've got everything to be proud of. Thankee, Dan'll, for bringin' us sech a nice darter."

He turned away for some rails, and paused a moment looking at their spiritory cleanliness.

"Out of the fryin' pan into the fire," he muttered, "an' I done it, shore's fate!"

—Asa Glauval.

THE YANKEE SKEWER.

Our British Cousins Like It Because It Doesn't Splitter Or.

Englishmen have some reason to feel aggrieved at the fact that so necessary an item of the domesticity as skewers should be sent every year in immense quantities from America; and the advocates of fair trade may hold that the circumstance of our being mainly indebted for our supply of skewers to foreign imports, admitted, free, is an additional argument in favor of some degree of protection. Putting, however, fiscal questions altogether on one side, it would seem to be entirely within the fitness of things that the Americans should be exceptionally skillful fabricators of skewers. It is not only that they have an abundant variety of hard woods in their forests; that one of their recent Presidents dwelt originally in a log cabin, and that Abraham Lincoln, the most illustrious of their Chief Magistrates since Washington, originally followed the useful but unpretending occupation of a rail splitter.

They can do something else besides hewing, chopping, and splitting timber, or polishing planks of butternut or bird's eye maple into handsome panels for the embellishment of sleeping cars. They can "whittle." They have taken the noun substantive descriptive of the knife used by Gurrth, the son of Beowulf, and turned it into a verb. When the "smart" American needs a little mental repose he bestows himself in a rocking chair, elevates his heels, if practicable, to an angle of 45 degrees above his head, lights a cigar, orders a mint julep or a brandy smash, according to the season, produces his clasp knife, and begins to "whittle." With exquisite neatness and dexterity he will pare and round and sharpen anything ligneous which is handy, from an oaken cudgel to an office ruler, from a bedpost to a bootjack, to the required form.

There was a champion wood attenuator once at Oshkosh, Wis., who would back himself heavily with a given number of minutes to whittle a walking stick down to a tooth pick. Such an achievement, however, must be looked upon as only a "fancy" one, and would involve the loss of much valuable timber. The majority of the wooden splints whittled by the Americans in their leisure moments intimately resemble those abominable little implements of boyish pastime and mischief employed in the popular but perilous English street game known as "tip cat." The transition from the diminutive projectile used as tip cat to a butcher's or poultry's skewer is very easy, and may be extremely rapid, and it is far from improbable that some cutely speculative dealer in notions, struck with the large number of whittled splints which were produced and the few uses to which they were turned, determined to send a cargo of them as skewers to the British Isles.—London Telegraph.

The Country's Wood Products.

Among the special reports of the Census Bureau one of the latest is devoted to statistics of the wood production of the United States in 1900. The bulletin in question embraces nearly all the industries in which wood is the principal material. Of these industries there are 171 single factories, 86 co-operative establishments, and 168 in which materials for wagons and agricultural implements, chair legs, axles, chests, and other articles of wood are produced. Of the planing mills only such are included in this bulletin as come in connection with the saw mills. Within this limitation the statistics show that of the wood products of the mills the value was \$115,000,000; of wood products not worked in the mills, \$30,428,194, and of products in more finished forms, \$21,112,618—making a grand total of \$167,537,816.

For the production of these values a capital of \$270,152,102 is employed, with an army of 95,253 men and 104 women and children cutting timber in the woods, and aided by 32,491 draught animals. In the mills is required the labor of 87,939 men and 1,299 women and children. The bulletin gives full statistics of the steam and water power, machinery, and mechanical apparatus, railroads, and tramways employed in these industries. For wages and salaries the expenditure last year was \$99,638,256. The report shows the growing tendency to concentration of the wood industries and economy of production by working the raw material into finished forms at points located as nearly as possible to the forests in which the lumber may be cut.

In the three greatest lumber States the increase of production within the last 10 years was: Wisconsin, 176 per cent; for Minnesota, 159.6 per cent, and for Michigan, 30 per cent. In portions of Michigan the forest supply of timber has been almost completely exhausted, while in other portions different kinds of timber in place of the vanished pines is worked into a great variety of products. The city of Menominee, in Michigan, shows the greatest increase in wood production in the last 10 years.

A Historic Stone Wearing Out.

There is danger that the historic slab of brownstone which lies at the foot of the big statue of Washington in front of the subtreasury building in Wall street will be worn out unless an iron railing is put around it. Scores of people stand on it and walk over it almost every day. This particular slab formed a part of the stone balcony of the old Federal Hall where Washington took his first oath of office as President. The present location of the stone is supposed to mark the place where Washington stood on that memorable occasion.

A large proportion of the hundreds of sightseers who visit Wall street very naturally pause in front of the great bronze figure on the subtreasury steps. They read the inscription on the front of the pedestal which informs them of the character and significance of the statue. Then they climb upon the pedestal and stand on the slab of brownstone in order that in after years they may be able to relate to their children and their children's children how they once "stood on exactly the same spot that Washington occupied when he took the oath as the first President of the United States."—New York Times.

CHEATING IN HORSE BLANKETS

Nearly every pattern of $\frac{5}{8}$ Horse Blanket is imitated in color and style. In most cases the imitation looks just as good as the genuine, but it hasn't the warp threads, and so lacks strength, and while it sells for only a little less than the genuine it isn't worth one-half as much. The fact that $\frac{5}{8}$ Horse Blankets are copied is strong evidence that they are THE STANDARD, and every buyer should see that the $\frac{5}{8}$ trade mark is sewed on the inside of the Blanket.

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