Says the rabbit to the peacock,
"Who's your barber? tell me, pray;
For his shears have shorn your ears, sir,
In a most old-fashioned way. Look at me,
Would you see
What a stylish ear should be!"
-Esther B. Tiffany, in St. Nicholas.

### BEN'S BID.

"Why don't you raise chickens for the market?" suggested Hiram Bassett the village storekeeper, to Ben Singer. Ben was fourteen years old. His

mother had died a short time before His father was a carpenter by trade but had been crippled by rheumatism so that he could not work. Ben, who always looked on Mr. Bassett as a friend of undoubted fidelity and great resources, had been telling the storekeeper how much he wished he could get some steady work. Mr. Singer's little stock of money was exhausted; he had already sold some of his tools to get the food he and his son needed. Ben realized that the day was rapidly coming when there would be no way of getting more, unless he managed to do

getting more, unless he managed to de something of greater profit than the odd jobs he picked up now and then from the surrounding farmers. "I'll do it," said Ben, in response to Mr. Bassett's suggestion, and, turning about, trudged home, and all the way was planning how he might begin.

A week later the "chicken farm," as Ben called it, was a fact; at least, he had made a start. In his spare time he had constructed some coops from old barrels and a box or two. The pay for two days' work he invested in three dozen eggs, and with the money ob-lained by sorting some vegetables for the storekeeper bought two hens which were just about to "set." He and his father already had five pullets, and within a couple of weeks more there were five "clutches" of eggs under as many of his hens.

He fed his chickens from the screenings he got at a small price from several of the farmers. The hens managed, too, to pick up a good deal of food among the bushes and in the tiny garden back of the house. Ben worked hard at the small jobs he was given round about, and waited with confi-dence for the time when he should be able to make something from his ven-

He would have felt much happier it it hadn't been for his father's condi-tion. Mr Singer did not complain of the rheumatism, though it still kept him confined to his big chair. But something worried him very much; the Loy could see that. He asked what it was several times, but Mr. Singer's only reply was that he suffered, he felt downhearted on account of being sc crippled. He tried to make Ben think that that was all that distressed him but the boy could not believe it.

Slowly the flock of chickens grew The eggs hatched remarkably well Fifty downy little balls were soon running in and out of the coops where their mothers were confined. Four more elutches of eggs were under that number of new hens, which he had bought and paid for in instalments of work. The first days of summer saw him with seventy-five young chickens some of them able to scratch for themselves. It took all he could now make to keep his father and himself in food and to provide for his farm, but he was always on the alert for a job, and was as cheerful as he could be, so that the neighbors all liked to employ him when

Ben had told his father of his plan and explained that as few of the farmers raised chickens, except for their own use, he thought there ought to be a chance to make something by sl., ping them to Waynesboro, the bigger town, five miles away. Mr. Singer was not altogether confident of the success of such an experiment, but he said nothing to discourage the boy, and used to sit near the window and watch the broods and talk to Ben about them.

July and August went by, and the young chickens thrived. Only a few of them were lost. A prowling 'possum got several before Ben trapped the marauder. Cold and rain killed off a few more. But the first of September came and more than sixty chickens were the boy's.

Ben planned to sell thirty or forty in the early autumn and to keep the remainder till the next summer to stock his farm afresh. He intended to go into it then on a bigger scale, and he hoped to realize enough from his sales to keep him through the winter with the part of his flock he retained.

One day in September, as he and his father sat in the doorway of his cottage. Ben noticed a couple of tears trickle down his father's face. He jumped up and threw his arms around his father's neck. He was frightened and he did not understand what was

Presently Mr. Singer unclasped the boy's hands and looked him in the

"Ben," he said, "I'm afraid we are

in for hard times yet."
"What do you mean, dad?"

"The house is only rented," said Mr. Singer, slowly; "they can't take that but they can take all our furniture and everything else."

"Why, they belong to us!"
"So they do, Ben, but the law gives another man the right to sell them and take the money they bring if we owe him money and cannot pay it."

"And we owe somebody money? thought Dr. James was paid?" "So he was. But there is some one else to whom I owe money—a man I borrowed from when your mother was sick. I owe him one hundred dollars. He has what they call my note. I haven't been able to pay him, and now he says he must have it. He is entitled to it right off, and will get as much of it as possible by selling what we have He was here to see me about it the other day, and I tried to get him to wait. But he says he's tired of wait-

us out." Ben had a fairly good idea now of the situation. He tried to comfort his father, but it was of little avail. Mr. Singer felt his helplessness and the dis-

ing, and the sheriff will come and sell

grace keenly, and did not know what would become of them. Ben worried over what he had heard all night long he could find no way out of their

The next day he took ten of his biggest chickens to the viliage store. He had already arranged with Mr. Bassett to have them sent to a commission merchant at Waynesboro and sold. After he had delivered the chickens and Mr. Bassett had promised to get him the money for them as quickly as possible, the idea struck the boy of asking the storekeeper about a sheriff's sale. The thing puzzled him a bit yet and he indulged a faint hope that, if he knew just how it was done, he might

be able to hit upon a way out.
"Mr. Bassett," he said, "how does sheriff sell you out?"

Perhaps the storekeeper had an idea of the trouble. But if he did he gave no sign of it, and tried to explain to Ben how such a sale was conducted.

"And the people at the sale," he con-cluded, "offer to buy what is offered, and the sheriff sells to the one who makes the highest bid."

Ben asked several questions before he left. Then he walked slowly home and all the while in his mind he was turning over a dimly defined project which had been suggested to him by what he had heard.

A week later Ben received the money for his chickens—three dollars and eighty cents. He was a proud boy, and he would have shown his satisfaction more if it had not been for the impending trouble, which made his father so miserable that he could not leave his bed. Ben bought some fruit for twenty-five cents, and took it home to him but Mr. Singer was feeling so bad that he are of it only sparingly.

On a Monday in the early part of the next month the sheriff, in pursuance of formal notice, arrived at the house to make a sale to satisfy Mr. Singer's creditor. Quite a crowd had gathered about the cottage, and there was not one who did not sympathize with the carpenter and his son. Ben's father was very ill that morning and could not leave the bed. The sheriff mounted a box in the yard and began a description of the goods to be sold.

It was a pitiful array, after all. A few tools, a miscellaneous assortment of cheap furniture, a kitchen stove with some cooking utensils and china, and some linen and blankets. But one item in the lot-the chickens-the sheriff counted on as his drawing card. Half a hundred of fine hens and marketable chickens were cooped in a pen near by and upon the value of these the county officer dwelt at length. Then, when he thought he had the crowd sufficiently around, he named a starting figure in default of an actual bid.

'Sixty dollars for this choice lot of chickens and household goods!" he

There was no response. He repeated the announcement, then dropped the figures to fifty dollars. Still no one

spoke.

The sheriff made some further remarks about the articles for sale and tried again at forty dollars. But the crowd was dumb. No one felt inclined to buy out the crippled carpenter and his son.

The sheriff tried again and again, dropping the figures lower and lower, and all the time growing more vocifer-ous in the explanation of the bargain which was offered. He did not like the job, for he had been told about the case by some of the village people, but he had a duty to perform, and he knew he must get as much out of the sale as he could.

The figures had dropped to ten dollars, but silence reigned, except for a defiant crow from one of the roosters Mr. Singer's creditor evidently had no representative on the house of Hapsburg had its beginning, ground, and even the low price named was not taken up with.

The sheriff dropped his offer now, a dollar at a time, but apparently in vain. It looked as if the sale would come to nothing.
Nine! Eight! Seven! Six! Five! Four!

Not a response came from those about. Three dollars! The sheriff was smiling at the ridiculous offer, and was just about to name two dollars and one dollar in quick succession, hoping for no reply, when a boyish voice, close at hand, said:
"I bid three dollars!"

The officer looked down on the speaker and saw Ben. The boy held up three one-dollar notes in his hand. The sheriff smiled. More than one man in the crowd felt like cheering the bidder. But the officer knew he could not accept the offer at once.

"Three dollars I am bid!" he cried. Who bids four?"

No one spoke. "Three dollars and a half then?" Every one was silent, and the sugtestion of three dollars and a quarter likewise went unanswered. Three dol-lars was the one bid offered, and, after one expostulation, the sheriff took the

offer. Ben handed the money to the sheriff, who congratulated him on his purchase with an earnestness he had seldom felt on occasions of this kind, and there was not one of the farmers who did not come forward and speak a kindly word of praise and encouragement to the

But Ben was listening to little of all this; he slipped away to his father, who could only strain the boy to him while the tears streamed down his face.

The chicken farm was saved, and it proved a success. A year later, when Mr. Singer was once more working steadily, and his rheumatism was gone, is creditor was paid in full the amount borrowed from him, and the proceeds from Ben's chicken farm did not a little to make up the sum required.

Newspaper Cuttings.

The only way to keep newspaper ecraps is to paste them into a book. Exposure to the air yellows them and makes them so brittle that in a few ears, sometimes within a few months, hey are destroyed. Never use muciage for pasting. Some kinds may an-arer admirably, but many have an inrectient which will darken the paper so that the printing will become illegi-ble. The best paste for ordinary purposes is made from flour or cornstarch

A New Idea.

"George Washington must have been

tired I can lie down."

STATE NICKNAMES.

Pennsylvania is called the Keystone State.

Kentucky is known as the Corncracker State, from a game bird enjoying the same name which was formerly found in most parts of the State. It is also called the Blue Grass State. Delaware has been called the Blue

Hen State. Ohio was early called the Buckeye

New York was long ago denomi-

nated the Empire State. Iowa aimost from the day of its admission has been called the Hawk-

eye State. Hawkeye was the name of a noted Indian chief. Michigan is known as the Wolver-

the color of the clothing worn by the

ine State. Tennesseeans are Butternuts, from

Tennersee volunteers during the civil Wisconsin was early dubbed the

Badger State. Texas is called the Lone Star State from the single star in the arms of

the Commonwealth. Indiana is called the Hoosier State. Maine is called the Pine Tree State. Nevada has two nicknames-the Silver State and the Sage Brush State. Georgians are Buzzards, from a

State law protecting these birds. North Carolinains are called Tarheels, from a leading industry.

Marylanders are Craw-Thumpers, a slang name for the lobster. South Carolina is the Palmetto

Delaware people are called Musk

The people of Oregon are Webfeet. West Virginians are Panhandleites

Texans are Beefheads. New Yorkers are Knickerbockers. Nevadans are Sage Hens. Kansans are Jayhawkers.

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Of all families in the British Isles, the oldest is the Mar family of Scotland, which can trace its lines into the

dim past of 1093. Other famous old European families are the Campbells, of Argyle, 1190; the family of Talleyrand, 1199; the family of Bismarck, 1170; and the and in 864 the House of Bourbon.

But in carefully preserved lines of ancestors some of the other nations of the world overshadow Europe. Far older than any European house is the line of Mahomet, dating back

Chinese old families and Jewish old families abound, all with lines of de scent that even the haughtiest British peer would be willing to give his rent roll to possess. But there is one house which goes back so far that beyond doubt or cavil it is the very oldest in the world.

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