

THE SERVANT PROBLEM.

FROM SMITH'S MAGAZINE.

Anne O'Hagan, who contributes to each number of Smith's Magazine, tells in an article in the last number how a friend of hers arrived at a satisfactory solution of the servant problem. In an interview, she allows the friend to tell the story in her own words. Here it is in a nutshell:

"I haunted the offices, and finally I took to haunting the emigrant homes and places. I caught Della fresh from the old sod, so to speak. I think it was the nice, generous width between her eyes and the neatness of her hair that won me. A girl with such glossy hair must be capable of being instructed in tidy ways, must even have a little vanity to which judicious appeal could be made! And a girl with eyes set like that would never do anything mean—never leave you in the lurch, or wear your best petticoat when you were away, or hide the pieces of the dishes she broke and then deny all knowledge of them.

"So I took Della, whose culinary wisdom was merely how to boil potatoes and how to serve buttermilk, and who had never seen a gas-jet in her life! She had to learn everything—but she didn't have to unlearn a single thing. In these two years she has become an excellent cook, a deft waitress, and she can do the rest of the work acceptably; but she doesn't have to, often.

"I am firmly of the opinion that it takes what we call a lady to keep the sitting-room lamps in condition, for example. I do that each day. I dust the sitting-room, water the plants, freshen the flowers, see that there is wood in the wood-basket, make the beds, and wipe up the floors with a long-handled mop. You see we have no carpets, and in the sleeping-rooms no rugs too heavy for me to lift easily.

"If there are almonds to be salted, I salt them. Della has learned how, though; you see, managing as I do, she thinks that I do a good many things in the cooking line because I am so extremely fastidious, and she forthwith becomes ambitious to show me that she can do as well as I. If there are many grapefruit to be freed from seeds and tough skin, I do it; I prepare the salad and I mix the salad-dressing—except, as a great favor to her, I have allowed her to do it all often enough to be able to do it in an emergency.

"On washdays I lurch down-town with Walter, so that she won't have to bother with me at all between breakfast and dinner-time. We have a simple dinner that night, and any other night when she has had a very trying day.

"We use a table-cloth very seldom. I think people imagine I want to show off my mahogany. It is good-looking, and I do like it when the candle-light and the flowers shine in its surface. But it's chiefly because dollies are easier to do up that I prefer them. I wear dark silk shirt-waists a good deal for every day—it's always washable silk, so that I can be as fresh as possible; but at the same time they don't get soiled so soon, and doing them up is the easiest thing in the world.

"When we have any dessert at all it is likely to be jelly and cheese, primarily, I suppose, it was because Walter was fond of it; but secondarily because there was no labor for Della attached to it. Often we begin dinner with a little relish—caviar or anchovy or smoked salmon—instead of with soup, so that she will not have that extra cooking to do. And a few judiciously bestowed theater-tickets keep her perpetually grateful.

"You say you think that such consideration would spoil her, and that you don't see why I don't give her the best room in the house, the largest rocking-chair, and become scullery-maid myself? You're talking nonsense. Della isn't spoiled, because I thoughtfully selected an unspoilable kind—an affectionate, grateful kind. And it isn't consideration for her—it's for myself. If she doesn't have so much cooking to do, so much washing and ironing, so much dish-washing, she can do for me the things that I chiefly want done.

"She can bring me my tea in the afternoon decently instead of slopped out to a tray because she is in such a mad rush to get to her vegetable-peeling. She has time to brush my skirts and my boots. She can wait upon the table with an unfurled air, which is a great aid to pleasant intercourse. And she isn't sullen and unhappy. She likes to stay with me as much as I like to have her.

"Really I think I have discovered a solution of the one-servant problem. My solution is, you see—keep two servants, being yourself the second one!"

MODERN PIED PIPERS.

Their Business That of Ridding Big Stores of Rats.

Professional rat catchers do a thriving business in Chicago. In the downtown department stores and in the wholesale houses along the river an endless warfare against rats and

mice constantly is carried on. In some of these places the rats grow so big and so bold that to speak of their exploits would bring down a charge of nature faking on the narrator. The professional rat catchers, of whom there are a score in the loop district, tell some remarkable stories concerning the big rodents with which they have had dealings.

Some of the department stores employ their own rat catchers. At Carson, Pirie, Scott & Co.'s retail store there is a man whose duty it is to keep the store free from rats and mice. This firm's rat catcher works at night and uses a small bore shotgun with which to put his enemies out of commission. Instead of shot, which would tear holes in the walls and ceilings, he loads his gun with salt balls. These are used to stun the rats sufficiently for him to get at them with a heavy stick. Despite the efforts of the professional rat catcher the rodents increase so rapidly that it is necessary every six months or so to go after them with ferrets.

On West Madison street there lives a man who keeps a supply of rat catching ferrets constantly on hand. His name is George Sells, and what he doesn't know about rats and methods of catching them isn't worth knowing. He contracts to rid a building of rats just as an architect would contract to put a new roof on it.

When Sells starts to rid a building of rats he first plugs all the rat holes he can find. After that he turns his trained ferrets, thirty of them, loose in the building. The ferrets go into the holes after the rats and then, to quote Sells, there is a "scattering." The average rat would commit suicide before it would allow itself to be captured by a ferret. The rats know that once their necks are caught in the sharp teeth of the ferrets there is no hope for them.

Not long ago Sells was cleaning out the rats in the Carson-Pirie-Scott store, in State street. About 9 o'clock at night, when all was still in the place and the rats were holding high carnival, Sells turned the ferrets loose. Instantly there was such a squeaking that it seemed to the watchman that an earthquake had struck Chicago and that the mighty steel girders of the building were complaining of the strain forced upon them. The rats ran everywhere. They jumped into the elevator shaft in such numbers that Adolf Swanson, one of the janitors, said he was kept busy half the night scooping them up into baskets. Sells who knew what would happen when the ferrets were turned loose, had left the windows up on the alley side of the big store and through these the rats jumped recklessly to the hard pavement below. In less than an hour after the ferrets began operations there was not a rat or a mouse in the store.—Chicago Tribune.

TOURISTS FIND ICELAND.

It Is Described as Fascinating—Sturdy Iceland Ponies.

Many misconceptions as to Iceland exist in our country. It may surprise many, says the National Geographic Magazine, to know that the Icelanders who have emigrated to America are said by their relatives at home to complain bitterly of the extreme cold of our winters.

Mr. Halldor Bjarnarson, a Lutheran minister on the north coast of Iceland, writing of the past winter in his district, says that at no time did he observe the temperature to drop below plus 5 degrees Fahrenheit. That was almost on the Arctic Circle.

Two lines of steamships maintain regular all the year sailings between Denmark, Scotland and Iceland by way of the Faroe Islands. The single passage to Reykjavik, the capital of the island, on the southwest coast, requires from three to four days from Leith, or five to seven days from Copenhagen.

The steamers of those lines are annually carrying more and more tourists to an island which is but just becoming recognized as one of the most interesting and fascinating lands in the world.

Excluding meals, which cost \$1 a day, the round trip fare between either Copenhagen or Leith and Iceland is about \$30.

Barring the possibility of driving on a narrow carriage road for about one day's ride from the capital, and possibly a less distance from some of the smaller towns, all travel must be made on pony back. Much has been written about the Icelandic pony. He is individual, a type by himself, and the word "sturdy" is his best description.

A Confusion of Sexes.

A small boy passing down Chestnut street the other day saw a placard in a window reading "Boy Wanted. Apply within." As this boy was in this business, looking for a job, he went in and asked for the boss. Getting an interview, he asked: "Do you want a boy?" "Yes," replied the merchant. "Wot kind of a boy does yer want?" "Oh, a nice, quiet boy, who doesn't use naughty words, smoke cigarettes, whistle around the office, play tricks or get into mischief of any kind." "Gwan; you don't want a boy; you want a girl."—Philadelphia Public Ledger.

Walter Scott liked venison better than any other meat, and potatoes better than any other vegetable.

Even if wishes were motors, we couldn't pay for the repairs, admits the St. Louis Post-Dispatch.



FARM FURROWS.

FARM NOTES.
It is very often beneficial to pull both the flight and tail feathers that are slow in molting. It seems to have a magical effect in changing the condition of the bird.

At this time of the year the best of attention should be given the stock. Molting is often the stumbling block for the young fancier, due to the lack of proper care.

The bath must not be forgotten; it is probably more necessary now than at any other time.

It is a good plan to add a few drops of tincture of iron to the drinking water.

To stop breeding during the molting period, separate the sexes this month.

No better time than now to give the loft a good coat of whitewash.

Be kind and gentle in handling stock.

Mix common sense with your methods, and you will save much trouble.

Keep the pigeons from worrying Regularity in feeding will prevent it.

Fresh water in filthy drinking vessels does not improve matters much.

Take pride in keeping things tidy, and do everything in a systematic manner.

The good qualities of birds are demonstrated by the amount of attention and care given them.

Have every fixture of the loft movable, so that it can be readily cleaned from lice and dirt.

Study and care, not luck and large talk, are the elements of success in the pigeon loft.

Don't crowd fifty pairs of birds where twenty-five pairs can scarcely live.

We prefer a good roofing paper to shingles for the roofs of pigeon houses.—From "Pigeons for Profit," in the Farm Journal.

MOST POPULAR BREED.

Plymouth Rocks have of late years become very popular. Partly the result of their good qualities, judiciously advertised, and partly because they are an American bird. True patriotism and love of country is deeply rooted in us.

These birds are good Americans—have the true Yankee spirit, taking care of No. 1. Having plenty of go-ahead activities, they are great foragers, being good eaters, and will not intrude where they are not wanted. It is amusing how an old cock of this breed will dodge around and watch to steal a few bites from the young chicks when you feed them. Their stealing propensity is equal to a southern colored "gemman's," and their begging capacity can only be equaled by a third term brass clad tramp. The hens are good average layers of nice large eggs, make excellent mothers, but are a little heavy for hatching and brooding quite young chicks.

The young grow rapidly, making good poultry for summer and early fall demand, being a nice, plump, clean, yellow-legged bird.

Their color is good, but for breeding they must be mated judiciously; and even with the best of mating many specimens do not come true to feather.

They are hardy and vigorous birds and with good care and protection will repay the labor spent upon them.—W. B. Litt, in the American Cultivator.

PULLETS DYING.

I have lost several fine pullets. The symptoms are dysentery, disinclination to eat, apparent sleepiness, sitting with head tucked under wing most of time, seldom opening the eyes, even when head is raised. I have one now that has been in this condition for a week or more. For the last two mornings she has drunk greedily, but refuses to eat. H. E. Brownell. (Evidently these fowls are troubled with some character of liver complaint. This kind of ailment has become more prevalent in the past few years than ever before. It is thought by specialists that much of this trouble comes from the use of egg-producing foods that contain antimony, fenugreek, or other material that over-excites the producing organs and injures the liver. Fowls not having a sieve or strainer for the bowels. The injurious remedies passing through the liver produce the ailments causing diarrhea, liver trouble, going light, and often an ailment that people call cholera. When the condition becomes so feverish that they gorge themselves with water, this aggravates the trouble. Fowls that reach this condition might as well be destroyed and their bodies burned. The remedy is to prevent such ailments through keeping the poultry houses perfectly clean and feeding only such foods as nature indicates would be best. No kind of treatment will cure them.)—Country Gentleman.

MERITS OF ALFALFA.

Alfalfa, that extraordinary plant for

producing wealth and doing wonders to farms, is occupying an important place in the plans of the Department of Agriculture, the experiment stations, and the agricultural colleges. Through their efforts largely it has rapidly gained success in cultivation throughout a vast area. The value of the crop as hay this year is supposed to be \$100,000,000, and if the plans and efforts now under way to promote its extension receive a reasonable reward the value of the future crop will be several times the present amount.

This forage plant is a chemical laboratory in which nitrogen is taken from the air. It is a soil improver of the highest merit. As a fish-forming food for growing live stock, and as a milk and egg producer, it is unexcelled by any plant of large production.

It grows 2-2 tons of hay to the acre as an average for the whole country where it is grown, or twice the average for all kinds of hay, and besides this, is more nutritious than other hays.

The cultivation of alfalfa has been pressing eastward until now it has established itself as far as the longitude of eastern Kansas, except in southern Texas. It is established in some area still farther to the eastward—in spots in Arkansas, in southern Wisconsin, northern Illinois, and northern Indiana, in the limestone regions of Kentucky and Tennessee, and in the southeastern corner of Michigan.

This plant is semi-established in Minnesota, Iowa, Missouri, Ohio, and is making its way in Illinois and Indiana. Elsewhere the growing of this plant is mostly experimental, but with promise of success.—Secretary James Wilson, Department of Agriculture.

CAUSE OF LAMENESS.

An English horseman writing to the London Live Stock Journal says that first of all, shoeing is probably responsible for more lameness than any other cause. Shoes raise the frog off the ground and prevent the concussion which is necessary to the health of this pad; they may directly lead to lameness through defective construction or attachment; or they may, by their shape (calks, etc.), cause strain and consequent lameness in some part of the leg. The mere concussion (emphasized by shoes) of trotting along a macadamized road must be very trying to all the ligaments, tendons, and points of the horse's legs, so that the wonder is, not so much that there are so many unsound horses in England, as that there are so many sound ones.

COST OF SILOING.

Figures have been gathered by the Department of Agriculture from some 31 farms with reference to the time and labor consumed in filling a silo. A rate of 15 cents an hour was made for men and the same for a team of horses. Engine hire was rated at \$4.50 per day, including the engineer, twine at 11.2 cents a pound, coal at \$5 a ton, and gasoline at 13 cents a gallon. Ten hours were considered a day's work. The cost of silage storage, as determined by this investigation, varied from 46 to 86 cents on the various farms. The average yield per acre was 9.1 tons and the average cost per ton of silage 64 cents. The average amount of silage cut daily per man was 4.9 tons, and the average cost per acre for putting the corn in the silo \$5.98.—Indiana Farmer.

THE FOOD OF THE MOLE.

Prof. Byche, of the University of Kansas, who has lately made a careful inspection of the stomachs of a large number of moles, reports that their diet consisted of earthworms, 43.3 per cent.; ground beetles, 27.7 per cent.; grubs, 28.8 per cent.; vegetable matter, 3.7 per cent., and insect eggs, 7.3 per cent. As a result of his investigations he contends that the mole is a friend rather than an enemy of the lawn keeper and gardener, his only fault being the somewhat unsightly ridges which he now and then makes in his travels.—Weekly Witness.

A COW'S APPETITE.

A cow with a finical appetite is not a profitable milk cow; neither is the cow with a prodigious appetite, that turns her feed into fat instead of into milk, a fit cow for dairy work. Make every cow come up to your mark for dairy performance or cut her out.—Indiana Farmer.

CLEANLINESS AND SUNSHINE.

Remember that cleanliness and sunshine have the same effect in the stables as in the human habitation. They mean death to disease germs and health and strength to the dairy cow.—Farmer's Home Journal.

The foreign trade of Japan in 1868 amounted to \$130,000,000, and in 1906 to \$4,215,300,000.

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CHECKS PROTECTED BY SECRET SIGNS.

Wealthy Men Have Marks to Prevent Forgery of Names—One Uses an Ordinary Blot.

If all reports be true, then the life of the millionaire, like that of the policeman, is most certainly not a happy one.

There is little doubt that a certain class of criminals regard millionaires as legitimate prey, and the millionaires, knowing this, are compelled to contrive schemes to thwart their cunning, says Pearson's Weekly.

The modern method of doing business by check has to a large extent provided the forger with opportunities for the exhibition of his workmanship. Therefore many of the millionaires' schemes for his protection relate to his signature on checks, and these schemes, which usually consist of secret marks (entirely apart from the signature), indicate to the bank the genuineness of the checks and are mostly of a simple character.

Far and away the most clever idea for protecting a check signature is the one utilized by an American millionaire whose name is as well known in Great Britain as in the States.

His idea is an extremely simple one. It is this: On the back of each check that he signs he makes a tiny blot, which looks so innocent and natural. But should the blot be missing, then the bank will decline to honor the check. This little blot saved the millionaire \$10,000 on one occasion alone.

Early one morning he was kidnapped. His captors threatened violence unless they received \$10,000 immediately. The millionaire thought. Then, after hesitating for a few minutes, he offered to write out a check for the money then and there on the understanding that immediately the check was cashed he was to be released.

The terms were accepted and the millionaire wrote out the check, without, however, making the usual blot on the back. The bank officials suspected that something was wrong. Payment of the check was refused on the ground that it was incomplete, and the men went away, followed by officials of the bank, who were fortunately able to rescue the millionaire from the desperadoes' hands.

Another man of great wealth disposes of the signature difficulty in a different way altogether. He protects himself by never giving an uncrossed check, and this fact has been duly noted by the bank.

Each day his bank passbook is examined by his private secretary, and if there is an entry in the book which has no business there then the matter can be looked into at once. Of course, if the bankers pass a forged check, then, generally speaking, they must bear the loss themselves.

This system has many disadvantages. It means that the man must never allow his check book out of his possession and must place unreserved confidence in his secretary and his staff.

The private secretary provides his employer with any cash required, receiving in exchange a duly crossed check for the amount. It is the private secretary, therefore, who has to protect his signature from forgery, and this he does in a very ingenious way. He has had a copy of his signature cut out of cork. This he uses as he would an India rubber stamp, and he asserts that it is impossible to imitate the markings of the cork as it is to duplicate the impressions of the human thumb.

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