

The General Postponement.
"Why do so many bills fall flat? The country's need for this and that—Men cry in deed dejection. The answer is, 'We're standing pat Till after the election.'"

"And industry—what is its fate?" The manufacturer so great Replies, in this connection, "I'm sorry, but you'll have to wait Till after the election."

Where people talked "reform" of yore A brooding silence hovers o'er The place. With circumspection They murmur, "Let us say no more Till after the election."

And even in the vernal glade The flowers fatter, all dismayed, Bereft of warm protection, And shall they likewise be delayed Till after the election?"

—Washington Star.

Foundlings

By George Weston.

As soon as Mary saw the shade and fruit trees, the attic and the large closets, her mind was made up; and the moment John's eyes caught sight of the chicken-coop, with its nests and perches, his mind was made up, for it had ever been his heart's desire to raise chickens, a hobby hitherto impossible, owing to the restrictions of a third-floor flat. As for Mary, that same flat had been contracting itself round her like a nightmare, so that, standing upon the second floor of this suburban residence, with its quarter-acre of ground and its unsurpassed view, when she looked at the broad halls and the large rooms, while a grove of friendly pines nodded their heads to her from over the way, she knew that here, at last, she had found that place called home.

"There!" said Mary, when the last curtain had been draped and the last loose tack but one had been found. "Now if we only had a cat this would be—"

"No, sir!" said John, meaning "No ma'am!"—as he nursed the foot that had found the last tack but one. "I could never stand cats! Cats! Ugh! But I'll tell you what you do want, Mary. Six fine Plymouth Rocks and a rooster!"

"Plymouth Rocks?" asked Mary. "What do I want Plymouth Rocks for?"

"Why, to have them lay fresh eggs for your breakfast," explained John, very patiently.

"Oh, then they're chickens?"

"Of course they are. What did you think?"

"I—I thought they were something to throw at the rooster."

"Why do you want to throw at the rooster?" demanded John.

"Because I don't like them," said Mary. "Now you just remember, John, we're not going to have any chickens here!"

And as John rose to his feet, the better to urge his plea for fowls, he found the very last tack of all, and the subject was dropped until dinner-time the next night, when Mary brought the cake in.

John took one look at the cake, opened his mouth to speak, changed his mind, closed his mouth and fixed his gaze upon his glass of water as if it mesmerized him.

"Not much satisfaction for me to make a cake," said Mary. John simply looked at his glass of water.

"Standing in that hot kitchen all afternoon, and this is all the good it does," she continued.

John said nothing, but looked at his glass of water very hard.

"Baking all day long—"

John blinked both his eyes, picked up his glass of water and looked sheepishly at Mary over the rim of it.

"And then having the mice eat it all up!" she concluded, with spirit. Whereat John looked with renewed interest at the cake, the choicest portions of which had apparently been devoured by ravenous little teeth, and then he looked at Mary.

"Was it good?" he asked.

"How do I know?" asked Mary, with bitterness.

"What's that on your cheek, near the corner of your mouth?" smiled John. "It's a crumb of cake!" he cried.

Mary blushed.

"Aren't you going to eat your eggs?" she asked, at the breakfast-table next morning.

"Eggs?" asked John. "Do you call these 'eggs'?"

Mary said nothing.

"I want fresh eggs or I don't want eggs at all!" said John, pushing them as far away from him as the table would permit.

"Will you have a chop?" asked Mary.

"No," said John, in hollow tones. "A little cold meat?" she hesitated. John declined not to answer, but stalked out into the hall, looking peaked and pined.

"Now if we only had a flock of chickens of our own—"

He made a ghostly gesture and vanished down the steps.

"You must have been hungry this morning," said Mary, that night.

"Hungry?" said John. "Hungry? Why—What's that?"

"What's what?"

"That scrunching noise?"

Mary put her head on one side and listened intently.

"It might be a mouse!" she exclaimed, at last. "They'll eat the house up! They will, John! They get in between the walls, and they'll eat the house up! Did you ever hear such a scrunching?"

She made a warning motion with her hand that was nearest John. With the other, resting upon the arm of her chair and concealed from his view, she brought the scrunching noise to a climax, her little finger-nails scratching away at a fearful rate, and then she let the noise ominously die away. This orchestration over, she walked into the pantry with an air of great dignity.

"What on earth are you doing?" asked John, following her shortly after.

"I'm pouring out the milk for the cat," said Mary, flushing as she picked the saucer up again.

"What cat?" gasped John.

"A make-believe cat," sighed poor Mary. "I—I often pour a saucer of milk out when there's one left over, and—and wish I had a cat."

John gave her a look that was almost pity, and went back to his paper with the air of a man who will never be astonished any more.

"Chickens," he said, at last, speaking slowly behind his paper and scowling at it, "lay eggs."

"Cats," said Mary, "catch mice."

"I can't stand cats!"

"I can't stand chickens!"

And that was how it started.

"John," said Mary, the following night, "listen!"

John looked at her with a wary eye.

"Is it a mouse in the wall?" he asked, with frightful sarcasm.

"Sh!" said Mary. "It sounds like something crying—"

She rose to her feet and put her finger on her lip.

"It sounds," whispered Mary, "as though it were on our door-step!" She tiptoed to the door and opened it, John following, and bending over, she picked up a quart berry-basket with a perforated cardboard top.

"Miau!" said a plaintive voice.

"Of all things!" said Mary. "A poor, helpless, deserted little kitten!"

John gave her such a look!

"You poor little foundling!" exclaimed Mary, in compassion. "You shall have a saucer of nice warm milk."

"Milk!" began John, when Mary turned upon him.

"John," she cried, "if you mean to say that we're going to turn this dear little kitten out-of-doors when—"

And her tone was such that John exclaimed in sudden alarm, "I didn't say anything, Mary! I didn't say anything, did I?"

The next evening he had something to say, though. They were in the sitting-room, John reading his paper and Mary busily nursing her kitten, when John dropped his paper and opened his remarks by putting his finger on his lips, exclaiming:

"Hush!"

"John," said Mary, in tones so prompt that it was plain to see that she had primed herself for the emergency, "this kitten is too small to catch mice yet, and well you know it, and if you think—"

"No, no!" exclaimed John, advancing on tiptoe. "I think it's something on our front porch—something crying. It may be another kitten."

He tiptoed to the front door, Mary with him, and suddenly threw it open, crying boldly, "Who's there?" Looking over his shoulders, Mary counted six small peach-baskets and a large one, all standing in a neat geometrical formation round the door-mat.

"Too large for kittens," whispered John. "They must be cats. Poor things!" He untied the paper cover of the first peach-basket and looked in.

"Why," he cried, in utter astonishment, "if it isn't a hen! A Plymouth Rock hen!" He looked in the second basket. "And if here isn't another hen! You poor, helpless, deserted hens! Mary!"

But Mary had fled, and when John had placed his foundlings in the coop—tears of joy almost forcing themselves into his eyes when the chickens hopped upon the perch—he returned to the house and endured all of Mary's silent looks with a serenity that was almost joy. Early next morning, as he walked into the kitchen after a visit to the chicken-coop, Mary breathlessly greeted him:

"Quick, John! Quick! That kitten can't be a day over four months old, and it's actually playing with a mouse! Quick! Right under the pantry table!"

But John, with a motion that scorned all haste, drew two eggs from his pocket, and placing them upon the table with a very ecstasy of pride, he said, in tones that shook and trembled with emotion:

"Mary, I'll have them poached!"— Youth's Companion.

CHURCH MILITANT.

Practical Direction of Church Growth Nowadays.

Each year, it would seem, the great annual assemblies of American denominations grow in interest for the layman. This is not to say that any religious assembly can ever fail to disclose to the thoughtful mind a profound bearing upon worldly affairs. But it is hardly to be denied that the will is increasingly manifest in the churches of America to make righteousness prevail in the affairs of

man through the exercise of the church's influence upon public life, upon legislation, upon social forms, and upon institutions. With the more and more definite and practical commitment of our church organizations to the struggle forward of what we call "reform" the layman must attend more earnestly to the convocations at which each church formulates its purpose. The utterances of the churches on such public questions as child labor, on working conditions for women, on the white slave traffic, indicate only the beginnings of a force which is to grow more potent each year as it grows more informed, more concentrated, more concrete and "practical." Statesmen and politicians will have to take greater account than ever before of this force.

And what of the effect upon religion itself of this militancy of the churches? There are servants of religion who fear that the churches will become "despiritualized" because of this entry upon the arena of secular affairs. It is a view that is not prevailing. Rather it is believed that a deepening and strengthening of spirit, a revitalizing of religion and of the churches, will proceed directly from their active enlistment in the ethical phases of the secular struggle for social betterment. Salvation through works may apply as well to the church as to the individual.—Chicago Tribune.

CLOTH WOVEN FROM BARK.

Tapa, a Product of Pacific Islanders' Loom—Its Many Uses.

Although weaving is one of the most ancient of the industrial arts it did not find its way among the peoples of the Pacific Islands until the advent of the white races in spite of some intercourse between the Malaysians and the orientals. Until the middle of the nineteenth century the only kind of cloth made was that known as tapa cloth. The two names are now used interchangeably, although the "t" originally belonged to the Samoan language and the "k" to the Hawaiian. This cloth was manufactured chiefly from the bark of the paper mulberry tree, a species native to Japan and the islands of the Pacific was occasionally used for the same purpose.

In the early days before the picturesque grass houses disappeared, each native home had at least one mulberry tree besides the palms that shaded it. As soon as a mulberry reached the height of about twenty feet its smaller branches and twigs were broken off, probably by the children, who loved to scramble into the branches and throw the boughs to the group of chatting women seated on the ground below. With the aid of their strong teeth the women loosened the bark, and having stripped it off, tore it into long shreds by a dextrous use of the thumbnail. After a sufficient amount of material was thus prepared the whole family joined in carrying it to a stream and placing it where running water could play over it without washing it away.

At the end of twenty-four hours the pieces had adhered into a solid mass. This was removed and placed upon a log about five or six feet in length and a foot square. In front of this a native woman sat, tailor fashion, upon the ground, and beat the mass with a wooden club that had a handle three or four inches in length and had a head nine or ten inches long. This beating process, a somewhat lengthy one, served to spread the mass as dough is spread by rolling. It was continued until the pulp became dry and as thin as desired. The substance was, however, in a brittle condition, but by constant repetitions of the washing and beating, the material became at least white and supple, and moreover so tough as to be almost untearable.

Having mixed her dyes, the woman again seated herself in front of the log, surrounded by a number of calabashes, or wooden bowls, filled with colors. Within easy reach were a number of square clubs. These differed from the club used before in that each surface had some simple design carved upon it. Another woman sat facing the log from the opposite side with the new, white tapa in a roll upon her knees. One edge of the cloth was unrolled and laid upon the log.

Having dipped one of her clubs in the required dye, the first woman laid it with a sharp, quick movement upon the tapa and so impressed the design carved upon the club. By repeated changes of clubs, a varied design was made over the whole surface. Then, to emphasize the pattern, broad black lines were painted on with a blunt stick to outline divisions or to cover defects made in placing the clubs. Often a number of black circles were added before the effect was considered complete.

Tapa cloth was used in many ways, but chiefly for beds, which were composed of as many layers of the cloth as the owner was industrious enough to make or wealthy enough to buy. In some cases as many as a hundred were laid upon one another, and they made a really soft and springy mattress. They also served as covers for the "cave." They were used for clothing by both men and women and, in smaller pieces, served many purposes in the household. The walls of the grass huts were often hung with them, especially in the homes of the chiefs. After the introduction of horses they made useful and showy saddle blankets and were used for the "pa-u" or riding costume of the women.—Los Angeles Times.

A Billion Tons of Fertility.

The soil is our chief natural resource. Yet many good citizens never thought of it in this light till the fact developed from the recent conference at the White House. Had this Convention of the Governors and foremost men from every State accomplished nothing else, this turning of public attention to the importance of the soil would have had far-reaching results. The final resolution adopted by the conference includes the following: "These natural resources include the land on which we live and which yields our food—we agree that the land should be so used that erosion and soil wash should cease."

The most casual observer knows that in nearly all parts of the country there has been a steady decline in the yields of crops from the soil. It must be equally apparent that unless this steady decrease is, in some way, stopped crop production must cease.

A startling presentation of facts bearing on this vital matter was made to the conference by Mr. J. J. Hill, President of the Great Northern Railroad. He showed that the yield of wheat in Kansas had fallen to an average of fourteen bushels per acre for the past ten years. He asserted that this decrease in production was not due solely to the removal of fertility from the soil in the crops harvested, but was augmented by the wash of fertility into running streams.

The amount of this lost fertility was asserted to be one billion of tons annually. This is the material coloring our rivers and filling up our harbors.

A very large part of this enormous waste is due to the denuding of our forests and to our improvident system of farming. It is, therefore, largely preventable, and as such deserves thoughtful consideration.

The Mississippi River yearly carries to the sea 1,441,123 tons of the most fertile soil of its great valley. The short Thames River, of England, yearly carries a burden of 557,695 tons of soil.

When it is seen that these two streams take over two millions of tons of fertility from the soils they drain, it is apparent that the whole network of streams traversing our country may easily carry one billion tons of fertility from American soils.

Fertility is crop producing power—plant food. A large part of it must necessarily consist of available food most essential in crops because most easily exhausted from the soil. It is therefore important to learn the real nature of the materials forming the vast quantity of fertility being yearly washed from the soils we cultivate.

On the basis of the "average composition of American soils," given by Stockbridge in "Rocks and Soils," this billion tons of wasted fertility must contain the following quantities of the three essentials:

	Tons.
Phosphoric Acid.....	1,200,000
Nitrogen.....	1,600,000
Potash.....	6,700,000

Here is an aggregate of 9,500,000 tons of actual plant food, worth at present prices of fertilizing materials more than three and one-half billions of dollars. We speak of our Billion Dollar Congress as an evidence of national extravagance. Yet more than three times this enormous expenditure is yearly washed from our soils and wasted in the seas.

These figures show one further important fact. The amount of potash in this enormous waste of fertility is more than double the aggregate of the other two plant foods combined. The actual proportion of the three different materials is chiefly important in connection with any effort at restoring this needlessly wasted fertility.

It is self evident that this enormous drain on the stored up fertility of our soils must eventually exhaust the supply. This is shown in their gradually diminishing productiveness. No soil must be wasted but prevented if possible, but the actual loss must be restored. This is the reason for our constantly increasing dependence on fertilizers.

With the intelligent and systematic use of legumes we shall become largely independent of artificial supplies of nitrogen, or, at any rate, there is little need for alarm, since the extraction of commercial nitrogen from the air has already assumed a practical form.

Vast deposits of mineral phosphates exist in many parts of the world. In our own country there are great stores of this essential plant food yet untouched.

Exhaustion of the supply of these two materials, however extravagant their use or improvident their waste, is hardly alarming; not so, however, with potash.

Bear in mind that the exhaustion of potash is twice as fast as with the other two essentials combined; then the further fact that there is but one known source of commercial potash supply in the world—the potash salts of Germany.

The point of this whole matter is here: There is no need for the continuation of the condition which now exists. Erosion of soils must always continue so long as water falls on the earth, but the present enormous and alarming waste of fertility is needless.

The grass covered virgin prairies and forest covered hills gave up comparatively little of their stored up fertility to the waters percolating through them. Man's improvidence is responsible for present conditions. Reforestation our denuded timber lands, and the practice of rational cultural methods will conserve the national heritage of fertile lands.—H. E. Stockbridge.

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THE BEAR TRIED TO SAVE.

The bears were about to be fed and the usual crowd had gathered before the iron fence of their enclosure in the Bronx Zoo. The bears themselves knew it was time, and most of them nodded their heads or strolled up and down impatiently.

Only one blinky eyed old brute seemed indifferent. He flopped by himself away back on the rocks. His indifference vanished, however, when the keeper arrived with the menu, which consisted of whole loaves of white bread and several baskets full of small fish.

As the man chucked the food into the enclosure, distributing it as well as he could to prevent collisions between hungry diners, the blinky old fellow showed how fast a bear can move when he tries by getting into the scrap in ten seconds and promptly gobbling several fish, while he seized a good sized loaf with his couth paw.

Oddly enough the animals did not seem to care so much for the fish, and the scramble for the loaves was active. Perhaps it was only accidental, but the way the blinky old chap seemed to sneak an extra loaf away from the others amused the crowd.

It had fallen a little to the rear, and as he scrambled over the fish he gave it a slap with his hind paw that sent it back to the entrance of one of the dens in the rear of the enclosure. "Gee," said a fresh boy, "he's sneakin' the bread away from the other ones so he can have another lunch all ter himself when he gets hungry again."

It certainly looked that way, and a school-masterly looking person volunteered the information that animals, squirrels, for instance, often laid by a store of food for times of scarcity. His lecture fell flat on the crowd, and even the bears were forgotten in the comedy incident that took place at the back of the enclosure.

The loaf had hardly been kicked to the rear when a tiny pink muzzle and a pair of white whiskers, with beady eyes shining through them, appeared over the edge of the nearest den. The situation was easy; the bears were busy eating with their backs turned; so out popped Mr. Rat, gray and fat and agile. He promptly tackled the loaf and gave it a yank toward the opening.

Then out popped Mrs. Rat and joined forces with her spouse. It didn't take half a minute for them to push and pull that loaf to the edge and down into the dark cave. What happened to it there cannot be recorded.

It certainly was not eaten at once, for in a minute or so the two gray rats were back again in the rear of the arena on the lookout for further chances.

When he had finished all the provender in sight the old blinky bear, turned toward the dens and the rats ran.

"Say! Watch! He's goin' after his loaf," chirped the fresh boy. "Oh, ain't he disappointed!"


Such a construction might be placed upon the blinky bear's demeanor if one had the imagination of a nature faker. As a matter of fact he went nosing around the dens for a minute or so, and then he slowly and gloomily climbed back to his roost amid the rock work. The crowd grinned at his rueful expression.

"Well, it's life all over," commented a shabby man badly in want of a hair cut. "You stint yourself to put something by. You wear old clothes and eat ten cent lunches and smoke two for five cigars. You soak your money away for the time when you'll want it maybe, and when you go to look for it it ain't there. The rats took it."—New York Sun.

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