

**The Origin of Indian Corn.**  
"Tis said that over so long ago  
A young maid walked by the river side,  
Singing sweetly, soft and low,  
To the music of the tide.  
And the little maid was passing fair,  
With eyes of tender, sunny blue,  
With rosy lips and flowing hair  
Of a wondrous golden hue.

Her fairy step on the velvet sod  
Was light and soft as the falling snow;  
But it reached the ears of a river god,  
Who lived in the waves below.

He saw the maid, with her flowing hair,  
Her rosy lips an' her rounded form,  
Her teeth like pearls. At the vision rare  
His heart grew bold and warm.

'So fair a sight has never met  
My eyes before!" said the ardent god,  
"These mossy banks have never yet  
By one so fair been trod!  
The river maids are fair to see;

But never one shall my eyes behold,

Though I live a thousand years," said he,

"Like this maid of mortal mould."

So said the god. "I will seek her side;

I must bring her home to live with me.

She must be mine, whate'er betide."

Said this vain god, boastfully.

Then, with a leap, he left the flood,

With never a care for right or wrong,

And sought the maiden where she stood,

Singing her little song.

Fear lent her wings. Afar she spies

A bank of reeds, tall, dark and dense;

And in the sorrest need she flies.

Swift to their frail defence.

She said: "Oh! reads, I pray you hide

Me safe and sure from his cruel art."

They crowded around on every side;

Each reed had a tender heart.

They wound around her trembling form,

They twined themselves in her sunny hair;

To save the maid from threatening harm,

They wrought a marvel there.

For lo! when he parted the slender wall—

He looked on the simple power with scorn.

There in the midst, fair, straight and tall,

Stood a stalk of Indian corn.

This is the reason that night and morn

A gentle sigh, as of one who grieves

Over some loss, fills the fields of corn

And flutters its haunted leaves,

This is the reason it whispers so;

"Tis the soul of the maiden prisoned there

That night and day, with a murmur low,

Burdens the summer air.

—Carroll Perry, in *Independent*.

## Polly's Pumpkin Pies.

Great golden pumpkins, yellow enough to be apples of the Hesperides, were lying about the kitchen floor, and Polly at the kitchen table was making pumpkin pies.

Her thoughts ran in this wise, as she measured out the ingredients: "One and one-half pounds of loaf sugar, one-half pound of butter, two quarts of cream—no, one quart. So Melissa's really engaged to the minister. Dear me, some people have everything in this world. I wonder if they are so lucky in the next? How gravely he would look at me if he were to hear me express such a frivolous thought. He has a stern face; but how kindly he can look out of his blue eyes. The other night when I burned my arm at the candy-pulling, he dressed it as carefully as a woman, and looked so kind and sorry that what with his sympathy and the hurt, I could hardly keep back the tears. He said I had already learned one of life's hardest lessons—patience under affliction. 'Do you call this affliction?' I said, laughing. 'I will be happy, indeed, if I never have any greater affliction than this.' And he answered so gravely that it silenced me: 'I pray you may be happy, dear child!'" Here Polly broke out in a warbling little melody that started the canary in the sitting-room to sing with all his might, and caused Aunt Phoebe to exclaim in tones sharp enough to sour the incipient pies:

"Can't you stop that noise, Polly? You and this abominable bird will run me crazy yet; every nerve in my body is just a tingling now." Then she added in tones not too low to reach Polly's ear: "I will get rid of you both some day, and then may be I will have some peace of my life."

There was silence in the house after this. Polly turned aside her head that her tears might not fall in the pastry she was working, and the sympathetic bird hushed its song and drooped its head.

Polly's reddish-brown curls were caught up high on her head and fastened with an old-fashioned shell comb of her mother's; she had on a fresh, dark calico, and her rolled-up sleeves showed white arms, made white by the flour dusted over them. She was a pretty picture as she rolled out her pastry and cut it in delicate, curling strips, but she was so engaged in repressing the ugly angry feelings that flushed her cheek and heaved her breast but found no outlet for her lips, that she was unconscious of a spectator until, hearing a movement, she raised her eyes and met the minister's.

He was standing in the doorway between the sitting-room and kitchen, and Polly's first thought was that her aunt had maliciously sent him to see her, thinking thus to embarrass her. This thought came to her assistance, and smiling and dimpling in spite of her annoyance as she met the sunny gaze of his blue eyes, she motioned him to a chair with the air of a princess and went on with her work.

He brought the chair and set it as close as possible to the table, so close that Polly trembled lest some of the four should fall on his immaculate black clothes.

"You are making pumpkin pies?" was his companionable question, but it was asked in the tones which thrilled poor Polly's soul like rich music.

She smiled an affirmative, and he went on, looking up in the fresh, sweet face: "Have you ever heard the tradition respecting pumpkin pies? It is said they are a sort of moral thermometer by whom they are prepared. Pumpkins, you know, are nourished in the sunshine. They are gathered in the glowing autumn days, and brought in the house, golden reminders of the summer sun. If the pies are made by one of a sunny disposition, they will be sweet, juicy and delicious—in short, such an essence of sunshine, sugar and spice as those you are making. But if one ill-natured thought is harbored during their preparation, they are soured and ruined."

Polly blushed crimson at this out-and-out compliment, and in her confusion

mistook the pepper-box for that which held the spice, and dusted the pies freely. Then she calmly poured in half a bottle of lemon extract, while the minister thought he had never seen so bewitching a little housewife.

As he rose to go he said, laughing: "I believe I am to take my dinner with you to-morrow: so, Miss Polly I shall have an opportunity to gauge your disposition by your pies."

Polly shook a spoon at him, and answered confidently that if that was to be the only test, she was not afraid.

As the front door closed on the minister, Aunt Phoebe, bristling with indignation, stalked into the kitchen.

"If you think I am going to have such disgraceful performances in my kitchen you are mistaken, miss! I asked the minister in the sitting-room while I went to put on my other cap, and he walked deliberately out here, and here he staid. You enticed him out; you know you did, you ungrateful minx! And you flirted with him over my table and over my pies, and under my very nose, for I was watching you behind the door. I consider it my duty to report the minister—I shall have his name on every tongue in the town. He shall be drummed out of the place—and you leave my house this night. I have put up with your nonsense as long as I intend to. You are not fit to stay in a respectable family."

"Oh, aunt!" moaned Polly, with white lips; but Miss Phoebe went on, in a more argumentative tone as her wrath cooled.

"No, you needn't leave to-night, either. I have so much company invited to-morrow that you shall help me. I might as well get what I can out of you, though if you were to work your fingers to the bone you couldn't repay me. You haven't any claims on me now; you are big and strong enough to work for yourself. I wouldn't have turned you out when you were little and helpless, but I've done my duty by you now—"

Polly stemmed the torrent of words. "It is not necessary to say anything more, aunt," she said in a clear voice; "I will go."

The next morning was clear and cold. The stubble sparkled with a million frosty diamonds when Polly crossed the fields on her way to church; some hardy little English sparrows were chirping thanks that the snow had not yet covered the bits of scattered grain which remained for them, and Polly's heavy heart grew lighter as she watched them cheerily picking and finding sustenance in the barren field.

"Behold the fowls of the air; for they sow not, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns; yet your heavenly Father feedeth them. Are ye not much better than they?"

These words of comfort coming into her mind warmed her cold heart, and with a light step she obeyed the sweet, silvery invitation of the church bells. A holy calm fell on her spirits as she entered the peaceful little church, and walking up the dim aisle she took her seat where the crimson light from a stained-glass window fell athwart her pallid face. The words "outcast, orphan, homeless" had been ringing in her brain with a dull, maddening repetition all night, but now, as the deep tones of the organ rang out in glad thanksgiving to the Giver of all good things, Polly felt herself uplifted, for the moment, above the miserable annoyances of her life; and when she glanced at Melissa, looking pretty and fresh in her feathers and silk, she felt almost thankful for her, that she possessed the love of a great and noble soul. Polly led the choir, and when the minister's ear caught the sweet, clear tones, in which there was no guile, he also thanked the church around the corner.

Polly looked wistfully out of the casement window of the house in Twenty-fifth street. She would have liked to join the throng of richly-dressed people crowding to hear the new minister, called

to the church around the corner.

"Of course he will accept it!" interrupted Mrs. Jones. "It is a shame for a man of his talent to bury himself in an obscure village."

"Of course he will. I wrote to him that I would show him a perfect house to-morrow, Mrs. Jones. So he prepared for explorations of all your premises; every water pipe will be examined. Of course they are always spotlessly clean, but I thought I would warn you—and keep your pretty cook out of the way, for I want Frank to think Mrs. Jones the prettiest woman in the house, at any rate."

The next day dawned bright and clear.

Polly looked wistfully out of the casement window of the house in Twenty-fifth street. She would have liked to join the throng of richly-dressed people crowding to hear the new minister, called

to the church around the corner.

With the inconsistency of human emotion Polly's mind wandered several times during the service to the pumpkin pie on the shelf at home. This was before the sermon. When once she felt the magnetism of his voice she listened spell-bound until it ceased. She never wept, as those around her sometimes did at some touching recital. She sat motionless, with dilated eyes, and almost held her breath until he had finished. To-day she kept saying to herself: "The last time! The last time! When next he speaks here God knows where I shall be!"

Once the minister caught the expression of the wild brown eyes, and there was such misery in them that for a moment he lost his self-possession.

After church Polly hurried home to set the table, and the minister followed with Melissa, whom, for reasons of her own, Miss Phoebe had also invited to dinner.

At dinner Melissa was placed next the minister and Polly opposite, a small handmaid being behind for the occasion to wait on the table. Polly could not help thinking what a handsome couple they would make, as she glanced from his strong, dark head and brilliant, blue eyes, to Melissa's cold, clear-cut, face, and graceful figure, draped in rich black silk. Polly's face was flushed from bending over the stove, and her hands trembled with excitement.

She did not know at what moment her aunt would come out with something about yesterday's "performance," and Polly felt that before all the assembled relatives, and especially before the minister and his betrothed, she could not endure it. But Miss Phoebe seemed in a particularly good humor, and her acrid face dissolved itself into something approaching a smile.

Once Melissa, smiling at Polly, said: "I have heard you were a good cook, but I had no idea you were so accomplished."

Polly didn't make anything but the pumpkin pies," Aunt Phoebe answered, smiling grimly, and she ordered the maid to bring them on.

"I can testify that they are everything that pumpkin pies should be," said the minister, with a laughing glance which caused Polly's face to blaze, caused Melissa to give her a cold, suspicious look, and her saying: "Tom is such a goose; he thinks nobody ever had such a house, and he will drag you from garret to cellar. I hope you don't mind."

Receiving no answer, she turned and looked at her guest. He was standing in front of Polly, who, crimson and trembling, was letting the flour dribble down on the floor. "Can it be possible!" he said, huskily; "can it be possible that I have found you! Oh, Polly! thank heaven, I have found you! I had almost lost hope." And right there, before the astonished eyes of Mr. and Mrs. Jones, the floury arms of their new cook went round the minister's neck, and she was sobbing on his immaculate coat. "But aren't you married to Melissa?" came from the depths of the coat. The minister smiled at this well-timed question.

"I have never contemplated such a thing for a moment," he answered; "I have never loved any one but you, Polly; since the morning I overheard your aunt abusing you, and I caused you to put pepper in the pies. You bore it all so meekly and patiently that, though I had only admired you before, I loved you from that moment." It was only by the most vigorous and unwearing treatment that he was at last restored to life.

Aunt Phoebe waited till there was painful silence about the board, then executed her next flank movement, "Sarah," she said, turning to the girl, "bring the cake off the dresser." When a large, beautifully browned plum-cake

was set before her she said suavely to her guests: "This cake, my friends, was made by Melissa's pretty hands, and I do not think you will find it seasoned with pepper and vinegar, as my husband, high-tempered Polly seasoned her pies."

It had flashed through Polly's head what, perhaps, she had done; but to have it insinuated that she did it on purpose was too much, and with a choke in her throat, which she was afraid would break out in a sob, Polly left the room.

Miss Phoebe had never loved her orphan niece; nay, more, she had always disliked her; but since the advent of the minister in the village society she had seemed to hate her with all the venom of an embittered nature. She had fed and clothed her since infancy because she had promised her dying brother she would do so, and "duty" was Miss Phoebe's watchword. The little lonely thing had won no place in her heart, because from the very first it had turned from her and called her ugly and cross. Miss Phoebe asserted, upon what foundation was questionable, that but for this encumbrance she would now be the wife a wealthy farmer in a neighboring county.

So all that had been done for the child had been done grudgingly, but notwithstanding she grew up beautiful and bright. The town's people, with whom Miss Phoebe was no favorite, whispered that she would never forgive Polly for being so pretty—it was a continual cross to her. And perhaps this was so, for at one time Miss Phoebe's eyes were cast on the minister, but finding there was not a shadow of a chance for her, she determined, to use her own expression, that Polly should not "entrap him," and she set to work accordingly.

Mr. Thompson Jones, in other words Tom Jones, and his young wife inhabited a handsome brown-stone residence on Twenty-fifth street. The street lamps were lighted and glistening with frost. It was dusk of a snowy night in the latter part of November.

Mr. Thompson Jones, and his wife chatted and laughed over a cosy tea-table.

"How do you like your new girl, dear?" queried Tom; "I never saw a better-cooked steak; must be a good cook."

"Good," echoed Mrs. Jones; "I think she is; she is a jewel, a treasure. And Tom," she continued, enthusiastically, "have you seen her? She is a perfect beauty."

"Yes," said Tom, absently, "but she only struck me as looking too young to know much. By the way, I heard from Frank to-day; he will take dinner with us to-morrow. By Jove, won't I be a happy man! A new house (paid for), a pretty wife, a good cook, and dear old Frank to sit at my board. Do you know he has had a call here?"

"Of course he will accept it!" interrupted Mrs. Jones. "It is a shame for a man of his talent to bury himself in an obscure village."

"Of course he will. I wrote to him that I would show him a perfect house to-morrow, Mrs. Jones. So he prepared for explorations of all your premises; every water pipe will be examined. Of course they are always spotlessly clean, but I thought I would warn you—and keep your pretty cook out of the way, for I want Frank to think Mrs. Jones the prettiest woman in the house, at any rate."

The next morning was clear and cold. The sun had gone down and the moon risen, thousands and thousands of rats, about the size of a bandit, bore down upon him and made a raid upon his provisions, refusing to be frightened away, and devoured everything in the shape of grain or biscuit, but not touching anything in the shape of meat. When the bags were hung up in trees, the predators swarmed after them, and would probably have caused a famine had not the convicts turned the tables upon them by killing and eating them in great numbers, saying that they were exceedingly sweet. These animals, which are something like the marmot, are often called the bamboo rat.

A recent traveler had a curious adventure on the Coco Islands, which he will not easily forget. As soon as the sun had gone down and the moon risen, thousands and thousands of rats, about the size of a bandit, bore down upon him and made a raid upon his provisions, refusing to be frightened away, and devoured everything in the shape of grain or biscuit, but not touching anything in the shape of meat. When the bags were hung up in trees, the predators swarmed after them, and would probably have caused a famine had not the convicts turned the tables upon them by killing and eating them in great numbers, saying that they were exceedingly sweet. These animals, which are something like the marmot, are often called the bamboo rat.

The Sacred Dogs of Islam.

No one who has lived in Turkey can fail to have been perplexed by the circumstance that hydrophobia seems but seldom to affect the dogs of Islam, although millions of masterless curs infest the streets of Moslem towns and villages. It appears, however, that an unusually long and hot summer season, attended by drought, resulted, some weeks ago, in an outbreak of hydrophobia among the canine scavengers of Samos, on the Black sea coast. At first small notice of the calamity caused by the affected dogs was taken by the local authorities; but by daily and as rabid Samsunites became more and more common in the town, a deputation of citizens waited upon the Vizir to implore that some steps might be taken to save the rest of the inhabitants from the horrors of hydrophobia. His excellency replied that "he would think about it," and a few days later he promulgated a decree, of which the following is a literal translation: "In consideration that the dogs of Samsun are infested with hydrophobia, it is ordered that the dogs of Islam be prohibited from entering the city, and that the owners of dogs be compelled to go to the port of Samsun, and there be placed a guard over them, and that they be not allowed to enter the city again."

The dinner hour was five, so she could have found time to go, but since she had been serving in her new capacity it was only by a great effort that she compelled herself to go out to buy necessary clothing. She watched little Mrs. Jones trail down the steps in an elegant velvet walking suit, leaning on her husband's arm. Polly wiped the mist from her eyes, and, concluding the front window was not good for her, she went back to the kitchen and wrangled a little song to cheer herself. And the canary in his cage took up the song, and no harsh voice silenced them. The poor child always comforted herself with the thought that her present menial position was only temporary; she only assumed it until she could find some other way to make a living. Mrs. Jones was very sweet and kind, kinder than any one she had lived with during the year. She really had something to be thankful for.

Feeling that she must not indulge in repining on such a day, Polly summoned her brightest thoughts, and even a