

### House Cleaning Belles.

See the wild house-cleaners, as they scrub,  
How the paint and woodwork now they rub!  
How they splash the soap and water  
Over things they hadn't ought'er—  
And the flies and spiders slaughter,  
As they rub, rub, dipping brush into a tub  
And vehemently they scrub,  
While the husband or the father  
Whose patience thus they bother  
Takes his dinner and his supper at the club.

See them mop, and splash around the ends,  
And from every nook or cranny, bring old duds,  
Things that were long since forgotten,  
Garments spun from wool or cotton,  
Worn and torn, in rags and rotten,  
While they sweep, sweep, sweep, everything into  
a heap;  
And the house in uproar keep,  
"Till the faithful husband's passion  
Vexed at treatment of this fashion,  
Into righteous wrath doth leap."  
—*Marathon Independent.*

### WINIFRED'S SECRET.

"There's only one thing wanting now, Arnold dear, to make our little house perfect," said Winifred Moreton, as she clung coaxingly to her young husband's arm; "and that is a conservatory—a wee conservatory to keep us in flowers all the year round. Look here, in this corner now, there are really three sides of it ready built; we should only want a front and a roof, and that old door we took from between the lower rooms and the shelves inside."

"And the apparatus to warm it, and the plants to stock it," added Arnold, with a smile.

"Oh, as for those, my friend, Mrs. Wodehouse, has promised to send me most of hers; she is going abroad shortly, and doesn't care about them, she says; and she appears anxious that I should have them."

"So—so you are jealous of your dear friend's conservatory, is that it? You forget, little woman, that the Wodehouses are rich folks, while you have been foolish enough to marry a poor young fellow in a government office. However, have your conservatory, my Winnie, only don't be extravagant about it."

A month later the conservatory is finished, and Winnie is superintending the arrangement of a cargo of fine plants just sent by Mrs. Wodehouse. All have as usual a label affixed to a little peg at the side of the pot, on which the botanical name of the flower is written; but she suddenly observes that this, in the case of the finest plant, is not a label merely, but a carefully-folded and sealed note directed to herself.

She opens it, and her blue eyes grow first round with astonishment then moist with pity as she reads. Finally she sits down among the flower pots, and looks at them as they stand just where the men have left them, and there is a sort of superstitious awe depicted on her face, as if she fears lest the arrival of these pots of flowers is also the arrival of a great misery in her home. All her pleasure, her almost infantine delight over the new conservatory is gone; it seems to have passed away as rapidly as the short exclamation of joy with which she has hailed the advent of these floral treasures. In her hand she still holds the note containing the cloud which, wreathing itself about her mind, is already beginning to dim the clear horizon of Winifred Moreton's bright young life. She is reading it once again with much intendment, when she hears her husband open the outer door with a latch-key. She thrusts it into her pocket with hurried eagerness, and then strives, but rather vainly, to compose her face into an appearance of creditable tranquillity. The first secret has sprung up between her and Arnold, and the keeping of it then and in the future will prove a heavy tax on Winifred's candid nature.

He cannot avoid noticing that something is amiss, and exclaims:

"Why, little wife, how grave you look over your new toy! You have got your conservatory; you have some lovely flowers to put in it—very kind of Mrs. Wodehouse to send them—and still you look as if you had some heavy care on your mind. What is the matter, my dear Winnie?"

"Please, Arnold, let me send for old Roffey, the carpenter, to put up some shutters and a bar across here, and a couple of bolts to the door."

"Foolish Winnie, do you think your plants so very precious that all the burglars in town will be after them? However, have your way. Send for that old carpenter with a face like a battered halfpenny, and make your floral treasures quite secure. Meanwhile, perhaps you will treat me to a smile and a kiss."

Days passed into weeks, and the conservatory was never out of Winifred's thoughts. Her plaything had become her *bete noire*, nor could all the care and solicitude of her husband, whom she loved to adoration, lay the ghost which seemed to be wandering about her heart.

Arnold had some thoughts of sending for a physician, as he positively was beginning to fear that Winifred had some

mental disease, which was developing into a phase which he was pleased to call "phantomania," and not a little delighted was he to receive a telegram from his brother-in-law, who had been for some time absent, saying that "he is coming home as fast as ship and railway can bring him, and that he may be expected any day."

"He will perhaps be able to throw some light," he thinks, "on this extraordinary infatuation of Winnie's, not only for watching and tending her plants, but for locking them up and thinking about them ceaselessly."

But Captain Verschoyle is not more able to account for his sister's peculiar mania than is her perplexed husband, and after many conversations between them on the subject and much confabulation they agree to consult the family doctor. Dr. Jones, however, laughs at their surmises and pooh-poohs their fears.

"He has known Winnie since she was a baby; he'll guarantee her reputation that there is nothing mad about her."

So he says; but when he comes to see her, at her husband's suggestion, the pained, anxious expression of her face, once so bright and smiling, the restraint of her manner, once so lively and gay, staggers even the belief of the faithful old Hippocrates. What can it possibly mean?

"Look here, Mrs. Winifred"—he had always called her Mrs. Winifred since she married—"look here, Mrs. Winifred, I believe the odor of these flowers is making you look thin and wan. I shall tell your husband to have them all carried away and that little ugly conservatory pulled down."

"No, Dr. Jones, no. I wish to heaven that it had never been built, but to take it down would be worse than death to me."

"I do not understand," said he, watching her keenly as he spoke.

"No, perhaps not; but plants are such a worry; they always die when you want them to flower. I am very sorry I asked for them. I was so much happier before I had them."

The doctor was nonplussed and began to think, with her husband and brother, that the worry these flowers occasioned her must be the result of a weak mind.

To his repeated suggestion, however, that if they were troublesome to her the wiser course would be to get rid of them, she persistently offered the most determined opposition.

Altogether, Winifred's conservatory was a puzzle to these three men's heads, the like of which they had never previously been called on to solve. She was perfectly sane, perfectly coherent, perfectly wise on every subject, except about these carefully-tended plants. What course, then, remained to those who were interested in her, save to imagine she was afflicted with monomania?

In the first week in May there was a splendid ball given by Lady Olive Farnham. The Moretons were there; and Winifred, in a pale pink crepe, which Arnold had insisted on ordering from Paris for the occasion, was surrounded by admirers; in fact, she was on the straight path for becoming a fashionable beauty—a state of affairs to which Arnold would especially have objected, had he not been in the frame of mind to hail with joy any event which would make Winnie forget to devote herself to that hateful conservatory. She seemed to be enjoying herself to the very utmost; and Arnold felt quiet happy.

While she was standing talking to a distinguished French diplomat the color suddenly forsook her cheeks, and she looked as if she was going to faint. Arnold, who had been watching her at a little distance, was at her side in a moment.

"My dearest Winnie, what is the matter?" he exclaimed.

"Oh, Arnold, the Wodehouses—how dreadful!"

He looked round, but he saw no one; heard nothing that could give him any clew to her meaning.

"Would you like to go home?" he asked.

"Yes, please."

He took her downstairs and called for the carriage. It was not till they were seated in it that she told him that while she was talking to M. de Merinan, she overheard, from a conversation that was going on behind her, that Mr. Wodehouse was locked up in a French prison for some bubble-share transactions in connection with a South American railway, and that Mrs. Wodehouse was dead.

Arnold Morton was not an unfeeling man, and he was truly sorry for this heavy affliction which had fallen on the family of his old friends. Still he could not be brought to understand why Winifred should be so desperately upset by it; for no sooner had she been released from her fiery by her maid than she threw herself on her sofa, sobbing convulsively, and by turns rejoicing and lamenting over what had happened. Arnold grew angry for the first time in his life, really angry with his little wife.

Dr. Jones had more than once recom-

mended a certain amount of discreet wrath; for the first time, to-night he felt inclined to follow his advice.

He represented to Winifred that she was by no means fulfilling the mission that either love or duty imposed, wounding her sensitiveness, too, not a little by telling her that, while he did everything he could to give her pleasure, she seemed to take a tacit delight in receiving all his advances with indifference—nay, almost with contempt.

His words went like a sharp dagger into poor Winnie's heart; but still she offered no word of explanation; only after a while she raised her tear-stained face from the sofa cushion on which she had hidden it, and looked at Arnold with her large, swollen eyes.

"One more favor, dearest. I know I do not deserve it; but you will grant me one more, will you not?"

"What is it, my love? You know I shall be delighted to give you anything in reason that will make you happy."

"Send for Blanche Wodehouse and let her come and stay with us."

Arnold's brow contracted into a frown. It was not that he objected to Blanche Wodehouse coming to stay with them, but that he was totally at a loss to conjecture what the affinity was that existed between his young wife and these people, even to the extent of rendering her unfit for all her home duties. She saw his hesitation, almost amounting to displeasure, and threw herself into his arms with a sudden outburst of affection.

"Arnold, dear, grant me this request—do, there's a darling Arnold—if you don't I shall be compelled to go off to the continent myself, in search of Blanche!"

"You, Winifred! You must be quite mad!"

"Oh, no, I am not in the least mad, only I have a terrible secret to keep, and the keeping of it nearly sends me mad, Arnold dear. Oh, how I wish I could tell you all about it!"

"A secret in connection with the Wodehouses?"

"Yes; and you will let Blanche come, will you not?"

"I do not object to your having Blanche Wodehouse to stay for a little while, if her coming is at all likely to remove the incubus which has lain over you of late."

"It will, indeed it will; at least I hope so. Oh, you dear, darling old pet, you are much kinder to your little wife than she deserves, though she is not such a bad little woman as I know you have been thinking her of late."

"Now let us to bed," he said, "or you will look so jaded to-morrow you will no longer merit the name of my pretty Winnie."

To bed for Arnold Moreton was not to sleep. He was perplexed beyond everything to imagine what this extraordinary secret could be which had so changed Winnie. That the flowers in that conservatory had something to do with it he felt sure; but turn the matter in his mind how he might he could make nothing of it; and after thinking it over in all its varied phases for hours he decided that it was perhaps as well he had given permission for an invitation to be sent to Blanche Wodehouse, since her presence in the house might throw some light on the matter.

At last Mr. Moreton fell asleep, to awake after a while with the sort of nightmarish conviction that some one had arrived, and that this some one was Miss Blanche Wodehouse. It was 8 o'clock, and the sun was streaming gladly into the room. He was not dreaming then, and it was actually the voice of the butler outside the door, informing him that a young lady in deep mourning had arrived from abroad and wanted to see Mrs. Moreton immediately. Of course it was Blanche Wodehouse, and of course Winnie, in her dressing-gown, rushed off without further delay to receive her; and "most extraordinary," muttered Arnold, as he peeped over the staircase to see them meet, "they have actually gone into the conservatory and locked the door." He went into his dressing-room to perform his morning toilet with a sort of desperate resolution to give up attempts at guessing the very difficult conundrum that had been presented to him. He did not hurry himself in the least; having resolved to give the matter up, he wrapped himself in a sort of gloomy resignation.

Quite an hour later, when he came out of his room, thinking that if possible he would get a little breakfast and go straight to his office out of the way, he met Winnie at the door. She had dressed very quickly, and appeared in the freshest and prettiest of morning dresses, a glad smile on her lovely face, an open letter in her hand.

"Oh, you great, dear, naughty Arnold, you look as grave as if you had the weight of the whole world on your shoulders!"

The cloud partly passed from his brow when he saw the changed look on her face, and he held out his hand for the letter.

It was the same that had been attached to the largest of Mrs. Wodehouse's flower-pots. With no small astonishment Arnold read as follows:

"Forgive me, my dearest friend, for the subterfuge to which I am compelled to have recourse; for the trust and responsibility with which, without even daring previously to ask permission, I am about to burden you. Sooner or later you must know the sad secret of my life; my husband is a confirmed and desperate gambler. This fatal passion has gradually made our whole life one miserable acted lie. It was necessary to keep up appearances in order to avoid suspicion and retain his business credit. The more deeply we sank in debt, the more wildly he sought to retrieve his fortunes at the gaming-table. Heaven only knows how soon and desperately this may end. My own little fortune, which by the culpable carelessness of my guardian was left in his power, has been dissipated. The only thing left for me and my poor daughter when the crash comes, as come it must, is the handsome parure of diamonds I inherited from my mother. These are indeed, by every right, my own, but already my infatuated husband has his eye on them, and I dread lest any moment they may be gambled away. For my child's sake, I entreat you, help me to save them. They may some day realize a sum which to her will be invaluable. Deep down in the mold of the flower-pots you will find them buried. There, for the present, let them remain; keep them till a day comes when I or my daughter may reclaim them. Do not betray my secret even to your husband. I trust entirely to your goodness and your loyalty. Your unhappy friend,

"MARIAN WODEHOUSE."

"So," exclaimed Arnold, putting his arm round his wife, "this is the terrible secret, little woman, which has been wearing your life away. I do not feel obliged to Mrs. Wodehouse for not letting you confide in me."

"Oh, Arnold dear, poor Mrs. Wodehouse, she is dead."

He shrugged his shoulders and followed Winnie downstairs into the conservatory, where they found Blanche, a rather sad-looking, tearful beauty of seventeen, whom Winnie's brother, Captain Verschoyle, was not altogether quite unsuccessfully seeking to console as they stood together taking the plants out of the flower-pots and shaking the diamonds from their roots.

Arnold looked at Winnie and smiled as he saw the picture; perhaps he had a vision of a matrimonial pendant. A few minutes later they all four went down to breakfast together, Blanche's dot lying before them in lustrous beauty on the white cloth.

Mr. Moreton being a busy man, Captain Verschoyle undertook the sale of the diamonds; but though he was always on the point of clinching a good offer somehow or other he never quite achieved it, and already Blanche Wodehouse had been nearly a month under the Moreton's hospitable roof, when she rushed into Winnie's conservatory one morning—now, since the finding of the diamonds, become once more the young wife's plaything—and threw herself into her arms.

"Oh, Winifred, he has asked me to marry him, and says I am not to sell the diamonds after all, as he has quite enough money for us both."

"My dear Blanche, I am so very glad. You will make the sweetest, dearest little sister-in-law. Only fancy a marriage arising out of my building a conservatory, and then having, as Dr. Jones says, 'diamonds on the brain!'"

### Finland Dairy Maids.

In Finland dairying is taught the women in the most thorough style at government expense. In 1868 traveling dairy maids were appointed throughout the country, and, being paid from public treasuries, every inhabitant had a right to claim instruction or assistance. The next step was the founding of seventeen dairy-schools, of which ten were established by owners of private dairies. Each school had a teacher at its head, who gave theoretical instruction and a female teacher, who taught the principal part of the work. Each school is calculated for eight pupils who are admitted by the teacher, and required to be able to read and write. After a course of two years they have to pass a formal examination in the presence of members of the agricultural society. The instruction gives them during the first year comprises animal physiology, tending of animals in general, the most common diseases of cattle and their treatment, the use of the thermometer, the different methods of cooling milk and their effect as to the formation of cream, the treatment of the cream and the making of butter, the manufacture of cheese from skimmed and unskimmed milk, and, finally, book-keeping by single entry. The contract for the erection of a dairy-school with the owner of a dairy applying for one is generally made for five years. During the first year only four pupils are received; none during the last. Hence, only sixteen pupils can be fully educated during the term of contract.

Three firms are now engaged in canning Boston baked beans, and their annual production is not less than 4,000,000 or 5,000,000 cans.

### SCIENTIFIC SCRAPS.

A fine specimen of the aerolite discovered at Cohahuila, Mexico, in 1866, has been purchased from Professor J. Lawrence Smith, of Louisville, Ky., for the University of Rochester, New York.

Dr. W. Reigler says that the quantity of rain-water which finds its way to the ground along the trunks of trees is very considerable, but that some kinds of trees discharges this function better than others.

A curious fact has been noted by Professor Von Tieghem. The cells in the roots of an apple tree underwent alcoholic fermentation when the soil was very damp. The tree then presented a very sickly appearance.

It is stated that Dr. Schliemann has resumed his work of exploration at Orchelimum, where he is likely to unearth historic and prehistoric relics of value not only to the student of the classics but of archaeology.

Some 583 miles in a northwesterly direction from Sydney, New South Wales, a most promising new gold field has been discovered at Wilcannia, and a great number of persons within accessible stations have caught the gold fever.

According to Mr. A. Renuard the water in which hemp has been steeped produces no evil effects on the health of a district when such water is allowed to flow into running water, but always destroys the fish and some varieties of vegetable growth.

There is an effort making in London, England, to test the system of compressed-air clocks which have been introduced in Paris, and of which long descriptions with pictorial illustrations have appeared in our scientific and mechanical journals. Ten stations are proposed for the British metropolis.

It is maintained by Professor E. Woolney that soil heaped up around plants has, during the day, a higher temperature than earth not so treated. During the night the heaped earth becomes colder. The explanation advanced is that earth which is heaped up around plants dries much more rapidly than level soil.

At the instance of the secretary of state for the colonies of Great Britain, Professor E. Ray Lankester has prepared a report on the artificial growth of sponges, which shows that they could be grown in localities where none now exist. Experiments in the Adriatic sea were made by sinking small bits of sponge in suitable localities, and in the course of seven years these fragments of a single sponge had each grown into a sponge itself, large enough to be salable.

### Catching Woodsnipe in Chili.

In the interior of the Province Valdivia, South Chili, a species of woodsnipe is often caught by the natives in the following manner: When the bird dries into one of the low bushes, which in spots of about three to six meters in diameter are found frequently in the wood-meadows there, two men on horseback go round it in the same direction, swinging their lazos over the bush. After ten or more rounds one man slips down from his horse, while the other continues, leading his companion's horse behind. Carefully, then, the first man creeps on to the point where the woodsnipe is sitting nearly motionless or stupefied with the rider's circular movements, and kills it by a quick blow of a stick. When I first was told so I would not believe it; but in 1853 or 1854 I took part myself in this kind of capture in the hacienda San Juan, in Valdivia, belonging to my chief, Dr. Philippi, now professor in the university and director of the museum in Santiago. I had left the house without gun, accompanied by a native servant, when, in a part of the wood called Quemas, I observed a woodsnipe falling into a dense but low bush of the above-mentioned kind. Desiring to obtain a good specimen of this not very common bird for our collection, I expressed my regret at not having the gun, but the servant replied: "Never mind, if you wish we will get the bird." And he caught it, with my assistance, in the above way without injuring it. —*Nature.*

### The Sulphur Slaves of Sicily.

The sulphur is extracted and brought to the surface by human beings, and, indeed, chiefly by children. Mrs. Browning's "Cry of the Children" might have been written in the sulphur mines of Sicily. Hundreds and hundreds of children who have scarcely the form of human beings, are sent down the steep, slippery stairs into the muddy, watery depths. Here they are laden with as much material as they can sustain, and they must reascend with it on their backs, stumbling at every step, often falling back into the bottom of the pit with broken limbs, or even dead. The elder ones, writes an eye-witness, arrive at the pit's mouth shrieking, the little ones crying and sobbing. The mortality exceeds that of any other province of Italy; the statistics of the lava show an incredible number of lame and deformed, and of young men of one-and-twenty totally unfit for military service.

### Handling Guns.

A sportsman, who thought himself very careful in handling firearms, tells of an accident which made him entertain a more humble opinion of his thoughtfulness. He writes to *Prest and Stream* as follows: A person may be careful in a great many points, but he generally has a weak point somewhere, and I did not prove myself to be an exception to what I believe to be a rule.

One day in the spring I had been out hunting for half a day without success, and was going home when I met a team that was taking a party to a lake to fish.

I made up my mind to accompany them and see if I couldn't find a few ducks, and so laid my gun in behind the seats and then sat on top of it.

Now, it never occurred to me that the gun was in danger of going off during that entire ride, but if it had the only damage would be no end-board in the buggy, so we will leave that "weak-point" and pass on. When we arrived at our destination I jumped out and reached for my gun.

I raised the gun up with the muzzle pointed sideways, and thought it was coming out properly, but one of the triggers struck the end-board and threw the gun around, pointing it at my head, or nearly so.

The gun was discharged, and the charge of shot passed under the rim of my hat, one shot grazing my cheek, taking off a little skin. The barrel was within a few inches of my ear at the time of the discharge, and you may imagine how much I could hear with that ear for the remainder of that day.

If anybody would have told me before that event took place that such a thing could happen to me, I should have thought him very presuming and foolish. And so it is with a great many others; they are careless, and only realize the fact too late that they are only human and are apt to forget themselves.

### A Woman of Grit.

Some days since a farmer's wife in Grayson county, whose name we have not obtained, was frying meat for dinner at her house, situated near a mountain range in a rather wild and sequestered place, her husband in the meantime being engaged at work some distance from the house. The savory odor of the bacon was scented by a couple of young bears that were ranging on the premises, and enticed them to follow the direction from which it came. They kept the scent until it even drew them into the house where the meat was on the fry. The lady of the house secured the strange visitors, and her knowledge of bears led her to think that these young ones had strayed from their maternal parent, which would soon follow their trail and hunt them up. Her judgment was correct, for it was but a few moments before the old she bear came in sight—an enormous black brute, of a kind which, as many of our readers know, will fight to the death for their young. The woman drew down from its rack the old, true, tried, and trusty mountain rifle, and fastening the door she made a loop-hole of the window and waited the approach of her bearship within a sufficient distance for a shot. She waited not long and fired, the ball taking effect but not proving fatal. The report of the rifle drew her laboring husband from his work, who, coming near the house, was chased several hundred yards by the bear, which then gave up the pursuit and returned in quest of her young. The plucky backwoodsman's wife had in the meantime reloaded the rifle, and with the second shot the old she bear keeled over, underside topmost, and yielded up the ghost. The cubs, we are told, sold at Independence, the county seat of Grayson, for \$26, and the skin of the bear, which was very large, brought the sum of \$8 at the same place. —*Wytheville (Va.) Enterprise.*

### The "Boss" System Among Esquimaux Dogs.

There is always one bully in every team, who gets all the choice bits that are stolen by the others, and generally manages to keep fat, no matter how short they are of provisions. He waits for the others to make the raid, and then stands on the outside to take it away from them. These bullies are in several grades. There is the chief, of whom all are afraid, and then there is the next in rank, of whom all are afraid but the chief; a third, of whom all are afraid but the two, and so on down. Sometimes the food is cut into small pieces and thrown out upon the ice for all to help themselves, and then there is a rough-and-tumble fight, and snarling and growling, as if a whole cage of hyenas had broken loose. But here the bullies have no advantage; indeed, the advantage is with the small, lively fellows that slip in and get the meat while the big ones are fighting. When a dog manages to steal a piece of meat he has a lively time of it, for soon every dog in camp is after him, and he has to eat it on the run, if at all, headed off at every turn by one of the bullies, and whining and choking at the same time. It certainly is one of the most comical exhibitions ever witnessed. —*Scrivener.*