

FINIS.

I ask not—
When shall the day be done, and rest come
on?
I pray not
That soon from me the "curse of toil" be
gone;
I seek not
A sluggard's couch with drowsy curtain
drawn.
But give me
Time to fight the battle out as best I
may;
And give me
Strength and place to labor still at even-
ing's gray;
Then let me
Sleep as one who toiled afield through all
the day.

—Waitman Barbe.

A TRANSACTION IN ICE.

BY H. E. ANDREWS.



OOD old Dr. Eben Martyn departed this life, leaving little except the weather beaten ancestral homestead, the venerable horse and chaise, almost worn out in the faithful service of all the countryside, and a rather shabby built ice house, propped on one of the high banks of the Kennebec River at the angle of the famed tower of Pisa. The residue of his belongings consisted of his two daughters, Regina and Mary Alice, not exactly juvenile, but much better preserved than any of his other possessions.

"Oh, Reejy!" said Mary Alice, after the funeral was over, the neighbors were all gone, and their lonely estate for the first time fairly confronted them. "Oh, Reejy! What shall we do?"

Mary Alice was the older of the two sisters, but from the days of her multiplication table she had leaned on Regina. Perhaps that partly accounted for her bent shoulders and faltering gait, so different from Regina's trim, erect figure, and brisk, reliant walk.

"Now, sister," replied Regina, "don't worry about that. We've a comfortable home, the year's wood is up, and there's half a barrel of corned beef in the cellar."

"But, Reejy, that beef won't last forever."

"Well, there's the horse—"

"Don't, Reejy! It makes me faint to think—"

"We can get seventy-five dollars for him, and that will last a long time."

"Oh, dear, yes. I thought you were going to propose something awful—but what can we do when the horse is gone?"

"What are we going to do when the world comes to an end! Don't borrow trouble. We must economize on everything; we must exhaust our whole stock of money at once. We'll get along in some way, but of course I don't know how," and then the sisters had what sisters usually call "a good cry."

Thenceforth Regina took the management of their affairs into her own hands. Mary Alice was the undisputed mistress of the kitchen, and wrought magic with needle and shears, but Regina was the provider. Everybody in Middledale and for miles up and down the river knew "the Martyn girls," and everybody knew who was their business manager.

"Don't you suppose you could sell the ice house for something?" asked Mary Alice, after Regina had disposed of old Dobbin at a shrewd bargain and rented the stable to one of the ice men for two dollars a month.

"I don't want to sell it," said Regina, quickly.

"But of what good is it to us?"

"I am going to fill it this winter."

"Fill it? Why?" but Mary Alice could go no further; she sank back in her chair, staring at her sister as if she suddenly unfolded a pair of wings instead of so simple a plan.

"Yes, of course, I'm going to fill it. I heard father say the old ice house paid him better than his practice last year, and cleared up all his debts. What do I know about the ice business? Well, I can hire men who know how to put up ice; there are enough of them on the river, and somebody in Middledale will advance the capital with the ice as security. I know I can do it, and why shouldn't I?"

And after the river had fairly frozen, which happened to be very late that season, Regina lost no time in sending an emissary down on the ice to stake out her field. The big operators, above and below, saw the move with surprise; but they all respected Regina's claim, and Mr. Hiram Lawry, the superintendent of the Knickerbocker Company, whose great houses were only half a mile up the river, came down a little later and gave her some good hints about buying her tools.

Now please don't think of Regina as a mannish sort of person, striding about in the doctor's old fur coat and rubber boots, brandishing an ice chisel and scolding the men. She was very much a woman, with a disposition to avoid snow drifts and kicking horses and holes in the ice and all such disagreeable things. She actively oversaw her enterprise, and even ventured down on the ice once or twice, but trusted almost everything to her foreman, who fortunately was experienced and honest.

The other ice packers made neighborly calls and offered kindly services. Mr. Lawry was nearest, and almost every day he asked if he could help her or gave her a good suggestion. When her elevator suddenly broke and Mr. Lawry sent one of his spare chains and had the break mended in an hour, Regina thanked him with blushes; he had saved her a round sum.

"Oh, Reejy, just think of the expense, with all those men to pay while they were loading!" exclaimed Mary Alice.

"Don't you think it was very good of Mr. Lawry?"

"I am not much acquainted with him,

but he's been very kind," said Regina, becoming absorbed in her pay roll.

That was a memorable year on the Kennebec, marked by an unprecedented mania for speculation in ice. It came on late in the winter, after Regina's harvest was completed. When, in the last days of February, it was certain that there would be no crop on the Hudson, or anywhere in the Middle States, and that the whole country would have to depend for its ice on the rivers and ponds of Maine, the craze spread like a plague.

It was too late to build additional houses; the ice was piled up on the river banks in great stacks and hurriedly covered with boards.

"Mary Alice, I'm going to put up a stack," Regina exclaimed one day. "There's a fine chance on the level just below our old house, and I can double up just as well as not."

"You almost take my breath away," said Mary Alice. "It frightens me to take such a risk—but dear me! You know so much more about these things."

Mr. Lawry called that evening. He had come two or three times during the winter.

"Have you heard of Reejy's new scheme?" asked Mary Alice, innocently. Regina bit her lip; but preferring to tell of her plans in her own way, now the cat was out of the bag, she went on, "I'm going to stack some ice. Our house holds only five thousand tons and I may as well stack five thousand more."

Mr. Lawry became grave. "H'm! My experience with stacked ice hasn't been very satisfactory," he said, with a faint smile.

"There, Reejy!" exploded poor Mary Alice, with a nervous start.

Regina turned a flushed face to her sister, but bit her lip again and smilingly appealed to Mr. Lawry. "You wouldn't have me let the chance go by, would you?"

"I wouldn't have you make a mistake," he said, quietly. "Your old house is well filled with good ice, and a pretty sure to pay you a fair profit, but if you put up a stack you risk everything."

"Never mind," laughed Regina, in a tone that seemed very strange and unpleasant. "I'm in for it. Nothing venture, nothing have!"

"Reejy," said Mary Alice, after Mr. Lawry had gone, "I'm really afraid about that ice speculation."

"Pshaw!" said Regina. "The big companies are always jealous if we little operators branch out."

And she stacked the five thousand tons of ice on the lowlands, within a week. "Mary Alice," said she one April day, "you shall have a seakins sack next winter," and the rainbow of bright hope spanned the skies of early spring.

But hark! Hear the great sheets of rain storming down upon the roof! Listen to the howling of the gale as it drives the flood against the panes and tears at the quivering shutters! Three days of steady rain were followed by warm, damp weather. The melting snow poured down the hillsides and the ice began to break. Daily the river rose, struggling masterfully with its frozen barriers; and then, swollen to an alarming tide that still rose higher and higher, it hurled the ice floes oceanward in leaping, crushing masses. It was the greatest, most frightful ice freshet ever known on the Kennebec.

Regina stood out on the bluff, watching its furious progress. They had told her of disasters up the river, and she was nervous for the sight when the huriling tumult of ice and water attacked and quickly undermined her ice stack and swallowed up its ruins. It crumbled almost like a heap of sand, under the beating of that fierce torrent.

"So much for women fooling with the ice business!"

The brusque old villager's remark was not intended for Regina's ears, but she heard it.

Mr. Lawry came up and spoke encouragingly. "Your house on the bluff is safe, and you'll make enough from that to set you right," said he.

Regina was brave, but she couldn't keep back one insistent tear.

"It hurt more to show him my weakness and to feel that he had a chance to cover over me, than to lose the ice," she sobbed, when she reached home.

"Poor dear," crooned Mary Alice, "it's all for the best—of course it is—and I don't believe Mr. Lawry would wish to humiliate you."

"That shows how little you know about the men!" retorted Regina, with gall and bitterness, and Mary Alice's suspicions were strengthened.

Three anxious months left their marks upon Regina. She grew pale and worn, and Mary Alice said she didn't eat enough to keep a canary alive. She fed mostly on the weekly market bulletins of the Ice Trade Journal, which grew less flourishing as the season advanced.

"I hope it won't be any inconvenience to you, Miss Reejy," said the President of the village bank, "but we are calling in our ice loans and must ask you to pay your notes within thirty days. There's a big lot of ice on the market. It seems as if everybody put up some, and the bank can't risk such collateral any longer. If you've a mind to mortgage your homestead, now—"

"Oh, I'll take up the notes," interrupted Regina, but her queenly spirit quaked. How could she raise the money? She had been unable to get an offer of more than a dollar a ton for her ice, and that would not bring enough. Oh, if she had not put up that unlucky stack!

Mr. Lawry had been coming quite often, of late, to sing to her accompaniment on the jingling old piano. When he called, the next Tuesday evening, she put it off till the last moment, but in sheer desperation appealed to him just as he arose to go. What would he advise her to do? Did he think there was the best prospect of a more favorable market?

"I'll tell you what I'll do," said he, briskly. "I'm always speculating, and will make you an offer for your ice. You

see I have better opportunities than you, and can take more risk. I'll give you a dollar and a quarter a ton for the lot."

A sudden elation took possession of Regina. Before she fairly realized what she was doing, she had accepted the proposition and signed a bill of sale.

Sixty-two hundred and fifty dollars! That would pay her notes and leave her a small profit.

After Mr. Lawry had left the house she hugged Mary Alice in a transport of joy and kissed Mr. Lawry's check. In a moment more she was weeping like a child.

"What have I done! Oh, what have I done!" she sobbed. "I had no right to take advantage of his sympathy. He might as well have given me the money, and I can never look him in the face again. Mary Alice, I shall go crazy."

"Why, Reejy! He made the price himself, didn't he?" asked Mary Alice in perplexity.

"Yes, but he knows he can't sell it for that, and I was mean enough to accept his charity. I've a good mind to demand my ice back and tear up his check!"

"Dear me," exclaimed Mary Alice in affright.

"But then he'd think me a bigger fool than ever. Oh, how contemptible I must seem to him!"

"Reejy, I believe you're fond of him!"

"I hate him, and I'll hate you if you speak of him again!" cried Regina, and rushed up stairs in a storm of tears.

The ice market continued to go down, and although the summer came in all its beauty the Martyn homestead did not emerge from the area of depression. Of course the Middledale people heard about Regina's transaction with Mr. Lawry, and did not spare their comments.

"He'll never get more than ninety cents for it," she overheard one of the gossipers say. Regina tossed her Ice Trade Journal into the fire when it came that night, and never looked at an ice quotation again.

"As I look at it now," she said to herself, "I was stupid, but he was positively idiotic. I can have no respect for such a man, even if he has done me a favor."

Mr. Lawry came to ask her to go for a drive the next afternoon, but she declined to see him, pleading a headache. Mary Alice looked mute reproaches at her; she did not dare to speak.

Several weeks passed before Mr. Lawry came again. Then he asked Regina to play the accompaniment of a new song, and she could not refuse. It was one of Molloy's, and she became much interested in it; Mr. Lawry certainly sang it with much spirit.

"Why! Where's Mary Alice?"

She had left the room while they were absorbed in the music. "I never knew her to do such a thing before," said Regina apologetically.

"Let's have that last verse again," cried Mr. Lawry, with enthusiasm.

And one song followed another till Regina found her voice mingling with his, and she blushed to think she was actually enjoying it.

"By the way, Miss Martyn," said Mr. Lawry, as Regina resolutely whirled around in her piano chair, "I hope you will congratulate me on my good fortune!"

He laughed good naturedly at her puzzled look, and added, "evidently you haven't watched the ice market recently. I've sold that ice I bought from you for a dollar and seventy-five cents a ton!"

A glow came into Regina's cheek, and she uttered a cry of pleasure.

"Nothing in the world could have given me so much delight," she said, stretching out her hand.

He grasped it and held it.

"Ah," said he, "I need one thing more to make me happy. I want you to share my good fortune with me, Regina. I dare not tell you of my love, and to hope you'll give me yours. I've loved you for a long time—you know I have—and you can't refuse me, my Regina!"

"But it never could have been if ice hadn't gone up!" declared Regina, as she struggled from his arms.

She rushed into Mary Alice's chamber, after he had gone.

"Sister, dear, I've something great to tell you!"

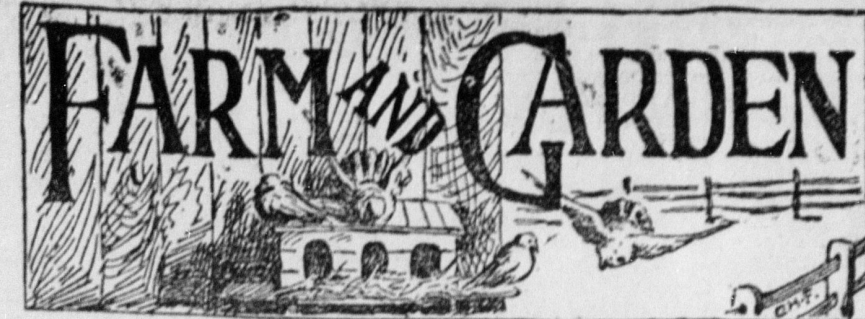
"I know all about it," said Mary Alice, in her fond and gentle way, pressing Regina to her heart. "I've followed the ice market every day."—*Munsey's Magazine.*

Tea-Chest Lead.

One of the industries in connection with the tea trade is the collection of the lead with which tea-chests are lined. China has been noted for many centuries for purity of its lead, and this tea-chest lead, as it is called, is regarded as the finest in existence. There are many uses for it, it is found very valuable in making the best kind of solder. No machinery is employed in the production of this sheet lead; every sheet is made by hand in the most primitive fashion. A large brick is provided, the size of the sheet of lead to be made, and is covered with two or three sheets of paper. On these the molten lead is poured, and another brick is placed on the top, which flattens the lead out to the required size and thickness. The sheets are then soldered together to the size of the interior of the tea chest; the tea is packed in, and the top sheet is fastened in place. The workmen are very expert, and they turn out an immense number of sheets in the course of a day, and, where labor is so cheap, at a price much less than if the articles were produced by machinery.—*Boston Transcript.*

A Rat's Queer Caper.

Some things are stranger than fiction. How is the following: In a manger at Barahill & Robertson's stables a full-grown rat has taken up its abode with a litter of kittens about its own size. Everything goes well until the mother of the kittens comes on the scene; then it is time for disappearing for the rat. At least 100 people have visited this strange spectacle to-day. The rat seems to enjoy the notoriety.—*Marshall (Mo.) Progress.*



FARM AND GARDEN.

CHANGING STREAM CHANNELS.

Natural water courses which cross the farm can be readily straightened by always making the new channel a little deeper and wider than the old one. Do not think the action of the water will enlarge a small channel, for nine times in ten disappointment will be the result. The changing of water courses of small streams is often of great value, increasing the tillable land and improving the appearance of the farm.—*American Agriculturist.*

WHEN TO KILL BRIARS AND BUSHES.

The idea that there is a certain time in the moon's age when briars, bushes and noxious plants are more easily killed than at others is now very generally regarded as fallacious. It is, however, true that when cut in the season of their most active growth they are more liable to die than when cut in the winter. The reason is that a far greater proportion of the sap and vitality of the plant being above ground and thus cut off and destroyed, there is a smaller power for recovery left than there would be if the cutting had occurred at a season when the growth is suspended, with the vitality largely in the roots. According to this, the cutting of briars and bushes during the summer months is likely to be the most effective. One cutting, however, is seldom enough for those most troublesome and persistent in their growth.—*New York World.*

SULPHATE OF COPPER FOR SMUT IN GRAIN.

By soaking seed-wheat in a weak solution of copper, the dreaded smut can be averted. The sulphate of copper is used at the rate of one pound to 400 pounds of wheat-seed, and is prepared by dissolving in warm water. The wheat should be in sacks which will admit the water, so that all the grain may get the benefit of the soaking. Three or four minutes is all the time required for the wheat to become thoroughly saturated, and when the sack is taken out of the mixture it should be placed in a draining trough to allow the water to escape. When the water in the barrel gets too low more can be added, and to keep up the strength of the solution more sulphate of copper should be dissolved and poured in the barrel now and then. This is not only a remedy for the smut in wheat, but for all grains subject to this disease. The sulphate of copper, also known as blue vitriol, is poisonous, and care should be taken that the stock get none of it, otherwise it might prove fatal. It does not seem to have any ill-effect on poultry and pigs. This remedy is in great use in the Pacific States.—*American Farmer.*

CALF REARING.

A practical Stratfordshire farmer, writing to the British Agricultural Gazette, says that after thirty years' experience in the rearing of calves on a large scale he has found it the most profitable branch of his business. It hardly needs to be added that he has made a business of it, that is to say, gone about it in a sensible and business-like manner, studying the conditions of success, and neglecting nothing likely to conduce to it. Some of his experience may be useful to others, and he has set a good example worthy of imitation in freely giving the public the benefit of it. Calves, this gentleman says, should never be allowed to lie out in open pastures during the first year of their existence, but should be brought into yards or sheds every night and allowed as much good old hay as they will eat. They should also be given the bucket the first thing in the morning before they go out. For this latter purpose he mixes them a gruel made of best Scotch oatmeal, at the rate of about a penny-worth per day, mixed with half a gallon of water, and given in V-shaped troughs in the open yard, not more than ten or twelve calves being allowed to feed together. This prevents them from filling themselves with stagnant ditch water and a lot of unsuitable green food, by which they get distended and liable to various ailments, such as quarter ill, red water, and other things. The liquid mixture is continued up to the middle of November, when they are brought in from the pastures and put on cake, a due allowance of which during the first winter is indispensable to the future growth and well doing of every calf, whatever it may be intended for. These few hints may seem simple, but coming from a successful, practical man they are thoroughly worthy of attention.—*Rural Canadian.*

ROAD DRAINAGE.

The one thing necessary to a good road—earth, gravel, macadam or paved—is thorough drainage of the foundation, declares John M. Stahl, of Illinois. Money has been misapplied in road-making because of neglect of thorough drainage, even when the money has been used to build roads of a material that should give them a permanent character. On the Western prairies, where the natural drainage is poor, undrained, gravel roads have suddenly become mud roads when put to the severe test of a long rainy spell in winter and early spring. Not the least unfortunate result of this has been a prejudice against gravel roads in particular, and a scarcely less pronounced distrust of permanent roads in general. Back of drainage was the real cause of the failure.

Whether the road is to be of earth, gravel or macadam, the earth roadbed should be graded, crowning it twelve to fourteen feet wide, and twelve to eighteen inches higher in the middle than at the edges. Along each edge should be

Pigeons for Naval Use.

The United States practice ship Constellation, when she sailed on the cadets' summer voyage, had aboard a number of homing pigeons, to be used as means of communication between the ship and points ashore. The birds will be liberated at intervals and are expected to bring official messages from the practice vessel to the Naval Academy, where a loft or cote has recently been established, says the Baltimore Sun.

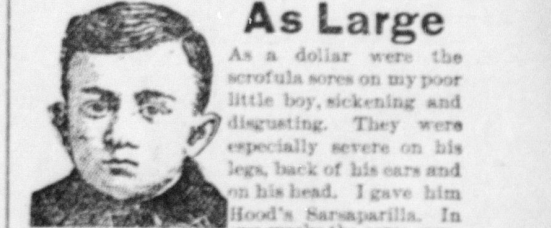
If the experiment should prove successful, the Government would probably find it profitable to the navy to encourage the homing pigeon service with the small appropriation needed to carry out the plans of the projectors of the enterprise. At present the facilities for training birds at the Naval Academy are limited, no Government appropriation being available.

At Fortress Monroe, the first stopping place of the ship, it is possible several trained birds from Baltimore, Philadelphia and New York will also be taken aboard and dispatched with information from the cruising grounds. The headquarters at Washington will also be posted of the whereabouts of the vessel through winged messengers from that city.

A lot of birds to accompany the ship will no doubt be sufficiently trained to ward the coast of the voyage to be useful in conveying messages ashore.

The practicability of the homing pigeon has been satisfactorily tested by communication with the ships of war anchored off Annapolis and from vessels plying between Baltimore, Annapolis and other points. If these experiments should be successful they will demonstrate the possibility of a vessel cruising along the coast at a distance of over one hundred miles, where no other means of communication would be possible, to be kept in constant intercourse with the shore.

This prompt service, it is claimed, would be a great advantage to the Government. The experiments will be continued during the entire cruise of the ship and will be watched with unusual interest.



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N.Y.S. 29

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