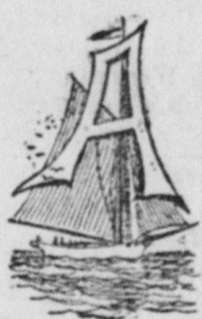


### WHEN THE HEART'S IN ITS PRIME

The Sun's on his throne, and the Wind on his hour  
Like wandering minstrel o'er meadow and  
The day and the season are both in their prime,  
And youth's at its sweetest and tenderest time.  
The buds are in bloom and the birds sing their best,  
The trees are in leaf and the orchard is dressed  
With clustering fruits, for the year's in its prime,  
And youth's at its ripest and tenderest time.  
Too soon shall the clouds cover sunshiny sky,  
The voice of the minstrel be hushed to a sigh;  
Too soon shall the day and the season decline,  
And clustering fruit shall be melted to wine.  
The petals shall fall and the songsters depart,  
The foliage fade like the youth of the heart;  
For swift runs the current of pitiless time,  
And always the swiftest when life's in its prime.  
The birds and the blossoms and fruit shall appear,  
With summer's return and the turn of the year,  
The breezes shall be sweet and the sun be as fair;  
Alas! but the prime of my youth is not there.  
Each month of the year has its prime, but in truth  
There's only the prime in the season of youth,  
Though hearts love again, and shall love for all time,  
There's only one love when the heart's in its prime.  
—Mary Berri Chapman, in the Century.

### THE MAPLE SUGAR CAMP.

BY AMY RANDOLPH.



DIAMOND, Jack? A real diamond! Oh, how bright it is, like a spark of white fire! Like a star, dropped down out of the sky! I never saw a diamond before; and to think that it is mine! Dear Jack, I couldn't possibly love you any more than I did before, but I do love you, oh, so much!"

The little bit of love making took place under the frost bound apple trees of the Back Orchard, where Esther Elmford was standing, with a white woolen hood wrapped tightly over her curls and a black-and-scarlet plaid shawl enfolding her, mummy-fashion. She was a tall, rosy-cheeked girl, with a complexion born of mountain breezes and eyes that shone with ruddy health—no ideal sylvan, but rather a rosy, wholesome, dimpled human girl like Wordsworth's hero-

"But you must not wear it every day, Essie, you know," said John Jefferson.

"Why not?" Her countenance fell.

"You wanted our engagement kept a secret," you know."

"So I did. Anything but the gossip of the whole combined neighborhood!" cried Esther, with a moue of distaste. Well, anyhow, I can put a black velvet ribbon through it and hang it around my neck!"

"But you haven't paid me for it yet."

"Paid you, you mercenary fellow!"

"One kiss, Essie! I don't often get a chance to claim it, you know."

She poised herself on tiptoe to accord the demanded royalty, and then ran, laughing, away toward her home.

"How generous he is! she kept repeating to herself. "A real diamond!"

When she got back to the kitchen of the roomy old farmhouse, where Mrs. Elmford was frying crullers in an atmosphere of fragrant blue smoke, that lady cast a discontented glance at her.

"Seems to me you've been a long time getting that spotted calf into the barnyard," said she.

"Was I long, mother? But he got clear down the lane, and the orchard gate was open," equivocated Miss Esther.

"The Striker gals stopped here for you. They was going up to the Maple Sugar Camp with a lot o' fresh baked bread and pies for Tom and Leonidas, and they waited for you till they was clear out o' patience," added Mrs. Elmford, fishing another tin skimmer full of crisp brown beauties out of the bubbling mass of fat and landing them in the blue stone jar, afterward to be liberally sprinkled with white sugar.

"Oh, mother, can I go?" said Esther, eagerly. "I'm sure I could overtake them in five minutes."

"I've no objection," said Mrs. Elmford. "And you might take a basket of these 'ere crullers to your Uncle Peter. He's dreadful partial to fried cakes, and he thinks there are ain't none like them I make arter Mother Elmford's receipt."

Esther was right. In less than the specified five minutes she had managed to overtake Alice and Jessamine Striker, with their baskets of fresh provisions to the dwellers in Maple Sugar Camp, on Giant Hill, where the supreme process of "sugaring off" was just then in full blast. But in the two minutes during which she put on her fur-bordered hood and fleec-lined mittens upstairs, she had slyly slipped the diamond ring on the first finger of her left hand.

"I shall be wearing it," she said to

herself, "and no one be any the wiser." The Striker girls welcomed her joyously.

"It's so nice to have you," said Alice. "Jessamine declared you would not go, but—"

"Why shouldn't I go?" said Esther. "Don't I go up every year when they are sugaring off?"

Jessamine Striker began to giggle. "Yes," said she, "but our Leonidas has never been there until this season, and Mr. Jefferson has never been so particular in his attentions to you before."

Esther crimsoned to the roots of her hair.

"What ridiculous nonsense!" said she.

"Oh, is it, though?" retorted Jessamine. "When all the world knows that Jack Jefferson is as jealous as Othello."

Esther walked on, with silent dignity. In her secret heart she was beginning to regret that she had put herself out to accompany these silly girls.

"Don't mind Jess, dear," said good-humored Alice Striker, slipping her hand through Esther's arm. "She will giggle at everything—it's her nature. Isn't this a charming morning? I heard a blue-bird in the swamp down by the river, and there's a lot of yellow jonquils in bloom in Anne Rebecca's window-box. The snow is thawing in the sunshine, but the walking is good yet, and Leon says the maple-trees have never given a better yield."

Up at the sugar camp, all was life and animation. Blue threads of smoke wound upward to the sky from the chimneys of the two or three board shanties, thatched with strips of bark and trusses of straw, where the "hands" kept house in a gypsy fashion. The great kettles where the sirup was boiling down to the requisite solidity were watched by select deputations, lest the fires should slacken or the saccharine masses scorch, while others were attending to the impromptu stone chimney in the open air, while the carcass of a wild turkey was whirling around and around in front of the blaze, impelled by a most ingenious rotary spit, and a nest of potatoes was baking in the hot ashes below. The girls were joyfully welcomed. Uncle Peter chuckled aloud at the sight of the crullers made after his mother's time-honored recipe. The two young Strikers extended a hospitable invitation to their meal, even now in process of preparation.

"Leon shot the turkey yesterday by Lone Lake," said Tom. "And it's a prime one, you bet. Rather nicer than the salt cod-fish we had reckoned on."

But Esther's eyes were fixed on the kettles, and she said, "and then hurry back to mother. We're going to have the parson's folks to tea, and there's a deal to do."

Leonidas Striker escorted her to the largest kettle of all, ordinarily called "Big Ben," and gave her the monster stick to stir the bubbling waves of sweetness.

Oh, you'd better stay, Esther, there's a lot of young folks coming up this afternoon, and Darcy Jones is to be here with his fiddle!"

"Oh, I couldn't, possibly!" said Esther. In truth and in fact she had not been quite at her ease since Jessamine's unlucky allusion to Othello in conjunction with Mr. Jefferson; and she did not breathe freely again until she had reached home, where her mother was just clearing away the dinner dishes.

"Has any one been here?" said she.

"Who should be here?" counter-queried Mrs. Elmford. "I don't expect Elder Morris's folks until four o'clock."

As Esther took off her things in the little chamber upstairs, where the shingled roof sloped down to the eaves, she glanced down at the engagement finger. Terror of terrors, the sparkling little ring was gone!

It was past four o'clock. Mrs. Morris was droning away in the sitting-room about the last missionary box which had been sent out to the Hungara Indian Reservation; Miss Adelgitha Morris was admiring her hostess's most recent crazy patchwork; the two little Morrises were playing checkers, and the good elder himself was laying down tomes of theological law to Farmer Elmford; while Esther, with tear-swollen eyes, was mixing a batch of biscuits for tea in the kitchen. All of a sudden she caught sight of John Jefferson riding past on his gray pony, with averted face. In an instant she caught down the shawl that hung on the peg back of the buttery door, and muffling it around her head and shoulders, darted across the snowy back-yard where she could intercept her lover at the curve of the road.

"Jack! Jack!" she cried, piteously. "I've lost it! Your ring! Oh, Jack, do say something to comfort me! I am so unhappy."

Mr. Jefferson drew up his steed and faced Esther with a scornful light in his eyes which she had never seen before.

"Yes," said he, calmly; "I knew you had lost it. I know how you lost it. I know to whom you have given it."

Essie stood dumb before the cruel emphasis of his words.

"I was at the Sugar Camp an hour ago," said he. "Some one told me you had gone there, and I was going to bring you home. And I saw your ring on Leonidas Striker's watch guard. Wasn't that rather soon to transfer your last lover's gift to your old swain? Would it not have been better taste of him to display your pledge a little less publicly?"

"Jack, Jack!" pleaded Essie, holding up her hands, as if every word were a blow.

"I need detain you no longer," he said, as he bowed frigidly and touched the neck of his horse with his whip-lash, and the next minute he was gone.

Poor Essie dragged herself back to the house, the tears freezing on her cheek and her heart colder still. Was she the victim of enchantment? What did all this mean?

Tea was over at least, but Esther Elmford did not know whether she had eaten hot biscuit or cold, hasty pudding. She had listened, with a vague, unmeaning smile, to Mrs. Morris's prolonged account of little Tommy's last siege of diphtheria and Miss Adelgitha's proposed visit to New York. It was almost as if brain and nerve were benumbed, when Jessamine Striker's clear, sweet voice struck across the current of her hopeless apathy and she found herself in a confidential corner of the best bedroom upstairs, with Jessamine eagerly haranguing her.

"The strangest thing!" cried Jessamine. "He found it in the maple-sugar kettle. Alice had made some flannel cakes, and he dipped out a dipperful of the hot sirup for us to eat with it, and Leon came within one of swallowing the ring. 'Whose is it?' said he. 'Why, Essie Elmford's, of course,' said I. 'Didn't I see the sparkle of it when she took off her mitten to unfasten the lid of the basket that held Uncle Peter's crullers? And it must have slipped off her finger,' said he, 'when she went to stir the sugar in the kettle.' So he hung it on his watch-chain for safekeeping until we came home, and here it is."

Esther murmured a word or two of thanks.

"I was very careless," said she.

But even after Jessamine was gone, she sat staring at the pretty trinket which had so nearly been boiled down into maple sugar. What was the use of it now? What was the use of anything?

"Esther! Esther!" her father called up the narrow wooden stairway. "Here's Mr. Jefferson wants to speak to you!"

How strangely all these things seemed to succeed one another, like the dull lapses of a dream. She knew not how, but she was standing, with Jack's arm around her, her troubled eyes looking up into his.

"My own darling," he whispered, "can you ever forgive me for being such a brute? I have just seen that Striker fellow. He's not such a bad lot, after all, and everything is explained. Sweetheart, say that you forgive me! I never shall forgive myself."

And all the horrid nightmare feeling was over, and the engagement was a secret no longer, and poor little Esther Elmford was happy again.

"But I don't think," said she, "that I shall ever want to taste maple sugar again. Not just yet, at all events!"

—New York Ledger.

full and satisfactory trial was made of a smoke-consuming apparatus to locomotives and doubtless suitable for all other steam engines. A number of practical and scientific guests made the trip between Vienna and Znam, a distance of about sixty-two miles, behind an absolutely smokeless locomotive. Open cars were used and even at a speed of over forty-five miles per hour, nothing but clear-water steam was emitted, and no smoke, sparks or cinders, and even the guests riding on the locomotive, found at the end of the journey that their coats, linen and hands were as clean as when they started. This apparatus is an automatic device, attached to the outside of the boiler, which supplies the fire with just enough air to consume the smoke and gas. Over the fire a steam veil whirls and mixes the air and gas, and this burned gas is forced against the boiler and every particle of heat is utilized. It is claimed that a saving of from ten to twenty-five per cent. is effected in heat-giving material. This device has been in constant use for over two years and has been found entirely satisfactory. The invention is astonishingly simple in construction and operation and soon saves its cost. A special advantage of the apparatus is that it can be readily attached to any locomotive or stationary boiler without the slightest alteration of the general system used in either.—Atlanta Constitution.

Has a Peculiar Malady.

The fourteen year old son of a man named Emery, at Buffalo, Ind., is afflicted with a peculiar malady. Although apparently otherwise possessed of ordinary intelligence, he has always had a mania for snakes and wants to catch and play with them whenever and wherever found. Last Thursday he was bitten by a viper and, although his life was saved by prompt medical attention, he is frequently seized with spasms in which he has the exact characteristics of a reptile, darting out his tongue, snapping at people, and wounding his shoulders about in imitation of a crawling snake, until three men are unable to hold him.—Chicago Times.

The World is Washing Away.

An interesting calculation has recently been made public through the French Academy of Sciences. It is to the effect that taking into consideration the wear and tear on the solid land by ocean lashing, river erosion and wind and weather, to say nothing of probable volcanic action, the world will, by the end of the year 4,500,000, be completely washed away, and the ocean will roll over the present foundations of the great continents.—New York Telegram.



HALTER FOR HORSES THAT ROLL.

A horse that is addicted to rolling and getting cast should wear a halter with a ring fastened to the top between the ears. Snap a rope or strap in this so he cannot lay his head down flat, and thus tied there will be no further trouble.—American Agriculturist.

STIMULANTS FOR FLOWERS.

One of the best stimulants that can be given to pot plants, especially palms and ferns, is soot water. Tie a quantity of soot in a coarse muslin bag, attaching a heavy stone to it, so that it will sink; let this soak for several days in a tub of water and then let it stand a day or two until quite clear. One quart of soot to seven gallons of water is quite sufficient. It renders the foliage more vivid, as well as stimulating growth.—Detroit Free Press.

EXPERIMENTS IN KEEPING EGGS.

The New York experiment station has been experimenting in keeping eggs. The eggs were all wiped when fresh, with a rag saturated with some antiseptic and packed tightly in salt, bran, etc. Eggs packed during April and May with salt, and which had been wiped out with cottonseed oil, to which had been added boric acid, kept from four to five months with a loss of nearly one-third, the quality of those saved not being good. Those packed in bran, after the same preliminary handling, were all spoiled after four months. Eggs packed in salt during March and April, after wiping with vaseline, to which salicylic acid had been added, kept four or five months without loss, the quality after four months being much superior to ordinary. Temperature of each box varied little from sixty degrees Fahrenheit, and each box was turned over once every two days. Little difference was observed in the keeping of the fertile and unfertile eggs, and no difference was noticeable in the keeping qualities of eggs from different fowls or from those on different rations.—Orange Judd Farmer.

THE MILK TEST.

In practice it is found that the Babcock test must be expanded in application so as to cover five things: The apparatus, the acid, the sample the manipulation, the operator. These five things include everything pertaining to the test as a machine, the test as an operation, and the tester. Iowa Institute of Science is conducting a test to make sure that the test bottles are correctly calibrated and graduated. As the invention is not patented anyone can make the apparatus, and the test bottles have been thrown upon the market with no guarantee that they are correct. Patrons have been condemned for selling inferior milk with no evidence against them but the test bottle and no guarantee that the test bottle itself was correct.

The new law makes it imperative that each creameryman and all persons testing milk for others, shall procure of the Dairy Commissioner a certified test bottle and the Dairy Commissioner is required to furnish one bottle certified to be correct, at cost price. In case of controversy, the one who makes the test has the burden of proof. He must prove his test to be correct, and cannot secure conviction otherwise. This is right. Before this it was a one-sided affair. One party did all the testing; the other was helpless unless he could prove fraud. Now the person making the charge must support it with evidence and if the evidence is the milk test he must substantiate the accuracy of his test.—Orange Judd Farmer.

HOW TO MAKE A SELF-CLEANING CISTERN.

Soft water for washing purposes is a necessity. To meet this necessity cisterns of various kinds are built, but the dust lodging on the roof, together with dead leaves, and various substances whirled about by the wind, will be carried by the water into the cistern. Unless it is frequently cleaned, this fouls the water and gives it a bad odor. The following is a description of a plan for a cistern so arranged as to avoid this difficulty. The overflow pipe, instead of simply entering the cistern at the surface of the water in the usual way, continues down the inner surface and opens near the bottom. Then, whenever the cistern fills with water and overflows, the surplus enters the discharge pipe at the bottom, thus carrying off whatever sediment may have been deposited. As the substances that are washed from the roof into the cistern always settle gradually to the bottom, each hard rain that fills to overflowing forces them into the discharge pipe and carries them off to the drain. Such foul sediment forms a good nest for disease germs. Where the ground is of firm texture it is not necessary to brick up the sides, but the cement may be laid directly on the earth. Begin by laying out a circle about a foot larger across than the intended size of the cistern. Dig this size down three feet, then dig the bottom six inches smaller on all sides, leaving a shelf on which to place the covering stones three feet below the surface to be out of the way of the frost. Cover it by laying on opposite sides of this shelf two long flat stones, eighteen inches apart. Then lay

Du Maurier, the Punch artist, has been making his stately women an inch or two taller recently, because, as he says, they look better that way.

Dr. Kilmer's SWAMP-ROOT cures all Kidney and Bladder troubles. Pamphlet and Consultation free. Laboratory Binghamton, N. Y.

CHINA is to have a new telegraph line 3000 miles long.

A Beautiful Souvenir Spoon  
Will be sent with every bottle of Dr. Hod's Certain Croup Cure. Ordered by mail, post-paid, 50 cts. Address, Hodde, Buffalo, N. Y.

Hall's Catarrh Cure  
Is a Constitutional Cure. Price 75c.

Acropia, Vocalists, Public Speakers praise Hale's Honey of Horsehold and Tar. Price's Toothache Drops Cure in one minute.

Karl's Clover Root, the great blood purifier, gives freshness and clearness to the complexion and cures constipation, 25 cts., 50 cts., \$1.

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Manifests itself in hot weather in hives, pimples, boils and other eruptions which disfigure the face and cause great annoyance. The cure is found in Hood's Sarsaparilla which makes the blood pure and removes all such disfigurements. It also gives strength, creates an appetite and invigorates the whole system. Get Hood's.

Hood's Pills are prompt and efficient.

### HALMS Anti-Rheumatic Chewing Gum

Cures and Prevents Rheumatism, Indigestion, Dyspepsia, Heartburn, Catarrhs and Asthma. Useful in Neuralgia and Fevers. Cleanses the Teeth and Promotes the Appetite. Sweetens the Breath. Cures the Tobacco Habit. Endorsed by the Medical Faculty. Send for 10, 15 or 25 cent packages. Sole Agents, Hodde, Buffalo, N. Y. GEO. B. HALM, 140 West 29th St., New York.

Testing the Wedding Ring.

A salesman in a Philadelphia jewelry store was approached by a woman of the fashionable world and her daughter, a few days ago. The latter looked somewhat embarrassed. "I desire to get a ring for my daughter," said the woman. The salesman looked at the young lady. "Not this one—another daughter. It is to be a surprise." She was shown case after case of diamond rings, but none seemed to suit her. Finally she said to her daughter: "Show him yours, dear." Blushing the girl took off her glove and slipped a sparkling ring from her engagement finger. "I want to get one exactly like that. How much will it cost?" The salesman looked at the ring, and the girl watched him as bravely as she could. He recognized it as one he had sold to Mr. Blank a few days before. So he handed the ring back to the daughter and said: "The cost of this ring, madam, was a confidential matter between Mr. Blank and myself. We haven't another like it in the house. I understood from his remarks that he thought the ring would not be valued at its intrinsic worth. However, if you wish to know its value, take it to some pawnshop, and multiply what they will offer you by five, and you will get pretty nearly the correct price." The mother flounced out of the store in great wrath. Her daughter followed, almost in tears.—Philadelphia Record.

Gotham's Ivy Drapery.

Ivy is rapidly embowering that portion of the city west and northwest of Central Park. Houses that are manifestly only a few years old wear a dense covering of the plant, and new plants are started all over the region. One of the noblest tulip trees on the island of Manhattan has recently been sacrificed to furnish a pole on which the ivy may climb. When the high trunk shall have been completely draped with the vine the effect will be one of the most striking bits of lawn decoration anywhere in the city. It is worth noting that the uncompleted work of last summer on the front of the old Forty-second street reservoir has been finished by the ivy already, and the whole central section of the Fifth avenue side is now thickly covered with the climbing vine.—New York Sun.

### KNOWLEDGE

Brings comfort and improvement and tends to personal enjoyment when rightly used. The many who live better than others and enjoy life more, with less expenditure, by more promptly adopting the world's best products to the needs of physical being, will attest the value to health of the pure liquid laxative principles embraced in the remedy, Syrup of Figs.

Its excellence is due to its presenting in the form most acceptable and pleasant to the taste, the refreshing and truly beneficial properties of a perfect laxative; effectually cleansing the system, dispelling colds, headaches and fevers and permanently curing constipation. It has given satisfaction to millions and met with the approval of the medical profession, because it acts on the Kidneys, Liver and Bowels without weakening them and it is perfectly free from every objectionable substance.

Syrup of Figs is for sale by all druggists in 50c and \$1 bottles, but it is manufactured by the California Fig Syrup Co. only, whose name is printed on every package, also the name, Syrup of Figs, and being well informed, you will not accept any substitute if offered.