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Educational Department

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E. E. QUINLAN, Editor.

"GOD BLESS OUR SCHOOL."

About the room the Christmas greens
In rich profusion hung,
While sparkling in their gilded dress
Those graceful vines among,
Were fitting mottoes wrought with care,
Each with its wealth of good,
And *this* of all that decked those walls,
The children's favorite stood—
"God bless our school."

It glittered in the morning sun
In characters of gold,
As beautiful at noontide hour,
Like Truth that ne'er grows old;
What though the storms were fierce without,
With low-hung clouds of gloom,
A halo crowned those sacred words,
Its radiance filled the room—
"God bless our school."

Once to my side a fair young child
Came with her eyes of blue,
So full of light and innocence,
Pure thoughts were they I knew.
"Teacher," said she "I wonder so
If it can really be,
That God, who lives high up above,
Looks down from heaven to see,
And bless our school."

Oh, what a fitting time to teach
A sweet and holy truth,
To leave its impress deep engraved
Upon the mind of youth!
I took the little hand in mine,
Gazed in that childish face,
And told how He, whose watchful love
Abides in every place,
Could bless our school;

And how not e'en a sparrow's fall,
Not e'en a raven's cry,
Though small they seem, could e'er escape
The notice of His eye.
The child-face glowed with happy smiles,
"Ah! now I know," said she.
"If God loves even the little birds,
He surely cares for me,
And all our school."

O ye! unto whose tender care
These little ones are given,
Spurn not the thoughtful questionings,
But turn their hearts to heaven;
And when ye twine about your rooms
The rich festoons of green
There place among those graceful vines
These golden words to gleam—
"God bless our school."—*Leader.*

THE PAST SCHOOL YEAR.

With the festivities and pleasures of the holidays, come the review of the old and the plans for the new year. A retrospect of the past is not always agreeable; still, whether pleasant or otherwise, we are better prepared to face the unknown future if conversant with those lessons which the "lamp of experience" alone can give.

As must be remembered by all acquainted with educational matters in our county, with the election of the present Superintendent a new era was to be inaugurated in our common schools. As all acknowledged, the wages of teachers were shamefully low, but from many parts of the county came the cry, "Our wages correspond to the preparation and professional zeal of many of our teachers. Give us fewer teachers, and those better prepared. Let us have greater efficiency in the school room." While of necessity many of the teachers are young and inexperienced, still, can any one doubt but that a great advance has been made in qualifications, in weeding out the poorer teachers, in the efficiency of those who remain, and in a general interest in the cause of education throughout the county? And yet, what is the per centum of advance in the salaries of the teachers? Many complain that the young, inexperienced teachers fill our schools. Can it be expected that young men, finely qualified, will remain long in the business of teaching when they receive less than $100 a year. The ability that makes a school successful commands more than $100 a year in other markets where age and experience are joined with qualifications? We cannot keep our best young men and women in the teachers' work unless we can offer them as great inducements as other vocations afford. The farmer, the mechanic, the business and the professional man expect from their business to have homes, support families, and purchase the accoutrements necessary to successfully prosecute their business. Can any teacher expect this, unless he teaches in a town? Is it strange, then, that the mass of our teachers are young and will remain so until the remuneration justifies them in making teaching a profession? Let us hope that with returning prosperity the patrons of our public schools will encourage our teachers in their efforts to prepare themselves, and to do better work in a more substantial manner.

We doubt whether any county of equal size in the Commonwealth can show an array of better young men than can be found in the ranks of our Bradford teachers. Among them can be found scores of intelligent, sanguine, self-denying, earnest young men. In whatever vocation they throw their energy, it will be the stronger for their help. We trust teaching may be made remunerative and honorable enough to receive their maturer strength as well as their youthful manhood.

The teachers in many of our townships are rejoicing this winter in having steady boarding places. A number of townships have wheeled in line. Boarding around is doomed in Bradford county, at least in the winter season, thanks to the efforts of the press, the discussions at the Associations, and other favoring causes. It interferes with the efficiency of the teacher, the good of the school, and the convenience of the patron.

Samuel M. Huston is becoming a fixture in the North Towanda graded school. He has taught there the larger part of the time for the last three years. The directors show their good sense by retaining a good teacher when once they have secured one. The frequent change of teachers is one of the greatest evils of our common school system. Miss Edith A. Thompson is Mr. Huston's assistant.

Mr. E. A. Thompson teaches in Carbon Run, and his brother Ernest in Barclay. The former has a large night school, also. Both are good teachers, hold State certificates, and we doubt not are making good records. Both of these schools are in session the larger part of the year, and pay larger salaries than many localities in Bradford.

PRONUNCIATION.

A copy of Webster's *Unabridged Dictionary* was offered at a Teachers' Institute in Pennsylvania to any teacher who would read the following paragraph and pronounce every word correctly, according to Webster. No one succeeded in earning the Dictionary, although nine teachers made the attempt.

"A sacrilegious son of Belial, who suffered from bronchitis, having exhausted his finances, in order to make good the deficit, resolved to ally himself to a comely, lenient and docile young lady of the Malay or Caucasian race. He accordingly purchased a calliope and a coral necklace of a chameleon hue and securing a suite of rooms at a principal hotel, he engaged the head waiter as his coadjutor. He then dispatched a letter of the most unexceptional caligraphy extant, inviting the young lady to a matinee. She revolted at the idea, refused to consider herself sacrificable to his desires, and sent a polite note of refusal; on receiving which he procured a carbine and bowie-knife, said he would not forge fetters hymeneal with the queen, went to an isolated spot, severed his jugular vein, and discharged the contents of his carbine into his abdomen. The debris was removed by the coroner."

THE SILVER LINK.

Joseph Cook is the champion of popular education. By his repeated and earnest utterances from the platform he has thrown his strong, positive influence against all retrograde movements in educational matters. He believes that the more culture we have, the more happiness we will possess. In a lecture before the Chatauqua Assembly, he took occasion to make the following remarks regarding our High Schools:

"There are three links of education in this country—an iron, a silver, and a golden; our common schools, our high schools, and our universities.

"We all believe in common school education. The difference between a fool who has been through college and one who has not, is, that the one who has been through usually knows he is a fool, and the other one does not. Therefore, in spite of the failures many of the collegiates make in life, we ought to believe in universities. In the republic of culture there are no foreign lands. What we most need, I think, is a silver link to unite the iron link with the golden, and if our high schools were a little improved in practical directions, we think in them would be found the silver link."

We are glad to hear of District Institutes organizing in various parts of the county. They can be productive of great good. We trust teachers will consult their own interests and that of the schools by attending regularly, and earnestly putting forth every effort to make them successful.

Mr. H. S. Patterson is principal of the Gilletts' graded school, and Mr. J. S. Bovington of the Herrickville school. Both are finely qualified and competent to fill responsible positions in larger schools.

Mr. Clayton M. Osborn is teaching the school in South Towanda, near the nail works. We have heard that he had eighty scholars. Certainly enough to fully employ one teacher.

The teachers and students of the Susquehanna Collegiate Institute and the Towanda Graded School have a holiday vacation from December 19 to January 5.

Fun, Fact and Facetiæ.

The route to the coal bin is a hard road to travel.

If you want a man to let you alone, let him a loan.

A torchlight procession always hangs fire—on poles.

When is a man obliged to keep his word? When no one will take it.

People who converse at the top of their voices are not high toned.

Trout should never be base-ball players. Too many go out on the fly.

Strychnine will cure longevity, but the remedy is worse than the disease.

In order to look spruce it is not necessary that you should remain evergreen.

In our country's cologne-ial day everybody had plenty of common scents.

Samson was a strong man, yet we doubt if he was able to lift a big mortgage.

"I am going out with the tied," said the blind man; and his dog led the way.

A knee-motional play—When an angry mother lays her offspring across her knee.

The difference between a hen and a mouse-trap is that the mouse-trap can't set itself.

A case of moral color blindness is that of a green clergyman trying to enforce the blue laws.

Trouble never comes single handed until you are knocked down by a one-armed fellow citizen.

"I'll join you presently," said the minister to the young couple, as he went for the church key.

Slowness in appreciating a joke is a positive advantage, for are we not told that he who laughs last laughs best?

She certainly had a pretty foot, but after all it didn't make half so much impression on him as the old man's.

The reason that old slippers are thrown after a newly married couple is that the chances of matrimonial happiness are slippery.

The monogram fever is spoken of as "initial insanity." Nevertheless it prevails, as *Judge Slote* says, "from alpha to Omaha."

A fashion exchange informs us that "striped parsols have taken the place of striped stockings;" but we don't believe a word of it.

It is very appropriate that Thanksgiving day comes in November. By that time base ball players and flies will have gone to their rest.

Susan B. Anthony is almost crazy, not because the women of Massachusetts can't vote, but because they won't.—*New York Commercial Advertiser.*

An advertisement appears in the Jamestown *Journal* thus: "Rooms desired for light house-keeping." We would suggest applying to the government.—*Oil City Derrick.*

An old hat belonging to Napoleon I was recently advertised for sale in Paris. We shouldn't think it would bring much, as both the Nap and crown are gone.—*London Times.*

A careful political economist closely calculates that the women in this country might annually save $14,500,000 in ribbons which the men might spend in segars.—*Baltimore News.*

All the African monarchs encourage blackguards, keep them about their palaces, and by way of giving them healthful recreation, allow them to go gunning after missionaries once a year.

The school boy will gloat for half a day over the enigmas in a puzzle column, but when he comes to his regular arithmetic lesson, he considers that he is the most abused boy in the world.

Did you ever notice that there is something really musical in the pitiful weeping of your own baby—God bless it!—and something, everything, fiendishly discordant in the squaling of your neighbor's howling young one? How is it, anyhow, that it always is that way?

Poetry.

ANNIE AND WILLIE'S PRAYER.

By Mrs. Annie P. Snow.

'Twas the eve before Christmas: "Good night" had been said,
And Annie and Willie had crept into bed;
There were tears on their pillows and tears in their eyes,
And each little bosom was heavy with sighs:
For to-night their stern father's command had been given
That they should retire precisely at seven,
Instead of eight; for they troubled him more
With questions unheard of than ever before.
He had told them he thought this delusion a sin,
No such being as "Santa Claus" ever had been
And he hoped, after this, he should nevermore hear
How he scrambled down chimneys with presents each year.
And this was the reason that two little heads
So restlessly tossed on their soft, downy beds.
Eight, nine, and the clock on the steeple tolled ten—
Not a word had been spoken by either till then,
When Willie's sad face from the blanket did peep
And whispered: "Dear Annie, is you fast asleep?"
"Why, no, brother Willie," a sweet voice replies,
"I have tried it in vain, but I can't shut my eyes;
For, somehow, it makes me so sorry because
Dear papa has said there is no 'Santa Claus.'
Now we know there is, and it can't be denied,
For he came every year before mamma died;
But then, I've been thinking that she used to pray,
And God would hear everything mamma would say,
And perhaps she asked to send 'Santa Claus' here
With the sacks full of pesents he bro't every year."
"Well, why tan't we p'ay dest as mamma did then,
And ask Him to send him with presents aden?"
"I've been thinking so, too," and without a word more
Four little bare feet bounded out on the floor,
And four little knees the soft carpet pressed,
And two tiny hands were clasped close to each breast.
"Now, Willie, you know, we must firmly believe
That the presents we ask for we're sure to receive;
You must wait just as still till I say the 'Amen,'
And by that you will know that your turn has come then;
Dear Jesus, look down on my brother and me,
And grant us the favor we're asking of Thee;
I want a wax dolly, a tea-set and ring,
And an ebony box that shuts with a spring.
Bless papa, dear Jesus, and cause him to see
That 'Santa Claus' loves us far better than he;
Don't let him get angry and fretful again
At dear brother Willie and Annie. Amen."
"Please, Desus, 'et 'Santa Taus' tum down to night,
And bring some presents before it is 'ight;
I want he should dive me a nice 'ittle sed,
With bright shiny runners, and all painted red;
A box full of tandy, a book and a toy,
Amen; and then, Desus, I'll be a dood boy."
Their prayers being ended, they raised up their heads
And with hearts light and cheerful again sought their beds:
They soon were in slumber, both peaceful and deep
And with fairies in dreamland were roaming in sleep.
Eight, nine, and the little French clock had struck ten
Ere the father had thought of his children again:
He seems now to hear Annie's half suppressed sighs,
And to see the big tears stand in Willie's blue eyes.
"I was harsh with my darlings," he mentally said,
"And should not have sent them so early to bed;
But then I was troubled—my feelings found vent;
For bank stock to-day has gone down ten per cent.;
But of course they've forgotten their troubles ere this,
And that I denied them the thrice asked for kiss;
But, just to make sure, I'll steal up to their door,
For I never spoke harsh to my darlings before."
So saying, he softly ascended the stairs,
And arrived at the door to hear both of their prayers.
His Annie's "bless papa" draws forth the big tears,
And Willie's grave promise falls sweet on his ears.
"Strange, strange, I'd forgotten," said he, with a sigh,
"How I longed, when a child, to have Christmas draw nigh.
I'll atone for my harshness," he inwardly said,
"By answering their prayers ere I sleep in my bed."
Then he turned to the stairs and softly went down,
Threw off velvet slippers and silk dressing-gown,
Donned hat, coat and boots, and was out in the street:
A millionaire facing the cold, driving sleet;
Nor stopped he until he had bought everything,
From the box full of candy to the tiny gold ring;
Indeed he kept adding so much to his store
That the various presents outnumbered a score;
Then homeward he turned with his holiday load,
And with Aunt Mary's help in the nursery 'twas stowed;
Miss Dolly was seated beneath a pine tree,
By the side of a table spread out for her tea;
A work box well filled in the centre was laid,
And on it the ring for which Annie had prayed.
A soldier in uniform stood by a sled,
"With bright shining runners, and all painted red."
There were bells, dogs and horses, books pleasing to see,
And birds of all colors were perched in the tree,
While Santa Claus, laughing, stood up in the top
As if getting ready more presents to drop;
And as the fond father the picture surveyed,
He thought for his trouble he'd been amply paid,
And he said to himself, as he brushed off a tear
"I'm happier to-night than I've been for a year;
I've enjoyed more true happiness than ever before,
What care I if bank stocks fall ten per cent. more!
Hereafter I'll make it a rule, I believe,
To have Santa Claus visit us each Christmas eve."
So thinking, he gently extinguished the light,
And tripped down stairs to retire for the night.
And soon as the beams of the bright morning sun
Put the darkness to flight, and the stars one by one,
Four little blue eyes out of sleep opened wide,
And at the same moment the presents espied.
Then out of their bed they sprang with a bound,
And the very gifts prayed for were all of them found.
They laughed and they cried in their innocent glee,
And shouted for "papa" to come quick and see
What presents old Santa Claus brought in the night,
Just the things which they wanted, and left before light,
"And now," added Annie, in a voice soft and low,
"You'll believe there's a Santa Claus, papa, I know."
While dear little Willie climbed up on his knee,
Determined between them no secrets should be,
And told, in a soft whisper, how Annie had said
That dear, blessed mamma, so long ago dead,
Used to kneel down and pray by the side of her chair,
And that God up in Heaven had answered her prayer;
"Then we dot up and p'ayed dust as well as we tould,
And Dod answered our prayers, now wasn't He Dood?"
"I should say that He was if He sent you all those,
And knew just what presents my children would please;
(Well, well, let him think so, the dear little elf,
'Twould be cruel to tell him I did it myself).
Blind father! Who caused your stern heart to relent?
And the hasty words spoken so soon to repent?
'Twas the Lord, who bade you steal softly up stairs,
And made you His agent to answer their prayers.

Christmas Story.

Reinette's Christmas-Tree.

Reinette sat on the lowest step of the balcony leading into the garden—sat and cried softly to herself. She looked very pretty, to be sure, with the tears on her lashes and her great brown eyes swimming in them, and the color reddening on her oval cheek; so it did not so much matter that young Mr. Theodore should come upon her unawares—or perhaps it did matter very much.

"Tears, Miss Reinette! What are you crying about, may I ask?" said the young man.

"Oh, yes, you may ask, but I can not tell; it wouldn't be honorable to tell."

"Indeed!" ejaculated Mr. Theodore.

"No—at least I would rather you didn't ask me; but I won't shed another tear—no, not one. Do you wish to see step-mother?"

"I don't know as it is necessary, since I see you," doubtfully.

"But *she* says it is indiscreet for me to talk with young men alone."

"Even with a rose hedge between us? Where is she? I do not wish to lead you into temptation"—laughing a little.

"She is in the music-room."

And Mr. Theodore went slowly up the steps and disappeared behind the glass door; and Reinette watched him go, and hummed the "Blue Danube," and tore her hands with a thorn, and pelted the children in the neighboring close with roses till they fled screaming with laughter. Half an hour later, when Mr. Theodore came down the balcony steps, he paused beside Reinette, and said, softly, "I am exceedingly sorry, Miss Reinette, that you have been so annoyed—"

"Oh, *she* has told you!" shrugging her shoulders—for, after all, perhaps it was not so bad a thing for Mr. Theodore to know that somebody had sought her, though it was only the gray-haired rector.

"Yes, she has told me"—slowly; "and it appears that your refusal was so vehement that nothing I could say—"

"*No, nothing*, Mr. Theodore," interrupted Reinette, the vexed tears standing in her eyes again. Was it possible that even Mr. Theodore would have her marry the gray-visaged rector?

"Good morning, Miss Reinette," said the young man, kissing her hand at parting. "May you live to change your mind!" If he really wished her to marry the rector, why had he kissed her hand and looked so oddly? Surely men were hard to understand!

"Reinette! Reinette!" called a metallic voice from the house, "where have you been, and with whom were you chatting? Don't you know that you are due at the almshouse to sing at old Nancy's funeral, child?"

"I was only in the garden, passing a word with Mr. Theodore," said Reinette.

"With Mr. Theodore!" cried Reinette's step-mother, as if she had received a blow. "Indeed! and what had he to say to you?"

"What did he say to me? He had too much to say—far too much. He is like you others—he wishes me to marry the rector, too." Madame Emlyn had the air of checking herself midway in an expression of surprise, before saying.—

"You see how it is; all your friends agree with me. It is better to look at such things through old spectacles."

"But old spectacles don't fit young eyes," sighed Reinette. "I tried looking through grandmamma's glasses once, and everything was misty and uncertain."

"You have been shedding tears before Mr. Theodore. Were they effectual? Did he take pity on you and propose to marry you himself in place of the rector?"

"Mr. Theodore marry *me?* What are you thinking of, step-mother? His words didn't sound very much like love-making; and besides," tossing her head, "it takes two to make a bargain of that kind." Then she tied on her hat and set off for the almshouse.

Mrs. Emlyn had married Reinette's father when Reinette was a child, and since there is no fool like an old fool, he had died leaving everything in the hands of his widow, confident, in his doting age, that she would deal righteously with his daughter. But instead of repairing the omissions of her late husband, Mrs. Emlyn, after a sojourn in crape and seclusion as brief as decency would allow, left the child, Reinette, at home in charge of an old servant, and spent her time and money in the city in search of a worthy successor to Mr. Emlyn. Failing which, in spite of charms which her forty odd years did not disparage, with manners capable of deluding the very elect, she finally returned, with her finances much the worse for bad management and extravagance, and set about economizing. The first act in the new drama was the dismissal of the ancient servant who had taken care of Reinette during Mrs. Emlyn's absence, and who, being now past service, was obliged to seek a home in the almshouse. Reinette shed bitter tears at what seemed to her her first misfortune, and it was old Nancy who had left a special request that Reinette should sing at her funeral.

"For then the angels will be there to listen," she had prophecied.

"If you would only come of Sabbath-days sometimes and sing to us!" coaxed one old crone after another, clinging to her skirts.

"You are coming to sing here allus, ain't you?" asked the little pale children, crowding about her and touching the fringes of her gown with curious fingers.

"I likes singing. I sings myself to sleep dark nights," whispered a small hunchback, "but it don't sound like yourn do."

Reinette had gone to the almshouse believing herself the most unhappy and desolate being in the world—bitter against her step-mother for urging the rector upon her, bitter against the rector for caring for her and putting a stumbling-block in her way, most bitter against Mr. Theodore, because we are most bitter against those we love most if they seem to underestimate our deserts. But here was a little community to which she could give pleasure—*she*, who had never seemed to please any body but the old rector. What a legacy old Nancy had left them!

One morning Mr. Theodore overtook her returning from her matinee. Reinette fancied that he had avoided her of late, and was disposed to treat him with a grand indifference.

"I hope you are quite well, Mr. Theodore," she said, condescendingly, dashing the tears from her eyes, which a call at the almshouse always encouraged.

"Quite. But has the world used you roughly to-day?"

"The world uses us according to our deserts, I fancy."

"Miss Reinette turned philosopher, forsooth! Then philosophy ought to dry your tears."

"They are so wretched at the almshouse!" she explained. "They were even glad to hear me sing."

"Who wouldn't be?"

"Why, *you* never listen. You always turn your back and look out the window, or talk with step-mother; you never seem to care."

"I never seem to care!" he repeated—"I never seem to care!"

"Not that there is any reason why you should listen—not that it signifies," she said, impatiently.

"No, of course it does not signify."

"I don't mean to say any thing rude."

"No, only you would like me to listen, though it doesn't signify. Women *are* odd fishes surely. Now it seems to me that if it didn't signify, I shouldn't care a rush though you clapped your hands over your ears when I sang."

Reinette looked at him bewildered.

"I wish you would not compare us to fishes," she said; "they are such slippery creatures. It's hardly polite, you know."

"I beg pardon. The resemblance only lies in the fact that we have to angle for both."

In the long summer evenings, while the air was sweet with the odor of dewy mignonette and roses, and the constellations palpitated across a violet heaven, Reinette used to sit on the old worm-eaten balcony and heed the holiday life of the neighboring mansion, where Mr. Theodore and his summer guests made merry. Sometimes across the dropped curtain a pair of shadows loitered by arm in arm; sometimes a rare profile lit up the canvas for an instant—Mr. Theodore's profile, with the *triste* mustache; sometimes she watched them pass, two and two, in each other's arms, to the dreamy allurement of the waltz that floated out and filled the summer night with infinite suggestions and longing; sometimes she listened to a rich voice singing,—

"If your love should ever fall,
If your heart should pass me by,
Tell me what else could avail
This poor heart to satisfy?"

One night when she had gone to her pillow early, but could not sleep for the sound of "flute, violin, bassoon," from her neighbor's grounds, which pictured vivid scenes to her mind's eye, she rose and sat down by her open window to watch the stars and sooth herself with their majestic calm. It was late, and the moon had dropped behind the hills, and the last echo of music was faint in the distance, when the rusty gate between Mr. Theodore's domains and the Emlyn grounds clicked, and, leaning out, she dimly guessed at two figures that passed through and in among the shrubbery slowly, as if the night were made for loitering lovers—the figures of Mrs. Emlyn and Mr. Theodore himself. She had left Mrs. Emlyn disheveled and yawning over her accounts below, with apparently no more idea of spending the evening across the hedge than of spending it across the equator, and here she was stepping up the garden with that sinuous grace of hers that suggested the primeval servant, regal in black velvet and lace, and leaning on the arm of Theodore, and speaking softly and sweetly. What did it all mean?

Reinette's heart turned cold within her at the question, and she crept back to bed and cried herself to sleep. After that Mrs. Emlyn never spent half the night across the hedge, when she was supposed to be snug in bed, but Reinette watched her flight and her return, only to be more wretched for her pains. The only thing in which she found pleasure was the long-contemplated scheme of a Christmas-tree for the children of the almshouse; and after considering a dozen methods of raising the money, she had at last hit upon a plan which required all her strength of will to accomplish, and which had taken all her spare moments since the date of old Nancy's funeral to perfect. It was no less an affair than a concert, to be given by the children of the almshouse themselves, each of whom she had drilled to sing its role of solo or chorus, while a few were to take part in a miniature operetta. Reinette's share in the undertaking was a profound secret, for her step-mother supposed that Reinette's visits at the almshouse had ceased with old Nancy's life. However, as luck would have it, the child who was to have taken the chief part in the operetta took cold instead, and as the audience was waiting in the hall, and the tickets were sold, and the thing would be a failure without a *prima donna*, Reinette was obliged to disguise herself under a jet black wig, corked eye-brows, and an unnatural pallor brought about by the aid of cosmetics, and step forward upon the boards. But there was one present from whom she could not disguise the liquid sweetness of her voice, and after her duty was ended, and as she was tearing down to the dressing-room to send on the next quaking little soloist, pulling off her wig as she went, she stumbled into the arms of Mr. Theodore.

"Oh, what *made* you come here, and find out my poor little secret?" she cried. "I did not intend to do it—to sing, I mean; it was quite an accident."

"Was it an accident that you sang like an angel?" he asked.

"It must have been an accident if it sounded so to you. But pray don't mention to any one that it was I. I only needed to raise some money—"

"And could you not come to an old friend like me, Miss Reinette, if you needed help?"

"Oh, I thought *you* were step-mother's friend, instead of mine"—laughing bravely. "And her friends are not mine."

"I am sorry indeed if I have forfeited your friendship by any ill-considered step of mine," he continued, "Will you never forgive and forget?"

Had step-mother flirted with and jilted him, and was he begging her pardon for preferring one so false? "Will you forget the past, Reinette, and let me help you—as an old friend and neighbor merely, if we can do no better?"

"You are mistaken," said Reinette, proudly. "I am not raising this money for myself. I thank you, but just now I am in a hurry. Good-night."

The receipts of Reinette's novel experiment were greater than she had anticipated; so that when Christmas-eve arrived she was enabled not only to load the tree with the useful articles such as the town hardly deemed necessities for its poor-children but with the luxuries of toys, books, pictures, and cornucopias of fruit and candy, all illuminated with colored tapers, burning against the background of the dark and fragrant pine boughs. It was a shivering night outside, decorated with frosty stars and a rosy fringe of northern lights along the horizon, while inside the old almshouse the scene was bright and jovial; the fire blazed in the wide chimney-place, tended by a smiling crone, the tallow dips burned more clearly than on less festive nights, while the capering feet of children and the trickling of laughter gave the place a home-like air. When the Christmas-tree stood revealed to the assembled inmates, children of a larger growth and all, the excitement became intense.

"Who planted it" asked the little hunchback, with open eyes and distended mouth. "It warn't there this morning, sure."

"It's jest like the feller's bean stalk I read about onst, that growed up in a single night, clear up to heaven," said another.

"Yes, but this un isn't growed up to heaven; it's come down from heaven I reckon."

"Oh, I see John bring it in this morning," quoth a small infidel.

"I'd jest like to hev a slip of that kinder plant," said one old soul.

"You've heerd tell of the century plant, eh?" returned her companion. "I guess this 'ere is one on 'em—it ain't bloomed here for a century, I'm sartin."

"It minds me of the apple-trees in father's orchard, when I was a gal," said a third, "jest as if the boughs would break and spill the hull."

"Wa'al, these be windfalls, anyway," put in her neighbor.

"I'd like an orchard of sich fruit trees."

Reinette was quite carried away herself by the novelty of the scene. For a while she almost forgot the troubles she had left behind her—her own homelessness, with a keeper in the Emlyn homestead, and the house itself under the hammer of the Emlyn creditors, and the Emlyn coffers empty; she almost forgot that Mr. Theodore had illusions concerning her step-mother, that the grey-haired rector had renewed his proposal, and she had consented to consider it, well knowing that the woman who hesitates is lost. For a time she surrendered herself to the pleasure of the season—of looking at happiness through the eyes of others, as she stripped the tree of its fruit, and listened to the exclamations of delight and surprise with which each gift was received; for nobody had been overlooked; the oldest inhabitant had her new cap or her box of snuff, and yesterday's baby had its rattle.

"And now, Miss Reinette," asked the little hunchback, "where is your Christmas present? Hesn't it hed time to grow? Ain't it sprouted yet? Ain't you going to hev a Christmas-tree all to your own self?"

"My Christmas-tree is an acorn yet," laughed Reinette.

"That is as you will," said a voice at her elbow, so like Mr. Theodore's that it made her start and cry out,

"Mr. Theodore, how came you here? how could you leave step-mother to come here?"

"It didn't require much effort, Reinette—you ought to know that."

"How should I know it, prithee?"

"Reinette, Reinette, don't trifle to-night."

"Do you think I feel like trifling, Monsieur Theodore, with a keeper in the house at home?—home! ah! I shall not even have an apology for one directly, unless I marry the rector, you know."

"*Marry the rector!*"

"Why, what's so odd about that? Is he not an excellent man? And did you not advise me to do that same thing only last June?"

"I advise you to marry the rector! *Never.*"

"Oh, Mr. Theodore, how short your memory is! It was, then, an affair of such small importance in your eyes? But did you not find me in tears in the garden? Did you not ask me why I cried? And did I not refuse to answer? And when you had spoken with step-mother, did you not come back and say, 'She has told me, and it appears your refusal was so vehement that nothing I could say—' And did I not snatch the words out of your mouth and reply, hotly, 'No, nothing?' And now he has proposed again, and—I am—thinking—of saying—'Yes!'"

Then I suppose you love him?"

"Love him! I can't bear him!"

"Perhaps you love somebody else?"

"Perhaps I do. Don't you wish you knew? But you remember now that you advised me?"

"I remember the circumstances, certainly; but we were at cross-purposes, you and I. You thought I was speaking of the rector, and I thought you were speaking of—myself."

"Oh, Mr. Theodore, how stupid of you! How could I have been speaking of you?"

"You must certainly know that I had proposed to your step-mother—"

"Oh, indeed I did not know that"—sadly.

"I had proposed to your step-mother—"

"You don't mean to say that she refused you?"

"Will you be kind enough to let me finish my sentence? I had proposed to your step-mother for the honor of marriage with her step-daughter."

"With her step-daughter! With *me!*"

"With you."

"You must be talking in your sleep, Mr. Theodore. I never heard of such a thing before. My step-mother did not confide your proposal to me. I'm afraid she thought you a more suitable match for herself."

"And what do you think, Reinette?"

"If I may be pardoned the suggestion, I think it would be better to propose in person the next time, Mr. Theodore, and avoid mistakes."

"That is why I followed you here to-night, Reinette. Will you not take me for *your* Christmas gift, and let my roof-tree be your Christmas tree?"

"And the rector?" asked Reinette, mischievously.

"We will invite him to read the marriage ceremony."

"And step-mother?"

"She can console the rector."

And so it happened that Reinette's Christmas-tree was Mr. Theodore's roof-tree.

Fun, Fact and Facetiæ.

When Kate and Joe were children small,
And crept about the floor,
One little chair would hold them both,
With room enough for more.

Now Joe is twenty, Kate eighteen,
Yet, strange as it may seem—
I saw the sight, the other night,
Myself, and 'twas no dream.

For, though they both had larger grown,
Yet I will take my oath
That in the parlor, on that night,
One chair was holding both.
—*Derrick*

When she was young she served a term
As calico disturber in a dry goods firm;
She served so well and so faithfully
That now she is boss of his hashery.
—*Savannah Record.*

A very beautiful lady who was hurrying through the streets of Baltimore turned, and in pathetic accents asked a gentleman walking beside her to knock a pickpocket down who was following her. The gentleman obligingly complied. As soon as she saw the fight fairly begun she chuckled gaily and skipped away. The man knocked down was her husband.

This, from *Peck's Milwaukee Sun*, is very good advice: "A man has just died in the Portsmouth (N. H.) poor-house, who was one hundred and eighteen years old, and who had been an inmate of the poor house for seventy-six years. Young man, if you want to live to a good old age, quit your carousing, and go to the poor house."

If a young man should mash his hat all out of shape in the style of the young ladies' hats, and then stick it on the back of his head, there would probably be some mighty uncharitable remarks as to his whereabouts the night before.—*Bangor Whig and Courier.*

The words "majolica jar" are pronounced "ma-yol-ica-yar," by persons of culchar, and with such an accent as would be given by a mouth talking while holding hot mush.—*New Orleans Picayune.*

Farm and Household.

Poultry Habits.

Of all stocks, hens are the most easily taught. The education of hens can be commenced at any age; but best while young. They should be housed and shut in every night, and not be allowed to roost on sheds, well-sweeps, or trees; even a neglect to shut the door on them for one night will cause the timid ones to seek a higher roost the next night, and that can only be found out of doors. This leads to laying out of doors—a great nuisance—and to constant loss from night enemies. At sunrise every morning call the hens around you, and scatter a full feed for them; let this always be done on the same spot of ground. Keep in a convenient place, a reservoir of fresh clean water, if you have no running stream. At certain and regular times in the day, you will find the whole flock there. Throw no scraps of food around the dwelling, or you will teach them to become a house nuisance. Burn all the egg shells, or you will teach the hens to eat eggs in the nests. If you coop your chicks, take hen and brood to the hen house as soon as the crop is dispensed with; otherwise, when winter sets in you will have to spend hours every night for a week before they will house well. Protect hens while sitting, by a light board or lattice cover to the nest, so that they shall not be annoyed by other hens wishing to lay with them. In fact, any bad habit, or any which does not suit your surroundings, may be entirely broken up and changed by reasonably preventive measures.—*Rural New Yorker.*

Salt for Poultry.

The question as to whether salt is injurious to poultry has often been mooted. To get at the facts, I have been feeding salt to my poultry, young and old alike, and closely watching the result. I have fed it in cold mush and hot; in bran and everything else, all the spring and summer, so far, with the following result: The poultry will eat all kinds of salted food in preference to unsalted; they are better in general health; not a louse of any kind in young or old (the first year I have been able to say so), and they are beginning to molt, many of them laying as though not molting. Eggs are cheap now, and the hens will be ready for fall laying when the weather is cold and eggs scarce. This may or may not be the result of feeding salt, but I am compelled to believe this to be so, as are some other peculiarities. I have noticed one feature, which may not be in favor of salt—the hens have seemed to be more persistently inclined to sit, it being very difficult to break off the inclination; they sit much closer than usual. All seem voraciously fond of green food of any kind, and have eaten a large quantity of clover, grass, young corn and other similar food. My observations lead me to the conclusion that salt is a needed condiment for all our poultry, and in all points beneficial to them. Pigeons are excessively fond of salt in any form, and why should not our poultry also? Such being the status it behooves us to consider their needs and attend to them.

Inspect Your Cellars.

Many of our farmers who have no special place built for wintering vegetables and fruit, store them in the cellar of the dwelling-house. In order to keep them from freezing there, the cellars are banked up tightly in the fall. No ventilation is provided for, and the only way for the escape of the noxious gases arising from decaying vegetables, is through the openings in the floor into the living rooms above, where it is dealing disease and perchance death to the occupants. Is it surprising that diphtheria and scarlet fever, and every other fever, result from such total disregard of the laws of health? A person will pay this inattention to sanitary measures, and then if his children sicken and die he blames the weather, or murmurs and grumbles at the dispensation of Providence—cannot conceive why God should afflict him thus severely. The Almighty is not to be blamed at all in such instances; the fault lies at the man's own door, or rather in his cellar, and he ought to condemn himself, and mourn over his own neglect of duty, instead.

Whole Wheat for Fowls.

The *Poultry World* says: "There is more solid nutriment in whole wheat as a feed for poultry, than in any of the cereals, weight for weight. It is an excellent kind of grain for this use, though somewhat more expensive than other sorts: but too much of this hearty feed is detrimental, particularly when carelessly fed to Cochins, Brahmas, etc. Fowls are very partial to wheat. It helps the laying capacity of hens, but it should not be used except with discretion as to the quantity allowed them daily. An excess of this raw grain will induce a looseness of the bowels very frequently. It is easy of digestion, and should be furnished in moderation, as a needful and most desirable variety, in conjunction with other dry grains, such as cracked corn, oats, barley, buckwheat, etc. If not more than one-third or one-fourth of wheat is allowed with the other cereals mentioned, for ordinary purposes in the laying season, hens will do quite as well, and they can thus be kept in better average condition than by a greater allowance."

Salt For Stock.

I have never been so successful in producing quantity and quality of milk, or even flow, as where the cows had access to salt at their option; and I know that it affected the butter and churning, the butter being better and "coming" sooner with than without salt. Furthermore, cattle having salt as freely as they choose, look smoother and do not have a starting coat, as do animals which have no salt, or only a trifle at long intervals. May not those favored individuals who supply no salt to their stock, fail to discover that their stock is supplied from some unknown source.—*Ex.*

To Tell a Horse's Age.

After a horse is nine years old a wrinkle comes in the eyelid, at the upper corner of the lower lid, and every year thereafter he has one well-defined wrinkle for each year of his age over nine. If, for instance, a horse has three wrinkles he is twelve; if four, thirteen. Add the number of wrinkles to nine and you will always get at it.

Colic in Stock.

A correspondent of the Massachusetts *Ploughman* gives the following cure for colic in horses, which is convenient at all times and easily supplied. He says he has never known it to fail: Spread a teacupful or more of fine salt on the back of the animal over the kidneys and loins, and keep it saturated with warm water for twenty or thirty minutes, or longer if necessary. If the attack is severe, drench with salt. I have a valuable bull weighing nineteen or twenty hundred, which had a severe attack of colic a year ago last summer. I applied salt to his back as above, and it being difficult to drench, we put a wooden bit into his mouth, keeping it open two inches, and spread salt upon his tongue which, together with the salt on his back, relieving him at once, and within a very short time equilibrium appeared fully restored. I have for several years past successfully applied this treatment to other animals in my herd.

How to Make Cows Give Milk.

A writer in the *Southern Farmer* says his cow gives all the milk that is wanted in a family of eight, and that from it, after taking all that is required for others purposes, 260 pounds of butter was made this year. This is in part his treatment of the cow: "If you desire to get a large yield of rich milk give your cows every day water slightly salted, in which bran has been stirred at rate of one quart to two gallons of water. You will find, if you have not tried this daily practice, that your cow will give twenty-five per cent. more milk immediately under the effects of it, and she will become so attached to the diet as to refuse to drink clear water unless very thirsty. But this mess she will drink almost any time, and ask for more. The amount of this drink necessary is an ordinary water pail full at a time, morning, noon and night.

Hints for Horse Trainers.

Never try to beat a colt into doing a thing, for if nervous he may turn out a vicious horse, and if stupid he may become stubborn. Remember that by patience and gentleness he can be got to do anything that will not hurt him.

When the horse shows signs of shying at an object do not beat him, but lead him up to it, allowing him to stand and look as he comes close, and after he examines it a few times he will not fear anything of the kind again. In passing by hedges with a colt, throw in stones and stop him until he takes no notice of the noise.

Before putting on any article of harness let your colt smell it, and then rub against his head, neck and body.

Always start a horse with the voice, never with the cut of the whip. In starting turn a little to one side; in stopping when going up a hill do the same.—*Norristown Hearld.*

Hints for the Kitchen.

If your coal fire is low throw on a tablespoonful of salt and it will help it very much.

A little ginger put into sausage meat improves the flavor.

In boiling meat for soup use cold water to extract the juices. If the meat is wanted for itself alone plunge in boiling water at once.

You can get a bottle or barrel of oil off any carpet or woolen stuff by applying dry buckwheat plentifully. Never put water to such a grease spot, or liquid of any kind.

Broil steak without salting. Salt draws tha juices in cooking; it is desirable to keep them in if possible. Cook over a hot fire, turning frequently, seering on both sides. Place on a platter; salt and pepper to taste.

Polling Cattle.

The horns of our cattle seem to be neither ornamental nor useful. As a means of warfare they can only have consideration, but warfare and goring is precisely what we desire to keep away from the barnyard. English farmers, whose herds are probably more precious and closer confined than in America, have introduced the practice of unhorning cattle by clipping the small projections in calves, when half an inch long, using simply a strong pair of shears. It is true it hurts the calves somewhat. There will be a little bleeding, but that will stop in an hour or two and the calves will soon resume eating.

Facts About Flour.

Flour is peculiarly sensitive to atmospheric influences, hence it should never be stored in a room with sour liquids, or where onions or fish are kept, nor any article that taints the air of the room in which it is stored. Any smell perceptible to the sense will be absorbed by flour. Avoid damp cellars or lofts where a free circulation of air cannot be obtained. Keep in a cool, dry, airy room, and not exposed to a freezing temperature nor to intense summer or to artificial heat for any length of time above 70 to 72 degrees Fahrenheit. It should not come in contact with grain or other substances which are liable to heat. Flour should be sifted and the particles thoroughly disintegrated and then warmed before baking.

A Cheap Ice House.—In giving the following cheap plan for an ice house, the *Fruit Record* leaves one without excuse on the ground of expense. "If you have no house ready draw one hundred or more blocks of ice; pack them close together in a solid block on the north side of a building, where the drainage will be good. After the ice is all packed together build up around it a cheap board or rail fence, one foot away from the ice, packing the space between the sides and ice with straw; over the top throw a few inches of saw dust, and, putting over all a cheap roof, leave a good air hole in the top. Ice may be kept in this way until September or October."

Rest After Eating.—The digestion of a horse is governed by the same laws as that of a man; and as we know that it is not best for man to go at work the moment a hearty meal is eaten, so should we remember that a horse ought to have a little rest after his meal, while the stomach is most active in the process of digestion. Many a good horse has been ruined by injudicious haste in working him with a full stomach.

For Earache.—Roast a raisin and bind on as hot as can be borne.

Household Recipes.

To Renovate Men's Clothing.—My husband had a beaver overcoat, for which he paid $30, which had become so faded as to be scarcely fit to wear. I took some benzine and cleaned the collars, then I took a sponge and dampened the coat thoroughly with water, into which I had previously dissolved a tablespoonful of coperas, and then I dipped a dark woolen cloth into a dye made by dissolving about five cents worth of extract of logwood, taking care to put it on evenly and not wet through; then, after drying I washed it thoroughly with soapsuds by dipping a cloth in it and rubbing so as to get the dye off, so that it would not blacken; then, by adding a new binding and buttons, the coat looked nearly as well as new.

To Clean Brasses.—Wash with warm water to remove grease; then rub with a mixture of rotten stone, soft soap and oil of turpentine, mixed to the consistence of stiff putty. The stone should be powdered very fine and sifted, and a quantity of the mixture may be made—sufficient to last for a long time. A little of the above mixture should be mixed with water, rubbed over the metal, then rubbed briskly with a dry, clean rag or leather, and a beautiful polish will be obtained.

Meat Scallops.—Take small scallops shells or small tin patty-pans, and line them with mashed potatoes; mince any kind of cold meat, and mix with it a little bread crumb and minced-boiled onions, seasoning to taste, and moistening with little cold gravy; put a layer of this over the mashed potato in the shell, placing a layer of mashed potato on the top, smoothing nicely, and pressing at the edges in scallops; lay a thin bit of butter in the center, and brown in a hot oven. Allow one shell or pan to each person.

Chicken Dressed as Terrapines.—Boil a fine, large, tender chicken; when done, and while yet warm, cut it from the bones into small pieces as for chicken salad; put it into a stew pan with one gill of boiling water; then stir together, until perfectly smooth, one-fourth pound butter, one teaspoon flour and the yolk of one egg, which add to the chicken half at a time, stirring all well together; then season with salt and pepper. After letting it simmer about ten minutes, add one-half gill Madeira wine, and send to table hot.

Snow-Flake Pudding.—Half a box of gelatine, the whites of three eggs, sugar and vanilla to the taste. Soak the gelatine in enough cold water to cover it for an hour; then add a teacupful of boiling water. After it is dissolved add enough cold water to make a pint of it altogether. Strain this on a platter, put the whites of three eggs in it, and beat until it is a stiff foam. When half beaten, stiffen with white sugar, add the vanilla to this, and finish beating: then put it in cups. When moulded in the cups, turn them out and eat with cream.

Ice Cream Cake.—Take one-half cupful of butter, two cupsful of sugar, three of flour, sifted, and one of milk, the yolks of three eggs, the white of one egg, and one and one-half teaspoonfuls of baking powder. Use the whites of two eggs for the icing. Boil two cupfuls of sugar in a small half cupful of hot water; keep stirring until it boils; boil just ten minutes; pour this, while boiling hot, on the eggs beaten light; beat until stiff and cold, adding one teaspoonful of vanila. Wet a broad steel knife by dipping in water, then smooth the icing with it. Bake the cake in three jelly cake pans; when cold, spread the icing between.

Old Bachelor's Chicken Pie.—Put your chicken in a pot, with as much water as you wish gravy. If the chicken is young, it will be only necessary to let it come to a boil; do not forget to season it. For the crust, three pints of flour, rub three teaspoonfuls of cream tartar and a half cup of butter thoroughly through it; one and a half teaspoonfuls of soda must be dissolved in hot water; put in milk to make it stiff enough to roll out. Butter the dish you are to bake it in (a deep earthen one is the best), put the dough around the sides, not the bottom, then pour in the chicken, but first thicken the gravy. Now put on the crust and bake.

Keep Lime Water.—A "handy thing" to have in the house is a jar or bottle of lime water. Pour water over unslacked lime (the quantity is not important, as only a certain amount will be slackened), and cork up for use. A spoonful of the clear liquid stirred into milk, cream or bread sponge in danger of souring will prevent that catastrophe. It also cleanses bottles, etc., that have an unpleasant odor. A person who needs milk, but whose digestion is so weak as not to manage it, will find inconvenience if into a glass of the lacteal fluid is stirred a wine-glass of lime water. The difference in taste is not perceptible.

To Cure a Corn.—Soak the feet and pare the corn down what it will allow without pain; then apply with a small brush a solution of gum arabic (such as is often kept for mucilage), dry it over a fire till it will not stick to the stocking, and repeat this application at least once a day (at retiring is best), without removing the previous coating, for two or three weeks, or till the corn is missing.

Sweet Bread.—Sweet breads should always be blanched; that is, after they have been soaked and cleaned in lukewarm water, throw them into boiling water for five or ten minutes, according to their size; lift them into fresh cold water and let them stand until cold. This makes them firm and white. Then cut in slices and fry carefully in butter until they are nice brown. Remove them from the pan, make a nice gravy of flour, properly seasoned with pepper, salt and a little lemon juice (not extract), and return the sweet breads to the pan and let them stew in the gravy. If you have it, just before serving, add half a teacupful of sweet cream, but do not let that boil. Send to the table in a hot tureen. Time of cooking, after they are blanched, thirty to forty-five minutes, according to size.

Coloring Kid Gloves.—White kid may easily be colored black, purple or lilac, with a solution of one part extract logwood and three parts brandy. Apply with a sponge and rub thoroughly dry, and keep rubbing the hands together so as to soften the gloves.

For chilblains use Cayenne pepper in alcohol or whisky, and bathe freely. For rough hands use glycerine and ammonia, equal parts; wash hands clean, and put on a little while the hands are wet; it's the best thing in the world.