

THE OLD MANSION.

Mr. Mandeville had just come into his office on a blowy, blue-skyed, shimmering March day in the '30s, where the open grate fire presented an appearance of comfort, and the clerk was busily occupied...

"Well," said Mandeville, curtly. "The old Wakenham house is let," said Mr. Lacy, "at twelve hundred dollars for a boarding-house. No repairs."

"That's good news," said the rich man. "Every house in the Windham Block has gone off at nine hundred like hot cakes," added Lacy, complacently.

"Very attractive houses, those. I only wish I had a dozen more like 'em. The place on Second square needs repairs; you'll be obliged to have a plumber and carpenter right away."

"See to it, then," said Mandeville, beginning to glance at the pile of unopened letters on his desk a little impatiently.

"And there's the Morand Mansion," added Mr. Lacy, "up on the Harmon River."

"What's that?" cried Mandeville, sharply. "Isn't that let?"

"It's my opinion, sir," said Mr. Lacy, slowly, "there's something radically wrong about that house. Nobody wants it. It's been in the market three successive years and it won't go off, no-how we can fix it."

"But," Mandeville exclaimed, "what do you mean? It is haunted?"

"Not to my knowledge, sir," said the agent, "unless the tenants have chosen to set up a ghost for their special edification."

"The tenants are distant relations of my own," said Mr. Mandeville, a little laughingly. "I have not met them for many years, but I have reason to believe they are ladies."

"Perhaps so, sir," said Mr. Lacy, dryly. "But it has occurred to my mind, now and again, as things will occur, you know, sir, that perhaps I had better go up there and see about it."

"Not a bad idea," said Mandeville. "I'll go myself."

"And he went. The Morand Mansion was a great antique house of moss-covered gray-stone on the banks of the Harmon river, with borders of yellow daffodils outlining its path like ribbons of gold, and the earliest crocuses blossoming around its doop-steps, which lay old and moss-grown, and their benches in the garden, and a superb white-pine tree spread its umbrella of black green shadow over the paved court in front.

Mr. Mandeville rang at the door-bell, glancing as he did so at the "To Let," which had become detached from its board, and lay wadded on the floor, gooseberry in his. A black-eyed handsome young fellow came to the door, with a mass of gray hair curling down her back, and a faded calico frock, which was nevertheless whole and neat.

"Is this house to let?" Mr. Mandeville politely asked.

"Ye—s—," he stammered. Miss Natalie Vane, commonly known as "Natty," with a glance at the battered board which lay face downward among the gooseberries. "At least the agent told us so—and a cross old growler he was."

"Could I look at it?" said Mr. Mandeville, hesitatingly.

"It is all convenient," answered Miss Natalie, planting herself within the door in such a manner that he could not possibly obtain an entrance without her permission.

The Country Schools.

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2. Will not better and more lasting results be obtained by "making haste more slowly?" 3. May not fewer hours in the school room, supplemented by outdoor and industrial teaching, be better for the child physically as well as mentally, and as a preparation for active life?"

4. Can not the country child, while attending the district school, become so well acquainted with, and made so to delight in, the pursuits of agriculture and horticulture, be led so gently and pleasantly into such an intimate acquaintance with, and love of nature, as often to determine the trend of later life in the direction of rural pursuits, or of scientific inquiry?"

5. Will not all this uplift rural life to a higher plane? Well, how? Perhaps I cannot tell you. The plan will certainly require different teachers, to some extent, or at least teachers better informed in some directions. Possibly almost any bright girl of 17 tolerably well instructed in the usual common school studies, may satisfactorily teach the rudiments of arithmetic, geography and grammar; but to take a school of 30 or 40 children of various grades of mental capacity, and train them into accurate observers, close thinkers and good reasoners with reference to the common things of their lives and their surroundings is quite a different matter, and needs more thoughtful and better-read teachers than many found in country schools. In no school is needed teachers of a better grade of intellect than in the primary, and perhaps in no school can better use be made of a broad scientific and literary culture.

It would seem as if part of the time usually devoted to arithmetic, grammar and geography, useful as those branches are, might be better employed.

Why should a bright child require half a dozen years to master those branches sufficiently for all usual practical uses? Suppose we take one of the branches at a time, and concentrate study upon it. Should not one hour daily, under a competent teacher, give an intelligent boy or girl of 12 or 14, as good a knowledge of either of these branches as usually had in all the years spent in the common school? If not, why not?

Let there be no more than four in summer, and no more than three hours of indoor school work, and but one hour at a time. Allow one of these main studies hour's work; then reading and reading to understand; writing and—as soon as possible—writing to express ideas; drawing and spelling; and after this oral, scientific, literary or historical, that may be thought advisable. After that let all go out-of-doors. Make each school an experiment station of agriculture and horticulture. Let the teacher conduct expeditions to neighboring farms, to the fields and the woods. Let the children learn how crops are grown and why; grow, and what obstacles meet the farmer, the fruit-grower, and the gardener, and how they may be surmounted. Teach them of the soil, the plant, let each child conduct experiments in the school grounds, a garden. Am I writing of Utopia? Would not the outcome of all this be a greater love of, and an intelligent interest in rural life, that would produce a class of wide-awake agriculturists, of thorough scientists, and of reverent seekers after Christ? But it is hard to get out of deep-seated ruts.

Let us have no high pressure system of conducting our country schools. Let us remember that children have bodies— that physical as well as mental strength is necessary to build up a strong nation. Let us remember that brains crowded with undigested and indigestible facts of no special value in ordinary circumstances, may not be so useful organs as those trained to observe accurately, think clearly and bring knowledge to bear promptly on the necessities of actual life.—Mrs. M. P. A. Ooster, in Rural New Yorker.

Grooming the Farm Horse.

There is a more important horse than the trotter or thoroughbred and that is the farm horse. After a hard day's work or long journey in the heat and dust a washing, if properly done, is very restful and quieting to the horse's tired limbs. Have the water warm and a little soapy. Rub the limbs briskly, and dry with a cloth and brush lightly. If the weather is at all cool, dry flannel may be profitably used about them. It the boot needs need relieving, use warm wet bandages.

These are also useful in case of sprain, blow or overexertion, but they must not remain on too long. One-tenth of the cure best bestowed upon a good sporting horse would make a farm horse feel too proud of himself. But there is little risk of such a horse ever feeling too proud from any such reason. A Scotch hired plowman greases his team with a degree of loving interest and pride to which the average American farmer is almost a stranger, though the Clydesdale team belongs to another man and the man who works is only a hireling, while the American farmer sees the team and, as a rule, the farm as well. Why should not the more valuable beast, because the more useful, have a little of the warmth of interest bestowed upon him that is ungrudgingly bestowed upon a 2121 trotter?

The farmer who looks on his farm, his stock and his other belongings merely as a means to make money, which he is reluctantly forced to stick to, will never find either profit or pleasure in his work. But the man who feels a pride in his beasts and has a kindly feeling toward them, is sure to turn the commonest drudgery into a source of pleasure, and make good deals of money in the bargain. See that the stable is well ventilated, and not so dark that when the horse is taken out into the daylight his eyes are hurt by the glare. Next to seeing that it is well and regularly fed and watered, grooming is one of the best means of making a horse keep well and work well.—Field and Farm.

No Base Ball Game for Him.

First Merchant—I've got a jewel of an office boy.

Second Merchant—Keeps everything neat about you and gets rid of unpleasant callers?

First Merchant—No, not that. He has been dancing around the floor of his boy's vaults now with rage about it. But he was as much right to our half of the old property as he had, no matter what the law said. And we are beggars almost, and he is a rich man.

"Law," said Mr. Mandeville, dryly, "but not equity. That's it, eh?"

"We've got possession of the old house; that's all I know," said the young outlaw. "And we mean to keep it."

"But perhaps," said Mandeville, "he may not be as bad as you think."

Wearied the Mulatto.

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"Why do cows give milk, papa. Why can't they sell it?"

"No," said Mr. Bronson, "they don't know anything about money, you know; and even if they did, they wouldn't know where to keep it."

"Oh, my!"

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