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THE OLD READING CLASS.

I cannot tell you, Genevieve, how oft it comes to me— That rather young old reading class in District Number Three, That row of educationists who stood so straight in line, And charged at standard literature with amiable design. We did not spare the energy in which our words were clad; We gave the meaning of the text by all the light we had; But still I fear the ones who wrote the lines we read so free Would scarce have recognized their work in District Number Three. Outside the snow was smooth and clean—the winter's thick-laid dust; The storm it made the windows speak at every sudden gust; Bright sleigh-bells threw us pleasant words when travelers would pass; The maple trees along the road stood shivering in their class; Beyond, the white-browed cottages were nestling cold and dumb. And far away the mighty world seemed beckoning us to come— The wondrous world, of which we connoit what had been and might be, In that old-fashioned reading class of District Number Three. We took a hand at History—its altars, spires and fimes— And uniformly mispronounced the most important names; We wandered through Biography, and gave our fancy play, And with some subjects fell in love—"good only for one day!" In Romance and Philosophy we settled many a point, And made whole poems we recalled to creak at every joint; And many authors that we love, you will agree, Were first time introduced to us in District Number Three. You recollect Susannah Smith, the teacher's sore distress, Who never stopped at any pause—a sort of day express? And timid young Sylvester Jones, of inconsistent sight, Who stumbled on the easy words and read the hard ones right? And Jennie Green, whose doleful voice was always clothed in black? And Samuel Hicks, whose tones induced the plastering all to crack! And Andrew Tubbs, whose various mouths were quite a show to see? Alas! we cannot find them now in District Number Three. And Jasper Jencks, whose tears would flow at each pathetic word (He's in the prize-fight business now, and hits them hard, I've heard); And Benny Rayne, whose every tone he murmured as in fear (His tongue is not so timid now; he is an auctioneer); And Lanny Wood, whose voice was just endeavoring hard to change, And leaped from hoarse to fiercely shrill with most surprising range; Also his sister Mary Jane, so full of praiseful glee, Alas! they're both in higher schools than District Number Three. So back these various voices come, though long the years have grown, And sound uncommonly distinct through Memory's telephone; And some are full of melody, and bring a sense of cheer, And some can smile the rock of time, and summon forth a tear; But one sweet voice comes back to me, whenever I grieve, And sings a song, and that is yours, O peerless Genevieve! It brightens up the olden times, and throws a smile at me— A silver star amid the clouds of District Number Three. —Will Carleton, in Harper's Magazine.

A HAPPY MISTAKE.

"No, life is not fair. Its troubles are given to the many; its pleasures only to the few!" mused Mrs. Merriam as she stood in her cottage door looking after the fine carriage of an old schoolmate that had just dashed by. "She has so much, and I so little! And yet, I once had the opportunity of accepting that rich husband of hers, and she would have given her eyes, in those days, if Tom Merriam would have cared for her as he cared for me! I wonder how it would have been if I had taken Jacob Marabout, instead of telling him that I was engaged to Tom, and seeing real tears in his eyes as he listened! I wonder if Tom— But what am I thinking of? I am quite sure that Tom could never have cared for her—never!" Mrs. Merriam's set face softened a little as her memory went back to the days when "Tom" wooed and won her, and when she was so glad to secure him after her long fear that Hermione Macy would be his chosen bride. But the next moment the bright sunlight flashed upon the highly-varnished panels of Hermione's pony carriage far up the Gorge road. She turned away from the open door with a heavy sigh and entered the plainly-furnished sitting-room where her two little girls were getting ready for school. "Put it away! Hide it under your apron, Rosy, or mamma will see it!" she heard her twelve-year-old Inez say in a frightened whisper as she laid her hand on the latch of the door. Rosy was shuffling something out of

sight under her white pinafore with a very guilty face. Both the children were anxious to set off to school before their usual time, and when the mother had allowed them to do so she saw them turn out of their road to go to their father, who was at work in the field on the hillside. The two trim little figures stood on the hilltop, in strong relief against the pale-blue horizon, and Rosy's apron was unfolded, and "father" was evidently made the participant in the secret which "mother" was not to know! It was a little thing, but it added to the discontent with which the neat and capable housekeeper went about her usual tasks that morning. Tom Merriam was unusually silent that noon when he came to dinner. He partook of the tempting meal in an absent-minded kind of way and went back to the hillside the moment he had finished, instead of lingering to talk to his wife as he generally did. And yet this was her thirty-fourth birthday! Tom might have remembered it sufficiently to say a kind word or two in praise of the extra good dinner which she had given him. But no; there he was on the hillside again, and actually leaning over to talk to Hermione Marabout as she drove by on her way back to the beautiful little villa which her husband had taken for her during his absence in Europe on important business. The hillside conference lasted nearly ten minutes; then the pony-carriage rolled by the small brown farmhouse once more; but Hermione's face was persistently turned the other way. "She has forgotten, too!" thought Mrs. Merriam, bitterly. "And yet her own birthday comes only one week after mine." She finished washing and putting away her dinner dishes and swept the kitchen floor. Her house was none the less spotlessly tidy because her heart was aching. She put on a clean dress of pink print which she had made ready for this very day. In the pantry were four tiny loaves of fruitcake—one for each member of the family—which she had made in secret, and the wheat bread, the graham rolls, the chipped beef and home-made preserves were ready for the supper table on the shelves. Nowork was pressing for this afternoon. For a week past she had planned to secure four leisure hours at this time, and now they hung heavily and sadly upon her hands. She wandered around from room to room for a few moments, biting her lips hard every now and then to keep back the unwelcome tears. At last she snatched up her sunbonnet, and leaving the house by the back door she hurried across the garden and a small neck of pasture land, and reached the cool, green shadow of the pasture woods. In the silence and beauty of the maples she flung herself down and burst into tears. Long, long she wept, till the sadness and discontent which had been making her heart sore all through the day were entirely gone. Raising herself on her elbow at last a quick whirl of wings close beside her cheek startled her. She searched among the moss, and found under the roof of three tiny maples, scarcely two inches high, a lovely little hair-lined nest with four little, warm white eggs in it, the latest brood of the season. "I will not disturb you, pretty one," she said to the small, brown mother who sat on a barberry bush close by chirping pitifully. She rose and walked on. The great trees rustled and waved their green and golden leaves about over her head in the sunlight and fresh air. A brilliant red bird, with a jet-black head and wings, flashed past; a golden robin chattered and scolded from a tall ash at her, and a red squirrel barked himself awry, just above the robin's head, when he saw her coming; sweet-scented thistles, honest-faced mule-ears, and the cheerful golden-rod were in bloom on every side; blackberries, late raspberries and crimson "Scotch-caps" overran the woods, and barberry bushes hung full of yellowish fruit. A bird, unseen in the depths of the forest, sang every moment three flute-like notes, half-sweet, half-sad. Toward the west a deep bell tinkled melodiously, and the strawberry-roan-cow came in sight, leading the rest of the herd to higher pastures. A woodchuck, standing on his hind feet at the door of his home, bolted down the narrow path as she passed by. All was life, movement, happiness, sunshine, blue skies and perfumed breezes, wherever she turned. She stooped to wonder at the curious tunnel that the wood-spider wove for a hiding-place in the midst of her net, the rounded shafts sunk through the dried grass by the meadow-mole, and the busy ants carrying their eggs about when a stone chance to be upturned, alike attracted and enchained her attention. Two hours passed before she was aware of their flight; and in all that time she had forgotten to be unhappy. "The woods have taught me a lesson that I needed," she thought, as she turned back toward the lonely cottage home that had never before seemed half so dear; "and I have had a pleasant birthday, after all." By the back door she entered her home again. Glancing into the pantry

as she passed she saw with surprise that the materials for the birthday feast had vanished. A confused murmur of voices sounded from the parlor. The dining-room door stood wide open. There on a table beautifully decorated with hot house flowers were the lost dainties in company with cakes, loaves, fruits and creams such as she had never seen before; while on an improvised side-board stood the heavier viands—cold roast fowl, a ham, in paper frills, and dressed with parsley, and a tongue. Speechless with astonishment the farmer's wife crossed the hall and peeped into the parlor. A beautiful rosewood arm-chair, covered with crimson velvet—a chair such as she had always secretly longed for, but never hoped to possess—stood near the open fireplace. Over the carved and arched top Hermione Marabout was arranging a wreath of golden-rod and field-daisies, while Tom Merriam was fastening above the wreath a finely-executed inscription, painted in colors upon tinted paste-board. "Oh, do hurry, papa, please!" cried Inez, dancing up and down in her Sunday slippers and best muslin frock. "Rosy and I saw her just now coming out of the woods, and—oh, here she is!" There were two screams of delight from the lips of the children in their Sunday attire; and Tom Merriam—also dressed in his best—turned from the chair and added his embrace to that of Inez and Rosy. "Welcome, dear mother!" said the glowing letters on the tinted board. "Welcome, dear wife!" whispered her husband as he kissed her. "Inez painted the letters and I made the wreath!" cried Rosy, capering about like a mad thing. "And we were so afraid that you would see them both this morning!" "And papa bought the chair and hid it out in the barn all last night," chimed in Inez. "And dear Mrs. Marabout has brought you—oh, such a lovely new black silk dress, and such lots and lots of nice things for supper! And it is just the happiest birthday in all the world—now isn't it, mamma?" "I congratulate you, dear; and I am afraid I envy you," said Hermione, in a low tone, as she kissed her friend. "I married for money, you know, and have it; but that is all. Never once in all my life, Esther, have I known the least tinge of joy that you feel this day. You are a very happy woman, my dear. May God keep you so!" With light hearts they all sat down together to share the birthday feast. But in the twilight of that evening, when they two were alone, the wife confessed to her husband all the evil thoughts that had beset her that day. Never again did they trouble her. Never has she forgotten the silent glimpse of the two sides that may exist in the most fortunate of human lives.—V. F. Benton.

Making Cross-Eyes Straight.

A medical expert described to a New York Times reporter his method of making cross-eyes straight as follows: "The operation to be undergone by the patient is simple and practically painless. For the convergent cases there is no pain whatever, only a little annoyance while the operator is reaching the little muscle which has to be divided. I have performed the operation hundreds of times on other people, sometimes giving anesthetics, and often with no such aid. The patient is stretched on the table. I draw apart with my fingers the lids of his eyes and insert between them a little steel instrument shaped like the letter O. The sides of this expand by a spring and force the lids open, disclosing the eyeball and the network of muscles holding it in position and directing its movements. When this expansion is accomplished I lift up the muscle with a small pair of tweezers and divide it with my instrument. When it is cut it feels to the patient as if a small band of rubber was being snapped. There is no pain at all. Very often, however, painful operations are performed. The muscle has sometimes been divided too much, and the error has to be rectified. This requires some stitches to be taken and a new cut to be made. The patient must be made unconscious while this is going on." "Can you cure any case of strabismus?" "I can benefit any ordinary case, even when it can't be entirely cured. I have often wished that I could operate on Ben Butler. I think I could give him as straight eyes as I have in half an hour's time."

The Influence of Forests.

The influence of forests upon climate and fertility is as yet but poorly understood by even the more professional class of farmers. It is a problem that can be solved only by observations extending over considerable periods of time. But the influence is plainly observable and its explanation simple. Strip the hills of their protecting forests, and the thin covering of soil which overlies their rocky slope will shortly be washed down into the valleys and into the beds of streams and rivers. Periodical freshets will result which will eventually carry away the best soil from even the valleys. One authority declares that if the destruction of the hill forests be continued in Ohio, half the area of that State will be sterile in fifty years.—Boston Courier

LIFE IN THE HOP DISTRICT.

THE FASCINATION OF HOP CULTURE DESCRIBED.

New Fortunes Are Made and Lost—An Agricultural Pursuit With the Chances of the Gaming Table.

Whoever makes a summer pilgrimage westward from Albany by the Albany and Susquehanna railroad, after the first thirty miles are passed, begins to see a strange and unaccustomed vegetation. Occasionally a luxuriant growth of vines is met, which covers the earth entirely from the fervent mid-day sun, and rises from twelve to twenty feet in the air. He is in the outskirts of the hop district. It is only after he has gained the summit, about fifty miles west of the capital city, and rolls swiftly down the long slope of the Susquehanna valley, that he realizes that the heart of hop-growing America is reached. He is in Otsego—a county which excels all others in acreage and amount and value of hops. Here the hop fields become larger and more numerous. Hop-growers are no longer the exception, but the rule. You may drive the whole day and hardly pass a farm which has not from two to fifty acres of the vine. This acreage is constantly increasing. The small grower of five years ago shows his broad fields to-day, and even the timid, old-fashioned farmer of that time has caught the infection, and boasts a modest acreage of his own. The merchant, the mechanic, and even the day laborer not infrequently hires a plot of ground from some neighboring farmer, and "tries his fortune with the rest." Instances are not uncommon of those who rent a few acres and rely upon the crop produced, spending the whole year in and about the hop yard. It is a mania; and, as in the oil regions nothing is heard save oil yields and oil prospects, so here you hear from year end to year end nothing save a dreary iteration of hop prospects, hop sales, hop yields and hop blight. It is a region of unquestioned fertility, and one of the best grazing and dairying sections of the State. All the cereals furnish certain and abundant harvests. The root crops are prolific and the orchards redundant of fruitage. All, however, are subordinate to the uncertain hop industry, and the rich man looks for his luxuries and the poor man for his necessities to the value of his crop alone. Hop growing is always uncertain. Therein lies much of its fascination. It is the spirit of Wall street carried a-field. The dairyman or grain grower looks for but slight fluctuation in the value of his produce from year to year. A gain or loss of fifty per cent. would be remarkable. Within a much smaller limit he is safe. But the hop cultivator knows that the price of this year bears no discoverable relation to that of the next. It may be 200 or 400 per cent. higher or lower without exciting great surprise. As great changes as that have occurred within the last few months.

When we reflect that hops can under favorable circumstances be fitted for market for ten cents per pound, and that fifteen cents yields a margin of profit, we get at the full significance of these figures. Eight to ten cents per pound has not infrequently been the price for a year or more, followed, it may be the next season, by from forty to fifty cents. Yet the decline is as sudden and unexpected. I have in mind a grower who was some years ago offered sixty-two and a half cents a pound for his crop of 5,000 pounds. Refusing to sell at that time he afterward accepted five cents per pound, which was much more than many others received. Another sold his whole crop for \$20. One man fed them to his sheep, while another used them for horse-feeding. But in the overturn of things produced by last year's supposed immense shortage some of these hops which had by some chance been kept, were sold for more than they were worth when new. It would be interesting to know if they have at last got into use, or are still kept in store, perhaps to pass into a greater worthlessness than before. The factors which produce this vast fluctuation of prices are many. Perhaps there is no other plant subject to so many vicissitudes of climate as the hop. The roots may winter-kill over vast areas. A slow, cold summer may retard the growth. A hot, wet August may bring the mold in the wake of the dreaded insect enemy, the fly. The house, an immature fly, may cover the leaves by thousands, causing that peculiar black and shining appearance known as honeydew. Add to these the depredations of the hop grub, which, working under ground, destroys the roots, and the myriad forms of caterpillars and of insect life which make their home in the hop plantations, and you get some idea of the enemies with which the planter must contend. During the present year there has been added to these a blight, the nature of which is not precisely determined. Many hills, after attaining a height of from six to ten feet, suddenly stopped growing, and the head or terminal point took on a withered appearance. This the plant seemingly overcame in a few weeks, but later it reappeared, attacking the ends of the branches in the full-grown vine. These withered, dropped their leaves, and in some cases became dry and hard. The

loss from this cause will not be considerable this year, but no one knows its cause or how to successfully contend with it, and no little anxiety is felt lest it reappear next season.—New York Sun.

The Stimulus of Necessity.

Dr. Carpenter writes as follows in the New York Medical Journal: What can be in stronger contrast than the sluggish life of the Orinoco Indian—for whom one day's labor (in the planting of a banana grove) is said by Humboldt to be sufficient to provide food for the whole year, and who divides his time between sleeping and smoking—and the hardy activity of the Swiss mountaineer, who toils throughout the summer and autumn in the cultivation of his small patch of grain or potatoes for the needs of his family, and scales heights that most men would deem inaccessible to collect their scanty herbage as winter's food for their beasts, using the long hours of his enforced confinement in some kind of skilled handicraft which may enable him to procure additional comforts for his home or educational advantages for his children? And so, in the higher grades of society, those who are born with a silver spoon in their mouths too often fall into habits of mere dilettanteism, while those who enter upon their career with good educational preparation for it but without any other means of subsistence than what they can themselves earn, are, as a large experience shows, those most likely to succeed. I need not call to your minds cases so familiar to you as those of some of your own presidents; but would rather draw my illustrations from the fact well known in my reputedly aristocratic country—that many of the men who have risen to highest eminence in the legal profession, and have thereby gained seats in our house of lords, have begun life upon nothing, while those who go to the bar with an income that places them above the need of exertion, are regarded as almost sure not to "get on." The autobiography of the late Lord Campbell and the biographical notices that have made us acquainted with the early years of the late Lord Justice Lush are in this respect, showing what steady determination may do without any brilliant ability, when nerved in the first instance by the "stimulus of necessity." And so it is with the most of us. In proportion as our path of life is smooth we tend to fall into an automatic routine; but obstacles arise which require some extraordinary exertion to surmount them, and then only do we become conscious of our real strength—that which lies in vigorous self-determination.

Clearing Stump Land.

A correspondent of the Country Gentleman writes from Michigan: We have here thousands of acres of what is called "stump land"—land from which the pine timber has been taken by lumbermen. The term "stump land" is no misnomer, for there are often a hundred pine stumps to the acre. From a field of eight acres in sight of me as I write, 600 stumps have just been pulled. When exposed to the weather pine decays very rapidly, and one would suppose that a few years after the timber was cut the pine stumps could be easily pulled; but such is not the case. Long, stout roots are required to support a pine tree 100 or 150 feet high, and nature strengthens the roots by saturating them with resinous pitch. This saves them from decay, and a pine stump, forty years after the tree has been cut, clings to the ground with almost the same grim determination as when first cut. But in spite of this, stumps from twenty to forty inches in diameter can be pulled with a good machine at a cost of fifteen or twenty cents each. A man who owns a good stump puller here has just finished a job of 1,500 pine stumps at fifteen cents each for pulling, and the same price for burning. These stumps were all standing on thirty acres of land, and many of them were from three to four feet in diameter.

The Amazons of Kurdistan.

The women of Kurdistan, says the London Daily News, are stated to be strongly opposed to the census, and even disposed to resist the curiosity of the enumerators with their lives. According to intelligence published in the Indian papers they have for the moment entirely frustrated an attempt to take a census among them in Kiran, although the census officers were supported by the military. The women of several villages, "five hundred fair and strong," marched out in a body and attacked the troops, who, whether actuated by fear or gallantry, turned and fled. It is added that the Turkish authorities will find it no easy task to overcome the resistance of an inquisitorial visitation of their homes by the Kurdish women, who are rather famous for their Amazonian prowess. Those who are familiar with the details of the Russo-Turkish war of 1855 will remember the Kurdish lady who went to Constantinople at the head of a thousand horsemen of her own raising in support of the national cause, and paraded and handled these troops with much effect before the Turkish military authorities.

DESPONDENCY.

[This sonnet was written by "Sluggard Bonner" only a short time before her death.] A soul which, anguish-smitten, sought release From its own thoughts through weary hours of night Turned with new life to greet the morning light, And read in golden lines the longed-for peace, When suddenly, 'mid all the fair increase Of hope, the new-found joys that round it pressed, There stood, reproachful-eyed, a famished guest, Whose woe, 'set look had all delight to cease. Will it be so hereafter! Shall we gain The heaven we sought through life's long night of care, Only to find some word, once heard in vain, Some duty, in sheer excess of prayer Left unfulfilled, start up to meet us there, Bidding us back to old remorse and pain? —Harper's Weekly

HUMOR OF THE DAY.

Beauty is but skin deep, at the druggists' varying prices per bottle.—The Judge. Yeast compares his boarding-house mistress to a frontiersman, for the reason that she lives on the boarders. The Newton (Iowa) Journal thinks the new electric wire fence will be splendid around a melon patch. It will be so shocking to the boys. The scientific angler is the man who goes fishing with \$25 worth of tackle and comes home with twenty-five cents worth of fish.—Norristown Herald. He talked inanely of the arts. And said some things about the muse, But all the point that he could make Was in his pointed, tooth-pick shoes. —Merchant-Traveler. Jealousy is so rampant now that a man can't chase his hat down street without being accused of running after the presidency.—Waterloo Observer. A young lady, who has probably had reason to doubt the veracity of the male biped, says batches of lies are only equalled by the lies of bachelors.—Boston Transcript. Why is it that a chicken will wander around and never begin to scratch in dead earnest until she gets on the bed containing the most expensive flowers in the garden?—Pack. "Why do you call a stupid person a stick?" asked Rollo one day. And Rollo's father said he didn't know, unless it was because one end was of no more account than the other.—Argonaut. A young woman in an Ohio town has married her brother's wife's father. When last seen she was busy with a compass and a dictionary trying to study out what relation she was to herself.—Peele's Sun. When you get pretty well up on the White Mountains, it is said you can often see a rain storm below you. It must be a decidedly healthy place. A man don't feel "under the weather" there, you know.—Statesman. An Alabama ball club composed of young ladies challenged a male nine and beat them by 20 to 11. It might be stated, however, that the males were all married men, and accustomed to knocking under to the women folks.—Burlington Free Press. A young miss of sixteen asks what is the proper thing for her to do when she is serenaded by a party of young gentlemen at a late hour. We are glad to be able to answer this question. Steal softly downstairs and untie the dog.—Rochester Express. One fellow might hang around a surf swimming place for weeks and never have a chance to rescue a rich man's daughter from a watery grave. Another would grapple a million helices the very first day, and be invited to her house to dinner. It is all luck.—Picoyune. "The race is not always to the swift," especially when a young man is met at the gate of pa's house by his greatly admired leaning on the arm of a rival who had preceded him by several minutes by coming cross lots instead of sticking too closely to stone pavements.—Yonkers Gazette. A hospital professor was making an amputation in the presence of his students; meantime the patient groaned and sobbed. Irritated at hearing so much groaning, the professor said to the patient: "Do me the favor to be quiet, for we can't hear ourselves talk. There are one hundred persons here at least, and you are the only one who is making any fuss."—The Monitor, Mexico. "Is the man mad?" "No, the man is not mad?" "Then, what makes him yell so?" "He is talking to a man a mile away." "Through that little instrument?" "Yes, through that instrument of torture called a telephone." "Will he make the man a mile away hear?" "Certainly he will." "But he could do it just as easily by yelling out of a window?" "Why, does not the telephone work?" "No, it does not work. The man using the telephone works. Jot that down in your men."—Hartford Post. It is authoritatively reported that there are 250,000 persons in New York and Brooklyn who receive charitable assistance, and that a few only these are entirely dependent upon charity for the necessities of life, larger part of this quarter of a million of semi-paupers are children.