

Orders have been issued to have our warships restored to their antebellum appearance. We shall now see them wearing the white paint of a blameless life.

There is a graver warning to France in the decrease of births from 865,000 in 1886 to 859,000 in 1897 than in the studied words of Sir Edmund Monson's lecture.

Experts estimate that the amount of money spent for Christmas toys by the American people exceeded \$55,000,000. It is a happy and cheerful sort of country that can spend that amount in playthings for the children.

The word Sirdar, which has been so frequently seen since the exploits of Lord Kitchener of Khartoum, is, according to the Paris Figaro a contraction of the Arabic words "Sayer ed Dar." Sayer means inspector or watcher; Dar means palace; Sayer ed Dar would therefore mean "inspector of the palace."

The shipbuilding interest of Maine reports an extraordinary revival of activity, exceeding anything known in ten years past. A portion of this is due to naval orders, but the greater part, according to report, reflects a boom in the West India trade—particularly trade between our ports and those of Cuba and Porto Rico, and the coastwise trade of those two islands.

Senor Montero Rios calls this country "an implacable conqueror," whose sole object was to reap from victory the largest possible advantage." And yet we are to pay Spain \$20,000,000, where we might as easily have compelled that country to pay us \$200,000,000 as an indemnity for having forced war upon us. But defeat embitters proud souls, and the Spanish resentment is by no means surprising.

Ours is now the greatest producing and exporting nation in all the world. Hitherto we have held at best second place to Great Britain. At the end of 1898 with our exports amounting to twelve hundred and thirty millions we leave even Great Britain behind by more than sixty million dollars. Our exports of domestic products alone passed the thousand million mark for the first time in the year 1892. From then until 1896 they fell below that figure, but in 1897 they rose to 1,032,000,000, and this year they have reached the enormous total of \$1,230,000,000. Twenty years ago we exported of our own products \$680,709,268 worth—or only a trifle more than one-half this year's exports.

A Vienna journal, in speaking of the movement for woman's emancipation in America, calls attention to the fact that in Austria women have certain legal rights undreamed of by Americans. They can refuse to accompany their husbands to any locality which endangers their liberty, life, or health and, "unless married to military men, can refuse to be parties to perpetual peregrinations, and to settling in foreign countries." There seems to be some misapprehension in Vienna concerning the status of woman in America. There seems to be some misapprehension in Vienna concerning the status of woman in America. Those rules of conduct so carefully laid down in the Austrian code are observed here, but in an entirely different way. Woman enjoys them without legal sanction, to be sure, but public opinion and the jury are usually with her. She can hardly envy her Austrian sister, who is constantly reminded that she is under police protection.

In international complications Englishmen have but one fear. Russia is "the gray terror" always in the background. How close the Russian-French alliance may be, or what Russia's interest is in any quarrel involved, is a mystery. Kipling has helped conjure up a picture of the gray uniformed Cossack hordes beyond the Indian mountain passes that has entered into the popular imagination and figures in all British conceptions of foreign relations. Some have urged war with France, not so much for hatred of France, but "because it will weaken Russia." Indian frontier wars are fought, not to conquer wild tribes for the sake of conquest, but to strengthen that part of the empire against Russia. The desperate anxiety about Chinese affairs is because of Russia. Russian designs real or imaginary, are the reason for much warlike activity. The czar's avowed peaceful ideas are simply not believed. Said a French diplomatist in discussing the situation: "Nicholas is keeping the peace of the world, not by love, as he would wish, but by fear. He is probably the only man on earth England is afraid of."

An English surgeon proposes to make the human stomach smaller by a surgical operation. Unless the cost of the operation is too great the man with a dozen children will find it profitable to submit the whole family.

The tremendous importance of the little things of life never was brought out more strikingly than in the story of the captain and crew of the schooner Johanna Swan. A single sulphur match saved nine men from the horrors of an awful death from thirst. Oh, that the blood-curdling incident would teach chronic borrowers of matches to keep a supply of these insignificant but valuable articles always on hand.

The phenomenally rapid progress of German trade and commerce, according to Professor Blondel, is due to the temperament of the German people, the system of education and the methodical adaptation of the results of scientific research to industrial and commercial practice. Consul Halstead of Birmingham, England, says that to the reasons given above must be added the eager celebrity with which the Germans seize upon and copy the good points of manufacture in other countries.

The governor of Massachusetts looks askance at the waxing debt of the state and hangs out a signal of warning, though the proud old commonwealth is nowhere near insolvency yet. She owed January 1, 1895 about \$4,500,000. On the first of 1898 the figures had increased to nearly \$12,500,000. Trebling the state debt in three years is certainly a financial exploit worth noticing, and it is no wonder that the governor takes note of it. The state has something to show for the increase, to be sure, but there would appear to be no wisdom in extending that line of assets at present at the cost of running further in debt for them.

When a man in England sues another man for money owed, he may charge him with conspiracy against the queen, in that he seeks to prevent her majesty from receiving the taxes due to her, by wrongfully impairing the ability of the plaintiff the money which he owes to him. When the case gets into court, the conspiracy is dropped, and the money question is tried out. Mrs. Richard Kelly of Conshohocken, Penn., raised an American flag over her pigpen in which was confined a porker which John Blake claimed was his property. When John Blake went after the pig, Mrs. Kelly knocked him down with a clothes pole. Her defense was that he was disloyal because he was really making an assault upon the American flag. She was acquitted—by a jury of men. The curiosities of law are not entirely English.

The postoffice department announces that hereafter private postal cards will be admitted to the mails for Canada and Mexico at the domestic postage rate of one cent each, and to the mails for other foreign countries at the postal union rate of two cents each. This is an extension of the privilege granted to the public a few months ago of printing private postal cards of a certain dimension and design for use in the domestic mail. The conditions under which such cards may be used are that they shall not exceed 3 1/4 by 5 1/2 inches in dimensions; that they must be at least 2 15-16 by 4 15-16 inches; that they shall be substantially of the same quality as the regular government postal card, of a white, cream, light-gray or light-buff color, and that the words, "Private mailing card, authorized by act of Congress of May 19, 1893," be printed on the address side. The postage is to be attached.

Youthful pupils in geography are taught in the public schools that the globe on which we live consists of a crust of earth and rock covering a core of molten lava. According to the tidal committee of the British association this is an error. They say that the earth is either solid or has an exceedingly thick crust. If the earth had only a shell of solid rock, say fifty miles in thickness, inclosing melted matter, it would yield under the tide almost as freely as a liquid. A globe of glass of the same size as the earth would yield like India rubber, and it is probable from a series of experiments that the earth as a whole is vastly more rigid than any rock upon her surface, a fact which, it is suggested, may be due to the excessive pressure in the interior. But the schoolboy will say, "Well, but volcanoes and geysers? If there is not fire down there, not many miles deep, how do they come?" The tidal committee has not included the answers in its report.

MY AUNT POLLY.

The greenest grass, the sweetest flowers, grew at Aunt Polly's door. The finest apples, miles around, Aunt Polly's orchard bore; Aunt Polly's cows were sleek and fat, her chickens a wondrous size. And Jabez Smith, the hired man, was witty, great and wise. I used to go with Jabe at night, with clinking pails to milk; Sometimes he'd let me feed the colts and rub their coats of silk; And the moon that rose in those days, just behind the cattle bars, Was twice as large as it is now—with twice as many stars.

Aunt Polly was a quaint old soul—a busy bee—by day Hiving the honey up for all, with never a thought of pay. How many dawns we watched the sun, uprising in the east, Shake out its banners o'er the hills and drive away the mist!

—Edith Keeley Stokely, in Youth's Companion.

THE MAKESHIFT OF JONAS KEMP.

Clarissa Kemp—late, very late—Clarissa Collins—carried each pot to the back door and inverted it briskly. The little heap grew high and unstable. There were a good many pots, and it was quite a distance from the sitting room window to the back door. Clarissa was tired when the stained green-painted shelves were emptied and all the litter swept up.

"There!" she breathed with a little gasp of relief, sinking into a rocker. "I'm thankful that job's done with! It's been staring at me ever since I came."

Clarissa invariably spoke of the day, a few weeks ago, when she and Jonas drove from the minister's into the little trim side-yard, as "when I came." Since that day there had been a good many reforms at the Kemp place. The heap of discarded geraniums and fuchsias was only one of them.

"I can't and I won't abide a mess of plants round, littering! There's enough, goodness knows, that's got to litter without putting up with what ain't got to. You've got to water 'em, and you've got to putter with 'em and coddle 'em, an' there's always a nussy, wet place under 'em and sprigs and dry leaves. I can't abide 'em if other folks can. Those that like 'em are perfectly welcome—I don't."

Clarissa rocked backward and forward in the capacious, calico-softened chair, communing aloud. Her comely, middle-aged face had a look of relief upon it. Once only a slight shade of remorse quivered across it and was gone.

"He'd ought to know I'd do it," she muttered, "and he ought to have got his mind made up by this time. I've given him time enough—ever since I came. I told him, ten minutes after, that I couldn't fellowship with a mess of plants. I guess that was good and fair warning!"

The rockers took to sudden creaking as if pleading in Jonas' behalf. In the sunny windows the green shelves looked bare and lonesome. There were little round circles, smaller and larger, side by side along their lengths, where the pots had stood. The biggest circle of all spoke pathetically of Jonas' pet cactus that bore the dainty pink flowers among its spines—that "Alwidly" had set store by. Alwidly was the wife that had driven from the minister's into the trim yard first. Even Jonas was hardly fonder of plants than Alwidly had been.

"There's some sense to having windows to sit by that you can see out of," mused Clarissa contentedly, gazing out on the strip of meandering roadway stretching bleakly away up hill. "Now I can see the people passing—there's Deacon Pottle coming a'ready! I can tell it's the deacon by the way the horse wags his head and meeches along down the hill. Seems to me I'd have a creature with some kind of spirit to him. Why, no; it's Jonas—as I live!"

With a sudden accession of nervousness, Clarissa Kemp snatched a rug and hurried to the back door. Jonas and the old horse were turning into the lane. She could hear the pound, pound of clumsy hoofs on the hard clay. She threw the rug over the heap of broken plants and waited to pull down one corner across the tiers of interlocked earthen pots beside it.

"I don't want it to come in him all in a heap," she murmured. "Jonas has to have time to get used to things. He ain't a sudden man, Jonas ain't. I've found that out since I came."

Then she hurried back to the rocking chair by the window. Jonas was just plodding past.

"Why, ain't you early, Jonas?" Clarissa called, a little breathless with hurrying. "It's only 3 o'clock. I wasn't looking for you back till supper time."

"Yes, I am early—whoa, back, Dennis, who-a!—but the town meeting rinner's early. We got through our doings sooner'n we expected to. They appointed me moderator."

Jonas' voice had a ring of modest pride in it. Clarissa laughed appreciatively.

"I should say you'd moderate splendidly, Jonas," she said, "but I shouldn't've supposed you'd've moderated so fast!"

The old horse started up and went steadily on toward the barn, with the trail of Clarissa's laughter in his wake.

"Clarissa's a real humorous woman," pondered Jonas; "she's got all of it that Alwidly didn't have. Whoa, back, Dennis!"

If Jonas noticed the unwieldy heap under Clarissa's rug on his way back to the house he said nothing about it. It was not Jonas Kemp's way to say things. In the trim little sitting

room the bare shelves and the unwanted inflow of sunshine across them appealed dumbly to him, and Jonas answered as dumbly. His seamed old face turned doggedly away from the windows, and the pain on it was only visible to the faint, sweet face of Alwidly looking out of the daguerreotype on the wall. Clarissa's keen eyes did not see it.

Twenty years divided Jonas and Clarissa Kemp, and Clarissa was not young. She had tailored and stitched away all her young years in her small village shop before she came. It had been a seven days' wonder to Clarissa's friends and twice three that to Clarissa herself, that she had locked her shop door and gone to the minister's with Jonas Kemp.

After supper that night Jonas did his chores and took down his pipe. Clarissa permitted no smoking indoors—pipes were even worse than a mess o' littering plants. You could abide the smell of flowers, but tobacco—faugh! So Jonas had his evening smoke under the stars, or, rainy nights, sitting on the saw-horse in the woodshed. Alwidly had "liked" the smell of his pipe. Heaven forgive the gentle little prevarication!

When Jonas went in again at early bedtime the heap of pots and bruised plants was cleared neatly away, and Jonas had the rug, well shaken, under his arm. He spread it with precise painstaking in exactly its place on the sitting room floor.

"I found it out by the back door, Clarissy," he said gently.

"Um-m-m," mumbled Clarissa, a little taken aback. And that was all that was ever said about the plants.

After that, if Clarissa had not been occupied continually with keeping the house "unlittered" and most spotlessly prim, she would have taken notice that Jonas stayed a good deal—somewhere—out-of-doors. He spent rare minutes only in his old place beside the sitting room window. And passers-by—if there had been any passers-by—on the grassy cross road that ran past the old, unpainted Kemp barn would have looked curiously at the big barn windows. There were two of them, and both were a-bloom with red geraniums and gay with purple and crimson fuchsias. Rough deal shelves stretched behind the cobwebbed panes, and every one was brightly tenanted.

But passers-by were few, and Clarissa never passed by. Her way, when she went abroad, was by the wider main road that ran uphill and down again to town. Clarissa never went to the barn. Jonas Kemp and the cows, the great barn cat and Dennis were the only ones that saw the red geraniums blooming bravely in the barn windows—unless, who can tell?—unless Alwidly saw them.

Another thing Clarissa might have noticed was how long the old pipe lay untouched on the kitchen mantel. Jonas went out to his evening smoke night after night—without it! If he had been his way to say things he might have said that when one's plants have been destroyed ruthlessly one must replace them somehow even if one must buy them with the tobacco one misses filling the old pipe with. And that would have explained the times of late that Jonas had driven alone to the little city down the river and come back, past Clarissa's window and Clarissa's curious eyes, with a queer, lumpy loaf "in behind."

"Humph! Now I wonder what Jonas's got all tucked up in behind," Clarissa would muse, eyeing suspiciously the lumps. "'Tisn't grain an' tist'n' critters—live ones anyway. And he couldn't've got 'em if they were alive, not without my knowing where the money had gone to."

But Clarissa had not put her curious thoughts into questions, and the times of being curious and the knobby, covered leads "in behind" Jonas had gone by together. She was very busy all the late summer and early fall sewing rags for her gay new carpet that was to transfigure the dull little corner parlor where nobody went and nobody wanted to go.

One afternoon, as she sewed, she heard Jonas' plodding feet tap slowly up the walk and Jonas' heavy breath keeping time to the taps. What in land of goodness was Jonas coming in that time o' day for? It was so unusual that Clarissa let the strip of red and yellow rags slide out of her lap and curl like a brilliant serpent at her feet. Jonas "came in" so seldom, lately, except to his meals. She hardly saw his unsmiling old face from morning to night, for she had formed the habit of setting his dinner out on the meal chest in the porch and letting him eat it alone. Her own dinner she could "pick up" on the run, and

HOME AGAIN.

At last it sounds. The phrase we longed to hear Is brave and glad in the triumphant cheer, But tenderest when a weary one may rest. At last with those who know and love him best, The fleeting years bid memory efface Life's crude and cruel lines. In softened grass The picture, lit by hope instead of pain, Shines, as our boys repeat it, "Home again."

And we, who could but watch the empty chair And pray for one whose place was waiting there, Found in the oldtime haunts so sad a change That places most familiar grew most strange. We, who were lingerers from the battle scene, With step grown lighter and with pulses keen, Like wanderers hear the welcoming refrain, For we, with you, at last are "Home again."

—Washington Star.

HUMOROUS.

"Is your flat crowded?" "Crowded? We can't yawn without opening a window."

"Are you still keeping up with national affairs, Mrs. Shortfud?" "No, I quit long ago; my war scrapbook is full."

Newpop—I have noticed that babies always have very open countenances. Oldpop—Yes; especially about midnight.

A shoemaker has a card in his window reading, "Any respectable man, woman or child can have a fit in this store."

Clerk—Are you going to buy a new directory? The Boss—Well, I guess not! Why, the one we have isn't half worn out yet.

He—Unless you marry me I shall go to the Klondike. She—There! Papa said you were a mere fortune-hunter, and now you've proved it.

"Sorry I have no small change," said a gentleman to a beggar. "All right, yer honor," was the reply. "I'll give ye credit. Where do ye live?"

Hicks—Just saw Hogley. Had been to the doctor's. Doctor tells him he is looking himself again. Wicks—Is he really as bad as that? Poor fellow!

"Even in China woman is rapidly supplanting man." "How do you make that out?" "Haven't you noticed that the man behind the throne is a woman?"

Rector (going his rounds)—Fine pig that, Mr. Dibbles; uncommonly fine. Contemplative Villager—Ah, yes, sir; if we was only all of us as fit to die as him, sir!

"The teakettle seems to be quite a singer," said the nutmeg grater. "It beats me, my voice is so rough."

"Me, too," replied the rolling pin; "I can't get beyond dough."

Mrs. Hiram—Dear, I wish you'd bring home a dozen Harveyized steel plates. Mr. Hiram—What do you mean? Mrs. Hiram—I'm just curious to see what Bridget would do with them.

Jeweler (excusing heavy charge)—That watch was in an awful condition. Why, sir, two hands have been constantly on it ever since you left it. Customer (dryly)—That's apparent on the face of it.

"Of course," said the lady with the steel-bound glasses, "I expected to be called 'strong-minded' after making a speech three hours long in favor of our sex, but to have it misprinted into 'strong-winded' was too much."

Fenderson—Do you know, I half believe Bass meant to insult me yesterday. Fogg—What did he say to you? Fenderson—He advised me not to visit the Vegetarian club, and it has just come to me that he meant to insinuate that I am a beat.

Charitable person to ragged and shivering tramp on a cold day: "Well, my man, I object to giving money, but if you come home with me I will give you an overcoat that will last you through the winter." "Overcoat! I suppose you want to ruin my business."

Pithy Remarks.

"Oh, don't that hay smell delightfully!" exclaimed the summer boarder somewhat ungrammatically, as the New Hampshire farmer drove her near a field of mown grass.

"Humph!" retorted the farmer, "it smells of hard work."

The answer illustrates the grim humor of the New England farmer of the olden time, whose hereditary sentimentality restricted him to brief but strong expressions. Another illustration of this grim, pithy humor is given in the history of the Massachusetts town of Pelham.

John Harkness, a farmer of that town, while plowing a gravelly knoll, one autumn day, had halted the oxen to rest just as a gentleman, driving a pair of horses, passed up the high hill road near by. The gentleman, stopping his turnout, bade the farmer good morning and added:

"May I ask you one question?"

"What is it?" answered the farmer.

"What will such land as you are plowing bear?"

"It will bear manure, sir," answered the farmer; and laying hold of the plow handles, he started up his cattle.

—Youth's Companion.

A Reign of Terror.

A sort of reign of terror prevails in the neighborhood of Candlewood hill, in Groton, Conn., because of the gathering in the dense wood at the foot of the hill, in consequence of the wintry weather, of three lynxes. People living in the neighborhood have become so frightened at the sight and sound of these animals that they dare not venture far into the woods. Several persons have seen the lynxes, which are very large and ugly. One man with a gun in his hand was so frightened by coming upon them unexpectedly that he ran like a madman for half a mile to a neighbor's house without stopping.

—New York Sun.

The Quality of the Water.

Doctor—Can you get pure water at your boarding house?

Patient—Not always. I frequently detect just a flavor of coffee in it.

—Detroit Free Press.