

There are more than 17,000 prisons in the United States and nearly as many insane asylums.

The "Lord High Executioner" of Prussia got \$37 "a head" and traveling expenses, and there is always a rush for the office when it is vacant.

Canada and Australia want to join themselves to Britain by a cable which no one else is to use, and representatives are at London from the colonies to talk the matter over.

There is a great dearth of school-teachers in Russia, owing partly to the fact that educated men are unwilling to exile themselves in villages far away from all intellectual companionship.

The work done by twenty-five sculptors and twenty-two painters in the way of decorations for the library of Congress at Washington will cost the United States government more than \$300,000.

Even Chicago begins to have its old landmarks. The Green Tree Inn is now sixty-three years old, and the local Historical Society has been advised to buy it and preserve it as an interesting relic of antiquity.

A dispassionate review of the business of 1896 shows to the satisfaction of the New York Herald that, while there were more failures than in any other year except 1884 and 1893, prosperity was simply checked by national and international complications.

John H. Inman, the cotton dealer of New York, lost \$600,000 in attempting to advance the price of cotton, and though this amount was less than one fourth his entire capital, he broke down in health and died. The moral is obvious, thinks the New England Homestead.

The system of school savings banks introduced in South Jersey about two years ago has brought excellent results, announces the New York Tribune. Savings to the amount of \$27,502.12 have been laid up by 5,612 depositors. The Woman's Christian Temperance Union is urging the extension of the system. It is a familiar saying that he who does not learn to save while young never will.

The races of this world are getting mixed; Europeans settle in Africa and in Asia; while Orientals go Westward and form colonies in the younger continents. Chinese scatter themselves over the face of the earth; and America both North and South is dotted over with Italian, German and Norwegian settlements; while Afghans are living in Australia; and Hindus in the West Indies. In the course of time these races will assimilate.

In response to the ultimatum of the combined powers, the Sultan is credited with having exclaimed, "I may be the last of the Caliphs, but I will never become a second Khedive!" Which is very grandiloquent, but scarcely in keeping with Abdul Hamid's notorious cowardice, moral and physical. When the time comes he will cringe before superior forces in order to save a semblance of royalty and his pin money. He is making his last "bluff."

Only a few years ago there were but six furniture factories in Canada, making two classes of work, one a very expensive and the other a very cheap class. Today, announces the American Cultivator, there are fifty firms manufacturing practically all the furniture that is consumed in Canada, excepting possibly that used by the very wealthy. The furniture men now utilize the material that is grown in Canada. But a few years ago elm was only used as staves for barrels. Now it is utilized in every furniture factory in Canada. The material is principally bought from the farmers, and has largely increased the price of elm.

With such an array of chefs as she possesses, expert in entrees and intricate culinary concoctions, the present plague of rats in Paris ought to be turned to profitable account, instead of being, as it is, the occasion of popular alarm and apprehension, maintains the New York Tribune. In the time of her siege by the German armies, such a visitation might have been as welcome as that of the tongue-tied grills to the famished children of Israel. In seasons of peace and abundance it is, of course, different, but the skill which converts the noxious vermin into a delicacy of the table is not to be despised. The art of the chef is to be equal to some similar conversion of the rat, when the advent there of a plied mouse-line of Hamlet is such to be feared.



### DAVID'S BABY.

BY ELLA F. MOSBY.

"He's just a common sized boy, ma'am."

This was the baffling reply to Mrs. Wilmot's question about the size of Mrs. Brown's boy. Mrs. Wilmot was the minister's wife, and Mrs. Brown one of her outlying parishioners, a mountaineer from one of the steepest and wildest peaks of the Ridge. Her husband had died in the great snow-storm of the past winter, and David, her only boy, was her sole prop and stay. Mrs. Wilmot thought a suit of clothes would not come amiss, even if secondhand.

But what was "a common size" for boys? In Mrs. Wilmot's experience they were of all sorts and sizes. Her mind reverted to Richard, her long boy, and his Aunt Ellen's frequent entreaty: "Richard, my dear, uncross a few of your legs!" to Robin, a head shorter, who was now crumpled up in a heap over "Stories of Lion Hunting in South Africa," and John, a round, roly-poly of a boy—and she looked slightly perplexed.

"No'm, he ain't to say big, nor yit small; he's just a common-sized boy, betwixt and between."

Mrs. Wilmot in despair went after the clothes, and saw by the delight in his mother's eyes as soon as she saw them, that they might at least be worn by David.

"I'm mo' than thankful, ma'am." Her voice trembled, and Mrs. Wilmot hastened to ask:

"Haven't you a little girl, too?"

"Thar's two gals—Lucy, she's goin' on seven, and the baby; the folks calls her 'David's Baby,' he's so good-natured with her. I never see a boy so tuk up with a baby befo'. She ain't a mite of trouble when he's 'round;'" and her hard-worked thin, worn face looked quite illumined by her smile of pride and delight.

Robin let his book fall. "Are there any bears on Priest's Mountain?" he asked, suddenly.

"Oh, nonsense!" said his mother; but Mrs. Brown answered seriously:

"Ef it's a mild winter, mebbe you won't see one; but in a long freeze they'll come right low down the mountain. They don't generally attack humans, the damage they does mostly is to young creatures—pigs and sech things. I seed one myself; 'twas in the summer too, three or fo' years ago; and I don't want ter see another."

"Tell me about it," said Robin, coming over to the chair next hers.

"Well, 'twas a long hot spell, and I'd gone out to git blackberries. Mos' of 'em was leetle and dry with the drouth; but just above my head on a long ledge of rocks I see a big clump of briars, all hanging with berries, big juicy berries, ez shiny ez silk. I kin see 'em now, ez pretty ez any picture. I put my hand out to pull the nearest branch down, and then I heard a growl—there ain't much more unpleasant noises than a growl or a hiss in the woods, I kin tell ye! Thar stood a big 'bar just on 'tother side o' the blackberries, showin' his teeth in an ugly sort o' grin. I didn't stop to have no words 'bout the berries—in fac', there was mighty few berries in my basket when I got home, I came so fast. Them was the finest berries on the mountain," she added, regretfully; "big and shiny and sweet-lookin', and jest burstin' with juice; and I hadn't fairly teched 'em when I heard that growl."

"Would he have showed fight if you had stayed?" inquired Robin, eagerly.

Mrs. Brown's eyes twinkled.

"I don't keer to argy a pint with him," she answered.

"What other wild beasts live near you?" pursued Robin, in a tone of positive envy.

"Why, squirrels and 'possums and foxes and wildcats—it do sound mighty lonesome to hear 'em cry. I reckon the woods is right full o' prowlin' varmints arter nightfall."

"But you have David to take care of you," said Mrs. Wilmot.

"Yes'm; and he's tolerable strong fur a boy. He kin shoot, too, mos' ez well ez his uncle. He's been takin' David out huntin' with him this spring and summer."

A few weeks after this talk David bustled into the mountain cabin at "sundown" in great excitement.

"Hello, Sissy!"—to Lucy—"there, honey!"—to the baby, who was laughing and gurgling with delight to see him—"Brother will take you in a minute—jest ez soon ez he kin wash his hands."

David Brown was a plain, freckle-faced boy, so tanned that his skin was several shades darker than his flaxen hair and pale eyes; but the sweetness and good humor of his homely face made it a pleasant sight to more than "David's baby." Everybody on the mountain liked David, from the gruff mountaineers themselves down to their curs that snapped and snarled at almost everyone else. As he whistled to the baby, who was now changing her rapturous noises to a more imperative demand, Spot, his own "yaller dog," watched his every movement with his keen, blinking eyes, and the black kitten, a recent stray, rubbed itself between his legs with a satisfied purr, and gazed up into his face with its yellowish-green opals.

"You've got some news, David," said his mother, bringing out the meal and a sifter.

"You are the beatin'est one to guess, Mother?" exclaimed David, admiringly. "I've got a job. Mr. Jones wants me to help him to drive his cattle down to the station tomorrow, and he'll give me a man's pay if we have 'em there on time and in good condition. Me and Spot'll do the job fine, won't we, young 'un?" and he held out his hands to take the baby.

"You set a lot o' sto' by that child, David," observed his mother laughing.

"Yes'm. I set a lot o' sto' by the baby and Lucy, too;" and he patted the older child's head, as she flushed with delight. It was not David's way to forget any one.

"Mother, 'spos you take the children and go with me ez fur ez Uncle Martin's! I don't like leavin' you all—a passel o' wimmen-folks," he said, laughing at the very small one on his lap—"by yo'selves all day; and mebbe I'll be back late."

"It'd be powerful lonesome here," answered his mother, "that's a fac'. But how could I know when you was back?" she added anxiously.

"Why, I'd 'lowed on meetin' you at the dividin' fence 'bout dusk, and totin' the baby fur you. An' the moon'd be up early; of I git back sooner, I'll come up ter the cabin, but I'll be sho' ter be at the fence, by nightfall, anyhow."

Mrs. Brown enjoyed her long, neighborly day, getting a new receipt from sister Martha, and hearing old Mr. Martin say how "pearl" the baby was, and Lucy as rosy as a peach blossom. As for David, she never wearied in talking of him, and it was really dusk before she was fairly started. The "dividing fence," a boundary line between two large tracts of mountain land, was often used as a trysting place by others than lovers, and would save David a good many steps.

She had wrapped up the baby well from the night air, and Uncle Martin had many jokes over the huge knot in which she had tied a bandana handkerchief at the back, "jest ez of you wanted ter tote it by a handle." Poor mother! If she had only known the use that would be made of this; but she did not, and went on her way down the steep path in good spirits, Lucy following close behind.

As they reached the fence in the woods a cloud was over the moon, and it was quite dark; but she could see a dim figure on the other side.

"David, have you been waitin' long?" she called out, and handed the baby over in a hurry, turning as she did so to see what was the matter with Lucy; for the child clung to her skirts in fright and cried out that it wasn't David.

When with some difficulty she had lifted her over the fence, struggling and crying still, and had herself climbed over—Mrs. Brown was not as active as she had been—there was no one in sight.

"David!" she cried. She heard a rustling in the bushes; but the moon,

shining out at that instant, showed the place empty. "David!" she cried again, in terror.

Then he appeared just at the bend of the mountain path whistling cheerily and with Spot leaping and barking at his heels. But where was the baby?

For he had called out to her to give him the child as soon as he had caught sight of her, and David was not given to fooling. She could not answer for her sobbing and crying.

Lucy tried to tell him the strange story. When she said, "A big, black, shaggy man," he threw himself on the ground, examining every mark. Spot smelled too, and his yellow hair began to bristle with rage, and he growled fiercely, for there were surely the recent footprints of some large animal.

"Mother, run back and rouse the neighbors. Tell 'em to bring their rifles," and, breaking off a stout stick, David dashed into the bushes, Spot springing in front and leading the chase.

Once David thought he heard a half-stifled baby's cry and hurried faster. For a "common-sized" boy, he was making good speed; but Madam Bruin was on the home-stretch, and she knew it.

At last he caught a glimpse of a big, clumsy, dark form, trotting briskly along with what seemed like a bundle dangling from his mouth. He was none too soon. The cave in which the little black ens rolled about, impatient for their supper, was but a hundred yards or so distant. He thought she must be near home by her quickened gait, and he knew, if she ever got the baby inside its black, yawning mouth, there would be no hope of bringing it out alive.

With the energy of despair he darted forward and gave the bear a sharp blow over the nose with his long stick. Spot closed in at the same moment, yelping and snapping at her legs.

The huge beast, enraged but not hurt by this simultaneous attack, dropped the baby, and reared up on her hind legs, looking in the mingled moonlight and shadow so like a human figure that David did not wonder afterward at his mother's mistake. She showed her sharp, white teeth with a fierce snarl, and stretched out her forepaws for a grapple. She was near her own babies now, and she meant fight.

David looked at the precious bundle. It lay just under the creature's terrible claws, and to attempt to pick it up would have placed him utterly at the bear's mercy, unless her attention could be diverted.

"At her, Spot! at her, good dog!" he shouted; and again he rained a shower of blows on her eyes and nose so quick and fierce that, blinded and confused for the instant, she backed a step or two, growling horribly.

Spot inflicted a sharp bite on her, hind quarter, and she turned her head. It was his only chance. Quick as a flash he seized the baby and fled, leaving poor Spot to receive a terrific blow from the brute's paws, at which he too, broke and ran, the blood streaming from his wound, and howling at every jump.

Halfway down the mountain they met the Martins with dogs and torches. The bear, after a fierce fight was brought to bay and killed, and the cubs taken captive.

Old Martin untied with rough but trembling fingers the knot he had laughed at—the knot which had saved the baby's soft limbs from the bear's teeth. David hardly dared to be certain that he had heard a cry in his headlong flight; but when they had unwrapped fold after fold and unfastened the veil, there lay the baby—"David's baby" now, without doubt or question—as rosy and fresh as a flower-bud, its big blue eyes full of wonder and fright, but ready to smile at the first sight of David.

David was more his mother's hero than ever. She never told the story without adding:

"And he was jest a common-sized boy when he done it!"—New York Independent.

#### In the Nearly 100 Years Age.

As long ago as 1824 the fountain pens were in use, for in that year Thomas Jefferson saw a contrivance of this sort, tried it, and wrote to General Bernard Peyton, of Richmond, asking him to get one of them. The pen was of gold and the ink tube of silver, and according to Jefferson's letter, the maker was a Richmond watch repairer, named Cowan. The price, he understood, was fivepence. The first American patent for a fountain pen was granted in 1830 to one Douglass Hyde, but the earliest English patent was issued twenty-one years before.—Boston Transcript.



#### TOUCHES OF COLOR.

Scarlet or pink or a touch of yellow are all good colors if sparingly used to brighten and relieve the monotones of a blue and white room. Any one of the colors may also be used to keep a green and white room from monotony. If the prevailing colors in a sleeping room are pink and white, use pale olive, or olive and blue, or pink and violet for a contrast.

#### FEMININE FIRE BRIGADE.

The little town of Nassau, in Sweden, has a feminine department, 150 strong, in its fire brigade. The waterworks of the village consist simply of four great tubs, and it is the duty of the women "firemen" to keep them full in case of fire. They stand in two continuous lines from the tub to the lake, about three streets away, one line passing the full buckets, and the other sending them back.—Tit-Bits.

#### ARE WOMEN'S FEET LARGER?

It is a fact that the feet of American women are growing larger! Devotion to athletic exercises is the cause, and some one is daring enough to say that the dainty, delicate, little Cinderella feet find ample room in No. 1 and No. 2 slippers will be unknown twenty years from now. Any exercise that keeps one on the feet for any great length of time will surely broaden and flatten the foot, and a year's steady course in a gymnasium will show a marked increase in the size of the feet.—New Orleans Picayune.

#### WHEN A FORTUNE BRINGS REVERSES.

When a sudden reverse of Fortune's wheel brings with it the necessity of earning the daily bread, the American woman turns instinctively to the "genteel" paths of toil, unskilled teaching, drawing, painting, and the like, all good starving professions, which involve as well an immense amount of wear and tear on the nervous system. Her British cousin, on the other hand, is far more apt to turn her attention to more practical and profitable pursuits. A large proportion of the first-class millinery and dressmaking establishments in London, for instance, are owned and run by titled dames who hold high positions in the world of society.

#### THE ARTS OF HOME.

Technical training for girls in the arts of the home is very much needed in this country. Abroad it is carried on extensively. Hundreds of institutions are maintained by private subscription, others are managed by the proprietors of large manufacturing establishments, who see in the training of the mothers and daughters better labor results in the fathers and sons, and still more are conducted by municipalities. Many of these schools are perfect courses in housekeeping. The pupil begins at the bottom round of the ladder, learning how to manipulate the tools of cleaning, washing, ironing, dishwashing, waiting at table and all the rest of the household detail. She learns to market and make out a palatable menu, and is taught the nutritive constituents and economical values of each food served. She must keep a record of her expenditures and waste. She learns to buy and make clothes, and when she enters her own home is fitted to be its keeper. All through Germany the schools are growing in number. Holland, Belgium, Wurttemberg, Bavaria, Austria, Switzerland, France and Italy have thriving schools intended for the most part for the children of laboring people. In the United States the work has barely begun in the few kitchen-garden schools which can be counted.—New York Post.

#### CAST-OFF GARMENTS.

Winter and the spring are the times when the clothing of a family is sifted out and much given away, and a woman who has worked among the poor, both in the cities and in the country, gives a very sensible word or two about the matter. She says: "Never give away clothes to poor people that need mending or buttons or anything of that sort. Give them away whole and clean, and if you have any pieces

of the stuff give them also, and in a neat bundle."

The very poor have very little time to mend, for all their time is taken in the struggle for daily bread, and little of that. People who have not been much among them cannot realize what it is to these people to have clothes given them, especially for their children, that are in good condition, mended and clean, they are a lesson, an object lesson that people in other and more fortunate classes do not at all understand. Very often these poor women, while deeply grateful for such gifts, have nothing to mend clothes with—no needles and no thread, and assuredly no pieces to patch with.

Then, too, they have no time very often, and very usually no ability to do the work; and so the clothes go on to the poor little children in the condition in which they are received. It is simply thoughtlessness that the clothing is so given, and because attention has never been called to it, for it would be a small matter for the mother who gives them away to give a day, if need be, to the mending, or to give it to the family seamstress to do, or, still better, to hire some poor woman who needs the work to do it and pay her for it, perhaps afterward giving her the clothing to use herself or to give away to those whom she may know of who need the things. But this last plan must be carefully managed, for such clothing means money and could be pawned for a small sum. Unless a person is known to be trustworthy it is well to dispense the clothing from headquarters. Never give away flimsy or any poor people. It does them no good, and positive harm.

They want whole, neat, clean, thin or thick clothing, as the season may be, but flimsy never. Old silk dresses are a curse and not a blessing, and the same with old and soiled ribbons. If one can find one of the thrifty country women who knit rag carpets, or who prepare the rags for the loom, or who make home-made silk curtains, that is the place to use all such stuff. Really beautiful curtains may be made out of scraps of silk, and sometimes they are good enough to be made into little quilts for cribs, or for the lining of a comforter. Those things are done in the country, where there is more leisure than in the hurried rush of city life, and many a gown is taken home soiled or crushed, and spoiled, that would be a boon to a girl in the country where the summer has been spent. It is certain that attention need only be called to the matter to bring about a reform as to how clothes are given away and where—also what. It is astonishing as one goes through the world to find how very generally people are ready to help one another.—Chicago Record.

#### FASHION NOTES.

The newest coats are squire shape, and extend only two inches below the waist.

With the wide use of corselets and girdles, buckles and fancy buttons are becoming more popular than ever before.

The winter roses of thin crumpled crepe and velvet are lovely. They seem to shade like the real down of a rose petal.

Comb aigrettes imitating the tail feathers of a bird of paradise are dazlingly beautiful and are marvels of the jeweler's skill.

For the back of a ribbon belt there is a steel buckle six inches wide and bent to the figure, with loops of ribbon above and below the center of the buckle.

Buckles are beginning to appear in the front of the wide corselet belt, and these come in steel and paste, in slender shapes and in lengths of six to ten inches.

The latest buttons are square and are rather large—in steel, enamel, paste, pearls of every color set in out steel and a new composition that imitates mother-of-pearl very well.

There must be a touch of black in the season's cloth gown if it lays any claims to fashion. Generally the somber hue is woven in the goods, often so subtly that it is only half seen.