

THE IDLE SINGERS.

Call us the idle singers who sit by the road and dream,
Sunning ourselves in the weather and winding a web of gleam.

Call us the idle singers, who wake and are worn in a day,
Dreaming our dream of clover in the hyacinth porches of May;

Call us the idle singers, who wake and are worn in a day,
Dreaming our dream of clover in the hyacinth porches of May;

Call us the idle singers; whether we toll or sing,
The looms of our silver music are weaving the web of spring;

KIDNAPPED.

The Queer But Nice Adventure of Arthur Gordon, C.E.

(W. R. Rose in Cleveland Plain Dealer.)

His cousin Emily had told him the electric stanhope would call at 3 o'clock.

"I'd rather stay here, Aunt Lucy," he said. "I'm not a strong admirer of afternoon receptions—and I want to visit with you."

"It doesn't seem quite right to hurry you off in this summary way," she said. "But Emily has set her heart on having you there. You are her lion, you know."

The tall young man frowned. "I don't like that, Aunt Lucy," he hastily said. "You heard me tell Emily so. If I thought she had any designs on my peace of mind I would skip this reception without further notice."

"You can rely on Emily's discretion," laughed his aunt. "If I thought otherwise wild horses wouldn't draw me out," persisted the young man.

"I believe it is an electric that draws you this time," said his aunt. "And isn't it 3 o'clock?"

He glanced at his watch as he arose. "It is. And how do I look? Any detail omitted?"

"You look the dear boy that you have always looked," she answered. "You are so much like Laura." And her eyes were misty.

He caught up his outer coat and hat and kissed his aunt. "Back soon," he cried as he hurried to the elevator.

His cousin Emily had been called away to attend an early afternoon function. Emily had arranged with her dearest friend, Anna Truesdell, who was also interested in the charitable organization, to send her electric automobile with the man to the apartment house. The man would be there at 3 o'clock and take Arthur Gordon to the function.

Arthur had demurred at going, but Emily assured him he was expected and that it would be a grievous disappointment to her if he stayed away. Arthur Gordon had just crossed on the Lusitania, reaching his aunt's home that very morning, and he would have preferred—much preferred—to stay in the cozy apartments and visit with the aunt he had not seen for a half dozen years. But Emily was insistent. She had told her friend, the hostess of the function, that Arthur was coming and there was a cordial welcome awaiting him. And Emily's mother had asked him to oblige Emily, and of course that settled it.

It was a showery afternoon and a light whirl of rain beat upon him as he opened the outer door. An electric stanhope was standing at the curb. The top was up and the curtains down and the long apron covered the front. He hurried across the walk and running around the machine pushed aside the curtain and stepped in.

"Number 72 East Bedford," he said as he settled himself in the seat. Then he hastily added, "Pardon me for forgetting. I was in a private vehicle. No doubt you know the place."

There was no response to this and for a moment the driver failed to make any movement. Then the stanhope slowly responded to the starting lever.

Arthur Gordon looked around and gave a little start. The clear cut face beneath the brim of the drooping hat was not that of a masculine chauffeur.

This couldn't be Emily's dearest friend. The dearest friend was with Emily. Besides, if this was Emily's friend she would have greeted him as he entered. It was evident he was a stranger in a strange land. Here was a custom of which he had never heard. If your man can't take the machine around send the maid.

If he could judge by the section of face that was revealed to him the maid was decidedly handsome, and she wore a stunning hat. He wondered if it would be quite right to speak to her. He was in a democratic country now and would chance it.

"Is it far?" he weakly asked. The maid did not look at him. "It is in Clifton," she answered. Her voice was pleasant, even if her tone was crisp.

"I know nothing of sections, he permitted. "I am a stranger here." "The distance is close to seven miles," said the maid.

They had turned into the broad avenue and suddenly the rain ceased and the sun shone and the blue sky appeared.

"Would you mind if I took down the curtains?" Arthur inquired. "I want a clearer look at this beautiful roadway."

"If you care to take the trouble," the maid replied as she stopped the machine.

He was out of the stanhope in a moment and had the curtains removed and folded and stowed away.

He gave the maid a quick look as he resumed his seat. "This is ever so much nicer," he said.

He had noticed the bright face, the long slim coat, the daintily shod foot. And he felt that if Emily's dearest friend equalled her maid in looks she was a remarkably fortunate girl.

The young man's roving eyes had noted in the roadway some distance ahead a long hung phaeton drawn by a steady going horse. The stanhope was not far behind; this vehicle when a heavy car came whirling around the corner and cutting in close to the curb, caught in close to the curb, caught a hub of the phaeton and tipped the vehicle over onto the lawn. The horse, old and steady, stood still.

Arthur Gordon was out of the stanhope in an instant. The driver of the big car had made an effort to stop. He backed a little ways as Arthur ran forward and then suddenly darted ahead.

"No, you don't," roared Arthur and sprang at the passing car and caught at the seat and pulled himself up.

The maid ran the electric close to the curb and then alighted and hurried forward. The passengers in the phaeton were a woman and a little child. The woman, evidently a nurse, had been dazed by the fall, but was struggling to her feet.

The maid ran forward and picked up the child and held it close. The little one looked up in her face and smiled.

"Baby dot a nassy bump," he said, and rubbed his curly head solicitously.

The nurse came forward. "Do you think he's much hurt?" she gasped.

"No," the maid replied. "He has bumped his head a little. How is it with you?"

"I seem to be all right," replied the nurse. "I was a little stunned at first. I want to make sure that the boy is all right. You saw it, didn't you? You know it wasn't my fault."

"It wasn't your fault," replied the maid. "It was something you couldn't have prevented."

The throb of a heavy car drew her attention. She looked around. The car that had done the mischief was halting by the curb. Beside it stood

ONLY ONCE: DO IT NOW.

- I pass this way but once—
Let me not fail
To answer e'en a faint,
A half-caught hail.

"Another blunder," he said and helped her alight. They passed into the house and up the broad stairway.

"You will wait for me," said the maid as she left him in the upper hall. There were other men in the coatroom, men who seemed to know one another, and who looked at the stranger a little curiously. But he had no thought for them.

There was a mistake somewhere. How in the world did this beautiful girl know him—for she was a beautiful girl. How was she connected with Emily's friend, Anna Truesdell? It was a queer puzzle and guessing didn't help it.

He stepped to the doorway. The girl he had supposed to be Miss Trues-

"His office is only a short distance up the avenue," said the maid. Arthur Gordon turned back to the policeman.

"Officer," he said, "the little boy should be taken to a doctor—to Dr. Armitage. He doesn't seem to be much hurt, but it is well to be sure. Have this man take you there in his car."

"Good," said the big policeman. "See here," whined the chauffeur, "it was all an accident. I wouldn't have tried to run away, but I was scared. And I'd been in trouble before, an'—"

"That will do," said the big policeman. "Get in, ma'am, an' take the child."

The nurse stepped into the car, and the maid brought the child to her. "Nassy bump," said the boy. "Will oo tuss it?"

The maid put her lips to the curly head. The policeman and the chauffeur stepped into the car.

"I'll straighten up the carriage and tie the horse," said Arthur Gordon. "Thank you," said the big policeman. "You're all right."

The car moved away, the little boy waving his chubby hand to the maid. Arthur Gordon straightened up the phaeton, which showed but little damage and then tied the patient old horse to the nearest post.

The maid watched him for a moment. Then she went back to the stanhope.

Arthur was smiling when he resumed his seat. "That was quite an episode," he said. Then it suddenly occurred to him that episode was not the sort of word he would use in conversing with an English maid. It failed to bother this American girl. She did not reply to his comment, but her gaze rested on the roadway ahead.

"I liked the way you went after that chauffeur," she said. "You couldn't have looked more determined if you had been facing a roaring lion."

Arthur suddenly laughed. "My dear young woman," he cried, "the only time I ever met a roaring lion he was as much frightened as I was. I threw my hat at him and he ran away."

The machine swerved a little. "And where did you meet a roaring lion?" the maid inquired.

He frowned. "I talk too much," he said. "It might have been somewhere along the line of the Uganda railway," said the maid.

"There are lions there, I believe," he abruptly answered.

"But of course, lions were not the only annoyances that bothered the English engineers."

He shook his head at her. "You have been listening," he said. "That's one of my most admired qualities," said the maid.

"Perhaps you even know my name."

The girl nodded the stunning hat. "Yes, Arthur Gordon, late of London, and son of Lord Sholto Gordon." Arthur groaned.

"And my cousin Emily promised me faithfully not to repeat a word of this. Of course you heard it all from Miss Truesdell?"

The stunning hat was shaken violently. "No," the maid replied. "You must not blame your cousin. Does she know that you have come here to take an important engineering position with an American bridge company? Does she know that you mean to become an American citizen?"

He could only stare at her. The electric turned a corner and drew up to the curb at a little distance from a handsome residence. There were many other automobiles halted in the street.

"This is our destination," said the maid. Arthur slipped from the machine. "I know so little of American customs," he said, "that I am sure to blunder. May I ask if you will wait for me here?"

The maid arose. "No," she replied, "I will go in with you."

dell's maid had just emerged from the opposite room. He drew a quick breath. She was more beautiful than he had imagined. Her hair was dark and her eyes were dark, and there was a white spray of something in her hair, and her eyes sparkled. Arthur noted these interesting facts as he gave her a quick glance and he noted too that her afternoon gown was something soft and shimmery and altogether becoming, although he could not have told its color—and then she smilingly nodded and they went down the broad stairway together.

There were many people below and a large number seemed to know the girl. She piloted Arthur through the throng until they reached the hostess, a stout woman with a nervously effusive manner.

"Why, Althea," she said, "this is dear of you!"

"Mrs. Abington," said the girl, "let me present Arthur Gordon, of London."

"Charmed," said the hostess with her most cordial smile. "You are Emily Telfer's cousin. She asked me to look for you and make you acquainted with somebody congenial. But I see you are in the best of hands. You are very fortunate to know Althea, Mr. Gordon. I suppose you met at the legation in London."

Arthur and the girl passed along and presently found themselves a little apart from the others.

"I don't know what all this means," said Arthur hopelessly. "You seem to have the advantage of me at every point. You know my name, my business, my intentions. All I know of you is that you run an electric stanhope skillfully, that your name is Althea, and that you are very—"

"Here comes your cousin, Mr. Gordon."

Emily fluttered forward. "Why, Arthur, I thought you were either strayed or stolen! Mamma told Anna Truesdell's man that you had gone. How do you do, Miss Ames?"

"Miss Ames!" murmured Arthur. "Your cousin wasn't stolen, Miss Telfer," said the girl at Arthur's side.

"Although it amounts to the same thing. He was kidnapped—by me."

Emily looked back at Arthur. "It's lovely to think you know Miss Ames, Arthur. Why didn't you tell me you had met abroad? It must be his English blood that makes him so reticent. But there, I want to speak to Mrs. Abington."

And she hurried away. "The mystery is clearing, isn't it?" said the girl. "I am Althea Ames, daughter of the managing director of the Columbia Bridge Co. My father met you in London last month and engaged your services. When he came home he told us a good deal about you. I'll admit that he aroused our curiosity. Father knew that you reached New York yesterday and that you would go to your aunt's home. Business called him out of town early this morning, but he asked me to carry a message and an invitation to you. If agreeable, you are to meet him at the company's office at 19 o'clock tomorrow morning and dine with us in the evening. When you plunged so unceremoniously into my stanhope, I realized there was some mistake, but I felt sure you were the right man as soon as you spoke. I'm an American girl, you remember, and admit that I enjoyed the mystification which, after all, was a very simple one. You don't see any harm in it, do you, Mr. Gordon?"

He looked at the glowing face, the dainty figure.

"Harm!" he echoed. "It's the luckiest and finest thing that ever happened!"

CURSE OF CHILD LABOR.

Disastrous Effects of Early Toil on the Youths of the Nation.

Disastrous effects of child labor upon the race are dwelt upon by Dr. John V. Shoemaker in an editorial in the December issue of the Monthly Cyclopaedia and Medical Bulletin.

"Child labor," he says, "tends to make the youth an undesirable citizen."

"When a child arrives at its twelfth year it reaches the age of adolescence, which lasts until about the eighteenth year. During the stage the organs attain their full development; the bones and muscles grow both in thickness and extent."

"This is all accomplished through good exercise and nutritious food, but when the necessary exercise is prevented by the nature of the work performed by the individual these muscles atrophy, and the results are general weakening of the whole body. The child fails to develop physically because it has no play; it fails to develop mentally because it does not go to school and stimulate the gray matter."

"Other effects are the loss of education, which makes them undesirable citizens, the too early strain upon the nervous system, the startling spirit of independence because they feel they form a support of the family, the loosening of family ties, roving in the streets and a knowledge of vice and profanity which they secure from their constant contact with the men in their environment."

Held Up by the Sentry.

Guzzle (after he had succeeded in waking his wife)—Open the door! Mrs. Guzzle (head out of the second story window)—are you sober? Guzzle—Yeeh. Mrs. Guzzle—Then say "reciprocity."—Pick-Me-Up.

Graft.

Landlord—You can't leave this hotel till you pay your bill. Guest—Will you put that in writing?—Cleveland Leader.

The Farm

Bacteria in Milk.

Milk may be heated and the bacteria contents killed in this way, but the pasteurizing temperature does not kill all the bacteria and a higher temperature necessary to sterilize renders it more or less indigestible. Not all forms of bacteria are harmful, in fact, some of them are necessary. The trouble is they are so small it is impossible to get personally acquainted with them, so cannot tell our friends from our enemies.—Epitomist.

Dairying Not Overdone.

There are so many by-products from the dairy that the business of dairying can never be overdone. Besides milk, butter and cheese, we have powdered milk, which may be shipped at little expense and kept for weeks in good condition, and other constituents of milk which are being exploited in commercial ways for the manufacture of artificial ivory, paints and a good many other commodities that until recently have never been associated with dairy work.—Epitomist.

Fast Walking Horses.

It is claimed by those who have trained many horses that, taking the colt when training first begins, they can be trained to walk over four miles per hour. The walking gait is the most important one to the farm and road horse. The mistake with many in training young horses is, that they are too soon put to trotting, which is a gait they more readily learn than fast walking. A farmer who has long trained his own colts to fast walking tells us that his horses with the corn cultivator do one-half more work in the corn field than the horses of his neighbor that were never trained to a rapid walk. In these times of scarce help on the farm that is an important consideration.

It is only a question of a little patience and persistence in training colts or young horses to walk fast, if they are well bred. Good breeding comes in here as well as in other things, as a well bred horse can be trained in any gait better than others.—Indiana Farmer.

Selling Soil Fertility.

Everything we sell from the farm represents a certain amount of soil fertility. The one exception, perhaps, is butter. It is difficult to trace butter fat as a direct drain on the soil.

It is said that a ton of wheat removes between eight and ten dollars' worth of soil fertility, and that the farmer never gets it back. Of course, there are ways or placing it by the proper rotation and stock raising, but the dairy farmer who sells butter or cream, stops the leak before it happens.

The difference is the wheat farmer sells the raw material, while the dairy farmer sells only the finished product in the shape of butter, and pork, if he feeds hogs, or cattle, if he raises calves with the skim milk.

If part of the skim milk is fed to chickens, so that eggs and poultry are sold, the manufacturing process is carried still further and the material sold off the farm carries a very small percentage of fertility with it, in fact, the raising of the poultry supplies more fertility than is sold a good many times over.—Epitomist.

Fat and Partially Fat Sheep.

It is altogether probable that many stockmen will feed sheep this fall for the first time, and they may not be acquainted with all the conditions leading to the best and most promising situation in feeding lines. The first thing to determine will be what to buy, says the Homestead. Will it be thin sheep, or those that carry more flesh? Thin sheep will gain more than fat ones, the general thrift of the two classes being equal. Thin ewes will gain from one-fourth to one-third more than those in good flesh, and this probably explains why the thin, good-mouthed ewes are sought more than those in better condition. It is a well-known fact among sheep feeders that females finish much more quickly than males, although thin two or three-year-old wethers will make rapid gains.

We have said that thin sheep will take on flesh faster than the sheep that is in good order, and we may say that it will require more time to finish them than those that are partially fat. Young lambs usually require more time to finish than older sheep, because they grow considerably under fattening conditions before they begin to finish. Old Western sheep are harder than lambs, and this will hold true in the field as well as in the feed lot. Older sheep are not nearly so liable to gorge themselves on green feed or so liable to over-eat while in the feed lot.

The feeder should make up his mind that when he is feeding thin sheep it will be necessary to feed them a long time. If sheep are to be fed only a short time, they should be partially fat when purchased. Thin ewes can be started by turning them in corn fields, grazing them on good pasture and by feeding fodder.

Intelligence of Ants.

If Dr. Howard, the chief of the Bureau of Entomology of the Department of Agriculture, were not well known over at least two continents as an eminently practical scientist, whose intelligent and aggressive work has saved from bug ravages millions of dollars' worth of agricultural produce, his story of the intelligence of ants as observed in the

greenhouses of the department, were certainly consigned to the "nature faking" class. But knowing the doctor's hard-headedness suggests the possible imputation falls to the ground.

As the story goes, one of the greenhouses of the department is frequented in considerable numbers by a medium sized black ant, attracted by the presence of mealy bugs and plant lice on the hot-house plants.

As is well known ants are especially fond of the nectar secreted by those insects. Some years ago a colony of Liberian coffee trees were started in the greenhouse. At the bases of the leaves of these coffee trees can be found very small nectar-secreting glands. The ants soon discovered this and sipped the nectar. Then the idea seemed to occur to some clever ant that these nectar glands would be the best place in the world for the mealy bugs to live and grow fat and in consequence secrete a great deal more nectar than they would if left on other parts of the leaves. But the nectar glands on the coffee tree leaves were each too small to accommodate even one mealy bug. So the word was passed around and the ants gnawed the edges of the glands and enlarged them so that each would support a good-sized mealy bug, which the ants then carried to it. The mealy bug thrived exceedingly. The gland was enlarged still further and a whole family of mealy bugs was raised in the same hole. Thus a custom grew up and many such greatly enlarged glands were found in a few months, the ants reaping a plentiful supply of their beloved nectar. Here then, said Dr. Howard, was an ant apparently taking advantage of an opportunity which was new not only to the experience of the individual but new to the experience of the race, and if we adopt the most reasonable of the definitions of instinct, there seems to have been displayed intelligence of a high order.—Indiana Farmer.

The New Strawberry Bed.

Considering the ease with which a small bed of strawberries can be grown we wonder why more farmers do not grow them.

We read of renewing old strawberry beds, which is all right, if it is the best one can do, but owing to insect enemies and other causes I would not recommend the renewal of an old bed for the ordinary farmer.

We change the bed from year to year, here and there over the garden, trying to get as far away from insect pests and fungus diseases as possible.

As soon as we plow for garden truck we plow enough for the new bed. We lay off the bed in rows four feet apart with the garden hand cultivator; in this way we back up a loose spot every three feet, as we would for a cabbage plant, only larger. We then go to last year's bed, which by the way is young and has never fruited, and dig up good hardy plants, and when we can find enough of them, we dig those that are not going to bloom, for they will at once produce runners instead of the bloom.

We like to have a hunk of dirt to each plant. If conditions are favorable we do not water when setting, if otherwise we water them as set.

We use a pan or shallow box to carry the plants from the old to new bed. If for some reason we delay our bed until the fruit is set on plants, we clip off runners and fruit stems.

We cultivate frequently with hand hoe and one-horse cultivators; good cultivation means much towards success.

We throw the runners around for awhile, then allow them to set, between the rows, and widen as the season advances. When several runners get set, it will necessitate pulling out by hand some of the weeds.

We experimented some with varieties, but soon found two varieties which suited us and stayed with them. One of these deserves especial attention; it is a seedling which originated near here, and was named by the originator, "Hoosier." It has very heavy foliage, is hardy, runners freely, very large berries, abundant bearer, the berries are of excellent quality, but are strictly a "home use" berry as they are not firm enough to ship.

One season, four square rods yielded fifty-three gallons.—Abraham Bros., in the Indiana Farmer.

Farm Notes.

Why is it that so many farmers neglect to provide water for their hogs? Hogs need a drink occasionally when they want it, just the same as anybody else.

The scratching shed does not require to be anything elaborate. Any old building may be utilized for this purpose just so there is plenty of sunshine, no winds, and a dry floor.

Give hens an extra allowance of grain at night, scratching it amongst the litter, so that the fowls can be induced to exercise before they get their regular breakfast.

Give the mother sheep the most nourishing ration you can. They need it for milk. Wheat bran is good; clover hay is nice. Plenty of water and some roots now and then will help out.

The best preventive of garget is clean, careful milking and a vigorous rubbing and kneading of the affected part of the udder at the first sign of trouble. Three or four days of such treatment will usually ward off the disease.