

A COUNTRY STORY.

"A swan!" Squire Freshwater clapped his hand to his wa'mus pocket and jumped up so suddenly that the little family of Plymouth Rocks gathered about his feet fled shricking to their mother who was prospecting contentedly in Black Prince's manger. "I clean forget that letter; now that's the naked truth. Dee-clare ! I didn't mean to forgit the gal that way. Most likely she's out in the spring house; it's churnin' day. So I'll take it out there; she'll want to read it right off."

A minute later he tiptoed away from the springhouse, silent and unseen. "Good Lord!" he said, taking great strides down through the orchard. "Good Lord! I never'd a believ-

ed it."

Something! seemed to ail the squire that day. His wife noticed it. Mattie, too, caught him looking hard at her at the dinner table. "Well, father," she asked goodnaturedly, "is my hair done wrong?" "Your hair? No, 'taint your hair, my gal

'taint your hair.' Mattie started a little at this, but forgot

it a minute later. That night after the rest had gone up to

bed, he went over and shut the stair door carefully.

"I say, Marthy," he began, running his brown fingers through his hurricane of white hair, "did you ever think-did you ever notice anything wrong about our Mattie ?" It was out now, and he wheeled round

and faced her desperately. She looked up at him through her silver-bowed glasses with a gentle stare of amazement. "Mattie!" she said, "anything the matter with her! What do you mean?"

"I mean this, I-there's somethin' the matter with her-soul. I'm afraid she's an

—infidel—a heathen—that's it." A shade of alarm crept over his wife's

"You see," he went on, "I got a letter for her last night and clean forgot to give it to her till the middle of the forenoon, an' then knowin' she'd be in the spring-house, I took it out to her, that is, I went to the door, an -now I'm a-tellin' the naked truth-our gal were a-standin' there by the table. She'd made an idol, mother, a little idol out'n the butter, in she were a-standin' there before it, a-wishupin' it. It jest minded me of the Israelite; an' their golden calf. But, good Lord! is it a thing to laugh at, woman? Are you turned heathen, too?"

She choked down her laughter in a minute and sat up in her chair. "I do declare, Nate, I never heard anything so funny in

all my born days !" "Funny!" he began, with a sudden stern-

ness in his tone. "But 'twant an idol," she interposed "that's what's funny. It's your mistake. You see, Nate, when Mattie was down to Elmwood to the high school, she took a great fancy to wood carving and sculpture and such things, and so once in a while she tries her hand at it while she works over the butter."

The squire put both feet squarely on the floor and laid his hands carefully on his knees, inspecting them attentively to see that each was properly placed, and square in the middle. Squire Freshwater abhorred anything crooked or out of plumb.

"Marthy," he said, presently, "I'm a big fool. Let's go to bed,

Out in the fragrance and coolness of the spring-house, Mattie sang and worked in the fresh spring mornings. The spring bubbled up crystal clear in its dark slatestone basin in the corner, and then slipped away under the wall, and with a happy gurgle at being free again, it ran off singing and sparkling through bird-haunted orchard and meadow. Outside the door, the apple blossoms swung in all their pink and white loveliness, and among them Robin hid himself, and sent out drifts of song through the fragrant air.

Round and round went the handle of the yellow churn, "che-clurg, che-clurg" and by and by, after a few satisfied peeps and dashes of cold water, the golden lumps were lifted out into a big wooden bowl.

Down in the "south patch," her father caught, now and then, snatches of her singing, and leaned on his hoe to listen.

"Dee-clare!' he said with a satisfied smile. "It makes me feel a powerful sight better, now that's the naked truth, to know she's all right. I thought sure she was awashupin' that butter figger like them Israelites.

By and by the song was hushed. Over and over, and round and round, she worked the yellow mass; then with skilful touch and pat it began to shape, and she stood before it, rapt and eager, changing and shaping till the little model was perfect and complete.

A month before, young Dr. Brook had told her that he loved her. After the first startled heart-throbs, she had said that she thought every girl ought to know how to earn a living, and that she had never proved that she could.

"But can't you trust yourself to me?" he had asked, and then went on to tell her how he had waited till he could get a little home, and a little store laid by to begin on, and now that it was accomplished, he wanted her and wanted her very soon.

The young lady had some very decided opinions, and this was a pet theory of hers and one that she had much advocated of late, so she shut her red lips very tightly, and ed in the gale; the rain dashed heavily said she wouldn't marry him till she had against the window and caught the firelight's proved that she could be independent, if glimmer as it streamed down the glass. necessity demanded,

eyes shining even in the dark, "and now, the soft brown shadows; there were friendly you say I must wait again. I'm afraid-I voices; a face in a shadowy corner half rebelieve-I have heard it said that women | vealed; and in and out, through roar of are false, but I thought I had found a true | incoming winds and soft rain-filled silences, one.

Matie drew away from him a litle haughtilv. "Am I the less a true woman because of this?" she asked, with a sudden flash in

"But you know how lonely I am, how comfortless my life is, and you will not come to me. You don't care for me!" "Oh, I do ! I do !" she cried.

And then he had gone back to the very and coaxing words. The end of it was,perhaps, when she had proved certain family Bible for prayers, he happened to choose things," and with that he had to be content.

His boarding house at Elmwood had never seemed so dingy and comfortless as it seemed in the months that followed, nor his room

so dark and dreary. Mattie had gone to work in earnest. She drew her fifty dollars from the city bank the downcast face, and her eyes met his, full of sole."

to death. Careful nursing had brought the little creature through, and now she was as 'peart a creature as there was on the place.

Plymouth Rocks to go to housekeeping in, and gave a dozen more of them nests full | mother was at work. of big brown eggs to brood over.

One Saturday, she had harnessed Black Prince to the buggy and gone to the city on it ?" a secret errand, with a mysterious wooden box on the seat beside her. In the box was glance. a roll of the new little Jersey's butter, hard and yellow, wrapped in a snowy cloth and lying in a nest of fresh, green grass, and on top of the roll was the prettiest of apple blossom sprays, carved that morning in the springhouse. They were delighted with it at the Woman's Exchange, and promised to take all she would bring; so, when she turned homeward, there was a little triumphant sparkle in her eyes.

In due time, the little dwellings in the orchard were filled with peeping, downy families, and she was busy as a bee, too busy to see Dr. Brook when he rode by and bowed toher.

Hosts of new ideas came flocking down to her in the spring-house, and one day she carried out a new one: and when the last touch was put on there were twelve little large and dangerous animals the guns golden lions on individual butter plates. It to be used are extra heavy express rifles kept firm and hard.

Next day she drove to town in the early morning. There happened to be a young woman at the Exchange looking for some of this very butter, the "Freshwater butter having already made itself a name at the rabbits. Exchange, and when she saw Mattie's box, she spoke quickly and said she was very sure her mistress would buy the little lions and there are few who can attain to success because she was going to have her friends to in it. lunch. Thus Mattie disposed of her little

family of lions. first fluffy prettiness, and got themselves cunning little gray wings. A thieving hawk happy and cheerful, playing "hide and seek and hunt the grasshopper all day in the long, lush grass, and at night creeping under their che-e-p," which the mother answered with a soft, deep-voiced crooning note like a lulla-

"daisy," and Mattie christened her "Daisy." Daisy was the pet of the farm.

When the county fair time came, Mattie was fuller of mysteries than ever, only she took her father into her confidence, and he brought home mysterious somethings in his wagon, wrapped in old carpets and packed in boxes, and on Tuesday he drove off to the fair with a great wooden box in the wagon. shook her head.

One of the prettiest exhibits in the Farm and on this crystal foundation was a castle built of solid golden butter, tower and turret and battlemented wall, all complete, with ier gun. two tiny sleeping lions at either side of the entrance. The card on it bore Mattie Freshwater's name, and late that afternoon a gay yards at the greatest, though you red card was tied on the corner.

and the little golden lions grew in great up her accounts, she found that she had an even two hundred dollars, besides the cows and the thirty hens, and she announced the fact with a gleam of triumph in her eyes.

Dr. Brook fared badly next time he saw her. She had grown so very independent that she had almost decided not to marry any tainty of their hitting the object aimed at. man. Women who didn't marry were better off nowadays anyhow. But when a few minutes later she stood at the sitting-room window and heard his horse's hoofs go tearing down the frozen yard, she turned and to be anything going on in this town. ran up the stairs and never stopped till she | Patrick (rebuking)-"Not'in' goin' on? was in her own room with the door locked, Sure there's fufteen big stroikes goin' on this When the clattering of the hoofs had died | vury minute." wholly away in the distance, she turned and threw herself on the bed and neither moved nor spoke for an hour.

With the coming of winter days, the springhouse had been deserted, and the butter had to be made in the wide, shining, farmhouse kitchen. When next churning day came, there was no singing and lingering over the task, no toying with the golden mass, but a sober persistence till it was done and put me, the vest especially." away out of sight. Golden idols had lost their

The March night was shutting down, cold and gloomy. There was no sunset, but a swift, down-swooping darkness that blotted out the world with sudden night. The Squire had been having "a tech of fever, and Dr. Brook had stopped to see him. Be fore he was ready to go, the evil promise of the day had been fulfilled, and they forbade his venturing forth. So he sat down again to wait till the fury of the wind and storm

should spend itself. But the downpour was continuous, the steady rush and roar of waters did not cease. Great thunderous gusts of wind, in grand crescendo, swept up from the far reaches of field and meadow, and hurled themselves against the house till it shook and trembled. The great maples outside writhed and twist-But within was peace. The pleasant fire-"But I've waited so long," he said with his light flickered and did merry battle with the words of an old song sung themselves over and over in his brain.

"And her face it is the fairest That e'er the sun shone on, That e'er the sun shone on, And deep blue is her ee, And for bonnie Annie Laurie I'd lay me down and dee."

beginning with arguments and persuasions | Squire Freshwater, after a brief survey of | wanted, and when I finally found the ribthe windswept outer world, came back re- bon I couldn't buy it, because the miserable she wouldn't. That is, she would only give marking that 'twas " the worst ekinokshul little dollar had all been used up in car fare.' the very uncertain promise of "Sometime, storm he ever see." When he opened the big brown finger crept down the page and his deep voice followed it. Dr. Brook listened idly, with his eyes on the shadowy face.

"Ephraim is joined to his idols," read the Squire, " let him alone."

Dr. Brook saw a sudden light sweep over great velocity)-" And now you have a flow

and bought another cow, not a full-blooded of tears. Then she slipped noiselessly from Jersey because her father thought they her seat and vanished through the open "wan't likely to be as healthy nor do as well kitchen door. Some way, after prayers, he as part Jersey." . The red cow, Cherry, found his way out to her, where she stood belonged to her, also little Spot, that she faintly outlined against the pitchy blackness had begged from her father when in its calf- of the window. And then and there, in the hood it had gone lame and been condemned soft gloom and shadow, sweet and humble, she gave her hand into his, and the golden | er empties into the St. Johns, twenty-five idols were dethroned.

When morning broke, clear and shining, She made some chicken coops for her big | with blue skies and jubilant song of birds, | ness, there not being a stretch in its en-Mattie peeped into the pantry where her tire length over 300 feet, while from bank

> "I can't keep chickens and cows in Elmwood, mother, what am I going to do about

Her mother look up with a quick, pleased "So you are going to marry Dr. Brook!"

> Guns and Their Use. BY MAURICE THOMPSON.

The best rifle for boys is a 32-calibre oreach-loader, which uses short metal shells. Such a gan, if of good make, will be quite accurate at any range within 150 yards, and will kill any game that boys are privileged to hunt. I say this because game that is large or dangerous should never be followed by the young or inexperienced. If, however, a boy must shoot large game, let him have a gun of large calibre. For deer, antelope and the like, a 44-gauge is quite heavy enough, but for bear and all was never warm in the spring-house, so they which none but strong men should try to handle.

For target-shooting at short range a 22calibre or even a smaller rifle may be used, and these small guns are very effective for squirrel-shooting in low timber or for killing

The rifle may be used for shooting at moving objects, but it requires great expertness

In choosing a shotgun, the chief thing is to get one of excellent workmanship, and Summer went by. The chickens lost their to do this requires some knowledge of the parts of the weapon. Of all the parts the barrel is the most important, though for captured two or three, but the rest grew up | that matter nearly all the reputable makers turn out good ones and no other sort. Order a gun with Damascus or laminated steel barrels and rebounding locks; have the mother's wings with sleepy little "che-e-p, left barrel "choked" and the right with cylinder bore. A choked barrel is bored so that it throws the shot very close together and with even distribution. The cylinder The little new cow proved a regular bore is of the same diameter throughout its length, and it scatters the shot over a large surface.

Boys will find a gun of the size called 20gauge the lightest and best for shooting all game not larger than quail. For all ordinary inland shooting, however, the preferable weapon is the 16-gauge, weighing about seven, or better, six and a half pounds. Let the stock be as straight as you can well use, The rest were all curiosity, but Mattie only and the barrels should be twenty-eight or not under twenty-six inches long. I have used a gun of the heavier weight mentioned Products department was the display of but- for years and have found it just the thing ter. It was in a small glass show case, that | for all small game, and have used it successhad been paved with crystal blocks of ice, fully on wild fowl. Still, for shore and boat, when water fowl are flying high and fast, it is much more satisfactory to handle a heav-

The safe range of a shotgun loaded with small shot is from fifty to sixty will hear men boast of their guns The chickens flourished, the cattle throve killing every time at much greater distance. About forty yards is the more prodemand. Four months later, when she cast | bable limit of safety for light guns, loaded with, say No 8 shot. The pellets go with great force when they first leave the gun, but lose speed rapidly as their distance from the muzzle increases; moreover, they spread apart or scatter as they fly, soon getting so widely separated that there can be no cer-

### A Lively Place.

Drummer (wearily)-"There dosen't seem

# Why he Didn't Accept It.

First Tramp-How did you fare at that house, Bill? Second Tramp—The lady offered me a suit

of clothes. "Why didn't you take it?" "I can wear most anything, but I think a minister's clothes look a little out of place on

### A Wise Clerk.

A stylishly dressed woman was recently brought before a Toronto city magistrate on a charge of stealing ribbons in a store. The chief clerk had observed her talking freely with her counsel, and was puzzled because she looked at him blankly when he asked her name and residence and replied with a shake of her head.

"She is French,' explained the lawyer: 'and doesn't understand English. Put it down 'Marie Latouche.' '

The clerk frowned incredulously.

"What age is she?" he asked. "Twenty-two," replied the lawyer.

Then the clerk's eyes twinkled as he said oftly: "Thirty-two?"

"No, twenty-two!" snapped the fair pris

Umph!" said the clerk, "you can speak English, if you don't understand it !"

### Life in Toronto.

Mr. Nubbins-"Well, my dear, did you succeed in matching that ribbon?"

Mrs. Nubbins (tired to death and mad as a hornet)--"The next time I start out shop ping with an empty pocket-book you'll know

Mr. N.—"But, my dear, you said you wanted only a little change to get some ribbon, a mere thread to piece out with, and you asked for ten cents. I handed you a

Mrs. N.—"Well, and I had to go fifteen Bed time came, and the storm still raged. or twenty places before I could get what I

### They go Together.

Stern papa-" Ah, going !" Late goer-"Yes, sir. Your daughter and I have enjoyed a feast of reason." Stern papa (moving his right foot with

#### OUEER FLORIDA STEAMBOATING. Weird Sights by Night from an Ocklawaha River Stem Winder.

The river is 300 miles long, and its source is at Okeehumkee, near Leesburg. Winding down with a four-mile current, the rivmiles south of Palatka. The greatest characteristic of the Ocklawaha is its crooked-

which reflects as a mirror. is built specially for the Ocklawaha, meas. partment above one of the tanks alongside ures seventy feet in length by thirty in the engine room. On the manhole being width, with stern wheel. The cabin is opened, some naked bodies were seen. The comfortable and roomy, admirably adapted | coal in the main hold was quickly removed to tourist travel. The crew is composed to get at the sliding door to the tank, and principally of negro deck hands, whose busi- when this was opened a horrible sight was ness it is to take a pole and shove the steamer off from the bank, should she run into it which is very often done.

for the Ocklawaha, leaving the great St. the intolerable heat. The compartment is Johns in the rear, one thinks that she is to about three feet high and two feet wide, and run into the woods, but on nearing the extends across the ship. It is used only for mouth a creek-like stream is noticed, and the purpose of getting at the tank for exshe ploughs along, and is soon surrounded amination purposes. by trees, from which branches lap over and In this cramped place twelve persons, one meet, making the scene one of weird grandeur. | man and the others women, had been stowed As the little craft rounds the bends you for a week. Japanese women are not allowed wonder if she won't run into the woods, but to leave their own country without official a bell signal to the engineer checks its slow permission, but the demand for them for speed to a motion that is almost a stop and immoral purposes is so great that frequent the point is gained, when we pass on. The attempts are made to smuggle them on board exhaust from the smoke-stack echoes in the steamers. That appears to have been the dimdistance, through the thick forest, while object in the present case. A party of ten an occasional wail or screech from some wild girls, in charge of a man and an old woman, birds adds to the music so romantic, peculiar were stowed away in the hole, where there to the surroundings. Hours pass and seem was neither ventilation nor light. but as minutes. On the forward deck the They had a supply of food and water with sightseers gather to "take in" everything. them, so that starvation was not added to An occasional alligator is seen to swim just their other sufferings, but that any of them across the bow or rest upon a dry spot in the should have survived a week's confinement broiling sun, slumbering and fearless, for it in such a place is simply wonderful. The has long been the rule on Ocklawaha boats man was one of those who succumbed, but never to allow passengers to shoot off a gun the old woman survived. The survivors or disturb this great curiosity, so famous were in a shocking condition. Their bodies on all Florida streams. With reluctance were swollen and covered with prickly we give up our sightseeing position to answer heat. They at once received such attention the supper bell, and hurry through the meal as those on board were able to give them. that no strange sight will be lost. When we again reach the deck darkness supplied.

has clouded the skies, and the echo becomes louder as the stillness of night grows deeper | they were induced to leave their homes by with the fleeting hours. The pilot house is the man and woman by promises of obtainon the hurricane deck. Two negroes stand ing good situations in Hong Kong. On at the wheel, while the Captain sits on deck | their arrival at Nagasaki they were put on smoking a cigar, with "eyes front." On top | board the steamer. They got into the comthe pilot house is an iron vessel, resting on partment by the sliding door from the hold legs that free it from the deck. In that ves- before the cargo was fully loaded, and until sel a glowing fire is kept burning all night the door was closed they had no idea of the long, with pine knots for fuel. The dusky suffering they were to undergo. Afterward darky who acts as fireman is noticed only they found themselves literally buried alive, occasionally by the grin on his face, which is without any power of escape or of attracting made all the more plain by the appearance attention. of his white teeth. One would think that a It has been impossible to ascertain at what locomotive headlight would be better on particular time the eight deceased persons these steamers. The Captain informed us succumbed, but the survivors say that the that the light must shine in all directions, heat of the iron plates became so great that hence the use of a pine fire. The bends in the the living lay across the bodies of the dead in river are so short that a locomotive light order to secure relief. Capt. Rumsey viewcould not be used quick enough in casting ed the bodies and they were afterward out its reflection, that the pilot might see buried. The four survivors were sent to which way to steer his boat.

living to see. The first night out there General. was a party of us on the upper deck. The little steamer ran so close to the river bank that the tree branches raked off our hats. The nego on the pilot house spied two cranes wood knot killed them both at one lick, when kin to me. the birds fell ot our feet.

More than once did the steamer in trying of happiness flitting over his face. "How did to make a short bend run into the woods, you know? Come here and sit on my lap and and have to be poled off by the deck hands. tell me all you have heard." Whenever this was the case there was a lively scramble to see which would get into | began the boy after he was safely in the arms the cabin first.

came to what is known as the "Sisters," two about you." large cypress trees grown up opposite to each other directly at the water's edge. Here "He was mad," replied the terror, "cause we squeezed through with only about one sis goes with you so much. foot on each side of the boat with which to get through.

### Needed No Reminder.

The lightning calculator looked out over

"Is there any other gentleman present," he said, "who would like to know the day of the week on which any event took place My friend," he continued, addressing a middle-aged man in front of him, "if you will give me the day of the month and year when you were married I can tell you instantly what day of the week it was.

"I don't need to learn," replied the mid dle-aged man, whose name was Enpeck. was married Wednesday, but"-and he took off his hat and wiped his bald head slowly and thoughtfully-"I was born Friday."

### She Reminded Him of the Sea.

Mr. Gay Lant-"You are fond of the sea, I presume, Miss Butie'

Miss Butie-"Indeed I am not, I was once

sea-sick." Mr. G. L.—"I should have thought you were fond of the sea; you remind me of it.' Miss B.-"I remind you of it. How?"

Mr. G. L.—"Why your teeth are like pearls, your lips like coral, your ears like pink tinted shells and your eyes like the deep, unfathomable ocean.'

Miss B.—"You flatterer." Then something followed which was not entirely without maritime associations. It was a little smack.

### Six of One and Half a Dozen of the Other.

Collector-"Mr. Hardup in?" Mrs. Hardup-" No, he's out collecting. C.—"That's what you told me the last time I was here.'

Mrs. H .-- "Yes." C.—"And the time before that."

you have."

Mrs. H.—"Yes." C. (sarcastically)—"He don't seem to

have much success. Mrs. H. (as she slams the door in his face)-" Seems to have as much success as

### A Liberal Corporation.

Grateful Citizen-"I was delighted to read in the papers that you had refused to raise the price of ice."

President Ice Company-"That is true only change will be in the lumps."

## BURIED ALIVE IN A STEAMER.

Terrible Sufferings of Twelve Japanese Stowaways.

Ten Girls, an Old Woman, and a Man Secrete Themselves Below Deck-When

Found a Week Later Eight Were Dead. The steamer Gaelic, which arrived at San Francisco from the Orient the other mornto bank the widest part is not over fifty feet. | ing, brings a shocking story of the death of The land on either side is swamp land, and eight people on board the Japanese steamer there is hardly a dry spot between its source | which left Nagasaki on March 21 and arrivand Silver Spring, so noted for clear water, ed at Hong Kong four days later. For some days an odor had been noticed in the We left Palatka on Monday morning on engineers' mess room, which gradually grew the Okeehumkee, which runs between that worse and was attributed to dead rats. point and Silver Springs. Our boat, which After a long search it was traced to a com-

Eight dead bodies and four still alive were disclosed, all completely naked, their When the little steamer turns her course clothes having been discarded on account of

revealed.

Warm baths were provided and clothing was

The story told by the three girls is that

Tung Wah Hospital, where they are de-A night on the Ocklawaha is a sight worth | tained under orders of the Registrar-

### Proud of the Relationship.

"Oh, Mr. Dusenberry," cried her little roosting on a limb, and picking up a light- brother, "I'm so glad you are going to be "Ah, Johnny, is that so?" he gasped, a look

"Sister's other feller come here last night," of the young man, devouring a quarter's One hundred miles up the Ocklawaha we worth of candy. "and I heard them talking

"What did they say?"

"And what was her reply to him?" continued the young man, the look of happiness spreading further across his features.

"She said," began the youth, again, "that he needn't get mad 'cause you come to see her, as you was a soft snap and was saving him lots of money that would go to fixin' up their house after they were married."

The look of contentment on the young man's face gave way to the pallor of despair, "Well, how is that going to make me kin

to you?" "Oh," went on the boy, "I'm coming to that now. She said that when you proposed

to her she would be a sister to you, and won't that make you my brother?" As the child picked himself off the floor he beheld the form of the young man flit through

### His Excuse is a Perfectly Valid One.

the front door.

She was the typical country schoolma'am She had a youthful, engaging look, and an evident interest in what went on in the neighborhood, despite the responsibility that rested on her shoulders.

"Willie Smith," she said, "you are late again.'

"Yes m." "This must be stopped. I have a great mind to punish you, and I assure you that if you allow it to occur again you will not escape lightly. What is the cause of your tardiness ?"

" Mi: 8 Jenkins' beau." "Who? that young man from town." " Yes'm.

"Does he go to see Miss Jenkins often?" "Bout seven times a week." "The idea! Do you know whether they are going to get married ?"

" Not exactly, but I know that they talk mighty sweet to each other, and he gave her a ring. " Poor fellow! You may go to your seat, Willie."

# Blood on the Moon

Wife-" My dear, that horrid man next door has killed the dog."

Husband-" Well, never mind, my dear; I'll get you another one some time." Wife-"But it wasn't my Fido that he killed ; it was your hunting dog."

Husband (wildly)-" Where's my gun?" Special festivities are under consideration We shall make no change in the price. The for the welcoming of the Duke and Duchess of Connaught at Windsor Castle.