BY HATTIE WHITNEY.

We were always getting out of wood at Maple Knoll.

It was the big fireplace in the sitting :: oom that ate up all the fuel we could get. I never saw such an insatiable monster. Yet we couldn't make up our minds to close it up and put up a stove instead, because of its radiant cheerfulness. How jolly it was, just when the first touch of a winter's twilight stole on, to pile fresh hickory logs on the old andirons and watch the flames dash up the chimney's throat and light the whole room with a mellow crimson

flame. But the wood! Of course, we three women couldn't very well go out and chop and haul it, and our funds did not always warrant hiring large quantities laid in, besides which the neighboring help we could get was not very dependable on at all times.

Maple Knoll was a lovely place, but didn't bring in much revenue, worked, as we were obliged to have it done, by any Tom, Dick or Harting a load hauled now and then about your ears. There wasn't when some neighbor had the time and inclination to undertake it.

December though it was, we had had a streak of regular Indian-summery weather-a mild atmosphere interwoven with a soft smokiness. Our stove wood had run out, and the the situation as possible, was bringneighbors had-all been too busy hauling cordwood to attend to our needs. Our chip yard was in good condition, however, and we had been levying on ting away as serenely as if he hadn't it for cooking purposes, using what driven us all frantic by his ill-timed little wood we had for the fireplace, as we didn't need much, and had gone jogging along in an easy, grasshoppery way, as if the pleasant weather were going to last all winter.

We woke up the morning of De- I was ashamed of was the corn cakes; cember 30 to find the world nearly they were so big and clumsy, and lost in a most beautiful blizzard of Dora had crumbled the edges in putward world a white desolation, but there were little drifts all over the inside of the house.

"Dora," I shouted, bouncing out a snow bank, "how many chips did we bring in last night?"

puff of snow out of her shoe. hopped out of my drift and rushed to the window.

do perish afterward."

"We'd better save the sitting-room the snow to the house. wood until after breakfast," counthe kitchen."

"Sure," said I, "that'll be a lark." In spite of the dismal outlook we had a cheerful fire and a cozy kitchbreakfast Dora and I did ourselves cle-" up like Laplanders and plunged out into the blizzard to feed and milk the cows, after which we braved the winter's blast long enough to trans-

partly by rolling it over and over. Breakfast was ready when we got It safely under cover, and notwithstanding our impending doom, we fell upon the ham and fried potatoes and pancakes, and enjoyed our meal immensely.

port my treasure stump to the house,

which we did partly by lugging and

"Girls," said auntie, when the last potato and the last crimpy brown batter-cake had vanished, "I don't want to dampen your spirits, but there isn't a chip left, and how we're going to cook dinner I don't

"Nett," said Dora (who was just three months older than I), "we'll cook dinner by the fireplace."

"Dora," I said, "you're gifted. That's what we will, and imagine wo're our own great-grandmothers and greataunts-how lovely!"

"Well, you'll have to help, miss, and I doubt if you think it so lovely before you get through," returned Dora. "You'll be baked a beautiful brown."

We took an inventory of our stores to see what there was we could cook by the fireplace.

"There's a sparerib, for one thing," announced Dora. "We'll hang it up by a string in front of the fire." "Potatoes we can boil by hanging the kettle on the hook and chain,'

said Aunt Laura. "And the sweet potatoes we can roast in the ashes." I added.

"And bake corn in a skillet in the hot coals," finished Dora. "Goody," said I, "that's a fine

enough dinner for a blizzardy day like this. Of course, nobody'll come." But somebody did come, as they usually do when you think they won't; and who of all persons but Rev. Cyrus Melton! Dora fairly equirmed when Aunt Laura brought him right into the sitting-room, for, of course, she couldn't take him anywhere else, unless, she wanted to freeze him. So in he came, smiling placidly, and there was the rib cooking in front of the fire with a skillet

set under to catch the gravy, and there was Dora with her face like a hollyhock, turning a great hoecake in another skillet, and there was I preach about it next Sunday," more attentive to Dora than the fact come to our assistance. of her being one of his flock warranted, and I knew that in her eyes he was about as near a state of perfection as a mortal man needed to

He was just riding out, he explainto see old Mrs. Hankins, who was sick, and had been delayed a little by the blizzard and been on the road quite awhile; he had brought a bag of oats for his horse, and had come up through the side lane and in our barn to eat his oats, while he himself ran in to see how we all fared this inclement day, etc., etc. slid out while he was thus discoursing and rushed to the parlor with a very forlorn hope of finding a stray stick or two left over there, making a fire and getting him into the parlor while we finished the dinner. The hope died as I poked my head into the arctic desolation of our best room. It was on the east side, where the spiteful wind had been batabout everything else, but for fuel had puffed in under the door. You scrap of wood nor a chip in the wood box. Relinquishing a wild idea chopping up a parlor chair or two to make a fire of, I scooted back to the sitting-room chilled to the bone. Dora, putting as bold a face upon ing in dishes from the dining-room and setting the table right under the eyes of the minister, who was chatcall. Aunt Laura had levied on her cellar goodies and produced preserved quinces, apple jelly, pickled peach-

whirling snow. Not only was the turning tnem. But that good man seemed to think we had a banquet, and even the corn cakes didn't go begging so far as he was concerned. We all made merry over our preof bed and landing with one foot in dicament as we told him how it hap- ther ahead than we could, and I put grateful and thankful we ought to be but shook his head a little, and to sleep. "About enough to cook breakfast said it oughtn't to go on that way. I slept so soundly that I was with," Dora answered, with the calm- He proceeded upon his errand soon greeted the next morning by a savness of despair, as she shook a little after dinner, and we went about our ory, sagey scent of frying sausages work with what spirits we might. It coming up the little back stairs bewasn't more than two hours after he fore I fairly got back from the

es and chow-chow, so the dinner

wasn't so frightful. The only thing

seled Dora, "and just have a fire in grinned, "so I 'lowed I'd come an' Aunt Laura came down without a the cook-stove till then, and eat in snake up a few logs 'n' split fer de speck of neuralgia and feeling as spry

cook'n' stove."

like Uncle Jink to be so indifferent pop out any minute.

deeds. were ready to fall in a heap.

did," said Aunt Laura.

an object of charity," ground Dora, "especially-"

"Oh, well, I don't suppose he'll prodding in the ashes with a long said, consolingly; but Dora wouldn't fork to dig out the sweet potatoes! cheer up very much. Still, it was Not that it mattered much about very comfortable to have plenty of me; but some folks were beginning to wood, and I felt grateful to the good observe that Rev. Cyrus was a trifle man for instigating Uncle Jink to

Of all the 365 days of that year the three hundred and sixty-fifth was the most dismal at Maple Knoll. It opened with a drizzling, soaking those jolly brown eyes of his, as he rain, much more depressing than the blizzard from which it evoluted; the kind that dampens your spirits in spite of all the philosophy you can bring to bear against it. The sky was a dismal gray waste without a slit of light. Aunt Laura had a racking neuralgia in her face. Dora taken the liberty to put the animal had been dreaming about charity and wood all night. As for me, I had a little trouble of my own which popped up just now more aggressively than ever. I never had but one lover (I never wanted but one), and he was a poor young man who had gone to the frozen Alaskan regions with the avowed intention of making his fortune and coming back to share it with me, rebuild the old house into a stately mansion and take care of Aunt Laura and Dora, which was quite proper; for, you see, I had tering at it all night, searching out been gathered into the family when a hundred crevices about windows I was left a small orphan, in Uncle of aunt and Dora and (incidentally) and door to hurl the fine, powdery John's time, and he and Aunt Laura snow through. There were drifts, had not made an atom of difference we could pick up; and the old varying in size, on the piano, on the between Dora and me in their love house was picturesque-but leaky as chairs, and a dainty white powdering and care. But now it had been so a sieve. Still, we managed very well all over the carpet, which the wind long since I had heard from Frank I couldn't help being afraid he had we were obliged to depend on get- could fairly feel the gale whisking frozen to death or been buried in a snowslide. And this dreadful rainy day I couldn't even have the satisfaction of going or sending to town for the mail, if there should possibly be any news.

Dora and I had an unwritten law bread in consequence, a slip in the cake in the fireplace. mud on Dora's part, etc., etc.-that and relentlessly, we felt that we ly, and we sat up till all kind going to bed at eight o'clock.

and the lights were out I could have cavern, roasting nuts and red apples, cried just out of low spirits, but I talking about the new paths opening wouldn't. I knew God could see far- before us, and telling each other how pened, and he joked about it, too, everything into His hands and went for this happy opening day of the

left that Uncle Jink, a dilapidated slumber world. Dora was down in "Meantime, let's go down and make old colored man, appeared with a the kitchen singing "Lightly Row" a fire and get a good warm-up if we yoke of steers, which he left in the over the biscuits, and looking as lane while he came plodding through fresh as a peach, with her rosy cheeks and clear gray eyes. And the "Heerd y'all was out o' wood," he stove was drawing beautifully. And si'place 'n' whack up some fer de as a girl, to finish breakfast, while said Aunt Laura, "for we are in rain had turned into a lovely soft

> pounded Dora, and looked as if she for any stray caller who might work of their own doing. * * * chance to appear. She had a cheer-"It was very good of him if he ful fire in the parlor, a plentiful sup-"Good-yes; but who wants to be we all put on our pretty house dress-

anyone came or not.

At half past nine a pleasant melody things awf. I are coming. of sleigh bells jingled along, and the a comet whisking its tween this call and his last one; but such is the perversity of man. I imagined he looked a little disappointed at not being ushered into the cooking regions again. Still, he smiled very good-naturedly, with fished something out of his pocket and handed it to me.

"Miss Nettie," he said, "I felt i in my bones that you couldn't get any mail up here on the hill all yes- Tupper says: "It is ills that never terday, and I dropped in at the post office as I came by this morning, and found you this."

even before I saw the handwriting on says that moonlight is especially it, and perhaps I didn't fly to get it dreaded by engineers. People wonand scamper out to the big fireplace der acci ents should happen on and curl down beside it on a little bright moonlight nights But the wooden stool to read my letter all engineer would far rather plunge alone. Frank hadn't made a fortune, through deepest darkness. On a he wrote me, and he didn't know as bright moonlight night he is conwe could have a big mansion built, stantly in a state of nervous tenbut he had dug enough gold to re- sion, because of confusing shadows pair the old house and make us all ahead. Right across the track lies comfortable, and he was on his way a shadow; a few rods away it looks home that blessed minute to meta- precisely like a man lying there. It morphose Maple Knoll into the finest is not a man, but a shadow. Then a little farm in the country, take care

When I got back to earth again

Mr. Melton had taken Dora off in his sleigh for a ride, so auntie and I had a little jollification of our own, and I forgot all about lunch time. It didn't matter, though, for when the sleighing couple came back they didn't seem to know much of anything. I fell on Dora in the hall and told all about Frank's letter, and she hugged me black in the face fighting shadows. It is a besetting and said she was tremendously pleas- sin with far too many of us. Shakethat the more downcast we felt the ed, but he wouldn't have to take sceare says: "Each substance of jollier we should force ourselves to care of her, because that was going grief hath 20 shadows, which show be. To-day I think we degenerated to be attended to by Rev. Cyrus, like gricf itself, but are not so." into silliness in our efforts to be who was the dearest man in the There are people, and plenty of cheerful. But a lot of smaller trou- world, but crazy as a loon, because them, haggard in face, bowed groanbles followed each other so persist- he confessed that he had fallen more ing to the earth, with a pile of ently-such as the refusal of the cook in love with her than ever the day nothing but shadows on their backs. stove to draw, the falling of the light he came and found her baking hoe- Now, if we really want to be happy

We celebrated that night by having when, to cap the climax that evening the biggest fire of the season in the our beloved fireplace smoked sulkily old fireplace, which behaved splendidmight as well wind up the year by hours, Aunt Laura, Dora and I, with no light but the mellow crimson and When we were all snuggled down gold brilliance of that big old black new year.

A HAPPY NEW YEAR.

Some Mistakes to Avoid if 1974 Is to Be a Better Year Than 1903.

"Happy New Year!" The very air is tremulous with the holiday greetings of love. They have garwith richer wreaths than those of holly or evergreen or mistletoe, writes Gerard B. F. Hallock. Yet we must concede that many people, Dora and I went forth to do the if we may judge by many indications, "It's very kind of you, indeed," milking. And behold! the sopping are not happy. Why? For general answer we may paraphrase Shakesen when Aunt Laurs Ame down, and great need of wood-only I'm afraid snow in the night, not a blizzardy peare's word about greatness, and He found there was plenty for him then while she began to prepare I can't pay you for it to-day, Un- snow like the one before the rain, say: "Some people are born to be that blew in everywhere, but a gen- unhappy, some achieve unhappiness, "Dass all right-dass all right," in- tle, fine, thick powder. It had stop- and some have unhappiness thrust terrupted Uncle Jink; "don't y'all ped falling now, and the air felt upon them." Some seem, indeed, to boddah 'about dat-dass all right," crispy and bracing. The sun wasn't be born unhappy, constitutionally and he scuffed away, leaving us a lit- shining yet, but there was a mellow miserable. Some have unhappiness tle mystified, for it was not quite look in the sky, as if it meant to thrust upon them-they are placed amid circumstances they cannot about compensation for his good New Year's calling was not much change. But the vast majority of in vogue in our rural district; still, unhappy people simply achieve un-"Of course Mr. Melton went and it was Aunt Laura's way to make a happiness; they have brought it uptold him to come, and either paid red-letter day of the opening one of on themselves, and they alone are to him or agreed to if we didn't," ex- the year, and always to be prepared blame for being wretched. It is a

> People try to find happiness in wrong-doing, and they are always disply of coffee and cake on hand, and appointed; and so they became morcse and sul en and wretched. Witen a person says he is very unhappy, it is a pertinent thing to ask: "What have you been doing? What makes you unhappy? What sin have you committed whose memory sits like an avenging spirit in your heart, glaring at you with eyes that never slumber?" How often a downcast haggard, despairing face indicates some dark record in the life. The person has done wrong and is suffering for it. It is sin that makes the life a burden and the soul unhappy.

But there are many lesser evils, and much more under our control, which many people permit to act as preventives of happiness. For ex- looking passenger, in a grave and ample, how much happiness is pre- far-away voice. "Man is a f. aud, vented by the simple fact of undue woman a bore, happiness a delusion, sensitiveness. We are liable to al- friendship a humbug; love is a dislow the most trivial thing to irri- ease, beauty a deception, marriage a tate us. "An irritable man," it has mistake, a wife a trial, a child a been well said, "lies like a hedge- nuisance; good is merely hypocricy, hog, rolled up the wrong way, tor- evil is detection. The whole system

self to be of vastly more importance ing. Ar-r-r-r-r !" generally unhappy. Self-conceit, pure sia pretty badly at times myself." and simple, is at the base of all that kind of unhappiness.

common a fault with us all. The to-day?"

es and prepared to be happy whether present may be well enough, but we peer out into the future and think fiery tail cutest little cutter stopped at our among the stars, and it certaily gate, and here came Rev. Cyrus Mel- will demolish our planet by a certain ton smiling up the walk. We were day! Business is doing pretty well mighty thankful for the contrast be- for the time of the year, but I am wenderfully afraid that there will be a panic before the season is out and a general breakdown of failures! The war may be over, but I very much fear we shall find a resumption of hostilities or we shall be into 'another one before the end comes! Did you ever hear anybody talk like that? With too many of us it is just fret, fret, all the time, not over actual, but just anticipated troubles: wo: rying over imaginary evils. As happen that have mostly made men miserable.

We read not long ago an account, Maybe I didn't know what it was, taken from a railroad journal, which cow, or a horse, or a tree, seems to be lying athwart the rails. It is only a shadow, but it bothers the engineer to tell whether it is a shadow or not. He must watch very closely. He is kept in a constant strain by those apparitions, until he almost begins to doubt his senses. Many an engineer reaches the end of his run on a moonlight right, tired in soul and body merely from his constant fight with shadows.

But engineers are not the only people who weary themselves with we have got to stop fighting shadlows, to cease borrowing trouble. Besides, what's the use of worrying? It will be time enough to cross tho bridge when we get there. "Taking trouble on interest," some one calls it, it is such folly. To make the mistakes we have mentioned is how not to have a happy new year. To avoid these mistakes during 1904 will go far toward making the year as happy as we could wish.

The New Year.

The clock struck twelve in the old church tower, And the old year slipped away,

To be lost in the crowd of phantom In the House of Dreams that stay All wrapped in their cloaks of

landed our homes and our hearts Then swift and sweet o'er the door's

worn sill Came the youngest child of Time, With a gay little bow and a merry

laugh, And a voice like bells a-chime, Challenging frost and rime.

to do. The strong and the weak were here,

And both held out their hands to him. And gave him greetings dear, The beautiful young New Year.

'You must bring us better days,"

they said; "The Old Year was a cheat." Which I think was mean when the year was dead; Such fate do dead years meet, To be spurned by scornful feet!

"I bring you the best a year can

bring," The newcomer stoutly spake, 'The chance of work, the gift of

And the bread of love to break, If but my gifts you'll take."

The noblest thing a year can lay In the lap of you or me, The brave New Year has brought this day.

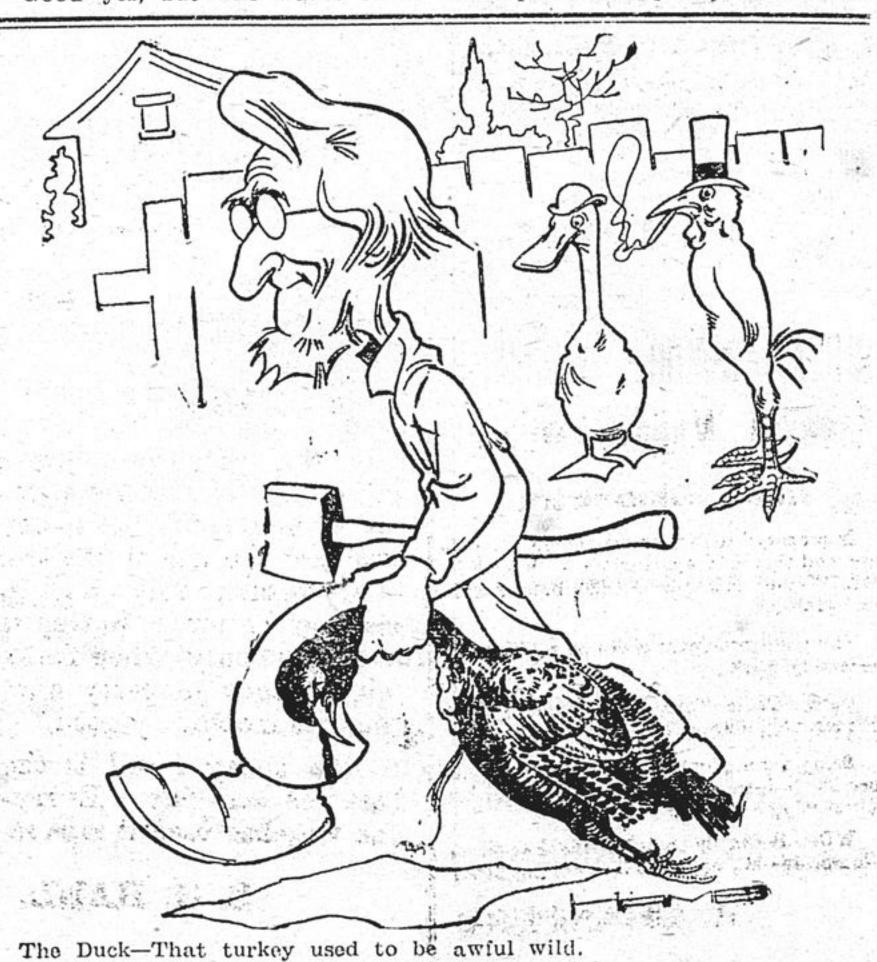
It is Opportunity, Which the wise are quick to see.

HE HAD A LIVER.

"Life is a failure," said the tiredturing himself with his own quills, of existence-life, morality, society, Exaggerated egotism is another of humanity, and all that-is a hellow those preventable and yet far too sham. Our boasted wisdom is egocommon things that stand in the tism; genero ity is imbellity. There way of our happiness. There is many is nothing of any importance but a man the cause of whose unhappi- money. Money is everything, and, ness is simply that he believes him- after all, what is everything? Noth-

than other people think we is. He "Glad to meet you, sir," said the feels that he is unapprecladed, and thin little man with the ginger-hued because of this, he snails and frets whiskers, extending his hand cordialat everything and everybody, and is ly to the speaker. "I have dysrep-

"And you will rever forget me?" Still another, way that happiness asked the gul of her lover, a grois prevented is by the habit of bor- cer's assistant, "Never," he said, rowing trouble. This is far too absently, "Is there anything more



The Rooster-He's a "dead one" now, all right.