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WIDE AWAKE

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IN THE MIDST OF ALARMS.

BY ROBERT BARR, IN "LIPPINCOTT'S MAGAZINE."

CHAPTER XI.

Margaret spoke caressingly to her horse when she opened the stable door, and Gypsy replied with an affectionate low guttural whinny which the Scotch graphically term "nickering." She patted the little animal as if Gypsy was surprised at being saddled and bridled at that hour of the night, but no protest was made, the horse merely rubbing its nose lovingly up and down Margaret's sleeve as she buckled the different straps. There was evidently a good understanding between those two.

"No, Gypsy," she whispered, "I have nothing for you to-night,—nothing but hard work and quick work. Now you mustn't make a noise till we get past the house."

She slipped the loop of a bridle on which she always carried but Gypsy had never felt the indignity of a lash. The little horse was ready to do what he was required without a word.

Margaret opened the big gate before she mounted her horse, and there was therefore no clattering on upon the main road, for the passing of the house was an event. She feared that if her feet should come out to investigate, there would be a war between her own home and Bartlett's. She sprang lightly into the saddle and Gypsy.

Gypsy needed no second word. Away went Gypsy on the road toward the east, where the stars were coming sweet and cool from the distant lake, laden with the scent of the woods and lake fields. The night was dense, broken only by the whippoorwill, America's nightingale, or the still more plaintive note of the distant loon.

Along the road seemed deserted, there were shown anywhere. The stars were abroad concerning the affairs of the day, and the population, if there appeared to have retired. A spell of silence and darkness had fallen on the land, and the rapid hoofbeats of the horse sounded with startling distinctness on the harder portions of the road, varied by intervals of complete silence when the fetlocks sank in the sand and gave a more difficult footing for the plucky little horse. The only thrill of fear that came to her night journey was when she crossed the dark arch of an avenue of trees that bordered the road, like a gloomy cathedral aisle in the darkness which anything might be hidden. On one occasion with a jump of fear started aside and plunged ahead; Margaret held her breath as she saw, or fancied she saw, a man stretched on the roadside, as if he were dead. Once in the open she breathed more freely, and if it had been the jump of the horse she would have put down the exhilaration of playing her imagination of playing her fancies she had completely reassured, a Shadow moved from the middle of the road, and a sharp

"Halt!" rang out across the night, and then down the lash on the flank of her horse, drawing the animal round with her left to her enemy. With a wild snort at the moment the horse sprang forward, bringing her rein and gun down to the ground with a jerk that woke the echoes; then, with an indignant toss of the head, Gypsy sped along the road like the wind. It was the first time Gypsy had ever felt the cut of a whip, and the blow was not forgiven. Margaret, fearing further obstruction on the road, turned her horse's head toward the rail fence, and Gypsy went over it like a bird. In the field, where fast going in the dark had dangers, Margaret tried to slacken the pace, but the little horse would not have it so. It shook its head angrily whenever it thought of the indignity of that blow, while Margaret leaned over and tried to explain and beg pardon for her offence. The second fence was crossed with a clear cut leap, and only once in the next field did the horse stumble, but quickly recovered and went on at the same break-neck gait. The next fence gallantly cleared over brought them to the side of a half a mile up which stood the doctor's house. Margaret saw the futility of attempting a reconciliation until the goal was won. There, with difficulty, the horse was stopped, and Margaret struck the panes of the upper window, through which a light shone, with her riding-whip. The window was raised and the situation briefly explained to the physician.

"I will be with you in a moment," he said.

Then Margaret slid from the saddle and put her arms around the neck of the trembling horse. Gypsy would have nothing to do with her, and sniffed the air with offended dignity.

"It was a shame, Gyp," she cried, almost tearfully, stroking the glossy neck of her resentful friend; "it was, it was, and I know it. But what was I to do, Gyp? You were the only protector I had, and you did bowl him over beautifully; no other horse could have done it so well. It's wicked, but I do hope you hurt him, just because I had to strike you."

Gypsy was still wrathful, and indicated by a toss of the head that the wheedling of a woman did not make up for a blow. It was the insult more than the pain; and from her—there was the sting of it.

"I know; I know just how you feel, Gypsy dear, and I don't blame you for being angry. I might have spoken to you, of course, but there was no time to think, and it was really him I was striking. That's why it came down so hard. If I had said a word he would have got out of the way, coward that he was, and then would have shot you,—you, Gypsy. Think of it!"

If a man can be moulded in any shape that pleases a clever woman, how can a horse expect to be exempt from her influence, even if he is a superior animal to man? Gypsy showed signs of melting, whinnying softly and forgivingly.

"And it will never happen again Gypsy, —never, never. As soon as we are safe home again I will burn that whip. You little pet, I knew you wouldn't mind it." Gypsy's head rested on Margaret's shoulder, and we must draw a veil over the reconciliation. Some things are too sacred for a mere man to meddle with. The friends were friends once more, and on the altar of friendship the unoffending whip was doubtless offered as a burning sacrifice.

When the doctor came out, Margaret explained the danger of the road, and proposed that they should return by the longer and northern way,—the Concession, as it was called.

They met no one on the silent road, and soon they saw the light in the window.

The doctor and the girl left their horses tied some distance from the house, and walked together to the window with the stealthy steps of a pair of house-breakers. Margaret listened breathlessly at the closed window, and thought she heard the low murmur of conversation. She tapped lightly on the pane, and the professor threw back the door window.

"We were getting very anxious about you," he whispered.

"Hello, Peggy!" said the boy, with a wan smile, raising his head slightly from the pillow and dropping it back again.

Margaret stooped over and kissed him.

"My poor boy! what a fright you have given me?"

"Ah, Margery, think what a fright I got myself. I thought I was going to die within sight of the house."

The doctor gently pushed Margaret from the room. Renmark waited until the examination was over, and then went out to find her.

She sprang forward to meet him.

"It is all right," he said. "There is nothing to fear. He has been exhausted by loss of blood, but a few days' quiet will set that right. Then all you will have to contend against will be his impatience at being kept to his room, which may be necessary for some weeks."

"Oh, I am so glad! and—and I am so much obliged to you, Mr. Renmark!"

"If have done nothing—except make blunders," replied the professor, with a bitterness that surprised and hurt her.

"How can you say that? You have done everything. We owe his life to you."

Renmark said nothing for a moment. Her unjust accusation in the earlier part of the night had deeply pained his over-sensitive nature, and he hoped for some hint of disclaimer from her. Belonging to the stupider sex, he did not realize that the words were spoken in a state of intense excitement and fear,—that another woman would probably have expressed her state of mind by fainting instead of talking, and that the whole espisode had left absolutely no trace on the recollection of Margaret. At last Renmark spoke:

"I must be getting back to the tent, if it still exists. I think I had an appointment there with Yates some twelve hours ago, but to this moment I had forgotten it. Good-night."

Margaret stood for a few moments alone, and wondered what she had done to offend him. He stumbled along the dark road, not heeding much the direction he took, but automatically going the nearest way to the tent. Fatigue and the want of sleep were heavy upon him, and his feet were as lead. Although dazed, he was conscious of a dull ache where his heart ought to be, and he vaguely hoped he had not made a fool of himself. He entered the tent and was startled by the voice of Yates:

"Hello! hello! Is that you, Stoliker?"

"No; it is Renmark. Are you asleep?"

"I guess I have been. Hunger is the one sensation of the moment. Have you provided anything to eat within the last twenty-four hours?"

"There's a bag full of potatoes here, I believe. I haven't been near the tent since early morning."

"All right, only don't expect a recommendation from me as cook. I'm not yet hungry enough for raw potatoes. What time has it got to be?"

"I'm sure I don't know."

"Seems as if I had been asleep for weeks. I'm the latest edition of Rip Van Winkle, and expect to find my moustache gray in the morning. I was dreaming sweetly of Stoliker when you fell over the hank."

"What have you done with him?"

"I'm not wide enough awake to remember. I think I killed him, but wouldn't be sure. So many of my good resolutions go wrong that very likely he is alive at this moment. Ask me in the morning. What have you been prowling after all night?"

There was no answer. Renmark was evidently asleep.

"I'll ask you in the morning," murmured Yates, drowsily,—after which there was silence in the camp.

CHAPTER XII.

Yates had stubbornly refused to give up his search for rest and quiet, in spite of the discomfort of living in a leaky and battered tent. He expressed regret that he had not originally camped in the middle of Broadway, as being a quieter and less exciting spot than the place he had chosen but, having made the choice, he was going to see the last dog hung, he said. Renmark had become less and less of a comrade. He was silent and almost as gloomy as Hiram Bartlett himself. When Yates tried to cheer him up by showing him how much worse another man's position might be, Renmark generally ended the talk by taking to the woods.

"Just reflect on my position," Yates would say. "Here I am dead in love with two lovely girls, both of whom are merely waiting for the word. To one of them I have nearly committed myself, which fact to a man of my temperament inclines me somewhat to the other. Here I am anxious to confide in you, and yet I feel that I risk a tight every time I talk about the complication. You have no sympathy for me, Kenny, when I need sympathy, and I am bubbling over with sympathy for you and you won't have it. Now, what would you do if you were in my fix? If you would take five minutes and show me clearly which of the two girls I really ought to marry, it would help me ever so much, for then I would be sure to settle on the other one. It is indecision that is surely sapping my vitality."

By this time Renmark would have pulled his soft felt hat over his eyes, and, muttering words that would have echoed strangely in the silent halls of the University building, would plunge into the forest. Yates generally looked after his retreating figure without anger, but with mild wonder.

"Well, of all cantankerous cranks he is the worst," he would say, with a sigh. It is sad to see the temple of friendship tumble down about one's ears in this way. At their last talk of this kind Yates resolved not to discuss the problem again with the professor, unless a crisis came. The crisis came in the form of Stoliker, who dropped in on Yates as the latter lay in the hammock smoking and enjoying a thrilling romance belonging to the series then in vogue among brainless people, entitled Beadle's Dime Novels." The camp was strewn with these engrossing paper-covered works, and Yates had read many of them, hoping to come across a case similar to his own, but to the time of Stoliker's visit he had not succeeded.

"Hello, Stoliker! how's things? Got the cuffs in your pocket? Want to have another tour across country with me?"

"No. But I came to warn you. There will be a warrant put to-morrow or next day, and if I were you I would get over to the other side; but you need never say I told you to. Of course if they give the warrant to me I shall have to arrest you; and although nothing may be done to you, still the country is in a state of excitement, and you will at least be put to some inconvenience."

"Stoliker," cried Yates, springing out of the hammock, "you are a white man! You're a good fellow, Stoliker, and I'm ever so much obliged. If you ever come to New York, you call on me at the Argus office,—anybody will show you where it is, —and I'll give you the liveliest time you ever had in your life. It won't cost you a cent, either."

"That's all right," said the constable. "Now, if I were you I would light out to-morrow at the latest."

"I will," said Yates.

Stoliker disappeared quietly among the trees, and Yates, after a moment's thought began energetically to pack up his belongings. It was dark before he had finished and Renmark returned.

"Stilly," cried the reporter, cheerily, "there's a warrant out for my arrest. I shall have to go to-morrow at the latest."

"What! to jail?" cried his horrified friend, his conscience now troubling him, as the parting came, for his lack of kindness to an old comrade.

"Not if the court knows herself. But to Buffalo, which is pretty much the same thing. Still, thank goodness, I don't need to stay there long. I'll be in New York before I'm many days older. I yearn to plunge into the arena once more. The still calm pescefulness of this whole vacation has made me long for excitement again, and I'm glad the warrant has pushed me into the turmoil."

"Well, Richard, I'm sorry you have to go under such conditions. I'm afraid I have not been as companionable a comrade as you should have had."

"Oh, you're all right, Renny. The trouble with you is that you have drawn a little circle around Toronto University and said to yourself, 'This is the world.' It isn't, you know. There is something outside of all that."

"Every man, doubtless, has his little circle. Yours is around the Argus office."

"Yes, but there are special wires from that little circle to all the rest of the world, and soon there will be an Atlantic cable."

"I do not hold that my circle is as large as yours; still, there is something outside of New York even."

"You bet your life there is; and, now that you are in a more sympathetic frame of mind, it is that I want to talk with you about. Those two girls are outside my little circle, and I want to bring one of them within. Now, Renmark, which of those girls would you choose if you were me?"

The professor drew in his breath shortly and was silent for a moment. At last he said, speaking very slowly,—

"I am afraid, Mr. Yates, that you do not quite appreciate my point of view. As you may think I have acted in an unfriendly manner, I will try for the first and final time to explain it. I hold that any man who marries a good woman gets more than he deserves, no matter how worthy he may be. I have a profound respect for all women, and I think that your light chatter about choosing between two is an insult to both of them. I think either of them is infinitely too good for you,—or for me either."

"Oh, you do, do you? Perhaps you think that you would make a much better husband than I. If that is the case, allow me to say you are entirely wrong. If your wife was sensitive, you would kill her with your gloomy fits. I wouldn't go off in the woods and sulk, anyhow."

"If you are referring to me, I will further inform you that I had either to go off in the woods or knock you down. I chose the lesser of two evils."

"Think you could do it, I suppose? Renny, you're conceited. You're not the first man who has made such a mistake and found he was barking up the wrong tree when it was too late for anything but bandages and arnica."

"I have tried to show you how I feel regarding this matter. I might have known I should not succeed. We will end the discussion, if you please."

"Oh, no. The discussion is just beginning. Now, Renny, I'll tell you what you need. You need a good sensible wife worse than any man I know. It is not yet too late to save you, but it soon will be. You will, before long, grow a crust on you, like a snail, or a lobster, or any other cold-blooded animal that gets a shell on itself. Then nothing can be done for you. Now let me save you, Renny, before it is too late. Here is my proposition. You choose one of those girls and marry her. I'll take the other. I'm not as unselfish as I may seem in this, for my choice will save me the worry of making up my mind. According to your talk, either of the girls is too good for you, and for once I entirely agree with you. But let that pass. Now, who is it to be?"

"Good God, man, do you think I am going to bargain with you about my future wife?"

"That's right, Renny. I like to hear you swear. It shows you are not yet the prig you would have folks believe. There's still hope for you, professor. Now, I'll go further with you. Although I cannot make up my mind just what to do myself, I can tell instantly which is the girl for you, and thus we solve both problems at one stroke. You need a wife who will keep your nerves in tune, who will be cheerful and who will make a man of you. Kitty Bartlett is the girl. She will tyrannize over you just as her mother does over the old man. She will keep house to the queen's taste and delight in getting you good things to eat. Why, everything is as plain as a pike-staff. That shows the benefit of talking over a thing. You marry Kitty, and I'll marry Margaret. Come, let's shake hands over it."

Yates held up his right hand ready to slap it down on the open palm of the professor, but there was no response. Yates's hand came down to his side again, but he had not yet lost the enthusiasm of his proposal. The more he thought of it the more fitting it seemed.

"Margaret is such a sensible, quiet, level-headed girl, that, if I am as flippant as you say, she will be just the wife for me. There are depths in my character, Renmark, that you have not suspected."

"Oh, you're deep."

"I admit it. Well, a good sober-minded woman would develop the best that is in me. Now, what do you say, Renny?"

"I say nothing. I am going into the woods again dark as it is."

"Ah well," said Yates with a sigh, "there's no doing anything with you or for you. I've tried my best: that is one consolation. Don't go away. I'll let Fate decide.—Here goes for a toss-up."

And Yates drew a silver half-dollar from his pocket. "Heads for Margaret!" he cried. Renmark clutched his fist, took a step forward, then checked himself, remembering that this was his last night with the man who had at least once been his friend.

Yates merrily spun the coin in the air, caught it in one hand, and slapped the other over it.

"Now for the turning-point in the lives of two innocent beings."

He raised the covering hand and peered at the coin in the gathering gloom. "Heads it is. Margaret Howard becomes Mrs. Richard Yates. Congratulate me, professor."

Renmark stood motionless as a statue, an object-lesson in self-control. Yates set his hat more jauntily on his head, and slipped the coin-making coin into his trousers-pocket.

"Good-by, old man," he said. "I'll see you later and tell you all the particulars."

Not waiting for the answer, which he probably knew there would have been little use in delaying for, Yates walked to the fence and sprang over it with one hand on the top rail. Renmark stood still for some minutes, then quietly gathered underbrush and sticks large and small, lighted a fire and sat down on a log with his head in his hands.

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

Dodging an Avalanche.

While Mr. C.S. Davison was climbing the Ortler, as described in the September Atlantic, he came to a stretch of broken snow, about a hundred feet in breadth, composed of the remnants of avalanches which had fallen from the face of the mountain above. It was necessary to cross it. An avalanche had fallen ten minutes before Mr. Davison and his two guides reached the place, and another would soon follow. The crossing must be made between two avalanches.

Twenty yards this side of the snow track, and perhaps a hundred yards from the threatening snow wall, we paused for critical survey. The question stood for instant decision. From the appearance of the snow wall it must be determined whether another avalanche would fall within the next few minutes.

Was it best to hurry silently across? Wast it best to wait? Was the next section of the snow face in such condition that a mighty yell would send an avalanche down, and give us an opportunity for our hasty transit? On the other hand, if we all yelled together and no avalanche fell, would the concussion hasten the next fall, whereby we might be overwhelmed in crossing?

One towering pinnacle of snow, pushed a little beyond its fellows, seemed ready to totter to its fall. We looked at it doubtfully. It ought to have gone with the last avalanche. Would it stand, or would it fall within the next three minutes? A hundred feet is not much of a space to cross; but such crossing, if through fresh, broken snow from six to ten feet deep, is slow and floundering work.

From the time we came within view of the snow the utmost silence had been observed, and now, the searching but momentary scrutiny completed, Pinggera whispered to us to come on: With noiseless speed we hurried forward. Silently we struggled through the snow, and as silently emerged on the farther side.

Close Figuring.

Mr. Veraclose—"Send out for a black man to do the whitewashing and a white man to black the stoves."

Mrs. V.—"Won't one man do?"

Mr. V.—"No. I want to see how much material they wasted."

YOUNG FOLKS.

A Song of Kriss Kringle's Tree.

Kriss Kringle's bells are jingling
The frosty air is tingling,
All silvery sounds are mingling,
This merry, merry day.
With many a fleecy feather,
The snow-flakes dance together;
Here come Kriss Kringle's weather,
In good Kriss Kringle's way.

Kriss Kringle's treasures tripping,
Kriss Kringle's sweetness sipping,
The while his gifts we're clipping
From brave Kriss Kringle's tree.
We set the candles burning
Like stars and planets turning,
And every dream and yearning
There satisfied we see.

Alone and solitary,
Aloof from elf and fairy,
It grew in forests airy
Through many a season dim—
To reach its day of glory,
When winter woods were hoary,
To hear Kriss Kringle's story,
And dear Kriss Kringle's hymn.

O tree that wearies never!
O tree that charms us ever!
O tree that lives forever!
The blessed Christmas tree.
Where love and kindness blending,
Round us the years fair ending,
There heaven's own beauty lending,
Behold Kriss Kringle's tree.

—[Margaret E. Sangster.

A Christmas Thought and What Came of It.

Santa Claus was tired and no wonder; for it was Christmas Eve, and everybody knows what a busy time that is for him. What journeys he must take!

Such numbers and numbers of chimneys as he must scramble down, and such countless numbers of stockings as he must fill!

It was no wonder the dear old man was nearly tired out, for it was past midnight; his work was done, and he had turned his reindeer homeward.

As he reached the suburbs of a large city, whose homes he had just visited, his attention was attracted toward an old dilapidated building, that he had supposed to be uninhabited; the attraction was not great; only a very dim light, but it let him know that there was someone within.

"Well I declare!" exclaimed he, suddenly stopping. "I didn't know anybody lived here! I thought Squire Steele had taken this old, tumble-down shanty for a pig-pen long ago; he ought to be ashamed to rent such a place, but he'll do most anything for a little money. I wonder if there are any children here? If there are, I suppose I ought to leave them some presents, though somehow I never do have much for poor children. Tisn't right, either, for Christmas should be a happy time for all; I must look after them a little better in the future, poor things, for I love them just the same as rich children."

Then he bent down and peered through the fringe of icicles that bordered the window ledge, into a little room so desolate looking that it would have touched a much harder heart than dear old Santa's.

On a pile of straw in one corner of the room, lay three little children fast asleep. But, though their bed was only straw, with covering of all ragged comfortables, they were smiling in their sleep; for they had gone to bed thinking that good old Santa Claus would come as soon as the clock struck twelve, and bring them some nice presents; he never had missed them, though to be sure they had never before lived in such an out of the way place. Two years ago their father was alive, and they lived in a nice little house of their own; but after his death there were debts to be paid, they must be fed and clothed, and with the little work that their mother could get to do, she could not procure enough money to keep them from going hungry and cold. So one by one they had to part with their house and all the pretty things within, until they were finally reduced to their present extremely straightened circumstances. Long after the children slept their mother still sat by their old broken-legged, rusty stove, trying to coax the fire to burn more briskly with branchies which she had picked up in the woods; for it was a cold night, and their bedling was poor; but the wood was so crusted with snow that it only sizzled and sputtered.

"Poor dears," said the widow, as she accidentally brushed the children's old ragged stockings off from the back of a chair. "Poor dears, how well I remember when I was a little girl, waking up Christmas morning and running to my stocking. Oh, my dear mother, how kind she was! And to think, I love my babies just as well as she loved me, and yet I can buy them nothing! And that is not the worst of it. There'll none of us have a Christmas dinner. I declare I could cry!" And she did cry, throwing her apron over her head and leaning back in her chair.

"Dear me!" said Santa Claus, "how my eyes do water! I must have taken cold," muttered he, wiping his eyes. The scene inside had affected him more than he was willing to own. "Now," he briefly continued, "what is to be done? Those children must have something, certain. But the trouble is I haven't a single thing left except a thought."

"A thought!" exclaims some of these dear little readers, "What's that?"

Didn't you ever notice any among your Christmas presents? Santa Claus has lots of them at holiday times, and he generally sprinkles a few in with everybody's presents; so if you have never noticed any among yours, look for them this year. He has many kinds—holy thoughts, benevolent thoughts, and thoughts of love, peace and reconciliation. The thought that he had left was good and strong, and plainly marked with the golden word, "Charity."

"Well I declare!" exclaimed Santa Claus, "What shall I do? It won't do the least bit of good to leave this for these children, but they must have something and their mother, too, must have a Christmas present. Humph! I know what I'll do. I'll just go over to Squire Steele's and leave this thought for him. If he will only nourish it and care for it, it will do much good there. I'll try it anyhow; so away, my good reindeer."

Squire Steele and his wife sat silently by their warm, glowing fire—she busy knitting, he busy reading—or pretending to, for his thoughts, as well as his wife's, were running away back over a lapse of some twenty-five years, to the time when a darling little baby boy came to live with them.

"Just twenty-five years to-night since little Johnny came to us," said he, at last, as much to himself as to his wife.

"I was just thinking of that, too," answered his wife. "Oh dear, why couldn't he have lived? How happy we might then be. It seems as though I can't stand it when I see other children having such jolly times at Christmas. My!" she suddenly exclaimed, "what was that? Somebody sneezed or coughed, surely. Didn't you hear them?"

"Oh, I guess it was nothing but the wind," answered the Squire, not dreaming that it was Santa Claus, who at that very moment dropped the thought down the chimney. "As you were saying, wife, we would have been far happier had little Johnny lived—and better, too," he added thoughtfully. Then, after some moments' reflection he continued. "Perhaps it would be better now if we did not live to ourselves so much; we have lost Johnny, our little darling, to be sure, and though we can never forget him, nor do we want to, it might be better not to nurse our grief so much, but try to get over it somewhat."

"Oh, I never can!" moaned Mrs. Steele.

"Yes I know," replied the Squire, hastily wiping his own eyes, "but perhaps if we did more to make others happy, our own grief might be lessened; they say it helps."

"Johnny would have liked that," answer-she, after a pause: "He always liked to see everyone happy, and it really seemed to trouble him if they were not. Don't you remember how, at Christmas time, he always tried to have all the children around, rich or poor, and have a jolly time, dividing his presents with those who had none, besides having some little treat to share with all. Had he lived no children near us would be without presents to-morrow morning.

"Would it not be well to do this work for him?" at length asked the Squire with a great softening of the heart; then adding, almost as an apology, "perhaps we might make him happier in heaven by so doing."

"I am sure we would," answered Mrs. Steele, quietly wiping away her tears. "But what can we do? Where can we begin? I don't know anything about the poor families around, nor which ones have children."

"There is one family down in our old house that will do to begin with, I think. There are children there, too—one little boy, about our little boy's age the last Christmas he was with us. He somehow reminded me of him, too, when I went there yesterday to collect the rent—looking as though he was bound to be happy under any circumstances. To-morrow we'll make a tour of the town, beginning with them.

AGRICULTURAL.

Care of Stock in Winter.

It is a most important thing for farmers to consider how they may best get through this inclement season without loss, and with the least expense for feeding. The Winter's feeding is the spending of the Summer's crops, and if the farmer does not make some profit from it, his labor and care have been lost. His business, therefore, is to make the feeding of whatever stock is kept over the Winter, profitable in some way, if not directly through the Winter, at least in the season following, when they will pay for what they have consumed in the Winter. To do this, two things are necessary; one is to keep only such stock as will pay for their feeding, and the other is to feed them in such a manner as to get the profit from them. Every farmer should know which of his stock are worth feeding, and which are not. Those which are too old, or are poor in quality, are, or should be, easily known, and as soon as known, should be got rid of. Any cow that will yield a pound of butter per day is not paying her way, and should be turned into beef. Old sheep, whose fleece will make no more than two pounds of wool, should be made into mutton, and for three or four of them one good sheep of a good breed should be kept. And, so on all through the farm stock. The arrangements for the feeding include proper shelter, feeding troughs which will not waste the fodder, proper methods for saving the manure; sufficient preparation of the fodder and feed, and ample supply of water, for water is food, and is indispensable for the welfare of animals; good shelter sayes feed.

A warmly kept cow will give twice as much milk as one that is exposed to storms and cold winds. A horse whose stable is kept warm, and whose bed is kept soft, will work better and more profitably for its owner than one which shivers with cold the whole night, instead of resting comfortably. Feed is required to keep up the animal heat, and of course the more of this that is wasted by exposure to cold, the more food is consumed to make it up.

Therefore the first care of the farmer should be to make the walls and roof tight and close, and the floor water-tight, and drains sufficient to save the manure; for if there is no actual money profit in feeding, the manure itself is a sufficient advantage to make it worth while to feed the stock. "Wilful waste makes woful want." This is an adage of universal truth, and applicable to feeding cattle. For the waste usually occurs in the Fall or early part of the Winter, and the want is felt at the end of it, when the waste cannot be replaced. There are two ways of wasting feed. One is to give too much feed, or to give it in such a way that the animals foul it and trample it under foot. Another is to give too little, so that they are half starved, and do not regain their condition until so late in the Summer as to cost more to recover, and in the loss of use or profit than was saved in the beginning.

A wise liberality is the best economy in this respect, and as an animal that is well summered is half wintered, so one that is well wintered is made far more profitable for the next Summer and the extra profit will easily pay for the Winter's keeping. Feed racks should be provided that will prevent waste and there should be a sufficient supply of them to furnish ample accommodation for all the animals kept. A large quantity of long hay and corn fodder will be necessarily wasted, unless it is cut up finely and mixed with meal and moistened. Hence we consider it economy to use a fodder cutter. We have found a fodder cutter costing $30, to save $300 worth of hay and grain in one Winter's feeding of 21 head of horses and cattle. The grinding of the grain, too, is an economy, and in this case the saving in one Winter paid for the fodder cutter and a grinding mill for the grain. Ground grain is better digested and of course, less of it will serve the same purpose. To prevent horses and cows from throwing such fine feed out of the trough, a few crossbars may be fixed across the top, giving room for the animals to put their heads between them, but preventing them from throwing it over the trough as is their habit to do. Regularity of feeding is another means of economy. To feed abundantly one day and the next day to stint the feeding, is a waste. Excess of feeding produces disorder of the digestive organs and the whole of the food is imperfectly digested. The next feeding then does very little good and the animal goes back and requires several days' feeding to make up the loss. Sheep, especially, pine and worry when their feed is irregular. The same applies to cows in milk, for in waiting for the feed and for the milking will often lessen the yield of milk one-fourth. In conclusion, we will say to the readers of this paper that thought is always necessary for good work and the farmer should always be a thoughtful man. But there can be no, thoughtfulness without knowledge, and in this most important matter of feeding, the farmer should understand his business and make a special study of it.

Cut Feed.

For Winter Feeding.—Linseed meal may be used to some extent with all classes of stock, to good advantage. It is more adapted to Winter feeding than to Summer, and should always be fed in connection with something that is very light and bulky.

One should know,—In order to make a profit from buying up Fall cattle, and feeding them through the Winter, one should know what are properly balanced rations. Without such knowledge, economical feeding will be only a matter of chance.

A Valuable Feeding Crop.—Sorghum has been found a valuable feeding crop in some sections, especially in the South, where it is used for hay and fodder. It produces heavily, and has great power to resist drought, an important factor with a fodder crop.

Not Good.—Wet land is not adapted to stock growing. A flock of sheep kept upon such land will almost invariably have foot rot; a horse raised, there would fail to stand the wear of city pavements; cattle will do better there than other animals, but we prefer a good, solid turf for them, as it is much the better.

One objection to storing cheap oats for Winter feeding is that the mice get most of the grain. If the straw, heads and all, is run through a cutter and into a box bin, it will prevent this loss, and you have it already for use when wanted. Mice cannot work in a mass of straw that is very finely cut up.

Will Help.—An occasional meal of root will help all kinds of stock to relish their dry Winter rations. If regarded merely as a relish, and to add a variety to the ration, we should grow and use more roots in our feeding. But it is merely elementary knowledge to say that they have their independent feeding value also.

Baby Beef.—An observation of the markets, during the past season, has shown that "baby beef" has its recognized place. The local butchers are getting so that they demand it through the hot weather, and pay a higher price than they will for extra large and heavy carcases. Put those two year olds in shape for this call the coming Summer.

If you intend to practice soiling next season, as many will do, who are intent upon making their acres pay the largest possible profit, you must not rely upon a single crop, but sow in such a manner that you will have a continuous succession to cut and feed. Begin now and make up your list, and select your land for them, and put the first in as soon as Spring begins to open up a little.

Farm Notes.

If corn has been put in temporary cribs, put some sort of a roof over it before the heavy snows come.

In preparing wood for fuel remember it is more easily cut green and makes quicker and better fires when well seasoned.

From September to May is a long time to keep stock on dry food. It is possible to underestimate the amount of food required during that time.

The continued dry weather offers a splendid opportunity to those engaged in putting in tile. Keep at it until done or the weather stops further work.

Now is the time to fill up around and put lids upon the water troughs and tanks to keep from freezing and thus save the expense of replacing the bursted with new ones next Spring.

A few days spent in filling the feed bins in the barn, in storing up bedding material and making things convenient about the place will save time and exposure in doing chores when more disagreeable weather arrives.

Haul in the fodder and if possible store it under a roof of some kind. Many prefer to haul as they use it which is well enough provided the field is handy to the feeding place. By good management it can all be hauled when the ground is solid or covered with snow, thus avoiding injury to the fields.

Many farmers are weary of hauling water from a neighbor's well for their stock. The time and money thus expended has been great. Enough has already been paid out to more than pay for digging and furnishing a first-class well, and the dry weather still continues. Why not dig one yet? A well which would supply an abundance of water at this time would prove a fortune in ordinary years.

THE CHRISTMAS DINNER.

CHRISTMAS dinner is, of course, one of the most important events of the festive season. In the joyous looking forward to the fruits of the Christmas tree and the spoils of the Christmas stocking the dinner may for a time sink into comparative insignificance. But it will not remain there. It does not take long to strip the tree and empty the stockings, and then the keepers of Santa Claus find themselves with nothing left to do but sit around restlessly for something else to happen. And that something is the dinner.

Luckily for the less important members of the household, the housekeeper has not waited until then to take the matter into consideration. Upon her has devolved the responsibility, in the midst of the whirl of keeping everyone's secrets and receiving every one's presents, of preparing a bill of fare that will do honor to the day.

A calm content fills her soul as she thinks of the mince pie, the plum pudding and the Christmas fruit cake upon which she has expended heat and hard work. The feast she has designed will be a culinary triumph that will add fresh glories to the name as a housekeeper.

It is not well to have the dinner too early in the day. On the breakfast is not usually a heavy meal, and the entire family have shown a less munching of fruit, nuts and candies in the forenoon. It is wise to put the dinner hour to 2 or 3 o'clock, and every one an opportunity for exercise that will bring up the appetite to the point requisite to the full enjoyment of the meal. An evening dinner is hard to be commended on account of the trouble it gives the servants who on this day at least, should be permitted to dine with their employers.

Make of your Christmas dinner a stately affair. Serve it in courses, with the best of everything adorn the table. The finest linen, the choicest china, the prettiest china and glass should be used. Flowers should be on the table, but profuse and lavish decorations should be avoided. Fruit and a spray of mistletoe should hang from the chandelier.

The service of the dinner need not be elaborate. A low bowl of flowers should stand in the middle of the table, with fruit on one side, one of nuts and raisins on the other. Here and there may be a few ornamental dishes of candies, olives, salted peanuts, of radishes, of preserves, jelly and pickles, etc. Place these wherever there is room for them. Every farmer should know which of his stock are worth feeding, and which are not. Those which are too old, or are poor in quality, are, or should be, easily known, and as soon as known, should be got rid of. Any cow that will yield a pound of butter per day is not paying her way, and should be turned into beef. Old sheep, whose fleece will make no more than two pounds of wool, should be made into mutton, and for three or four of them one good sheep of a good breed should be kept. And, so on all through the farm stock. The arrangements for the feeding include proper shelter, feeding troughs which will not waste the fodder, proper methods for saving the manure; sufficient preparation of the fodder and feed, and ample supply of water, for water is food, and is indispensable for the welfare of animals; good shelter sayes feed.

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