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THE STINGERS

By EARL R. RICE.

A tense silence filled the room when Mrs. Morrison arose and announced that the moment had arrived for the election of officers. The other business of the Blandon Church Ladies' Society had been but preliminary to this, the really outstanding event of the year. Every lady member but two had answered "Present," at roll-call. No one on the list would have willingly absented herself from this annual meeing.

The exceptionally fine reports had elicited only feeble applause, although the Bazaar committee had outdone previous years. Calling committee, visits and returns, literature and tracts, committees special and committees standing, as well as secretary and treasurer had all felt themselves hopelessly in the background of interest on this day, however important at other times. For in this meeting, as in former years, the society was to determine its leadership for the coming six months.

To most of the election meant either victory or defeat to its two well defined factions, accordingly as it resulted in one or the other direction. No one could have told just how the factions came to be, but as to their reality all could testify.

Ordinarily victory or defeat for either party meant little more than a new distribution of honors or minor offices. As a matter of fact, the winning party must accept responsibility for work done. And thus far nothing very serious had come from the strife, if a few "injured feelings," or "insulted intentions," might be excepted. But this year it was different.

Since its history began Blandon had boasted of but one church. The "Old Church" had, satisfied all longing hearts and filled all prayerful aspirations. The good "Old" pastor had been revered and comfort to all, and the activities of the "Old Church" had been the channels through which the outward expression of the religious life of the town had flown. One faction could well have become a barbarian and would probably have been considered worse than a heathen, if he had gone elsewhere. For there had been no other place to go heretofore.

But now all was changed. A "New Church" had come and it was easy to "go over." Indeed, some had gone. And the "Old" pastor had heard, with pain, that the forcing of the election that November day, no matter which way it went, would take others from his care.

And now, the day of the meeting, Mrs. Brown, the mistress of the comfortable farm house on the outskirts of the town in which the annual meeting was to be held, had voiced to her husband her despair over the situation.

"I do wish something would turn up to bring us to our senses to-day," she said. "But goodness only knows what it could be."

Screwed John Brown pushed back his plate and reflected a moment before answering.

"How would it do for all of you to forgive and forget?" he suggested.

"But how could we?" she returned. "A part of us might forgive but nobody could possibly forget the way those folk have acted. Why, last year—"

"Yes, yes, I know," said John, who had heard the story many times. And then he finished rather hopelessly, "You might begin by trying!"

Mrs. Brown said nothing.

"At any rate I'll put on a good fire in the furnace for you before I go to work," her husband said, "I must hurry, too, for we must finish picking those late apples."

"By the way," he called back as he went out, "if any children come send them down to the orchard. That may help you some."

Good—as his word, he put an extra shovelful of coal into the furnace and carefully adjusted the drafts and dampers. The short days of November were fast putting chill into the air and down in the orchards the frost lingered all day.

By two o'clock the ladies had begun to arrive. Mrs. Brown greeted all alike, as a courteous hostess should, and tactfully guided those friendly to each other to the same upper room to put aside wraps and afterward to places congenial in the spacious rooms below. To her delight all went along smoothly. She was a little dismayed when she saw that Mrs. Morrison had brought her hopeful son Jimmy, a lad of nine years and in high reputation for mischief. Thankfully she recalled her husband's invitation to send the children down to the orchard and availed herself of it.

And thus events had run on to the moment announced in the first paragraph.

After the preliminary motion that the society proceed with the election of officers there came a little pause. Mr. Brown glanced over the assembled company and noted that though the lines of opposition were rather closely drawn there still existed a little uncertainty as to the result of the voting.

Some old members had dropped out during the year and several new ones had come in. Just how these new ones would vote no one could tell, though both sides claimed them.

"Are there any nominations for president?" asked Mrs. Morrison, the chairman, herself an active partisan. She knew very well that she was to receive this honor from one of her followers. Nor was she disappointed.

But scarcely was her name put in nomination than a lady of the opposition named Mrs. Benjamin, her closest rival, for the same honor. The battle was on.

The candidates were both estimable women. Had not fate—or something else—put them in rival camps they would have been, doubtless, warm friends and co-workers. Each secretly admired the other, and perhaps—who can tell—could price and stubborn self-will have been put aside, each would have gladly dropped all differences. So near do fine folks get to harmony and goodwill—and yet stay so far apart. Mrs. Morrison and Mrs. Benjamin had not worked together for years.

With nominations closed, balloting should have followed immediately. Mrs. Brown prayed fervently that it might be so. But no. One of Mrs. Morrison's supporters claimed the floor on a question of privilege and bluntly challenged the election of Mrs. Benjamin on the ground that she had heard that in the event of defeat Mrs. Benjamin's faction would go over to the "New Church" in a body. All this was hotly denied and Mrs. Morrison's good faith attacked in return.

Just as the discussion promised to become warm there came a momentary diversion. Jimmy Morrison ran excitedly into the room with a prize in his hand.

Out in the orchard the men had found a huge hornets' nest high up on an apple tree branch and had given it to him. More than a foot in diameter, its cone shape, cunningly devised, had been the home of a vigorous colony during the summer. But the inhabitants were now probably scattered far, and cold and lifeless.

Now Jimmy had often heard his Uncle Jack, who lived in the city, say that he would like one of these cones for decorating his den. He had even offered Jimmy a dollar to find him one.

Jimmy ran straight to his mother who stood near the center of the room.

"Here, mother," he said, "keep this for me 'till we go home."

With a sigh of relief, for she had expected some teasing request, Mrs. Morrison took the beautiful cone and held it a moment in her hand. As Jimmy went out she turned and hung it on the chandelier at the side of the room.

But the diversion had had its effect. The talk momentarily subsided and the tellers soon were busy counting the ballot. It proved a tie. Another ballot was ordered.

Thanks to John Brown's furnace the room was warm. If the ladies noticed it, however, they gave little sign of the fact. But up near the ceiling the warm air pressed and there presently produced some startling effects.

It is a fact in nature that hornets and yellow-jackets are numbed by the first cold nights of autumn. Later they revive and for a few warm days are active. As the cold increases most of them in a colony die, and only a few survive the winter to reproduce their kind.

In Jimmy's cone the hornets were by no means lifeless, though completely chilled. As they hung in the overheated atmosphere they came back to life—back to summer days and stirring activities.

Had the ladies of the society been less occupied with other things they would have noted a gentle hum that presently proceeded from the cone. But while the tellers counted the second ballot the chatter of many tongues arose.

"Br-r-r-r, hm-m-m-m-mm."

The tellers finished their counting and gathered the ballots in two places.

"Buz-z-zz, buzz-z-zzz."

"Are the tellers ready to report?"

"We are," was the response.

"Buzz-zzz—zzzzz," said the hornets.

"We will listen to the result of the ballot," said the chairman.

One of the tellers arose, cleared her throat, and began—but she never finished her report.

At that moment a very much alive yellow-jacket poised in the entrance to the cone, and with a note clearly audible throughout the room launched out toward the nearest resting place, which happened to be Mrs. Morrison's devoted head. Other yellow streaks followed him. Hither and yon they flew, and wherever they lighted a wild waving of hands beat the air. Timid ladies screamed and dodged. Pandemonium ensued. Rout indescribable followed.

Out of the room the ladies fled, each bent on seeking friendly cover.

A door in the hall stood open and into it plunged Mrs. Benjamin. Mrs. Morrison followed her and as the door slammed shut they were in total darkness.

"O, dear, what shall I do?" shrieked the former.

"O, please take that thing out of my hair," wailed the latter.

With mutual assistance they found and crushed their tormentors.

And then as silence reigned outside they ventured to open the door a crack and peer out. While they hesitated valiant Mrs. Brown, with a fly swatter in either hand, came back to combat the hornets. Others came, too, and with windows open waged a brave fight. Presently every member was in the midst of the conflict.

Many hornets died in battle and the rest were driven outside and gassed by the cold.

When the victory was complete the ladies looked a moment at each other. Everywhere was the disorder of strife, and here and there a swelling casualty. Then someone laughed. A perfect storm of merriment broke loose. It continued till the last bitter feeling in the society had vanished.

With order restored Mrs. Morrison made a new kind of speech.

"Ladies," she said, "this is the first fight in a long time in which we have all been on the same side. From now on let's have but one side in this society."

Mrs. Benjamin led in vigorous applause. After that it did not seem to matter which way the election went.

Preserving Eggs With Water-Glass.

When the housewife finds an overabundance of eggs from a prolific poultry yard in the summer months, and the cold-storage speculator is capitalizing the opportunity, she too can make provision for the proverbial rainy day. The abundance of eggs in June, July and August, and the consequent cheapening of price, suggest the use of the water-glass method to preserve the eggs.

Select fresh eggs that are clean, but not washed. Use infertile eggs if possible. Take nine quarts of water that has been boiled and cooled, and add one quart of water-glass (sodium silicate). Place the mixture in a five-gallon crock or jar. This amount of liquid will preserve fifteen dozen eggs. For larger amounts, mix the solution in the same proportion. Clean the crock thoroughly before using.

Place the eggs in the solution. If the poultry yard has not supplied an adequate quantity of eggs for immediate use, they may be added from time to time. See that at least two inches of the solution covers the eggs at all times. Place the crock or jar in a cool, dry place, well covered to prevent evaporation. Wax paper placed on and tied around the top of the jar will serve the desired end.

As a substitute for water-glass, this method has proved good: Dissolve two or three pounds of unslaked lime in five gallons of water that has previously been boiled and allowed to cool. Let the mixture stand until the lime settles and the liquid is clear. Place clean, fresh eggs in an earthenware crock or jar and pour the clear lime-water into the vessel until the eggs are covered.

Earthenware crocks are good containers. They must be clean and sound. Scald them and let them cool completely before use. A crock holding six gallons will accommodate 18 dozens of eggs and about 22 pints of solution. Crocks that are too large are not desirable, since they increase the liability of breaking some of the eggs and spoiling the entire lot.

It must be remembered that the eggs on the bottom crack first and that those in the bottom of the crocks are the last to be removed for use. Eggs can be put up in smaller crocks, and the eggs put in the crock first should be used first. Inspect the crock from time to time and replace with cool boiled water any water that has evaporated.

When the eggs are to be used, remove them, as desired, rinse in clean, cold water and use immediately.

Eggs preserved in water-glass can be used for soft boiling or poaching up to November. Before boiling such eggs take a needle and prick a tiny hole in the large end of the shell to keep them from cracking. The eggs are satisfactory for frying until about December. From that time until the end of the usual storage period—that is, until March—they can be used for omelettes, scrambled eggs, custards, cakes and general cookery.

As the eggs age, the white becomes thinner and harder to beat. The yolk membrane becomes more delicate and it is correspondingly difficult to separate the whites from the yolks. Sometimes the white of the egg is tinged pink after very long keeping in water-glass. This is due, probably, to a little iron which is in the water-glass, but which does not injure the egg for food purposes.

Flowers and Chickens

Chickens and flower gardens have long been considered an impossible combination, but for several years I have been able to combine the two in a more profitable manner.

The yard where I keep my coops of hens with baby chickens has little or no shade. Having a few dahlia roots that I do not need in my flower garden I planted a row in this chicken yard twelve years ago. This soil was very rich, the plants made rapid growth and the baby chicks did not disturb them. Each time I gave the fowls fresh water I threw the stale water from the chickens' drinking receptacles on the plants. This added nothing to my work.

The growing chickens were kept in this yard all summer and always sought the shade of the dahlias during the heat of the day. As the blooms faded I picked them off and threw them on the ground where the chicks devoured them greedily. Since dahlia tubers are used for food in certain localities I knew the blooms could not harm the fowls; in fact, I believe they are nourishing and beneficial.

The next year I increased my dahlia planting, saving all of the tubers the first fall and buying some new ones in the spring. The result is that this chicken yard that formerly had been far from attractive is now one of the show places on the premises; passers-by stop to look at it. So many stopped and asked for bouquets that I put out a sign during the summer: "Fresh Eggs and Flowers, 25 cents a dozen."

Part of the money made from the sale of the flowers two years ago was used to buy eggs from blooded poultry, and choice varieties of dahlias. Last year I sold every blossom from the new varieties of dahlias, which were of immense size and had exquisite coloring.

This whole chicken yard is annually a forest of flowers. The tubers are dug each fall and stored the same as potatoes. I no longer keep all of the more common varieties for planting; these are stored separately and fed to the laying hens throughout the winter. As the chickens grow they eat some of the lower branches of the dahlias, but their scratching in no way disturbs the plants, for they become sturdy long before the chicks grow strong enough to harm them.

The farmer who moves to town to take it easy will get so tired doing nothing that the days will seem lots longer to him than they did on the farm.

April.

Now fades the last long streak of snow,
Now bourgeons every maze of quick
About the flowering squares, and thick
By ashen roots the violets blow.

Now rings the woodland loud and long,
The distance takes a lovelier hue,
And drowned in yonder living blue
The lark becomes a sightless song.

Now dance the lights on lawn and lea,
The flocks are whiter down the vale,
And milkier every milky sail,
On winding stream or distant sea.

Where now the seaman pines, or dies
In yonder gleaming green, and reels
The happy birds, that change their sky
To build and brood; that live their lives.

From land to land and in my breast
Spring wakens too; and my regret
Becomes an April violet,
And buds and blossoms like the rest.

—Alfred Tennyson (In Memoriam)

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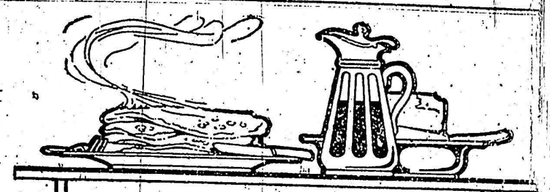

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TO BEGIN ON CHANNEL TUNNEL

LONG-PROJECTED SCHEME TO JOIN ENGLAND AND FRANCE.

Only Danger Lies in Geological Formations, Say Experts—Layers of White and Gray Chalk.

Intense interest has been aroused by the government's announcement that the long-projected tunnel under the English Channel to connect England and France is now to be constructed. The cost of the enterprise is roughly estimated at $100,000,000. Some say the tunnel could be completed in six and one half years.

A commission in Paris which has been discussing the project is now considering the building of a tunnel under the Bosphorus connecting Europe with Asia and one from Calais connecting Europe with Africa.

The English Channel tunnel company already has done a great deal of work in anticipation of the actual construction of the tunnel to France. The work, it is said to be, so far as the actual work could begin at once.

Second Only to [illegible]

With the exception of the Panama Canal, it will be the most interesting enterprise of modern times. The total length including the approaches in England and France will be about twenty miles, with a submarine section of about thirty miles and one half miles. The plans provide for two tunnels, each eighteen feet in diameter, separated by a gallery 25 feet wide and placed at a depth of 200 yards. The tunnels will be below the bed of the channel, the water on the chalk bed at this point being about 300 feet deep. The tunnels would be left dry, the crown of the tunnel being at a safe distance from the bed of the channel. The submarine explorations have revealed the fact that above the tunnel will be a layer of gray chalk 250 feet thick.

Iron tubes will be used in the construction. The experience gained in tunneling in certain sections of London, especially in the Underground railway, has enabled the engineers to work at great speed. The machinery to be operated by electricity generated by means of the Simplon tunnel. Under the mountain of that name, which is twelve and one-half miles long, is the longest at present in existence.

Before the war the quickest time from London to Paris was seven hours and forty-five minutes. Through the tunnel the journey could be made in three hours, whatever the weather.

Speaking of the possibilities of the tunnel, Engineer Bell says: "Apart from the sea itself offers no danger. The only risk lies in the nature of the formations. The upper layer of the channel is white chalk about 250 feet thick. The great question is whether the gray chalk is impervious to water.

"The chief points of the scheme have not been settled, but in my expert opinion favorable conditions exist between Dover and Cape Grisnez."

STONES RESEMBLING DIAMONDS

But the Peculiar Luster of the Latter Cannot be Imitated.

The lead-glass or "paste" stone looks all right in the window properly displayed to show the cut) the "fire" of a real stone, a brilliant sparkle of light.

Hence it easily deceives the casual day observer. But a lapidary will tell you that is lacking in the luster of the diamond. No stone can by any means fit be set in a ring. And before very long the paste loses of its new polish, and with it much of its brilliancy.

There are, however, many precious stones that, with proper cutting, will counterfeit the diamond to a remarkable degree of success, even to the sharp, snappy, cold and glassy appearance the French call "eau de roche," which is the colorless zircon.

Another gem stone, used for the purpose almost exactly, is the pure, colorless sapphire, the hardness of which (rendering it capable of extremely high polish) is next to that of the diamond. When cut it has a fine brilliancy.

The same remarks in general applies to colorless topaz, which cuts well and takes an extremely high polish, while it has a brilliant "fire." One of the most famous diamonds of the world is the "Braganza," belonging to the royal family of Portugal, which is said to be a white topaz.

In former days [illegible] passed for diamond. Only comparatively recent years have given accurate knowledge of their character. But the modern expert is not deceived. A colorless sapphire, for example, stands the test of brilliancy and diamond tests, and nobody could pass it off on the intelligent pawnbroker for a diamond.

In South America two species of lizards and baked centipedes [illegible]

To prevent dampness in cellars is clothed only in the months when the time when the frame should be kept closed most of the time. At night without air, while the cellar is wet and there is much bottom heat, it is almost sure to cause the trouble. Sulphur sprinkled on top of the soil among the plants is also helpful.

The Markdale STANDARD

Is published on Wednesday by C. W. RUTLEDGE, [illegible] Markdale

SUBSCRIPTION.—to subscribers in Canada, $1.50 a year; in the United States $2.00. Twenty-five cents when not paid in advance. No paper discontinued until all arrears are paid except at the option of the publisher.

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Hiram Lodge, No. [illegible] Markdale, meets in Masonic Hall, Farland Block, on Tuesday on or before the full moon. Visiting brethren cordially invited. H. C. Dall, W.M.; [illegible] Secretary.

C. O. F.

Markdale Court, Number [illegible] Chosen Friends, meets in Oddfellows' Hall on 2nd and 4th Mondays in the month at 8 o'clock. All welcome. [illegible] Councillor; Herb. [illegible] Secretary.

SAUGEEN LODGE, I.O.O.F.

Meets first and third Tuesdays in the month at 7.30 p.m. in their hall, Main street. Visiting brethren cordially welcome. Herb. M. [illegible] McEachnie, Sec.

MARKDALE, I.O.F.

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