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Poetry.

WISDOM FROM THE FARMER'S WIFE.

Some people rave over country life,
The lack of hurry and noise and strife,
The grace of nature, the bracing air,
The robe of green that the meadows wear,
The peaceful breeze in the mountain pine,
Old clothes, bare feet, and a fishing line.

But life in the country is something many
A mile-and-a-half to the general store,
No waterworks, and a coal-oil lamp,
A two-mile walk for a postage stamp,
Eight cows to milk at the dawn of day
And thistles mixed with the clover hay.

Some people talk of the country food,
Bestowing on it a beatitude,
The cool fresh berries just off the vine,
The new potatoes, as large and fine,
The cherry pie and the cream so yellow,
The harvest apples, so sweet and mellow.

But food in the country means a stove,
Aglow with wood from the maple grove,
And a woman slowly melting away
While doing her baking day by day,
No neat gas range with its flame so bright,
And four big men—with an appetite.

The folks in the city ought to know
That life in the country is somewhat slow.
So when they joyfully come out fishin'
They should say: "Come in for the lexhibition."
We need a change ev'ry now and then
From goin' to bed on the stroke of ten.

Select Family Reading

Seth Graham's Pride

BY AGNES BREWER.

THE little New England village nestling in the heart of the hills seemed shut out from all the world on one cold night in January, as silently and swiftly the white, feathery flakes fell one by one, wrapping it in a shroud of purest white. Already the snow lay thick upon the ground, and the people shook their heads as they listened to the wind, and gathered closer round their cheerful fires, with a glance, perhaps, toward the trundle-bed where rosy cheeks and young limbs were safely housed and quietly sleeping.

In Seth Graham's cottage the scene was a different one. Here all was order. No toys were scattered upon the floor for the careful house-wife to gather up with loving touch; no child's breathing broke the stillness. Seth Graham and his wife sat alone. The fire burned brightly on the hearth, the shutters were closed tight against the storm, but on the faces of both was a worn and anxious look.

"I wonder where she is to-night?" at last burst from the mother's lips, as though unconsciously. For the first time in twelve long months she again approached the forbidden subject. "Father," she continued, "should she come back to-night, would you forgive her?"

For a moment tremulous lines softened the old man's mouth, a tear trembled in his eye, then the same severe expression came back sterner than before, as he answered:

"Have you forgotten your promise never to breathe that name? Forgive her? No! Not though she lay dying at my feet! Let her not come here for aid or comfort; she who has brought disgrace and dishonor upon our name!"

"Perhaps not," the mother replied, in pitying tones. "Perhaps—" but her sentence was unfinished, for a wailing cry without the cottage door caused both to start from their seats, and gaze at each other as though they had conjured up a ghost. In a moment it came again fainter, nearer. The wife looked into the husband's face with anxious dread, but the father's heart conquered.

"It is she—our Alice!" he exclaimed. "Woman, have you no soul, that you can stand there and see her perish? Quick—a light!"

And throwing open the door he went hurriedly out into the night, returning in a few moments, bearing in his arms the prostrate woman, who had fallen almost at his very door. With tender care he laid her upon his bed; but the blue eyes which opened to the light had in them no gleam of consciousness, and the long hair which swept the pillow was wet with snow. On his knees beside her knelt the man who, a few moments before, had spurned her in his thought, calling her by the pet names of her babyhood, imploring just one word in answer. But no answer came. Once a look of recognition swept over the beautiful face; once, as the dawn was breaking, she stretched out her arms to her mother, whispering:

"It was not as you thought. I—I loved him so that—"

But the sentence died away unfinished; and when, at last, the morning sun dispelled the last night's storm, it shone upon the calm, quiet sleep of one forever at rest. Alice had given her life for another, and the baby sleeping at her side would never know a mother's love.

Reverently the neighbors followed the dead to its last resting-place, asking no questions, but with sorrow sincere and earnest. In all the village none had been so great a favorite as the girl who now lay in her coffin; and, when, but little more than a year ago, she had disappeared from among them, at the same time with the young and handsome stranger who had been spending his summer amid the hills, they spoke pityingly rather than with censure.

But with the springtime the wild flowers grew in rich luxuriance over Alice Graham's grave; and in Seth Graham's cottage once more childish laughter broke the silence; a child's cry demanded food and rest.

Swiftly the years rolled on in their appointed courses. Seed time and harvest followed each other rapidly. Seventeen summers passed. The life which had opened in storm and darkness seemed to have left them at its very portal, and to have lived in eternal sunshine since. The man who had proved so stern a father had, to the girl, been only kind and gentle, and to "grandy," as she called the sweet old lady whose face bore traces of such grief as few have known, she knew she had but to frame a wish to have it granted. And now she felt her young life was crowned indeed with joy, for in the twilight in the early summer time Will Howard had confessed his love, and won from her her answer and her secret.

"You will see grandfather?" she questioned, her voice tremulous with happiness.

"Yes, dear," he had replied. "But why should he not give his consent? My name is old and honorable. I am sure he will not hesitate to give you to one who has done naught to sully it."

So that night, with a heart beating high with hope, the girl paced up and down the walk alone, waiting the return of the lover who had gone to plead his cause; and the flush rose and died on her cheek as she pictured his eager face, fancied his buoyant tread hastening to her, to, perhaps, draw her arm through his and bring her a willing truant to her grandfather's side, first to be playfully scolded, and then to receive his blessing. How happy she was! But, ah, she hears his step! A sudden shyness takes possession of her, and she throws herself down on the green sward, making no motion till he stands beside her. Where is the eager delight, the torrent of words with which he is to break the silence? Mute and still he stands there, and at last, with wondering dread, she turns her head and glances upward into his face. In its whiteness she reads all. He went from her a boy, with no trace of care; he returned a man. No sign of youth seems to be in those hard lines around his mouth or in the eyes, which have so strange an expression.

"Had I been a beggar, Florence," he says at last, "he could not have spurned me with greater scorn. He had me tell you to come to him, and never look upon my face again."

"Will," she sobbed, "he meant to try us. Why should he have said such dreadful things?"

"He meant it all and more. When I told him that the name I offered you was as old, as honorable as your own, he laughed and said: 'A noble legacy, indeed. Did the girl come to me, and put such thoughts out of her head. She shall never marry.' Florence, it is unjust, cruel. You shall not submit to it!"

"Hush, Will!" the young girl answered. "You do not mean those words. It will break my heart to give you up, but I never can desert the old man who has watched so tenderly over my childhood and girlhood. Time may soften him, Will; and though it come years hence, you know my love can never fail you. I will go to him, and see what my pleading can effect. If it is hopeless, oh, Will, help me to be strong!"

"Grandfather, I am here," said the sweet young voice, as Seth Graham raised his head from his reverie and glanced at the threshold where she stood, who had interrupted him. So had her mother stood eighteen long years before, and the stern lines which then had gathered on his face again saw the light.

"What is this story young Howard has been telling me? What do children, such as you, know of love?"

"We are both children, grandfather, and we love each other. Oh, grandfather," she continued, hastening forward and throwing herself at his feet, "think of the time when you, too, were young, and your dear granny; think of your own child who lies buried in the churchyard, the darling mother whom I never saw. You did not blight her young life. You—"

"Hush, child!" the old man exclaimed, rising hastily from his chair. "Do not speak of her! I say you shall never marry!"

"And I say, give me some reason for your refusal. If it be just I will abide by it. But I have no right to condemn the man I love unless you can convince me it is just."

She, too, had risen as she spoke. As she stood confronting him, the light blazing in his eyes was reflected in her own.

"Then you will have it—the secret I have kept from you all you life. On the headstone at your mother's grave is but one word:

ALICE.

It was all to which she had the right. Now can you understand why you are barred from an honest man's heart? Your mother left my home and gave up all for a stranger who had won her love."

"How do you know he did not marry her?"

The old man laughed.

"Think you she would have borne silence and disgrace had it been so?"

"But it Will loved me, he would not close his arms against me even were this true. Let me go to him and tell my story; then leave the issue to him."

"What! Tell the story of my shame? Never. Here, nothing has been known; no one knew but that my girl was slighted. She has been forgotten; and her dust—never shall it be resurrected! Florence, I took you a baby from your dead mother's arms. If you do not wish me to shed tears of blood that you were not buried with her, never again breathe this man's name—he who dared taunt me, though he meant it not, with his honor and unsullied record."

That night a note was put into young Howard's hands. He tore it eagerly open.

"It is over, Will," she wrote. "I have accepted my grandfather's decree. It is stern, but just. I can only pray fate has more happiness in store for you; for me—an early grave beside my mother."

The summer died; the harvest fruits blossomed and were gathered; the winter snows fell again; the spring creeping pushed up to see if they might show their heads; but in Seth Graham's cottage all stepped unchanged; the months come and go, yet leave no sign. Yet it was not so. Since that fatal day Florence had made no outward moan, but day by day her cheeks paled and the light faded from her eyes, and often, when the twilight fell, she would steal away to sit beside that grave whose head-stone bore the one word—"Alice."

But the time came when she could not go so far, when her thoughts failed her utterly, and when by the open window she could only look wistfully toward that spot. But though the old man knew that he who had murdered the young spirit was sapping the young life, the stern pride of his race forbade relenting.

Frail and white as a lily she had grown, when one day Seth Graham burst into his cottage followed by a stranger anxious and eager. His wife looked up with wonderment; but when she saw that face, here, too, grew white.

"It is not as you think, mother," Seth exclaimed. "This is our child's husband, come to punish me for my wicked, cruel pride—come to demand the child whose life I have wrecked."

"No, father," answered the stranger. "I have been the one to blame. It was I who begged Alice not to acknowledge our marriage, because I know my father had other views, and would probably have discarded me. I had gone to his sick-bed when she came to you with a feeling, I suppose, of homesickness she could not resist. I returned to find her gone, and was frantic with grief. Then the news of her death reached me, but I did not know she had left a child. I thought, then, acknowledgment could do her no good, and so I let it pass, but my conscience would not let me rest, and I came to find her grave, when I learned all. My child! Where is she?"

"Here, father!" answered a clear, young voice, and turning, he clasped in his arms the now fainting girl, who had came forward at the sound of voices, an unseen listener. But happiness proved a wonderful cure, and ere many months the roses came back to the cheeks to which nature had restored their roundness. And when Florence stood before the altar a happy bride, it was her father, honored and acknowledged, who placed her hand within Will Howard's, who so gladly claimed his own again. But on no face shone the glad, happy light which lighted that of the old man, whose pride had so nearly blighted two young lives.

OIL WELLS AT SEA.

The whale is by no means the only source of marine oil. Though little known to fame, the humble menhaden yields oil and fertilizer worth $1,000,000 a year, giving employment to 1,800 fishermen and 1,600 employees of fifty factories. The people who are so profitably engaged in slaughtering 700,000,000 of these fishes every year naturally claim that they were created providentially for the express purpose, since they are not fit for food, and yet the supply seems inexhaustable. No one knows whence they come or whither they go. All we know is that every spring vast schools of them appear in the Gulf of Mexico, heading north in closely packed masses, near the surface, utterly incapable of either defence or escape. All that is needed is simply to scoop them up with big seines.

CONUNDRUMS.

1. Why does a chicken cross the road?
2. Chink, chank under the bank, ten drawing four?
3. There were a frog, a duck, a lamb and a skunk went to a fair. They each had to pay a dollar to get in. How many got in, and how did they get in?
4. What is it that a rich man wants, a poor man has, and an honest man steals?
5. What is it that occurs once in a minute, twice in a moment, and never once in a thousand years?

ANSWERS

1. To get to the other side.
2. A lady milking a cow.
3. The frog had a green back, the duck had a bill, the lamb had four quarters, the skunk had a cent, and it was a bad one.
4. Nothing.
5. The letter "m."

THE ART OF SKIP READING.

Skip reading is an accomplishment of our own time. An ordinary man or woman of to-day can extract all the requisite information out of a newspaper in less than five minutes by the exercise of this new sense—for it is little else than this. The eyes race down a column, pick up instinctively an essential word here and there, and the brain fills in the intervals intelligently, producing a precis which is sufficient for the purpose.

NOTHING DOING.

Mistress—Jane, I saw a milkman kiss you this morning. In the future I will take the milk in.

"Twould'n do us use, mum. He's promised never to kiss anybody but me."

Hubbuba — Are you ever bothered with tramps out here?

Subbuba—No; I have a sign on the gate reading "We are strictly vegetarians, but our dog isn't."

TWENTY YEARS AGO.

Chronicles Carefully Corralled and Condensed from the Free Press of November 17th, 1887.

Messrs. Graham & Graham have opened out in the meat business in the meat shop erected beside Kenney Bros'. shoe store.

DIED—In Esquesing, Nov. 6th, 1887, Mary Ann, widow of the late James Brown, and mother of Mr. James Brown, farmer here, aged 76 years, 6 months.

The late Mrs. Brown came to Esquesing with her husband over 50 years ago and lived on the farm then taken up until her death. Her husband died 13 years ago. Her decease will be regretted by hundreds who shared her kindness and enjoyed her hospitality in years gone by. Her six sons acted as pall-bearers.

Prof. Panton and the 3rd-year students at the O.A.C. in investigating the Rockwood Caves started on Saturday in the main cave which is 90 feet long, and by worming their way in through passages, some less than two feet in diameter, which opened into chambers, reached a distance of 112 feet from the entrance. They are going to investigate the pot holes, which are circular with perfectly formed sides, and are supposed to be made by friction of small stones under a glacier. The large one is estimated to be 25 feet deep, and nearly as large as the one at Lucerne, Switzerland, supposed to be the largest in the world.

Two men, S. Duffield, Rockwood, and H. Foley, Morriston, who publicly declared they would pay no Scott Act fines, have had distress warrants issued for the collection of $50, and $100 for two fines respectively.

"Gleaner," of Crewsons Corners, reports stirring evangelistic services in the Methodist Church under the leadership of Revs. Swann and Barnby, pastors.

Also deprecates the possibility of Halton repealing the Scott Act, as owing to its active enforcement, the word "Halton" was a good reply to those who said prohibition was not enforced in Maine, or Massachusetts, or Michigan.

Under the large-type caption, "A Rousing Meeting," a three-quarter column report is given of a meeting when one of the largest audiences, ever seen in the town hall, assembled on the 7th to hear Mrs. Youmans, upon the repeal of the Scott Act. Reeve Fyfe called the meeting to order, and Mr. D. Henderson, banker, was appointed chairman. On the platform were: Rev. A. E. Riss, Co. Pres., Rev. C. R. Morrow, Co. Secy., Police Magistrate Young, Rev. R. Phillips, Rev. J. W. Rae and Rev. R. B. Cook. Mrs. Youmans spoke for over an hour, followed by the gentleman out of town, named. Mrs. Youmans asked for an expression of favor for the Act, and nearly every one rose, including many who had previously voted against the act.

The Georgetown Herald gives further interesting information re Esquesing's poor fund financing under license and no-license. In the four years previous to the Scott Act in Halton, in Esquesing $1,293.69 was paid for licenses, and $2,082.56 paid for the support of the poor. During the past four years only $502.80 has been required for charity.

The Woodstock gas works for the County of Oxford, for the year, show that not one person was imprisoned for drunkenness, but that six were for breach of the "Canada Temperance Act."

Six dynamite explosions have occurred in Orangeville in two years. It is noteworthy that they always occur after liquor men have been fined. On Nov. 15th the house of Inspector Anderson was again blown up. He had only left the house a few minutes, but was badly stunned, but his wife, who was alone in the house, was badly shocked. A note was found tacked to the fence, warning him to desist from his efforts on behalf of the act, and stating that he might congratulate himself that he had not been blown to "Kingdom Come" before this.

MARRIED—At the residence of the bride, Grimsby, by Rev. D. E. Brownell, Rev. Christopher Cookman, of Waterdown, to Minnie, [illegible] of the late J. M. Bowslaugh, and sister of Rev. D. E. F. Gee, and Rev. Thos. Gee.

BORN—In Acton, Nov. 10th, to Mr. and Mrs. George Hynds, Chairman Public School Board, a son.

BORN—In Esquesing, Nov. 12th, to Mr. and Mrs. Wm. Mullin, a son.

HOW HE DIED.

An Irishman is too nimble to be caught when he doesn't wish to be apprehended. Cardinal Manning delighted to tell the following story as an illustration of the national elusiveness:

An Irishman, the son of one who had been hanged, having been asked how his father died, thus eluded the admission of the fact:

"Sure, thin, my father, who was a very reckless man, was jist standin' on a platform haranguing a mob, when a part of the platform suddenly gave way, and he fell through, and thin it was found his neck was broken."

"ESQ."

In Paris, as well as in some other parts of the world, there are men of fashion who aim to do everything as the English do it. A foppish Frenchman, who knew no English, but never thelless called himself a "gentleman," went so far in his Anglomania as to write "Esq." after the names of men to whom he wrote letters, on the back of the envelopes. By and by a friend asked him what this meant.

"Why, the English do it," the other answered.

"Yes, but what does 'Esq.' mean?"

"Why, you see, the English are of a very cold temperament, and admire cold things, and 'Esq.' which means 3 quinan, is a great compliment!"

MAIDENHOOD.

Where the buds are white and pink,
On the trees the bursting green,
In the land of "Oh, I think,
In the years, years that have been;
'Neath the blue of perfect skies,
With the smile upon her lips,
With the wonder in her eyes
And the world at finger tips.

Merging from the dewy morn,
Dazzling in the noon-day heat,
And the thunder of the storm,
With its quick, pulsating beat;
Watching shadowy figures glide
In a new world just anon;
Still does dim regret abide,
For the morning prayer and song.

To the future vaguely reaches,
With a tearful glance behind
Blushing, while the new hour reaches,
With great eyes that seek to find
That vast something, for which speaks
All the longing of the heart,
In the land where mankind seeks
For the still great, unknown part.

—Minnie Evelyn Henderson, in The Canadian Magazine.

THE "NAGUR" AND THE FIDDLE.

Here is a story that Frederick Douglass used to tell about himself:

Once when he was in Dublin he felt very lonesome. He was wandering about the street, when he was attracted by two violins in the window of a second-hand dealer. Frederick entered and asked the price of one of the instruments.

"Five shillings, sor," said the Irish dealer.

Frederick tuned the violin and began to play "Rocky Road to Dublin." Soon the proprietor's wife heard the music and entered the rear door. Then Frederick started in on "The Irish Washerwoman," and the couple began to dance for dear life. When the music and dancing stopped Frederick tendered the dealer five shillings, but his performance on the violin had greatly enhanced its value in the mind of the storekeeper, and as he hurried away to a place of security he exclaimed:

"If a black nagur can git such chunes out of that fiddle I'll never sell it at any prices, begorrah!"

THE SECRET.

From his farm Judge Blank was in the habit of supplying the preachers of all the churches with flour, corn, hay and vegetables free of cost. He also kept the country supplied with venison from the herd of deer which he kept for many years. He built a big smokehouse in the rear of his grounds. One night, unseen himself, he saw a man emerge from the smokehouse with a side of pork on his shoulder. He recognized the intruder, but said nothing. A week afterward the fellow approached him, saying, "Judge, I understand you had some meat stolen from your smokehouse?"

The old judge raised his hand deprecatingly and said:

"Sh! No one on earth knows anything about that but you and me."—Argonaut.

WIT SAVED HIM.

An instance of wit serving as a buckler is mentioned by the Buffalo Enquirer:

A man was up before a judge the other day for stealing coal. The railroad detective said he caught the fellow in a coal-car, but the man said he was only sleeping there because his wife had locked him out and he had no money to go to a hotel.

"Pretty hard bed, wasn't it?" asked the judge.

"Oh no, sir," he answered. "It was soft coal."

And the judge was so struck with the joke that he let him go.

NOVEL MENSTRATION.

One of the difficulties in the way of acquiring exact information in Georgia courts is thus indicated by the Atlanta Constitution:

"How far was it?" asked the lawyer of the witness, "from your house to the road where the difficulty occurred?"

"Bout a acre on a half, suh."

"I mean how many yards?"

"Dey wuzn't any yards dere at all, suh, excepthn' of my yard, on dat wuz 'bout a acre on a half fum de road!"

CORRECTED.

A commercial traveller who makes frequent trips to the West from New York is on friendly terms with the porter of the sleeping car, who rejoices in the name of Lawrence Lee.

"Well, Lawrence," announced the salesman, gleefully, "I have good news for you. We've had a birth in our family—twins, by George."

"Dat am no birth, sir," said Lawrence, "dat's a section."

WANTED.

Every Man, Woman and Child in Acton

To call at our store for the greatest strength creator and health restorer which we have ever sold—Vinol. It is not a patent medicine, but the most valuable cod liver preparation made by an extractive and concentrating process from fresh cods' livers without a drop of oil to nauseate and upset the stomach and retard its work, and tonic iron which is a needful constituent for the blood added.

We do not believe there is a person in this vicinity who cannot be benefitted by Vinol at this season of the year. Vinol is delicious to the taste, and it is recognized as the greatest strength creator for old people, weak, sickly women and children, nursing mothers, and after a severe sickness.

Vinol is unequalled for hacking coughs, chronic colds, bronchitis and all throat and lung troubles. Creates an appetite and makes those who are too thin, fat, rosy any healthy.

We have had so much experience with Vinol and seen so many wonderfull results from its use that we offer to return money without question if it does not accomplish all we claim for it. E. A. Robertson, druggist, Acton, Ont.