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All accounts collected monthly.

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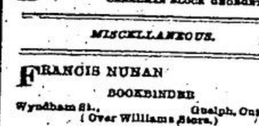

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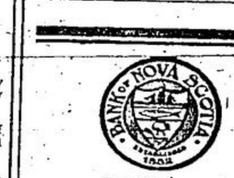

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SOME FUNNY LITTLE FOLKS

Once there was a little boy who never slammed a door,
Or took his shoes and stockings off and threw them on the floor;
He never slid down banisters, and always wore his hat,
And never asked for pudding twice, or anything like that.

And once there was a little girl who wore her dress all day
And never got a spot on it when mother was away;
Her hair was never out of curl, her gowns were always neat,
Nor when her mother's back was turned did she run off down street.

There was a little mouse as well, that never tasted cheese,
Or took a bit of anything but he said, "If you please;"
He never scampered here and there and all around the house—
The only one I ever knew as quiet as a mouse.

So, too, there was a little dog that never barked or whined;
He wore his head in front of him and had his tail behind;
Except for that he was unlike all other dogs I know,
For he had perfect manners and behaved himself "just so."

There was a little pussycat that never purred or mewed,
Or did a thing about the house or impolite or rude;
She was so well-behaved a cat in everything, I'd grieve
To think she'd ever taste her milk and not say, "By your leave."

The boy said, "Pray, excuse me," every time he went to sneeze;
The cat said, "By your leave;" the little mouse said, "If you please;"
The dog said, "Beg your pardon," if he passed from left to right,
And the little girl said, "Certainly," which surely was polite.

You may think that I am joking, but I'm sure it is not so;
For if you find the boy and girl I tell you of, I know
You'll find the dog and pussycat and mouse of which I tell,
And find them all together, too—I know it very well.—Youth's Companion.

THE SPOKE IN THE WHEEL

DAVID LYALL

JAMES LEADBETTER had two sons in the fighting line, and two in the great industrial army at home. He himself was one of the indispensibles in a Scottish shipbuilding yard.

Two daughters of working age were also in the war, one a nurse at Salonica, and the other on munitions in one of the great new munition centres which have sprung up in the most remote and unlikely places. The imaginative might indeed well wonder what the elves and the pixies and the little woodmen must think of the strange devastation and desecration of solitudes once sacred to them. But they are in the war, too, and no doubt understand.

There was no old lore or glamour of romance in the drab area where James Leadbetter, in common with hundreds of others, had his home. It was a long, grey street, with high modal dwellings on each side of it, with entrance to each block by a common stair; and there was a common drying green at the back, where the family washings were hung out every day of the week except Sunday, and where the wives foregathered for gossip over the war and their individual stakes in it. There were hundreds of children in that street, little sturdy lads and lassies who embodied the hope of Britain's future. It may be wondered what such an area has to do with the War in the Glen. It is easily explained by the fact that James Leadbetter's wife was Highland born, being the daughter of a crofter on the Shane side of the glen, where there is a particularly good stretch of fishing open to all comers on the Ender burn.

James Leadbetter, in his youth, had been a keen angler, and had paid frequent week-end visits to Strathender, catching by the skin of his teeth the two o'clock train on Saturday, and stopping up to fish all night. It was there he had wood and won Jean Logan, daughter and only child of Shamus Logan and Elspeth, his wife.

It had been a great, even a dreaded, change to Jean Logan to settle down in the city, but love has wonderful adoptive powers, and she sincerely loved her husband, and on the whole had had a happy life.

At forty-nine, with all these children out in the world, fighting each in their own way for freedom, Jean Leadbetter was still a halo and hearty woman, as ready as ever for her day's work. She was respected, rather than loved, in George Erskine Street, for she had little sympathy with the ways of some of her neighbors; and rather than be mixed up with them, kept herself to herself. Her washing would be out on the back at six o'clock in the morning, so that for her there was no gossip, either on the stairhead or on the green.

But to all in sickness or in trouble she was a friend indeed, and never spared herself for a neighbor's good.

We see her first on a grey December afternoon, not so very far from Christmas, when she was laying the table for what they call tousie tea in that part of the world. Wages being very high (I refrain from setting down the actual number of pounds which found their way, or at least were due to find their way, every week into James Leadbetter's house,) and there was no lack of comfort. The kitchen was a cosy place, the sort of place a man dreams of in the trenches, and awakes cursing the reality in which he finds himself.

And the table was being spread with every sort of eatable the lads had been known to love before the war—scones and oakes and shortbread and fresh butter, and a cold beefsteak pie, and a great round of a specially toothsome dainty called boiled beef-ham—a specialty of Jean's. It was a veritable feast surely, and not the ordinary evening meal provided on George Erskine Street. When all was ready she sat down to wait; and at last there sounded the foot on the stair.

A volume might be written on these words, and one of the bonniest songs of Scotland tells us how "his very foot has music in't as he comes up the stair."

When she heard the great bang on the door Jean rose hurriedly, and her slightly worn face whitened. But she ran along the dark passage to the outer door, and threw it open; and when she saw the figure on the mat, wrapped in a strange goatskin coat, and with the trough mud still thick on his boots, such a shiver came over her that she very nearly fainted on the threshold.

"Hold hard, mother. I'm a'richt, never was better in my life—Eck's no here, is he?"

The question was timely, and caused her to pull herself together.

Eck? No, what way do ye ask?"

"He hoped he'd get leave at the same time; maybe he'll come the morn. I've had rotten luck, mother, for there's nae train on Sunday now at all, and I've lost sixteen hours outen my short leave. Never mind. Come and gies your crack—how's everybody?"

She shut the door and stood by him while he dropped his kit on the hall floor, and then when she got him clean into the bright, cosy kitchen, her keen motherly eye covered him from top to toe and found nothing to vex or distress her.

"My, but you're looking well, Tam, and fatter than when ye went away."

"Am I? The bully and the biscuit must agree, but I've got a holdfhere," he said, patting the front of his tunic. "But I ate plenty to fill it. And how's yourself, mother? I think you look tired."

"Oh, me, no," she said, and turned away as if shrinking from his scrutiny. "You'll want hot water to wash wi', and I'll get the tea."

"It's half-past six; where's faither, not working overtime, I hope?"

"Oh, no, he'll be in presently," she answered, still evading her son's straight look. Never had his eye been keener or brighter; it had an almost uncanny clearness, as if it had been sharpened by a vision of incredible things.

He did not pursue the subject meanwhile, but passed into the scullery, and soon the splash and rush of water was to be heard; while his mother put something even more toothsome than was to be found on the table into the frying-pan. In about a quarter of an hour's time they sat down together at the table; and though they were happy thus, some cloud seemed to intervene.

"Didn't dad ken I was expeckit?" he asked discontentedly. "He ought to have been here."

"I told him—well—when he got up about twelve o'clock, and he went out immediately after dinner—I haven't seen him since."

"But why?"

"It's Monday, Tam," said his mother quietly. "Do ye not understand?"

He sat back in his chair and looked her hard in the face.

He remembered other Mondays in the far back days, before the war, black Mondays when his mother and other wives like her had tried in vain to persuade their husbands to return to work.

"Ye don't mean to say they're at that game yet?" he said in consternation.

"Oh, ay," she answered, dejectedly. "Worse if anything, because you see there's mair money and they're no needin' to work the full week."

"No need to work the whole week?" he repeated. "Ye can't be meaning whit you say. No needin' to work the full week! My God, an' us out there gaspin' for the stuff."

"Tak yer tea, laddie, and never mind, you're doin' your bit, onyway. Tell me about Eck. Has ye later news than last week's letter?"

"I don't ken. He's in a hospital at Boulogne, an' thocht he would get back to Blighty this week. Tell me about Lizzie and Jean. They havena been writ' to me lately."

She tried to satisfy him regarding the other members of the family, and sometimes his eyes would lighten, and he would burst out into the old boyish laugh which is ever music in a mother's ears. He was her Benjamin, the light of her eyes, and the pride of her heart. Perhaps also the cleverest of the family, she had cherished ambitions for him, and had planned that he would be something better than a working man. But the call had come at the crucial moment, and he had leaped to respond with an enthusiasm and joy which nothing could daunt.

This was his first leave, after seven months on the hottest front, in the days when the line was very thin and the fighting against fearful odds. And though his figure was hardy and taut, there was something different about him, a seriousness, even a gelidness, which filled the mother's heart with dismay. Therefore when his laugh rolled out her own eye brightened, and she said quietly:

"That's mair like. I was feared ye had forgotten how to laugh, Tam."

Before he could answer there was a great fumbling and noise at the outer door.

"Your father, lad," she said, and sped from the kitchen towards the outer door, hoping against hope that he would be sober enough to pass muster before his soldier son's accusing eyes.

It was a vain hope: she knew that as he stumbled on the step.

"Come, Jamie, I hoped ye wouldn't be late," she said, and her voice was thick with the anguish of her soul. "Tam's come, lookin' splendid, askin' for you the minute he was inside the door."

I will not here describe the state of James Leadbetter after a half day spent in a saloon bar, following on a full dose on Saturday night and intervals of imbibing between sleeping hours on Sunday.

As he staggered into the kitchen, not able to hold himself straight, a ineffable disgust was visible on his son's face. They shook hands, and Jean Leadbetter, obviously nervous now, and dreading any friction between the two men, made haste to pour out a cup of strong tea for her husband, and to urge it upon him. But he was at the talkative, argumentive stage, and anxious to deliver his views on the war, on the Government, on the iniquity of the capitalists and profiteers, on any subject which suggested itself to his addled brain, and the more provocative of strife it was the better.

"Tell ye what, Tam, we've got them in the hollow of oor hands. It's us yins that will win the war, and we'll win it at oor ain time, when we think fit."

Tam listened to as much of this kind of talk as he could stand then rose quietly and said he would go round and see his brother Peter, who was married and lived about half a mile away.

He stayed late, and when he came back his father had gone to his bed. The face of the young soldier that had looked like Galahad at the first moment of his homecoming, when all his heart was brimming with joy, was set and hard now, and his mother, who understood them all from first to last with an understanding that caused her both secret pain and untold joy, knew that the bitterness of death had entered into his soul.

"I wish I could hae keepit it frae ye, laddie," she said, as she drew up, shivering a little, to the side of the hearth. "If ye had come in the middle of the week it had been better. They work fine about the middle. Was Peter a'richt?"

"Peter? Oh, Peter hasna been at work the day. He was sober enough. Mother, do they ken we are at war?"

"I think so; I ken, onyway," she said, and her mouth drooped a little at the corners.

"It's half a mile to Peter's, and Finlas Street was thick with drunken men: ay, and women. Can naebody dae onything? Is the Government blind? Can it no see what's gaun to happen? A chap like me could tell them. If I were to walk into the House of Commons wi' the Wipers mud on my legs do you think they would listen to me?"

"They ken wool enough: they need no tellin'. They're not to blame altogether. They do their best, I think," she said wringing her hands.

"Their best? They could destroy the whiskey. If they dinna it'll destroy them. We may fecht till we fa' oot there, but if they dinna help us at hame the war'll be lost. As for the auld man, an' Peter, an' the rest, they're spokes in the wheel."

The words beat on Jean Leadbetter's brain long after her son had closed his tired eyes in the sweet folds of the snow-white bed her loving hands had made ready for him. They had both given and would give, their best and utmost, but there remained to be reckoned with the spoke in the wheel.

THE TIE THAT BINDS

Often when we know the circumstances under which a song was written, it has ever after a new meaning. The hymn "Blest be the tie that binds," which more than any other has come to be used to express Christian fellowship, came from the heart of the author, Dr. Fawcett.

At the time this hymn was written, he was the pastor of a small church in Yorkshire, England, from which he received only a meager salary. But at length he received a call from a church in London which he accepted. He preached his farewell sermon and immediately began to make preparations for his departure.

When the hour came his Yorkshire friends and neighbors clung to him and his family with an affection beyond words. The pain of the separation was heart-breaking.

The pastor and his wife were completely overcome by these evidences of attachment. Looking into her husband's face while the tears flowed like rain down her cheeks, Mrs. Fawcett exclaimed, "Oh John, I can't bear this. How can we go?" "We will not go," he answered. "Unload the wagons and put everything back in its place."

The people who had cried for grief, now began to cry with joy. The wagons were unloaded, for they all lent a willing hand, and by sunset the Fawcett's home was again in good order. The subtle force of love and friendship held them fast. The doctor wrote the London congregation that his coming was impossible, and then buckled on his armor for renewed effort in Yorkshire, at a salary less by forty pounds a year than that which he had declined.

To commemorate this incident, Dr. Fawcett wrote this hymn, "Blest be the tie that binds," which has captured the heart of Christendom.

A RECIPE FOR A GOOD DAY

When you go to bed some nights you say to yourself, "What a nice day this has been." And sometimes you can hardly wait till bedtime, you are so glad the day is over. Did you ever stop to think that the difference between the nice days and the spoiled ones is largely a difference in you?

Here is a recipe for a good day. Read it to your mother and see if she has anything better in her cookbook.

Take two parts of unselfishness and one part of patience, and work together. Add plenty of industry. Lighten with good spirits and sweeten with kindness. Put in smiles as thick as plumwin plum pudding, and bake by the warmth which streams from a loving heart. If this fails to make a good day the fault is not with the recipe but with the cook. Try it and see how it works.

Hogs fed on corn-meal and linseed-meal, or middlings, will not take so much feed and turn it into fat, as they will if fed on corn-meal and skimmed milk.

TRY SAYING KIND THINGS

TRY for a month not saying anything of another that is not good. Try omitting not only downright criticism but the "faint praise that damns" the approval qualified, till in the end it proves to be disapproval. Few of us realize how much we criticize till we make the effort to say nothing but kind things. A month of total abstinence from this particular indulgence would open the eyes of many of us to the hold this habit has upon us.

TWENTY YEARS AGO

From the Issue of the Free Press of Thursday, April 22nd, 1897.

Won't the Council please give the lamp posts a coat of paint this spring. If we must continue to endure coal oil street lamps let the painters improve on the ugliness of the lamp posts.

—Acton Roller Mills market report for the week: wheat, 72c. per bushel; Peas, 49c.; Oats, 26c.; flour, Manitoba mixed, $2.10 per 100 lbs.

Turkey and Greece have been at war for nearly a week. The present condition of affairs has not been accelerated by any external act. The attitude of the six powers has been one of non-interference, with Germany supposed to be on the side of the Sultan.

At the Council meeting Monday night the Band was granted $60.00, and a half hour was spent over a $3.00 account without settling it.

Easter coming and going:

—Mr. Roland Smith, of Galt, was home for the holidays.

Mr. D. D. Christie, of Guelph, was in on Good Friday.

Mr. W. McNabb visited friends in Creemore.

Miss Ruby Clark is in Pontanguishene.

Mr. R. J. Edmiston and Master Albert visited in Fergus.

Mr. Ronald Johnson, of Gloversville, N. Y., is visiting friends in town.

Misses Maggie and Nellie Matthews, spent Easter in Parkdale.

Messrs. Lawyer McKinnon, R. J. McNabb and W. A. Storey spent Good Friday in Toronto.

Reeve Nicklin, who has been on a business trip to Quebec, returned home on Thursday.

Mr. R. Somerville will remove in a week or so to Berlin where he has secured a situation.

BORN

PANNABECKER—In Acton, on Monday 19th April, to Mr. and Mrs. G. A. Pannabecker, a daughter.

RAYMOND—In Guelph, on Tuesday, the 13th, to Mr. and Mrs. C. E. Raymond, of the Advocate, a son.

A CUSTOMER WON

"I have often wondered," said a man who rambles all over town looking for bargains, "how the small merchants in the streets off Broadway manage to make their living. I know something about it now.

"A year ago I went into a little store in Greenwich Street to buy an article that cost me 12 cents, when I finally got it. The first time I made my want known the merchant said that he had never kept the article, although it was in his line. He thanked me for calling his attention to it.

"I did not call again for several days, and when I did I went out of my way ten blocks. He knew me as soon as I entered his store. He said he ordered the article and expected it any day. He asked me to leave my address, saying that he would send the article as soon as he received it.

"I went into his place several days after, still going out of my way in doing so. The article was ready.

"What was the result? I have been going out of my way ever since for anything in his line just because the merchant had been so obliging. We became very well acquainted, and one day I told him how I became one of his customers."

"Why," he replied, 'that is the way I get my trade. If I didn't try to accommodate people who come in here I would have had to close up long ago.'

I suppose that is the key to the success of all the little merchants in the off streets. It pays to be gracious."

THE INCONSIDERATE MICE

A more kind-hearted and ingenuous soul never lived than Aunt Betsy, but she was a poor housekeeper. On one occasion a neighbor who had run in for a "6 ack-door" call was horrified to see a mouse run across Aunt Betsy's kitchen floor. "Why on earth don't you set a trap, Betsy?" she asked. "Well," replied Aunt Betsy, "I did have a trap set. But land, it was such a fuss! Those mice kept getting into it!"

AN EDIBLE CURRENCY

At Cobbham, a rural station in Central Virginia, Mr. Bell is the storekeeper. One day a small negro came into his store with a single egg. "Mr. Bell, mummer say please, sir, give her a needle for dis egg."

"You can get two needles for an egg," answered Mr. Bell.

"Nor, sir, mummer don' want two needles; she say please, sir, give me de change in cheese."

SOUNDED THAT WAY

The cat settled herself luxuriously in front of the kitchen range and began to purr. Little Dolly, who was strange to the way of cats, regarded her with horror.

"O grandmother!" she cried. "Come here quick. The cat's begun to boil."

PREFERRED THE OTHER KIND

"Mamma, I want a dark breakfast."

"Dark breakfast! What do you mean, child?"

"Why, last night you told Mary to give me a light supper, and I didn't like it."

SPRING-TIME

Oh, 'tis house-cleaning time on the mountain,
And grand sweeping-day on the plain,
Mother Nature is doing the business
With a scrubbing-brush made of the rain.

The brooklets, the streams, and the rivers—
She uses them each as her broom,
And sweeps away all the old year leaves,
Making ready for May-day's fresh bloom.

She washes the trees and the bushes,
She beats up her carpets of leaves;
She scrubs well the rocks and the pebbles,
Then for more worlds to clean up she grieves.

With her broom made from cascades and snowbanks,
Mad brooks, and wild spring time rain,
She hurries with gusts and with torrents
To sweep out and dust the big plain.

And as housecleaning time with us ever
Is a most disagreeable season,
We groan and we scold at such weather,
That wearies us all without reason.

But when she is done and the sun shines
On the gay world so sparkling and bright
We can all join in saying, "Dear Mother
Your house-cleaning time was all right."

HUMOROUS

Mother (looking through magazine)—"Darling, I see from statistics given here that every third baby born in the world is a Chinese."

Father (fondling his first-born)—"Then thank goodness this is our first."

Farm Hand (excitedly)—"Farmer, farmer, come quick, your Mary has had a fit and is frothing at the mouth!"

Farmer—"What is it?"

Farm Hand—"Your Mary, your wife!"

Farmer (relieved)—"Great Juniper, man, you did give me a shock. I thought you said my mare."

Host (to guest whom he was only able to accommodate the previous night with a second rate bed)—"Good morning! And how did you sleep?"

Guest—"Rather poorly. I was greatly troubled with insomnia."

Host (excitedly)—"It's a lie! I'll give you a quarter for every one you catch!"

She took a course of first aid to the injured, and, after long and anxious waiting, the street accident she had earnestly wished for took place.

It was a bicycle accident; the man had broken his leg; she confiscated the walking stick of a passerby and broke it into three pieces for splints; she blushingly took off her underskirt for bandages and she was cheered by the crowd. When all was completed she summoned a cab and took her patient to the hospital.

"Who bandaged this limb so creditably?" inquired the surgeon.

"I did," she blushingly replied.

"Well, it is most beautifully done," said the surgeon, "but you have, I see, made one little mistake."

She felt terribly self-conscious.

"You have bandaged the wrong leg," he said quietly.

GENTLE HITS

Each season has its specialty, and the hand that was blistered by the snow shovel now looks forward to the callouses of the lawn mower.

The glad sweet notes of bird on wing,
Unlock the portals of spring.

Young ladies who faint on being proposed to, can be restored consciousness by just whispering in their ear that you were only joking. Cruel.

A Kansas man pays taxes on twenty dogs. Most of his money is going to the dogs.

The nature of a dog seems far removed from that of a man, because the dog is counted mad when it refuses to drink.

Governments move in mysterious ways their blunders to perform.

Milk patrons kick, but pay the penny that is added to the cost of milk, which reminds us there may be many a kick between the cow and the lip.

So far no substitute has been found for gasoline cheaper than shoe leather.

BRIEFS

A bit of ensilage is relished by the best of hogs, and there is meat in it.

You are responsible for the appearance of one part of your town. Don't forget that.

Zeal exhibited at the annual clean-up day will put your town in a sanitary condition.

The colder the weather the more it costs to make pork. Hustle the hogs along and save expense.

A multiplying machine small enough to be mounted on the end of a lead pencil has been patented.

Pressing a lever projects a slide down the tines of a new cold meat fork to remove its contents neatly.

Sir Robert Peel became a great orator and statesman by practising when a boy, before his father, repeating to the best of his ability any address heard.

Miller's Worm Powders are par excellence the medicine for children who are suffering from the ravages of worms. They immediately alter the stomachic conditions under which the worms subsist and drive them from the system, and, at the same time, they are tonical in their effect upon the digestive organs, restoring them to healthful operation and ensuring immunity from further disorders from such a cause.

The Beauty of a Clear Skin—The condition of the liver regulates the condition of the blood. A disordered liver causes impurities in the blood and these show themselves in blemishes on the skin. Prameleo's Vegetable Pills in acting upon the liver act upon the blood and a clear, healthy skin will follow intelligent use of this standard medicine. Ladies, who will fully appreciate this prime quality of these pills, can use them with the certainty that the effect will be most gratifying.

The Poor Man's Friend—Put up in small bottles that are easily portable and sold for a very small sum. Dr. Thomas' Eclectric Oil possesses more power in concentrated form than one hundred times the quantity of many unguents. Its cheapness and the varied uses to which it can be put make it the poor-man's friend. No dealer's stock is complete without it.