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"Now all you little tots sit in a row,
Just like the big church choir,
And I'll stand here to lead, you know,
And when I wave my stick, just so—
Then you must all sing higher."

But Roy sang of his choo-choo car,
And Gracie, of fine weather,
While Bob's and Bessie's twinkle star
Went wandering high and low afar.
They could not keep together.

The little leader's eyes grew wet,
And then a smile o'er ran them.
"You see, Mamma, they can't do it,
They can't sing songs the leastest bit,
And so they singed an anthem!"

BLOSSOMS AND BERRY

Isabel Graham Bush

A FRAGRANT breeze shook out the fragrance from the heart of the rose-tinted bloom which clothed the row of sturdy apple-trees in a cloud of beauty. It whisked away a cloud of loose-clinging petals and dropped a few of them upon the clover field beyond the school yard; others drifted into the open windows of the building itself.

The children had departed in a state of ill-suppressed exuberance. Even the teachers had not tarried to finish their usual after-school tasks, but hurried from the building to enjoy the splendor of the day. And Berry, with one swift glance at the quickly deserted rooms, had seized his broom and set to work with a fierce energy, not daring to look outside.

Only six rooms to sweep! Berry smiled grimly to himself. By the time he had finished, the dusk would have dulled the colors Nature had used so freely. At that instant a warm, perfumed wave, freighted with tiny, pink missives, broke at his feet. The broom wavered, then toppled against a desk. Dropping to his knees, the lad gathered the petals with reverent fingers. With fond eyes he surveyed the handful, then held them carefully against his cheek.

"How many there are! 'Most like the sands of the sea, I guess! In Micah Timson's orchard every tree's a big bouquet, he says, all shiny pink and white. I thought mebbe I could hustle 'round and get a little chance to see 'em, but there won't be a minute's time before Saturday and the blossoms'll be all gone by then." Berry unfolded a curled petal. "Seems queer the Lord took such a lot of trouble to make such little things so pretty! I guess if he cares that way, He won't forget folks, sure!"

A sudden rush of wind down the hall and a door closed with an energy which shook the building. It brought Berry to his feet guiltily—moments were precious, and he had lost five already. The broom travelled across the floor with greater speed, but poor Berry's brain was not gathering dust. He could perform his task faithfully and also enjoy the bits of beautiful things he had stored away in his memory.

"Flashlights" Berry would have called them, taken in his hurryings to and fro. The big willow that was now shaking out its fringes over the river's edge, the blossoming trees, with shafts of sunlight piercing their branches leaving little shimmering pathways across the greensward, the sunny slope of Branny's hill, freckled with dandelions—oh there were so many of them! Berry could have told you dozens had you asked him.

Perhaps it was because of these memory pictures, that the light scarcely ever left the lad's face. Even on the blue-gray days when things snarled themselves into dreadful tangles, those clear, brown eyes seemed to look straight through all perplexities at a something—people wondered what.

At such times Miss Carl, the teacher would quote Emerson under her breath. She had made a discovery. It might not have happened, if she had not left the schoolroom door ajar and stood out in the hall hunting for a missing glove. Now the secret was out! Her faithful young janitor was reciting poetry while his broom flew over the floor with incredible swiftness.

"Beautiful thought—of houses, built without hands for our souls to live in—and she said to herself, tiptoeing away with a little mist before her eyes, "I really feel as though I had been introduced to another Berry, and I have!" Miss Carl leaned against the fence and looked up into the apple-boughs thoughtfully. "How dull I am that I could not have seen it before! I might have helped him so much—all these months! and there's such a little time left now! But I'll do something yet!" she nodded resolutely.

It was Berry this and Berry that all through those delightful spring days when Nature flings out her bewitching lures.

"Was there ever such a spring?" the people of Harmonville asked of each other. But Mrs. Graw seemed to consider it merely a propitious season for the whitening of her already snowy linen—which waved from the long stretches of line which filled the little back yard, for that good woman was exceedingly proud of being the finest laundress in Harmonville. She had little time to note the changing pictures around her back door.

So, Berry, dutiful and uncomplaining, trudged back and forth with the washings, after the schoolrooms were in order, and performed the numberless tasks which seemed to multiply with the lengthening days.

But although the blossoms opened and faded, and tiny spheres of green appeared among the leaves, although the yellow-dotted hill was closely cropped by hungry cattle, and Berry had only glimpses of fleeting beauty which he must not pause to admire, a great many lovely things had been added to his memory collection. In fact, as he reckoned them over, he had never gathered so many in quite so short time.

The evening Miss Carl invited him over to see her art folio added a whole constellation to the stars in Berry's sky. The pictures were beyond description, and he tried to remember every word of Miss Carl's explanation. The tiny water-color sketch she had given him for his very own, lay carefully wrapped in many coverings in the old bureau drawer and was his most precious possession. Then there was the Victrola concert, due to the same kind thoughtfulness. Only Miss Carl's sweet, persuasive voice could have won Mrs. Graw's consent. The latter was far too busy to spend an evening herself, listening to "such foolishness."

But somewhere away back, before their fortunes had changed—the Doolittle family had loved both music and poetry. Mrs. Graw had been a Doolittle, and while her own nature had succumbed to hard work and disappointment, Berry had inherited all that his mother had missed, with an unfailing supply of optimism. The concert had woven a web of delicate harmonies into his brain which sang themselves over and over even in his weariest moments.

Yes, indeed, life was full of compensations!

Nicholas Graw was janitor of the Park Street School in name only. It was Berry who did the work with untiring faithfulness, fearful lest his father's failings he discerned. The pay, small as it was, they could not afford to miss. So, while his father lounged in the quiet, out-of-the-way places where he would not be called on to exert himself, his wife grew weary over the washtub and ironing board, and his son performed the task of two.

Each spring a Nature Club had been formed in the school, and often, on pleasant Saturdays or after school hours, the young people made excursions to the woods or along the river banks, with camera and magnifying glass, returning at nightfall laden with specimens. But try as hard as he could Berry never could find time to go and satisfy his passionate love for the out-of-doors with its never-failing wonders.

A call at the Graws one Saturday, revealed to Miss Carl the true state of affairs. That night she had a long talk with her brother—a shrewd business man. The next time the club went out, there was a sudden demand for Berry's services. A bit of silver to pay for Berry's absence, solved the problem for Mrs. Graw, and her son—blissfully ignorant of the manner by which his freedom had been purchased—was as jubilant as the birds which answered to his call. He displayed a surprising knowledge of the woods and their inhabitants. He knew where the wintergreens grew green and tender, half-buried by dry, rustling leaves; where great clumps of violets hid in sheltered, moss-nooks; where the rarest of ferns showed their beautiful fronds. The birds, the squirrels, and even the woodchucks seemed like delightful acquaintances with Berry as a guide.

"When and how did you learn so much?" Miss Carl asked, amazed.

Berry laughed. "I've known things like that ever since I was a little shaver. I was too little to help mother much so I lived out here most of the time—talking to the birds and the squirrels and hunting for wildflowers. I can't get out much lately, though, only when I can wheel the baby out Saturday afternoons, and once in a while in the moonlight when the woods are full of queer shadows and little whispers, and—" Here the boy stopped suddenly in confusion.

That night, Miss Carl sought her brother once more. "Berry Graw is a born naturalist," she told him. "He certainly must have a chance!"

During the summer vacation, when the janitor work was over, Berry spent the long, hot days in a stuffy grocery. It was not a pleasant prospect, but the boy never complained.

A few days before the close of the spring term, when in the early twilight Berry was very hastily gathering his mother's last washing from the line, Miss Carl and a strange man appeared at the door of the Graw home.

"Professor Allen wanted to see you," explained Miss Carl, after the shy lad had been introduced.

Professor Allen! The man whose books Miss Carl had let him read! Could it be possible that such a great man had such a friendly, and intimate smile? But Berry was to be still more amazed.

Early the next Monday morning Berry trudged along after the professor, across dewy fields, carrying the traps, and wondering if it really was his good fortune to be there, or whether it was simply a dream.

What a summer that was! Never in his fifteen years had he known such unalloyed pleasure! What mattered it if at times the sun's rays seemed almost overpowering? That often the two returned from a long tramp wet to the skin and worn with fatigue? Nothing could mar the joy of the companionship which grew to be like that of father and son. The great-hearted, learned man had found in the lad a love and reverence for the things closest to his heart—his life-work.

Berry did not neglect an opportunity. It was not long before the professor allowed him to use the camera, and that on occasions when a single false movement would put to flight the object of many's days search.

"It's wonderful how he picks up things!" the professor told himself again and again. "I don't see what I ever did without him!"

So Berry's summer passed and Mrs. Graw was quite reconciled to the change. There were even times when she asked him about his pictures and looked at them with admiring eyes.

"How did you get that bird on his nest?" she would ask, or, "I never thought bugs were so interesting before!"

The days slipped by—vibrant flashes of dawn, noon-time and dusk. Again the schoolrooms were brimming with young life. Berry was back at his post and the professor had taken his departure. The old life had begun—no, it could never return, for an earnest student of nature had come very close to the heart of the great Unseen.

When Professor Allen called again at the little home, it was to interview Mrs. Graw, but Berry was not excluded. He listened quietly, then slipped from the room. Across the fields like a scurrying rabbit he ran down to the river's edge. A slender bow of silver, hanging low, half illumined the shadows where he knelt to plunge his restless hands into the cool water. The untroubled peace of evening was around him, but in his heart a strange tumult had arisen. Above it the words of the professor came back to him:

"I will educate him as though he were my own son. He will make a name for himself if he has the opportunity, and—two years in the West Indies—" Berry's head was in a whirl his heart was beating like a trip-hammer. His parents, listening in a maze of bewilderment, had finally told him he might decide for himself.

The very bigness of the decision nearly took away his breath. It had come to him at last—this great opportunity! Surely he would be wronging the kindest of men to refuse. The professor was alone with no earthly tie; he needed a son—and Berry, how he longed for the companionship of such a man! Yes, he had decided! It must be right!

He rose from his knees; a moon-beam spanned the water with a shining bridge. It was like the new life opening before him, only it stretched away, away,—in glorious, ever-widening circles. Berry turned his face upward. Not a cloud marred the calm blue where the glittering silver lights flickered. Long and silently he stood there until in his heart there crept a wonderful peace and strange, new thoughts.

Berry hastened home. Professor Allen stood by the gate. The young voice did not falter: "I'd be willing to go to the ends of the earth with you, but—I can't leave mother and the children—it wouldn't be right," he said simply. "I can't think of any words to thank you!" The boy's brimming eyes told the rest.

"Berry!" said Miss Carl, a few days after his name had appeared in the list of those graduated from the Harmonville High School, "show me some of the pictures you have been taking lately! Bring them and your note-book over this evening, won't you?"

A fine camera had been Professor Allen's parting gift, and Berry had acquired no little proficiency in its use.

Miss Carl took possession of both views and notes with no words of explanation. She was delighted with the accurately written sketches which supplemented the pictures and took them immediately to her brother.

Some weeks later, Berry opened wonderingly a blue envelope, which the postman left him. It was not addressed by the professor and he had no other correspondent. He unfolded the sheet and a slip droped out—a check from a newspaper for articles and illustrations. Berry read the letter in astonishment and delight.

Miss Carl, bless her! She had helped him all the way through! Once more his future looked rosy, and that moment he lost all regret for the shattered dreams of the year before. And best of all, his mother was growing to look at the beautiful outside world through his eyes—the eyes of optimism—while the rest of the family followed in her footsteps.

SELF MASTERY

"Prove to me," says Mrs. Oliphant, "that you can control yourself, and I'll say you're an educated man; and without this, all other education is good for next to nothing."

The lack of self-control has strown history with its wrecks; it has ruined multitudes of ambitious men, men of rare ability, fine education, and immense promise every way.

Every day the papers tell us of the tragedies that have been enacted when the blood was hot with anger.

Ask the wretched victims in our penitentiaries what the loss of self-control, even for moment, perhaps, has cost them. How many of these unfortunates have lost their liberty for life through a fit of hot temper. The fatal blow was struck, the cruel shot was fired, the trigger was pulled in an instant, but the friend or brother man returned never, the crime could not be undone.

Many a man has lost a good position has sacrificed the opportunity of a life-time in a fit of temper. He has thrown away in the anger of a moment, perhaps, the work and experience of years in climbing to his position.

Think of one's whole life being marred, of feeling one's self handicapped at every turn, forced to strangle ambition, to stifle aspiration, to be looked upon as a nobody, just because one cannot control his temper, and yet to possess power and brain force equal to that of the giants who are heading great enterprises!

I know a very able writer who has occupied splendid positions on the best and greatest dailies in the country. He is a forceful, vigorous, masterful writer on a great variety of subjects, a fine historian, and warm, tender-hearted man, who will do anything for anyone in need; and yet he is almost a total failure because of his explosive temper. He does not hesitate, in the heat of a moment's anger, to walk out of a position which it has taken him years to get. This man is conscious of great ability, yet he has drifted from pillar to post, hardly able to support his family, going through life with the full consciousness that he is the slave to a bad temper.—Orison Sweet Marden, in Success.

MAKE YOUR DOLLARS WORK

When any manufacturer or other producer of real wealth does a profitable business and turns his profits back into the business he gives employment to men and creates more real wealth as he progresses year by year. He does more real good for his fellow men than he would if he gave all his profits in charity, because it is better to make people self supporting and independent than it is to give them something for nothing, no matter how worthy the motives may be.

When a rich man invests his money in productive enterprises he performs an important social service for the benefit of his country. Accumulated capital is always a power for good and accomplishes much good when intelligently handled. When a man deposits his savings in a bank his money is lent to others who can make good use of it in business or it is invested in productive enterprises or loaned to those who do produce real wealth.

If a depositor takes $1,000 in gold or its equivalent to a bank and deposits it that bank can extend credit to others in five times the amount deposited in actual cash. Many men can save money who do not know how to invest it in active business enterprises. As far as the common good is concerned it does not matter much whether the man invests the money himself or gives it to a bank to handle for him. In the hands of the bank it will do more work and service for a greater number of people.

The worst a man can do with his money is to hoard gold or currency redeemable in gold. Every idle dollar in this country should be put to work at once.

The world is full of folk who have breath enough to boast, but not quite enough to say their prayers.

Many a father on seeing his sporty son home from college can say with Aaron: "I threw my gold in the fire, and there came forth this calf."

DO YOUR VERY BEST

"I do the very best I know how—the very best I can; and I mean doing so until the end. If the end brings me out all right, what is said against me won't amount to anything. If the end brings me out wrong, ten angels swearing that I was right would make no difference."
—Abraham Lincoln

TWENTY YEARS AGO

From the issue of the Free Press of Thursday, February 3, 1898

The Crokinole club will give a concert on Monday evening, 14th inst.

The mercury registered 19 degrees below zero on Sunday morning.

The evangelistic services which have been in progress in the Methodist Church since the New Year were concluded on Sunday.

John R. Barber, candidate for the Halton Liberals, called on a number of Acton friends on Saturday. The political campaign is on in earnest now.

March 1st will be election day.

Dr. John J. McLaren, Q. C., of Toronto, will preach missionary anniversary sermons in the Methodist Church on Sunday.

The Guelph Presbyterial Union of Young People's Societies met in annual convention in Knox Church last Friday. Very interesting addresses were given by Rev. Mr. McInnes, of Elora; Rev. Mr. Aitkmann, of Berlin; Rev. Mr. Muir, of Nassagaweya; Rev. J. R. Mullan, of Fergus, and Rev. Dr. Dickson, of Galt. Mr. A. T. Mann, of Acton, was elected President, and Mrs. H. A. Macpherson, corresponding secretary for the coming year.

An Irishman had a very heavy fall on his head the other night but still had wit enough to say that ice always froze in this country with the slippery side up.

Since the city hall disaster in London on the night of the municipal election, critical inspection of town halls has been made in many places. Some have been condemned, others have been strengthened. In many halls dancing has been prohibited.

Acton Hockey Team went to Milton on Thursday evening and suffered a defeat. The game was fast but rather rough. The team lined up as follows: Goal, A. Swackhamer; point, A. Smith; cover point, T. McPhail; forwards, T. McIntosh, R. Ryder, A. E. Gurney, F. Ryder (Captain.)

WHAT IS MODERN BEER?

To the Editor:—

A glass of beer. It sounds so simple so harmless. "A glass of beer could never harm anyone," is a common expression. If such people know the composition of a glass of beer they would think twice before inserting their stomachs with such stuff. For over 20 years I have said to my patients who could not do without alcohol, to take it in the form of whiskey, but for God's sake leave beer alone.

Vance Thompson, who ought to know, says: "It is doubtful if you can buy a glass of pure beer in any American saloon or drink it at any brewery."

There are 19 hop substitutes; there are 15 malt substitutes; so the brewer has his choice. A patient of mine who was employed in a large brewery, told me of carloads of stuff that came there that was neither malt nor hops and yet it went into the making of beer.

Vance Thompson says: "The ferment the brewers use is always impure. As a result the beer ferments putrefactively. These putrefactive changes go on steadily. In order to overcome them the brewers add what they are pleased to call preservatives. These preservatives range all the way from white arsenic (a deadly poison) to salicylic acid which attacks notably the kidneys and liver. The preservatives are poisons and they are in all American beer—not to mention the large number of substances added for purposes of taste deception, such as those employed to give 'body,' 'grip,' 'the after taste' and so on. It will be remembered that a few years ago a large number of people in England were poisoned by arsenic in beer.

"Now pure beer could be kept indefinitely. It could be kept even in the sun. Whereas if a bottle of American beer with its 'preservatives' were left in the sunlight for a few days it would explode into rottenness."

One authority on the witness stand stated that 100 per cent. of the beer brewed in the United States was bad.

Could you imagine any intelligent person, aware of these facts, putting such a mess into his stomach?—H. Arnott, M. P., M. C. P. S., Department of Social Service.

THE REAL DIFFERENCE

"I can't see why that man is boss over me. I do most of the work around here."

"I guess that is so."

"It is. I know more about the business than he does. Whenever he wants to know anything about what's going on he comes to me to find out."

"That's usually the way."

"I'm the fellow that ought to be the boss."

"A lot of men think that way, and yet there's one big difference. He knows something that you don't yet know."

"What is it?"

"He knows enought to hire good men like you to do the work. If you know that you'd be the boss and he'd be in your place."—Detroit Free Press.

WOMAN HORSE NURSE

In London Messrs. MacNamara, who employ about forty women drivers, have put their horse hospital entirely in charge of women. Mrs. Pary, the superintendent, says they have thirty to forty patients a day. She and three assistants do all cleaning, grooming, feeding and administering of medicines prescribed by the veterinary surgeon. The animals, she says are very grateful and companionable, and she has no doubt that women will want to keep on with this work after the war. "We do not baby the horses," she says, "somehow we reform the worst cases of temper, and the women can do anything they like with even fractious, nervous and suffering horses. The effect on the nerves of the horses, and consequently on their value, is noticeable."

WHAT PROHIBITION MEANS

A little boy stood on the fence,
One hot day in July,
His little head was full of sense,
His mouth was full of pie.
I asked him where to get a drink,
Said he, "At mamma's well;
This is a prohibition town."
"What's that?" said I, "pray tell."
He looked at me in great surprise,
Said he, "Why, don't you know?
It's prohibition when we close
Saloons where drunkards grow."

QUIRKS OF MIND AND TONGUE

V.

In a little country village in Vermont Prof. Eli Edgecomb was once introduced to the Rev. Remley Sideling-er by a friend whose tongue got so tangled up at the critical moment that he said, "Mr. Edgelinger, allow me to present Prof. Sidecomb."

Some years ago, when the Rev. Paul Smith went to San Francisco as the pastor of Central Methodist Church, the members of the parish gave him a formal reception, as was their custom with new ministers. The man who acted as master of ceremonies made a fervid speech, in which he eulogized the power and abilities of the new pastor, and closed with these words: "And now, friends, I present to you the Rev. Smaul Pith." The joke did not suffer any from the fact that Dr. Smith is by no means a large man.

But most delightful of all the introductory blunders is that of the young man in a little Texas town who had been very attentive to the new school-teacher. His father was present at one of the meetings of the Social Centre, and as the young man wished big to meet the girl, he led her over to him. The words in his mind were, "This is my father, Miss Brown," but what he said was, "This is my Miss Brown, father." What more romantic opening, what happier chance, could there have been? It is hoped that the young man had a ready wit and the girl a sense of humor; otherwise they did not deserve their opportunity.

But there is almost no limit to the tricks that the unruly tongue can play. Anyone can easily sympathize with the "rattled" hostess who said, "Won't you let me take your Hyde, Mrs. Bonnet?" and with the little Connecticut girl of fifty years ago who was sent to the store for a certain kind of paper collars that came in little tin pails, and asked for "some of those pin-tail collars"; also, with the leader of the sewing circle who asked only the other day that articles already completed be sent to the Red Head Crossquarters. But since the list must end somewhere, let us leave the subject with as cheerful a view as possible of what probably happened to the politician who began his speech to a gathering of farmers by addressing them as "You tons of soil!"

IMPORTANCE OF GOOD SEED GRAIN

Free Tests will be Made at Ottawa for Farmers Desiring Them

It has been estimated that if first-class seed were sown on all farms the crop of the country would be increased by fifty per cent. This cannot be verified definitely, but the annual loss caused by the use of seed other than the best is beyond all doubt surprisingly great.

The present situation with the world scarcity of cereals and the shortage of farm labor, urgently demands that the best possible selection be made from our 1917 grain crop for seed. This will bring about a great increase in production with a minimum increase in labor requirements. The proper procedure is for each individual farmer to make sure now, in early winter, that he has pure seed of strong vitality for his spring planting.

The energy and vitality of seed can be ascertained only by a germination test. Mere inspection is untrustworthy. Grain of very good weight and excellent appearance is frequently found to have a considerable part killed outright, and the rest so weakened that the young plants are started with too little energy to withstand bad weather, or give a high yield. A poor crop is often said to have been the result of adverse conditions when if strong seed had been sown a satisfactory yield would have been secured. Tests may be made at home, or will be done free of charge, up to twenty-five in number for one person, at the Seed Laboratory, Ottawa. For home tests seeds are counted and sown in boxes or cans of soil, and kept in a warm place. For all seeds, care should be taken to have them thoroughly representative of the bulk lot. When sent to the Seed Laboratory samples should be enclosed in strong manilla envelopes or cotton bags, and where more than one of a certain kind is sent, each should be marked with a distinguishing number. From two to four ounces of grain is sufficient for the germination test. Samples should be addressed to the Seed Commissioner, Department of Agriculture, Ottawa. They are carried free in the mails if not exceeding twelve ounces in weight.

GOOSE LAID REAL GOLDEN EGGS

Probably no other goose in the world laid so many golden eggs in 1917 as the goose that a patriotic farmer in Madison County, Iowa, gave to the Red Cross last October. The bird was first sold at auction in a Chautauqua pavilion for thirty dollars, but the purchaser promptly gave it back to the Red Cross to be put up at auction elsewhere. Since then it has been "sold" many times and each time has brought more money than it brought before. On Thanksgiving Day Adair County and Madison County bid against each other for the goose. Adair County won with a bid of $2,250, and both that sum and the $500 that was bid by Madison County were turned into the Red Cross treasury. Having thus earned $5,450 for a good cause in a single day, the goose journeyed on to do patriotic work elsewhere. Long may she live!

A PRACTICAL ANSWER

"A train leaves New York," supposed the teacher, "travelling forty miles an hour. It is followed thirty minutes later by a train travelling eighty miles an hour. At what point will the second train run into the first?" The class seemed at a loss—that is, all except Willie Green, who was standing in the aisle very vigorously waving his hand. "Well, Willie?" said the teacher. "At the kind end of the rear car, ma'am" answered Willie.—Onward.

SUPPLANTS EXCELSIOR

Waste paper can be utilized, it is said, for packing purposes instead of excelsior. For this purpose a machine has been brought out which shreds various kinds of paper fed into it, making it into a soft material, which many firms are using for preparing fragile goods for shipment, thus reducing the cost of handling such things, materially.