The Acton Free Press

THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 17, 1921

HORRIBLE FATE OF OLD FATHER HUBBARD

Old Father Hubbard went to the cupboard
To get him a bottle of beer,
But when he got there the cupboard was bare,
And he got there just the same as the bear.

He went to the shop for a bottle of gin,
But when he got there the cupboard was bare,
He ordered some whiskey—for use scientific!
They sent him wood spirits; the smell was terrific!

He went to a vet. to prescribe for a calf;
Some brandy would do—say a pint and a half.
He found on return the vet. played him false;
The bottle contained only water and salts.

He went to the doctor for rum for a boil,
But doc. prescribed sulphur and sweet castor oil;
He went to a druggist with a prescription,
But he couldn't get liquor of any description.

He sought a blind pig as his only resort,
But when it was raided he landed in court.
He went to the jail for a month and a day,
He thought when released Prohibition was busted.

He's glad to be free from King Alcohol's power,
He now he goes thirsty or drinks lemon sour.

—Selected.

SUNSHINE PRESERVES

By Mabel McKee

THE minute Margaret scrambled to a sitting posture in her bed she caught the odor of cooking strawberries. She drew a long delicious sniff, then gave her shoulders an impatient shrug.

"O bother!" she exclaimed. "Those three crates of strawberries have come! I don't see why mother could not have waited until we had started for work before she began to preserve them."

She leaned toward the edge of her bed. What time could it be? As if in answer to her question Agnes, dressed for work, opened the door and poked her head inside.

"Mother wouldn't let us call you, Margie, when the rest got up because you were out late last night," she said. "But it's after seven, so I imagine you'd better hustle. Remember you have to go past the main library this morning."

The next minute Margaret was out of bed and had begun dressing. All the while she scowled. How she did hate strawberry-canning time! Long after the fresh fruit had disappeared the cooked preserves would still linger. Instead of boiling them down until they were thick and then sealing them immediately in cans as most people do, her mother spread them on great platters and put them where the sunshine would thicken them.

Each evening all of the Bartlow girls took turns carrying them into the kitchen, and then each morning carrying them back again to the sunshiny nooks about the house. Sometimes they thought it an irksome task. But when winter came, and they dipped out spoonfuls of the solid, luscious strawberries and spread them on their biscuits, they always exclaimed, "Sunshine preserves surely do beat the old-fashioned, boiled-down kind all to pieces. We're glad you know how to make them, mummy."

In the kitchen Margaret found her mother hulling the strawberries and dropping them into big white crocks, ready for washing. Mrs. Bartlow smiled approvingly at her over the bungalow apron she had donned that morning instead of the crepe kimono she sometimes wore down to breakfast.

"Mildred straightened up the dining room for me before she went to work," she began, "so I just put your breakfast things on the corner of the kitchen table, dear. There's fresh cocoa in the pot, and your egg and toast are in the oven."

With difficulty Margaret kept a threatening scowl away from her forehead. How she did hate to eat in the kitchen! But the white towel on the corner of the table, the crisp bacon and the dish of big strawberries smothered in thick cream looked so attractive that as she pulled up her chair she had to smile at her mother. While she ate her mother hulled berries and talked.

"Margie, do you think you could have the children with you at the library?" she asked anxiously. "If they're only out from under my feet, I can get the preserves all done today."

Margaret nodded, but a surge of resentment rose in her heart. Mother never asked Agnes to take the four youngest Bartlows to her office; or Mary to have them at the bank. The Cruft branch library was bad enough without her being obliged to have four extra children on her hands. But her mother, who did not suspect Margaret's feelings, was talking gayly on. She would have them take magazines and scissors, so that they could cut out dolls at one of the long tables in the school hall. Perhaps some of the mothers in that district would also be canning fruit and would be only too glad to have their youngsters join in the doll making. To make ready for just such an emergency she said she would send a great pile of magazines and two or three extra pair of scissors.

"Don't wash your dishes," she exclaimed as Margaret rose from the table. "One of the little girls can do that. If you have any spare time, I'd rather have you weigh out the berries and the sugar for me. I'm so slow at doing that."

Margaret looked at the clock. If she did not sew the buttons on her new white linen dress, so that she could wear it that day, she would have time to weigh out the berries. The blue voile was all right, but she was tired of it; and besides, all the girls at the main library were wearing linen dresses. But her mother had already brought out the scales and was waiting expectantly for her to begin weighing. It was too late now to refuse.

An hour later, Margaret, clad in the blue voile, ascended the steps of the main library. She found an excited group of the young librarians gathered round the receiving desk. The library inspector would arrive in a few minutes, and the girls were wondering what recommendations for promotions and changes in the staff she would make as a result of her visit.

Mary Markle, immaculate in a green linen dress, spied the new arrival. "Margie," she exclaimed, "why didn't you call me? Just as soon as I heard she was coming I called your house and told your mother to have you call me the minute you got up."

Margaret knew that under the stress of beginning work on those bothersome sunshine preserves her mother had forgotten. She glanced down at her blue voile. How dingy it did look among the other girls' linens! But there was no way to avoid wearing it. She had to be at her branch in half an hour, and even if she could have slipped home to don the new linen dress she would not have time to sew on the buttons. Another disastrous result of those miserable sunshine preserves!

"O Margie, dear," said Mary, tucking her hand in Margaret's arm, "we girls were all hoping that the inspector would recommend that you be promoted from branch work to the staff library. It would be such fun to have you with us."

Margaret's eyes shone at the very thought. For almost a year she had been longing for a chance to come to the main library. There she would be associated with the other librarians, and, moreover, the work in the beautiful building with its thousands and thousands of books was much more interesting than that in the poorly equipped branch libraries, which for the most part were stationed in unused rooms in the school buildings.

Decidedly out of heart over the blue voile—for she did want to make a good appearance and win the approval of the state inspector—Margaret started on her walk to the Cruft branch. Her thoughts were rebellious. She condemned all kinds of sunshine preserves and other "home impediments" to her work. None of the other girls had to do so much work at home as she was obliged to do; but also none of them belonged to families that contained nine children.

"I can't have the children there today; that's one thing sure," Margaret declared at the corner of Vine and Market streets. "The minute I get to the Cruft building I'll telephone mother about the inspector's visit. She'll have to send them to the park."

But when Margaret arrived at the building she found the four youngest Bartlow children waiting on the steps. Dressed in clean gingham frocks or khaki suits, and laden with bundles, they were a happy group. But when Margaret spoke dismay settled on their faces.

"We can't go to the park," eight-year-old Katharine wailed. "Mother won't let us go there alone for fear Billy will get drowned."

"Oh, well," said Margaret, turning her key in the lock, "you youngsters may as well stay on here, then. A few more children to keep in order won't change the inspector's opinion of dowdy me."

Inside the building she told them of the inspector's coming visit and warned them to be extra good. Their eyes grew big at the news. In their little minds the inspector was a person of policemanlike aspect who had power exceeding that even of the mayor. Yes, indeed, they would be good!

"It's lucky mother sent all these clean towels and pieces of soap," ventured Jean, the eldest of the quartette. "First she put some in just for us, and then she said that the other children probably would have dirty hands, too, and ought not to handle the books with them."

A few minutes later, while Margaret opened the windows and put her library in order, the Bartlow children scattered their magazines and scissors over the long table out in the hall, placed chairs round it and did all they could to make it look like the reading table in their living room at home. When Margaret saw them she smiled at their contented faces and the array of towels that Jean was hanging over the towel rack in the wash room.

At any rate, thought the librarian, children were numerous they were always clean and well trained. Margaret, looking at their trimmed nails and their attractively arranged hair, decided that if all children were as clean as they were branch library work would be nearly rid of the special task that made it so disagreeable—the task, that is, of repairing books.

Near noon a commotion in the hall caused her to leave her desk. Jean was insisting that two grimy-looking youngsters wash their hands before they went into the "library room" to get books. After one look at their hands Margaret sustained Jean in her decision. She watched the children gathered round the long cutting table. How happy they were! On a cold Saturday last winter she had followed a suggestion her mother had made and had used the hall as a temporary reading room. Now she believed she would make the change permanent.

Then the outer door of the school building opened, and into the hall walked Miss Willis, the city head librarian, and the library inspector. Margaret moved shyly forward to greet them; important persons always awed her. The head librarian gave her only a slanting, sidewise look as she shook her hand. Her main attention was on the group of children round the reading table. The library inspector was staring at the scene in the wash room. While she looked the two children who had had such grimy hands came skipping across the room to Margaret.

"Now our hands are clean, Miss Library Teacher," they cried. "Can we have our books?"

Margaret took them into the tiny library and left the visitors in the hall. A few minutes later the head librarian followed her.

"She's taking notes," she told Margaret proudly. "That's a good omen. How glad I am you put in the table for the picture cutting and started the rule of having them wash their dirty hands before they could have books!"

"It was my mother's idea," Margaret said simply. "You see, she's had lots of experience with children and dirty little hands."

The head librarian smiled. "I got lots of my early ideas from my mother. There were eight of us children, and we are all rather successful. I've always noticed, Miss Bartlow, and these thrifty little mothers who have a half dozen or more children to train turn out the best workers. I wish more of my librarians had that kind of mothers."

Margaret's eyes shone. She knew that her mother was a genius, even if she herself did sometimes fail to appreciate her.

"Miss Willis," she asked earnestly, "did your mother ever make sunshine strawberry preserves?"

"Why, bless your heart, yes, and lots of them every year!" Miss Willis laughed so heartily that her glasses threatened to fall from her nose. "And she always put them in my room to get the sunshine, because I had a bay window. Sometimes when they were being made I was distinctly out of sorts with all kinds of preserves, but always when winter came I was back in good humor and ready to devour quantities on my bread and butter."

The library inspector's head appeared at the doorway. Her eyes scanned the neat little library and then the bright-eyed girlish librarian. She nodded to Miss Willis, and together they left the Cruft branch to continue their work of inspection. Once more Margaret was alone.

After that the day seemed to have golden wings. When she was not receiving and handing out books she worked with the little cutters at the reading table in the hall. At noon she hustled the other children home and helped the little Bartlows spread out the lunch her mother had packed for them.

"Margie," said Katherine, looking up at her sister, "you act just the way mother does—so nice and sweet and—"

"Margie is nice," Billy interrupted, wrinkling his freckled little nose in adoration. "The lady said you were pretty, too!"

"What lady—the library inspector?" Margaret asked with a laugh.

Then the Bartlow children dropped their spoons and stared at her.

"The library inspector!" said Lawrence in an awed voice. "Was that woman the library inspector? Why, where was her uniform?"

And this time it was Margaret that fairly shook with mirth.

Closing time came at four o'clock, but it was after five before Margaret and her little procession entered the Bartlow gate and came round to the back porch.

"Mother, I took them past the park to see the animals," she explained as she entered the kitchen. "But I kept them clean. They look just as neat as they did this morning when they started out."

The kitchen was in exquisite order. A freshly iced cake was on the table, and Mrs. Bartlow was making mayonnaise. She turned from it to beam at her daughter.

"I'm so glad you did," she said happily. "Now they won't have to be dressed before supper; but you will, Margie." Her eyes were critical. "We have company coming for supper, and I want you to look nice. Put on the dress I laid out on your bed. When the mayonnaise is done I'll slip upstairs to fasten it."

"Margie was so nice to us, mother," said Katherine, who had followed her sister into the kitchen. "She's just like you."

"Of course she is!" Mrs. Bartlow's eyes were bright. "Doesn't father say so every day?"

Margaret's arms closed round her mother. "If I only were, mummy!" she whispered.

Upstairs she found two big plates of strawberry preserves on her south window seat. They brought a tender smile to her lips and the memory of what Miss Willis had said of her own girlhood days. On the bed opposite them was her new white linen dress with all the buttons sewed in their places. That was one of the things mother had managed to "get out of the way."

Margaret had it on when her mother entered the room. Critically she turned her daughter round and looked at every seam before she announced that it was a perfect fit.

"I want you to look real sweet tonight," she said, with a happy gleam still in her eyes. "We're having a little party for you—the girls from the main library. You see, Margie, Miss Willis telephoned right after dinner and told me that, following the library inspector's recommendation, you are to be first assistant in the children's department at the main library next year."

Margaret's arms closed about her mother's waist, and her head lay on her mother's shoulder.

"O mother," she sobbed, "did she tell you that it was all on account of you that I got it?"

Mother winked her eyes hard and then straightened her trim shoulders resolutely.

"Margaret Bartlow," she said pretending sternness, "if you don't look out you will be just as emotional and foolish as I am. Now, you hurry and run to the drug store after some ice cream to keep my cake company at supper."

Margaret looked over her mother's shoulder and saw the two big plates on her window seat.

"O mother," she begged earnestly, "can't we have some of your sunshine strawberry preserves instead? I should rather have them for the party than ice cream or anything else."

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DREW'S ODD WAYS

When Drew came back from the camp on the river where he had spent six weeks of the summer following his Freshman year in high school, his first act was to bake a big cake and send it by parcel post to the fellows still camping. "They crave something sweet," he explained to his amused mother.

But when he happened to mention the circumstance to the neighborhood boys on the tennis courts, he was rather taken back at the howls of derision which greeted the remark. A few questions brought out these facts from Drew himself:

When he and Marian were quite small, just starting in school, they and their mother were left to make their own way, by the death of their father. The mother went back to the university to prepare for teaching, and the children began to take the responsibility of the little apartment in which they lived. They helped with the housekeeping; did the marketing; learned to plan simple meals; solved the mysteries of a gas stove; Marian slightly older took the lead, but Drew kept very close to her. What one learned the other soon acquired.

When Drew got into high school, he did not feel that his somewhat expert knowledge of housekeeping barred him from more strenuous physical feats; he became a star on the teams. But he kept right on helping at home; mastered the sewing machine, was a shopper of judgment and taste; and his cooking was in demand at camp, right along.

"I figure out," concluded Drew, "that every thing I can do well, is just one more asset! I'm going in for commercial life as soon as I finish school, and who knows but what I have learned of home making will boost me at some department store or wholesale grocery? I'm sure to use the practice and skill that necessity forced on me."

Sensible and manly is Drew! Wonder how many boys would have his courage!

THE RUSTING OF PAINTED IRON

It is known that iron, even when carefully covered with a coating of paint, still shows a tendency to rust. This has usually been attributed to minute cracks in the paint caused by the action of cold and heat, under whose influence the iron and the paint do not expand and contract equally. But experiments in England have led to the conclusion that there is another cause at work, namely, that paint, when swollen by moisture, is pervious to both water and gases. Under such circumstances oxidation can take place beneath it. Paint that contains the largest possible quantity of oil is the best for protecting iron.

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INTERESTING FACTS ABOUT SEA FISHES—POLLOCK

The pollock, captured extensively by our deep sea or bank fishermen, along with cod and haddock, is for unaccountable reasons, not popular as a fresh commodity. It is closely allied to the true cod, is of fine flavor, and may be readily and cheaply procured in our Canadian markets, especially during the months of June, July, August and September. One authority, endeavoring to locate a reason for the apparent deep-rooted prejudice, considers it due largely to the fact that the pollock destroys better fishes. It is true that the pollock is very destructive to the young cod, surrounding the schools and driving the fish to the surface where they fall a prey to the voracious pollocks attacking below and hundreds of sea gulls which with astonishing veracity and precision pounce upon them from above. But this cannibalistic tendency is not confined to the pollock alone. It is a trait of many of our sea fishes.

Pollock, sometimes known as the coal fish or green cod, is common northward on both shores of the Atlantic. It is caught abundantly on our north Atlantic banks, and also along our Canadian coast where inshore fishermen capture it along with cod and haddock. Frequently the pollock come close in shore and become entangled in nets fixed for herring and other fishes. It ranges as far south as France on the European coast and Cape Cod, or even New York on the American side.

It reaches a length of more than three feet and a weight of twenty-five pounds or more. It is exceedingly productive. According to an eminent authority a fish three feet, three and a half inches long, weighing twenty-three and a half pounds, contained approximately 4,030,000 eggs, and one thirteen pounds produced about 2,570,000 eggs. The eggs are, of course, very small and are produced in such tremendous quantities in order to provide for enormous destruction by predatory fishes, and guarantee adequate continuation of the species. It obviously is not the intention of nature that all of the eggs should mature. The eggs are buoyant, floating at the surface where they hatch in five or six days.

The pollock is darker than the cod and more lustrous and the lower jaw is more extended, with a smaller barbel at the tip. There is a good deal of similarity between the true pollock and the whiting, so common on the British coast. Two closely related species of pollock are found in Pacific waters. The Alaska pollock is found in Behring Sea and as far north as [illegible] Bering Sea the [illegible] and furnishes the main item in the diet of the fur seal. In the waters of the Canadian Pacific is found the wall-eyed pollock. It is quite abundant about Puget Sound, but is not fished commercially.

As a game fish the true pollock or Atlantic pollock has not been fully appreciated. In some localities it is a voracious fish, taking the hook freely and fighting violently. In Massachusetts Bay great numbers are caught with a surface bait, but larger fish must be sought at the bottom.

Those who eat pollock fresh esteem it highly. The limited experience the writer has had convinces him that the general antipathy to the fresh pollock is largely associated with the name and not with its inherent qualities. Some months ago pollock were brought into a certain Canadian city and offered for sale. The demand was discouragingly small, but a few days later the resourceful dealer offered the same fish for sale as "Boston bluefish." On the first occasion the price was six cents and subsequently as "bluefish" it was offered for sixteen cents. The "bluefish" was extremely popular and the stock was soon sold out. The writer does not intend to justify the business morality of the deception, but it illustrates clearly that the aversion to pollock is not a sensible one. Incidentally it proves once again that Barnum had the right conception of human nature. Any method used in preparing cod for the table may be employed with the pollock with equally good results.

The official returns for the year 1919 disclose that of the total pollock catch of 128,023 cwts. only 16,490 cwts. were used fresh. The value of the total catch was $428,460 and the quantity consumed fresh $55,808. The great bulk of the fish was dried or green salted. Eighty-five thousand cwts. were thus treated, valued at considerably more than half a million dollars.

THE SECRET OF GOOD MANNERS

There was a young lady who wanted to know the secret of good manners. She wanted to be so gracious, so tactful, so thoroughly precise and correct that no one could find fault with anything she said or anything she did no matter what the occasion. This young lady had studied books on etiquette till she had all the common and accepted rules of conduct committed to memory. Yet she could not be sure. For she learned that etiquette—or the rules of etiquette—change as regularly as styles and fashions. Things that were exactly proper last year may not be correct now.

So the young lady sought the advice of a wise man. And this is what the wise man told her:

"My dear, you have asked me to reveal the secret of good manners. Really, there is no secret to it. All manners are good that come out of a kind heart. Good manners please, bad manners offend—and that is all there can be to it."

Thus did the young lady learn that the unchanging rule of right conduct embraces the simple qualities of kindness, sympathy and understanding.

WHERE THE COAT WAS

A negro pastor was warming up to the climax of his sermon, and his auditors were waxing more and more excited. "I wahns yer, O my congregashun," exclaimed the exhorter. "I wahns yer against de sin uv fightin'; I wahns yer agins de sin uv whiskey drinkin', an de sin of chicken robbin', an' I wahns yer, my breddern, against the sin uv melon stealin'." A devout worshipper in the back of the church jumped to his feet and snapt his fingers excitedly. "Whurfo' does yer, my brudder, r'ar up an' snap yo' fingers when I speak of melon stealin'?" asked the preacher. "Kuze yo' jes' reminds me where I lef' mah overcoat," replied the devout worshipper, as he hurried off.

Mt. Vesuvius is troubled with eruptions and they don't know what to do with the crater.

A CURIOUS BOWLDER

In the mysterious Ice Age, when great glaciers advanced from the north over the northern part of Canada and the United States, many strange rocks were brought from the regions beyond the St. Lawrence and the Great Lakes, and left far down from their place of origin, scattered among the hills and plains of New England and the Ohio and Mississippi Valleys. One of these rocks, found near Columbus, Ohio, some years ago, proves to be particularly interesting and curious. It is not more than a foot and a half in diameter, but it is plainly a relic of glacial times, and nobody can tell for certain whence it came. There is no rock resembling it within hundreds of miles. The supposition is that the ice carried it from a point north of Lake Huron to the place where it was found. Its composition shows that it was of volcanic origin.

A STARTLING EXPERIENCE

To have an animal suddenly begin to talk to you would be enough to make the shivers run down your spine. Imagine your horse, some morning, suddenly greeting you with "Hello!" Well, read the following from T. H. Hawkins' "The Soul of an Animal":

"He was picked up injured and given to me," (a young rook that had fallen from its nest) "and has been my devoted companion ever since. He soon learned to talk and to speak the following words quite distinctly: 'Good-bye!' 'What is it?' 'Kiss me!' 'What is it? Jim Crow!' I never actually taught him to talk, because I had no idea rooks could do so, but when I left him after feeding him I used to say 'Good-bye.' No one was more surprised than myself when I heard him say 'Good-bye' one day for the first time. After that I taught him the other phrases."

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Which?

Crerar — The head of a great trading organization which unites its trading with its politics—a political theorist who lost control of the political movement he started and is being driven into impossible positions by class rule extremists. He is under the domination of Wood, the political boss of Alberta. He would give effect to Free Trade, thus destroying Canada's industrial and economic structure.

A Vote for Crerar is a Vote for Chaos

King — So evasive that nobody knows where he actually stands on the great issues of the day. Fits his policy to suit his audiences. Talks Free Trade to the West and Protection to the East. Specializes in high-sounding phraseology. His party is pledged to a large measure of Free Trade, but fails to suggest now methods of obtaining necessary National Revenues.

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