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A CONCERT FOR THE FATHERLESS

Night was coming cold and dreary. A wild wind from the North was sweeping over the prairies of western Kansas. The air was thick with frozen particles of ice and snow that rattled against the windows of an eastern bound train. The car was poorly lighted and a spirit of discontent seemed to have fallen over the travelers. Above the roar of the wind and the noise of the train came the shrill cry of a baby.

A delicate little woman, thinly clad and evidently in the last stage of consumption, vainly tried to hush the little one. Black looks were exchanged and scowling faces were turned toward the noisy child. One man in an audible voice remarked, "Better put brats in the baggage car with the dogs and guns." The weary mother grew more nervous and the child screamed louder than before. A woman sitting near offered to help, and soon found that the family of mother and four little children were suffering from hunger. They had been two days on the train, coming from western Colorado, their lunch box was emptied and they were without dinner or supper. The father had recently died and the brave mother was trying to reach her childhood's home with her little ones before the grim summons came to pass over the divide. The eldest child, a girl of eight years, was trying to amuse the two boys, younger than herself. The story of the hungry little ones spread from group to group and lunch boxes were freely offered, and the little ones bountifully fed.

A white-haired, stately old gentleman left his seat and with a pleasant smile and courtly bow to the tired mother, said "I was quite a nurse in my younger days; let me take that child," and the baby freed his face, as only babies can and was satisfied. Reaching out its hands it was soon cuddling its head upon the old man's breast. The tired eyes began to drop as its nurse slowly paced up and down the aisle humming a cradle song.

At a distant end of the car were the members of a denver concert company. All were tired and sleepy; some were cross and some complained of the cold car and the smoke from the soft coal.

But the baby face touched a tender chord as the old man paused beside them and told the sad story of sickness and poverty. A new interest was aroused, and after a few moments consultation the manager announced that "the company would give a concert for the benefit of the widowed and fatherless."

How they sang! Every corner of the car was filled with the sweet melody. Now soft and low, then higher, sweeter, clearer, our hearts were lifted. We forgot the cold and the bitter wind outside as the sweet strains of "Annie Laurie," "We'd Better Bide a Wee," and "The old folks at home," rolled through the car. Song after song they gave us, and then came the grand old hymns that hold the key to every heart. As the last word of "Rock of Ages" died away the old man with the sleeping baby in his arms passed his hat and everyone responded to that call for help. Hard faces grew soft and eyes were dim. Silver chinked against silver and not a few bank notes drifted silently among the coins. With tears streaming down her face and voice choked with sobs, the mother tried to express her gratitude.

The old man placed the sleeping babe beside its sleeping mother and walking to the centre of the car raised his hand and reverently said: "Praise God from whom all blessings flow."

THE LUST TO KILL

"It's a pity you killed it" I said to a boy with a dead "Great Blue Heron." "Why? It's only a crane!" he answered. "It's no good—eats all the trout." Odd fact, they call the heron "the crane" here and belie it with the old wives' tale of it eating trout. It eats any small fish it can get and go do we, but as far as the trout it eats count, it is no danger to their propagation. I want to say the same thing about the loon. As I write this the French Canadians that live along the Gulf of St. Lawrence in the Gaspe peninsula have the right to kill loons even in their nests, because forsooth, the story runs that the big birds are killing off the salmon and trout. I have wandered as widely as any man in America on this continent, and I never saw them doing it as they usually live on lakes and those are river and creek fish as are among. Any excuse will do in these days of extermination. My old eyes have seen the majority of living things put up by the beneficent Creator for food for man, wantonly slaughtered by the same wild animal, man. Policies, laws, game wardens, departmental heads all seem to be unavailing against the slaughter that goes on. We have nursed, with aching hearts, hundreds of wounded things we meet on our Natural History field work, and I rarely meet a man who has an atom of sympathy with the beasts of the field or the birds of the air. There is no place so wild but we meet with the authorised collector for museums, departments, governments, and he kills the setting birds on their nests to add to the already overburdened collections and takes eggs and bird and nest and all. Numbers of men are doing this every year all over Canada for the Canadian and United States collections.

WHAT IS HOME?

Home is the human nest, and the woman who fails as a home-maker fails as a woman.

Home is the social unit. A nation is built up of its homes, and will be strong or weak according to the strength or weakness of the homes, home being to be individual the rallying-point of nearly all the social virtues.

Home is the child's birthright. The world should unfold to a child from the home-centre; all experience and education should begin there, that centre meaning love, protection, trust, honor, disciplining.

Home is the woman's kingdom. Her power radiates from the hearth, which is the natural focus of her highest strength, gifts and ambitions. The farther from the hearth she goes, the weaker is her sway of happiness, whether as giver or receiver.

Home is the man's anchorage, his point of security, the harbor to which he returns after toil and weariness, after wandering; home, whether the man be in it or out of it, is his rampart against the restlessness and ingratitude of life; it shields him, refreshes him, sustains him, steadies him, holds him to his best.

Home, in its highest aspects, is all this; and even when it falls short of the highest it remains a portion of its inevitable virtue and power. Beside the hearth we grow up, beside the hearth we must die.

ITS ONLY PURPOSE

"O Willie, Willie," cried a teacher to a hopelessly dull pupil, "whatever do you think your head is for?"

Willie, who evidently thought this another of the troublesome questions that teachers were always asking, pondered it deeply. "Please, miss," he replied at length, "to keep my collar up."

EASILY GAUGED

Old Benjamin Dwyer was accustomed to treat his guests with sweet cider, and although the barrel stood in the darkest corner of a dark cellar, he never carried a lamp on his trips for a fresh supply. One evening, Mr. Brookings, the minister, was his guest. "It must be quite an art to fill the pitcher so accurately in the dark without running it over," said Mr. Brookings.

"Wal, no," Tain't jest difficult," Benjamin replied. "You see, when the cider gets up to the first joint of my thumb, I stop."

TWO JOSHUAS

A negro appeared before the judge on the charge of violating the prohibition act. The darkey was trembling so much that the judge thought he would have a little fun with the poor fellow; and so he asked him his name.

"Joshua," answered the negro.

"Oh!" said the judge. "Are you the Joshua that made the sun stand still?"

"No-no-no-no, suh. I'se de Joshua what made de moonshine."

KEEP BUSY

Nine-tenths of the miseries and the vice of manhood proceed from idleness; with men of quick minds, to whom it is especially pernicious, this habit is commonly the fruit of many disappointments and schemes of gratified; and men fall in their schemes not so much for want of strength as for their ill direction of it. The weakest living creature, by concentrating his powers on a single object, can accomplish something. The drop by continued falling bores its passage through the hardest rock; the hasty torrent rushes over it with hideous roar, and leaves no trace behind.

NEEDED A VETERINARY

Doctor (to patient)—"What ails you."

Patient—"Indeed, I don't know, I only know that I suffer."

"What kind of life do you lead?"

"I work like an ox, I eat like a wolf, I am as tired as a dog, and I sleep like a horse."

"In that case I should advise you to consult a veterinary surgeon."

THE FARMER TO THE LAWYER

"There was a certain prominent physician who had a serious operation on one of his patients," said the farmer. "During the operation the physician became rather nervous and excited, and instead of removing the membrane he was after, accidently took out the man's conscience."

Here the farmer stopped.

The lawyer inquired, "Well, what became of the patient? Did he get well?"

"Oh, yes," replied the farmer, "but having his conscience taken out, he was not fit for anything else, so he studied law.—Judge.

REVERSED ?

Dougie's mother, who was a peaceful, saving body, made him a pair of knickerbockers. They weren't very well made, however, and one day Dougie came in crying bitterly.

"What's the matter with you, my man?" asked his mother.

"I'll no' gang wi' thae breeks again," said Dougie. "The laddies say they dinna ken whether I'm gaen to the schule or comin' frae it."

HER GREAT DISCOVERY

He leaned back in his chair and regarded the tea-cake with a contemplative frown. Then he picked it up gingerly between thumb and forefinger, as if weighing it.

His wife looked very stern, but did not speak.

Her husband tapped the cake on the edge of his plate. Then she did speak.

"I suppose you're making fun of my cooking?"

"Oh, no, my dear," he answered. "Unwittingly, perhaps, you have made a great discovery."

"What do you mean?"

"I mean," came the answer, "that our future is assured. Though not much of a success of a cake, this thing is an absolutely splendid substitute for a rubber heel!"

FACT AND COMMENT

Had it not been for work, man would have perished of boredom ages ago.

We find a true home only when we discover a place where we dare to show our best and do not care to show our worst.

HOW HONEY MAY BE USED

Honey sweetens life in many ways. This is apparent when we see the various uses to which it is put. Formerly it was used as a spread on bread, but today, there are a great number of other ways of using it to vary the menu. Though the best way to serve honey is in its natural or raw form in deserts, as a sweetener, it is used to a large extent in cookery both in the baking of cakes and the making of bread to which it imparts the property of keeping fresh for a long time—this is a point which all good housekeepers should note.

A very appetizing spread is now manufactured by incorporating honey with peanut butter to make what is called "Honey-nut Butter."

Apart from entering into table use, it is used to make most excellent vinegar, said by many to be equal to the best product.

We can realise the value of honey as a natural food when we see some of the large breakfast food manufacturers now advocating on all packages of cereals put out by them the use of it as a sweetener.

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