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Mr. Van Gamp's Goat

By CLARA C. HOLMES
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"MR. VAN GAMP is pardonable for buying the Babbitts' goat," stated Victoria, Mr. Van Gamp's unsophisticated sister.

SHORT STORY
Expected to comment, I replied: "Your brother has the reputation of being an expert tradesman, undoubtedly he bought the goat to add."

"Van does trade farm stock, but he didn't buy the goat to trade," persisted Victoria.

As I saw no logical reason why a shrewd tradesman should buy a goat for the mere sake of owning a goat, I made no answer. Victoria continued:

"It's like this. Miss Leonard: Van was brought up from childhood deprived of playthings. Our neighbors, the Hubbards, were well-to-do; their boys had everything—bicycles, guns, pigeons and goats. Our boys only had garden tools and a wheelbarrow. Van used to run away and stay in the pasture with the Hubbard goats. It's only a childish whim of Van's now to have a goat of his own."

"The Babbitt girls told me a woeeful story about Rags. Last Monday afternoon he chewed off his tether rope and then went to the clothesline and chewed up the week's wash."

"I'll have Van keep Rags in the barnyard," vowed Victoria. "I'll have him fix the fence."

Van did; he worked hours adding an extra top-rail. With evil eyes the goat stood watching, ready to butt viciously whenever Van ventured inside.

Although he built a corral, Mr. Van Gamp had no intention of keeping Rags in it. A summer boarder at Van Gamp's, I assumed a neutral attitude in their family differences. Therefore, when Van let the goat out back of the barn, bravely harnessing him into a goat-cart to go driving around Rockhill, I knew all about the affair, while Victoria, who puritanically would not tolerate any such tomfoolery, did not know.

The first house across Meadowbrook bridge is Van Gamp's. Behind this house rises a round-topped hill, abounding in boulders, the rocky pasture sloping to Meadowbrook pond. Hitherward, to the pond, this Saturday morning, in my bathing suit, went I; and hitherward riding in his iron goat-cart to Rockhill, went Mr. Van Gamp. I barely had time to gather my important manuscript papers and scramble out of the way to avoid being run over. With momentum the goat speeded down and out into the Bottomless Pit, where the iron cart forthwith sank.

Solicitously I looked down into the still, deep water, but I saw nobody, nothing. In my bathing suit I went up into the pasture. When I shouted, only mournful rock echoes came mockingly back to me. At last I scudded home.

Victoria was in the kitchen, making pies.

"Where is Mr. Van Gamp?" inquired I.

"I s'pose he's in the meadow lot planting potatoes."

"Well, he's had a runaway."

"That sorrel mare again," fumed Victoria. "I've advised Van to trade the sorrel mare."

Victoria went to the telephone while I returned to the dale of the disaster.

I found the goat chewing up my shoes and silk stockings which I had mindlessly left behind me.

Presently came Victoria's help-policemen, coast guardsmen, men of the fire department, followed by the endless throng of week-end joy riders.

Needless to say, they found Mr. Van Gamp; they found him leaning bewildered against a boulder with a gash in his head. He supposed he had been asleep 20 years.

On Monday following, Van traded the goat with Billy Brown's father for a rooster.

"I didn't want pay; I gave Billy the goat," Van explained to me confidentially. "But Brown offered a rooster I'd been wanting. That's how we happened to swap."

Deprecate and Depreciate

To depreciate means to express regret or to plead against; depreciate means to lessen in price or estimation. The other day, a banker said: "I depreciate all this talk of a strike in the cotton trade; it only tends to depreciate the value of cotton shares."

Rabbits Very Small at Birth

Eyes of young rabbits open on about the eleventh day. On the seventeenth day they are usually away from the nest. Little rabbits weigh about an ounce and a half at birth. By the time they are 28 days old, they weigh a pound each.



News about FISH

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Department of Fisheries, Ottawa.

Ladies: WRITE FOR FREE BOOKLET!



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Combine 1 1/2 cups of fish, cooked or canned fish, add 2 tablespoons of chopped pimento with one cup of medium white sauce. Season with salt, pepper and a dash of cayenne. Bake rich baking-powder biscuits, split and butter white top, serve with creamed fish between the layers and over the top. Hot buttered sprouts is a good accompaniment.



Department of Fisheries, Ottawa.
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