The Big Line Fence.

Miss Euphemia Anderson sat down upon a fallen log and wiped her face with her blue checked apron.

"Jemima!" she called to a pink sunbonnet displayed above the raspberry bushes.

"Jemima Hume! Ain't you ever goin' to stop pickin'? My pail's full an' shook down, and not another berry would I pick this day, if I had to wade in 'em knee deep. Come over here in the shade, and let's eat our lunch!"

The pink sunbonnet moved and its owner came slowly from the woods, her portly form tearing an ample path-way in the bushes.

"Well Euphemia Anderson!" she said, as she sank panting in the cool shade of the maples and fanned her rotund countenance, "If you'd lived for the last twenty years on the prairie, and in a town at that, you'd go on pickin' raspberries all summer, and winter too for that matter, an' be glad. This here 's brought back my younger days more than anything. I've gone round in a reg'lar dream all afternoon, sayin' to myself "Jemima Hume, you're home again; you're in Ontario and you're under a tree pickin' raspberries after twenty years!"

"Well, well," said her hostess, smiling, "you'll be easy entertained Jemima, if that's all you need. I'm sure it makes me young again just to see you round. Somehow I never felt the same after you an' Peter went to Manitoba. Now help yourself to that chicken jelly, and try some of the short-cake. There's no hurry home, as long as I get there to help Sarah Ellen put away the milk.

Thus the women sat and talked for some-time.

"Look now; ain't that a prettier sight than you'll ever see in the north west?" said Miss Euphemia at length.

They were seated at the edge of a little wooded hill, known as "The Slash," which overlooked the surrounding farms. Mrs. Hume looked down across the sunny fields that sloped in gentle undulations down to the blue and silver expanse of Lake Huron. Here and there farm-houses nestled cozily in their orchards, and past them ran a picturesque little glen that divided Miss Anderson's home from the neighbouring farm. A little stream gurgled through its green depths, slipping lazily over the white stones, for the thirsty sun had almost dried it, lingering in the cool hollow called "The Spring," where the willows were reflected in its clear pools, rolling out a little swifter under the bridge, where the white dusty road crossed it, and finally flinging its joyous self into the waters of Lake Huron, as they came rushing up in welcome, all blue and white and smiling. It was indeed a beautiful picture, with the warm afternoon sunlight flooding all; but the visitor's attention had been caught by a huge board fence that ran parallel to the little stream. It was remarkably high and was topped with iron spikes (worthy of the wall of a mediaeval castle.

"Deary me, Euphemia" she said, re-adjusting her spectacles, "What on earth possessed your brother to put up a barricade like that between you and the Martinses?"

A shadow passed over Miss Euphemia's wrinkled face.

"You may well ask, Jemima. That fence is the disgrace of the country-side. I s'pose there weren't two better friends in Ontario than Steve Martin and our Andrew, when you folks moved away. But they got into a row about fencin' the farms off, nothin' much to begin with, but it ended up awful bad. I never quite got the rights of the story, because it started before my time, when Andrew's wife was livin', but there was a good deal of trouble about payin' for a fence, and for a long spell there was no fence at all, both o' them bein' that stubborn. An' Steve's cattle used to get into Andrew's grain; some said he kept that field for pasture on purpose even after it was all wore out. I never liked to ask Andrew about it because he's got a temper, even if he is my brother, an' the name of Martin to him, is just like showin' a red rag to a mad bull; but as far as I can make out they went on rowin' an' rowin' for a whole year, till it came to Steve havin' the law on Andrew, an' that's a thing he couldn't never forgive; none of our family ever bein' in a law-court in their lives before. I don't blame Andrew much but I do say it's an awful way to live with your neighbors. It's just eighteen years, come next Thanksgiving, since poor Maria died, an' I came to keep house for Andrew; and that big fence had just been finished. An' since the day I set foot in that house the Martinses an' us ain't had no more to do with each other than if we was both scared the others had small-pox. An' Mrs. Martin seems a pleasant spoken body too. Bob was just five then, an' bein' the youngest he hadn't much idea of what was goin' on; and I mind when he started to school his father gave him a reg'lar trimmin' one night for haulin' little Maggie Martin home on his sleigh. And they say Maggie caught it from her father too when she got home. "Ain't it just a terrible way to live, Jemima?"

"Dear, dear!" sighed her friend sympathetically. "It's a great pity to hold malice like that. It is indeed, And do the young folks keep it up?"

Miss Euphemia's voice dropped to a frightened whisper.

"That's the worst of it. There never was no trouble in that quarter to speak of, but now I'm clean worried to death. You see, there was just the two Martin children, a boy and a girl. You'll remember the boy, Jim. He was just the same age as our Archie an' they fought like two young bears at school. Well, Jim turned out an awful worthless fellow and left home when he was quite young. He went off to Australia or Africa or Greenland or some such out-o-the way place, an' they ain't never heard of him for years. Some say old Steve Martin ain't never got over it, and that's what makes him so hard. He thought the sun just rose an' set on that boy an' his mother just the same. But it's the girl I started to tell you about. I don't know what sort of a girl she is, but I tell you she's most awful good-lookin'. She's the neatest slip of a thing, as straight as that stick, an' with fair, curly hair like her mother, an' the biggest an' softest eyes. She's a Williams all over, whether she's like the Martins in her ways or not I don't know. Well, what I started to tell you about her was this. I never got wind of it until about a week ago because everybody is scared to mention the Martinses in our house; but Sylvia Morrison couldn't keep it. You mind what a gossip Sylvia used to be? Well, she's ten times worse now, for she does the sewin' for all the folks on this line, and she's just chuck full o' news all the time. Last week I had her to help make over my black silk, soon as I heard you was comin' an' right in the middle of stitchin' a piece on the machine, she stops up sudden an' says, as perk as you please.

"'So Bob's keepin' company with Maggie Martin?'

"Well, I just felt for a minute as if all the breath had been knocked out of my body. I couldn't say a word. She pretended to be most awful surprised because I didn't know. She said it had been goin' on all last winter and she'd seen them herself comin' home from the pic-nic on the Queen's Birthday, arm-in-arm, walkin' dreadful slow. I've been that worried ever since thinkin' what his pa would do to that boy if he was to find out, that I can't sleep nights. I know Andrew ain't got wind of it yet, for him an' Bob is just the biggest chums, Bob bein' the baby you know, an' the only one at home now, besides havin' his mother's black eyes. But I can't bear to think what he's do if he was to find out."

"Well, well!" said her friend, soothingly, "I wouldn't let it worry me, now Euphemia. I just wouldn't. There mayn't be anything in it after all. Young folks change so now. Our Tom is just hereaway, thereaway, with a new girl every week. Boys is like that," she added, reassuringly.

"Yes, but Bob ain't," replied Miss Euphemia, with mournful conviction. "If he takes a notion for anything he never changes. He's like Maria's people that way. Now the Andersons were all flirts in their day."

"Yes, and you were one of the worst yourself, Euphie!" laughed her friend.

A twinkle came into Miss Euphemia's blue eyes and for a moment her wrinkled face, that still showed signs of a past beauty, looked almost young.

"I'm afraid, I was," she admitted with quite a coquettish glance. "I'd better have been like you, Jemima, for see what came of it all," and she sighed.

"But Bob's different. He's such a jolly sort of a fellow you'd think he didn't care for a thing except to be up to some mischief. But my goodness! he's that set when he does take a thing into his head there's no turnin' him. I mind the time his father gave him the thrashin' I was tellin' you about. I went up to his room after Andrew had gone to the barn, because it just always went through me to see Bobby touched. He never shed a tear until I took him into my lap, an' then the poor little darling put his arms around my neck till I thought he'd choke me, an' we had a good cry together. But, oh, my! Wasn't my little man mad! His big black eyes were blazin' and he tightened his little fist an' he says: '

"'Aunt Euphie, I'll marry little Maggie when I get big, just to spite him, see if I don't!' An' I sometimes think maybe he's kept that in his mind all his life. It would just be like him."

There was a sympathetic silence between the two old friends for a time. They leaned against the tree trunk and looked down over the tranquil valley. The sun was sinking into Lake Huron, now a sea of gold, and sending its resplendent glow over the hills and the tree-tops. The stalwart beeches on the shore stood black against the shining water, the woods in the hollows were growing purple. From the farm houses came faint, peaceful sounds of life; a line of lazy cattle wandered slowly up the white road, the leader's bell tinkling softly; the little river caught the radiance of the sun and responded with a gay sparkle. But the big line fence followed the stream's bright course, winding down the hillside dark and sinister like the serpent in the garden of Eden.

Miss Euphemia's sharp eyes had been taking in the details of the scene and had espied two figures moving in the deep violet shadows by the spring. Suddenly she sprang to her feet.

"Jemima, oh land of liberty! what's that?"

"For the love of goodness, Euphie Anderson," gasped Mrs. Hume, "Is it a bear or what?"

"A bear! I wish it was. It's our Bob! Yes, it is so our Bob!" she cried climbing upon the fence to get a better view. "Oh, my stars above, it's true!"

Mrs. Hume clutched her friend's trembling form.

"Euphemia Anderson, what's the matter? Are you gone daft?"

For answer Miss Euphemia pointed through the trees to the little willow grove beneath them, and there, standing against the big line fince, as though it had been erected for the express purpose of sheltering Andersons and Martins, while they made love to each other, stood the stalwart form of the son of the Anderson household, and very near him shone the golden head of the Martin's daughter.

Miss Anderson seized her friend's arm and dragged her across the field, over the summer-fallow and into the lane beyond. Neither spoke until the barn-yard was reached and then Miss Euphemia dropped her pail and leaned against the gate.

"Jemima Hume, don't tell me that he kissed her!" she commanded.

But Mrs. Hume was quite beyond telling anything. She pointed mechanically to a figure that was crossing the summer fallow quickly, and making straight for the spring. Poor Miss Euphemia upset her berries and trampled them ruthlessly in her eagerness to see who it was.

"It's Andrew!" she screamed. "It's his father! He's seen Bob goin' an' he's followin'. May the Lord have mercy!"

"Come away in Euphie," said her friend, soothingly. "Come now, don't take on so; don't cry now. Maybe Andrew won't mind so much as you think."

"Mind! He'd mind murder far less. A Martin, Jemima! It'll drive him mad, Oh, my poor Bobby, my lamb, you'll be driven from your home this night. His father'll never forgive him, never! Oh dear! Oh, dear! There I am Jemima burdenin' you with all my troubles and you my visitor. Deary me, what a dreadful thing, and to happen when you're here, too. Come, we might as well go in; they'll be home soon an' we'll know what's happened."

What had happened was soon apparent, for it could be read in the lowering face of the old farmer as he entered the house. The fourth meal of the day was spread in the big, breezy kitchen, for it was the rule in the Anderson household to have the table set at all hours. Sarah Ellen was bringing in the fried chicken from the cook-house, and the two women were seated awaiting the others, when the elder Anderson entered.

"Ye needn't wait for Bob," he said shortly, throwing his hat into the corner and seating himself. "An' just go on without me, I don't want any supper to-night."

To be Continued.

THROWING SHOES AFTER BRIDES.

"Over Edom will I cast my shoe," says the psalmist, the throwing of a shoe being the symbol of new ownership, a testimony in Israel of possession. In Anglo-Saxon times the father delivered the bride's shoe to the bridegroom, who touched her with it to show his authority. The custom of throwing an old shoe after the bride in England and Scotland signified that the parents gave up all right or dominion over the daughter.

About the House.

TO HOUSEKEEPERS.

Vinegar will "set" dubious greens and blues in ginghams.

Vinegar is an antidote for poisoning by alkali.

For a summer picnic luncheon there should be plenty of relishes and a few sweets. Many people object to meat sandwiches, and if the party is to start early in the morning the bread, biscuit or rolls are better carried uncut. The butter should be taken in a tightly covered tin box, which should be wrapped in several layers of wet cloth, and this put into the centre of a much larger box and packed tightly with wads of paper, so that it will not come in direct contact with the sides of the outer box. This will prevent the heat from hands or sun reaching it. Brown bread is always especially delicious after a long walk, and it is well to have loaves of both it and white bread.

In making pickles only the best cider vinegar should be used. If a green color is wanted in sour cucumber pickles it can be obtained by putting them into cold vinegar in a porcelain lined kettle and letting them heat slowly over a slow fire until they are green. Only granite or porcelain-lined kettles should be employed in making pickles. Mold can be avoided by putting nasturtiums or pieces of horseradish root into the pickle jars, which should always stand in a dry and dark place.

A cafe frappe, which is always delightful as an afternoon or evening refreshment is simply made. To one quart of strong coffee sweetened to taste add the beaten white of one egg and freeze. Serve it in glasses, with whipped cream on the top.

People who move into rented houses are likely to encounter water bugs and cockroaches, and only vigilant efforts will effectually rid the premises of the pests. Both of these varieties of bugs are especially fond of brown paper and wet cloths, and it is well to see that their tastes are not gratified. Cucumbers are a rank poison to the insects, and the parings from them, scattered about, will thin their ranks perceptibly. Borax, which is a clean powder, is also poisonous to them, and this, with a trace of sugar added to it, sprinkled in the iron closets about the range and other haunts will have a desirable effect. There is a great variety of manufactured powders, all of which are good if applied to corners and edges of floors and wall with one of the "shotguns" that come for the purpose.

Wash black lace with rain water, to which a teaspoonful of borax and a tablespoonful of alcohol has been added to every pint. Sew cotton on a bottle smoothly and wind the lace over it. Pull out the edge and baste it down on the bottle.

Wash white lace with boiling water and borax soap, after first basting it on a bottle covered with white cotton. Let the lace dry on the bottle.

TO PRESERVE MEATS.

To can meat boil the meat until nearly done, season with salt and pepper. Cut from bones in slices and put at boiling point into glass cans. Fill all spaces with the broth to the brim of the can. Screw on covers tightly as possible. Beef, mutton, veal or chicken can be successfully canned by this method. Keep in a cool, dry place. The bones may be boiled until the meat will slip from them; then can it and the broth for use in making soraps.

To sugar-cure pork, thoroughly cool, carefully trim hams and shoulders and split sides in two lengthwise. Sprinkle bottom of barrel with fine salt and rub each piece of meat with salt. Pack in barrel with hams on bottom, shoulders next, and sides on top. After three days cover with following brine; Water, 8 gallons; salt, 12 pounds; sugar, 3 pounds, saltpeter, 3 ounces; concentrated lye, 3 teaspoonfuls. Boil and skim, then cool and pour over meat. Brine should be strong enough to bear up an egg.

To season sausage, for 40 pounds of meat use 1 pound salt, 2 ounces sage, 2 ounces pepper. Pack in crocks and cover with melted lard.

CLEANING OIL PAINTINGS.

Artists sometimes use a raw potato for this purpose. Cut off the end of the potato and rub the painting very gently with the cut end. As fast as the potato becomes soiled cut off a thin slice and continue to use it until the whole surface is clean. Another method is to rub the soiled surface with the finger wet in warm water. If the dirt is very hard and old use oil instead of water. Let it rest for a few hours so that the dirt may be softened, then wash off with a sponge and tepid suds.

PAINTED FURNITURE.

The painted furniture formerly described as "cottage sets" passed out of style more than a score of years ago. It was always looked upon as a rather economical and modest substitute for the black walnut carved set, or even the more costly rosewood, which was in those days the last word in modish and expensive furniture. The "cottage furniture" could be of cheaper wood, because the thick paint covered up all trace of its quality.

Gloomy grays, dull greens and steely blues were the tints most admired in this old-fashioned furniture. The backgrounds were relieved by crudely painted bunches of flowers which ornamented—if anything so intrinsically hideous could be said to have that effect anywhere—the head and foot of the beds and were applied in more diminutive form to the bureaus and other pieces in the "set." Cottage furniture was always sold in a set.

It was very cordially despised, after taste turned toward the antique wooden furniture, brass beds and all the similar improvements that came during the past score of years. The cottage sets were relegated to country residences, servant's rooms and other inconspicuous places. Since that time painted furniture has not been seen until the white enamelled chests of drawers and other wooden pieces began to be seen. Now there are signs that the days of painted furniture may return, although it is not likely that the taste for it will ever be strong enough to recover the slightest favor for the cottage set.

Painted furniture of the day is very much more artistic and elaborate than its predecessor ever was. It is as expensive, too, as nearly any other kind, and would never be bought for economy. White is the most popular color for a background. It is decorated with sprays of flowers, very artistically and charmingly disposed and painted, indeed, with all the excellences that the most modern and best trained artists can give them. There is as much difference between them and the old painted pieces as there is between a crude chromo and a delicate water color.

Probably this same degree of difference exists between all articles popular for household decoration thirty years ago and to-day. The old-fashioned furniture seems to have disappeared altogether and never likely to reappear in any form. But its direct descendant, very much bettered and undoubtedly made much more expensive, is offered to-day by the large furniture establishments as one of their latest and smartest styles.

A PLEASANT SURPRISE.

"Seeing one's self is a great surprise," said the amateur philosopher. "You think you do that every day in your looking glass, but you don't. What you see there is a conventional image, a symbol. It stands for you just as certain arbitrary ink scratches stand for your name, and it is handy in showing you where to part your hair and how to tie your cravat; but it doesn't give you any idea of how you would look if you were to meet your self here on King street. It is only by the rarest accident, happening maybe twice or thrice in a lifetime, that one gets a glimpse of one's real self. An unsuspected mirror or a chance reflection in a window pane is usually the agency. You see somebody approaching, somebody you know perfectly well you have never seen before in life, yet who startles you by a poignant, inexplicable sense of familiarity. In half a heart beat the trick discovers itself and the illusion vanishes, but you had a glimpse of the real thing, and the experience is almost always accompanied by a sensation of pleasure. Ten to one the stranger seemed quite attractive. The first time I ever saw myself was in a large pier glass at the head of a staircase. I was bewildered, but I remembered distinctly that the gentleman who advanced on me out of space struck me as being rather a distinguished-looking person. I felt proud of him after I discovered his identity and asked him to have a drink on it.

Without exception, everybody I have ever spoke to on the subject has admitted to me that he was pleased by the appearance of his double. So there's a hard metaphysical nut to crack—why is it that we generally look better than we had supposed?"