WHEN SWIFTY WAS GOING SOME

A LITTLE ROMANCE IN THE LIFE OF PROFESSOR SHORTY McCABE'S ASSISTANT

BY SEWELL FORD

SAY, I don't play myself for any human cheese tester, but I did think I had Swifty Joe Gallagher all framed up long ago. Not that I ever made any special study of Swifty; but knowin' him for as long as I have, and havin' him helpin' me in the studio, I got the notion that I was wise to most of his curves. I've got both hands in the air now, though.

Goin' back over the last few months, too, I can see where I might have got a line on him before. But, oh no! Nothin' could jar me out of believin' he wouldn't ever run against the form-sheet I'd made out. The glimmer I gets was when I finds Joe in the front office one day, planted before the big lookin'-glass, havin' a catch-as-catch can with his hair.

"Hully chee!" says he, dippin' one of my military brushes in the wash basin, "That's fierce, ain't it, Shorty?"

"If it's your nerve in helpin' yourself to my bureau knickknacks," says I, "I agree with you."

"Ah, can the croak!" says he. "I ain't eatin' the bristles off, am I?"

"Oh, I'm not fussin'," says I; "but what you need to use on that thatch is a currycomb and a lawn rake."

"Ah, say!" says he, "I don't see as it's so much worse than others I know of. It's all right when I can get it to lay down in the back. How's that, now?"

"Great!" says I. "Couldn't be better if you'd used fish glue."

Maybe you never noticed how Swifty's top-piece is finished off? He has a mud-colored growth that's as soft as a shoe brush. It behaves well enough when it's dry; but after he's got it good and wet it breaks up into ridges that overlap, same as shingles on a roof.

But then, you wouldn't be lookin' for any camel's hair finish on a nut like Swifty's—not with that face. Course, he ain't to blame for the undershot jaw, nor the way his ears lop, nor the width of his smile. We don't all have gifts like that, thanks be! And it wa'n't on purpose Swifty had his nose bent in. That comes from not duckin' quick enough when Gans swung with his right.

So long as he kept in his class, though, and wa'n't called on to understudy Kyrle Bellew, Swifty met all the specifications. If I was wantin' a parlor ornament, I might shy some at Swifty's style of beauty; but showin' billous brokers how to handle the medicine ball is a job that don't call for an exchange of photographs. He may have an outline that looks like a map of a stone quarry, and perhaps his ways are a little on the fritz, but Swifty's got good points that I couldn't find bunched again if I was to hunt through a crowd. So, when I finds him worryin' over the set of his back hair, I gets interested.

"What's the coiffure for, anyway?" says I. "Goin' to see the girl eh?"

Course that was a josh. You can't look at Swifty and try to think of him doin' the Romeo act without grinnin'.

"Ahr, chee!" says he.

Now, I've sprung that same jolly on him a good many times; but I never see him work up a color over it before. Still, the idea of him gettin' kittenish was too much of a strain on the mind for me to follow up.

It was the same about his breakin' into song. He'd never done that, either, until one mornin' I hears a noise comin' from the back room that sounds like some one blowin' on a bottle. I steps over to the door easy, and hanged if I didn't make out that it was Swifty takin' a crack at something that might be, "Oh, How I Love My Lulu."

"You must," says I, "if it makes you feel as bad as all that. Does Lulu know it?"

"Ahr, chee!" says he.

Ever hear Swifty shoot that over his shoulder without turnin' his head? Talk about your schools of expression! None of 'em could teach anyone to put as much into two words as Swifty does into them. They're a whole vocabulary, the way he uses 'em.

"Was you tryin' to sing," says I, "or just givin' an imitation of a steamboat siren on a foggy night?"

But all I could get out of Swifty was another "Ahr, chee!" He was too happy and satisfied to join in any debate, and inside of 10 minutes he's at it again; so I lets him spiel away.

"Well," thinks I, "I'm glad my joy don't have any such effect on me as that. I s'pose I can stand it if he can."

It wa'n't more'n two nights after that I gets another shock. I was feelin' a little nervous, to begin with, for I'd billed myself to do a stunt I don't often tackle. It was nothin' less than pilotin' a fluff delegation to some art studio doin's. Sounds like a Percy job, don't it? But it was somethin' put up to me in a way I couldn't dodge.

Maybe you remember me tellin' you a while back about Cornelia Ann Belter? She was the Minnekeegan girl that had a room on the top floor over the Physical Culture Studio, and was makin' a stab at the sculpture game—the one that we got out to Rockywold as a ringer in the snow-carvin' contest. Get her placed now?

Well, you know how that little trick of makin' a snow angel brought her in orders from Mrs. Purdy Pell, and Sadie, and the rest? And she didn't do a thing but make good, either. I hadn't seen her since she quit the building; but I'd heard how she was doin' fine, and here the other day I gets a card sayin' she'd be pleased to have my company on a Wednesday night at half after eight, givin' an address on Fifth avenue.

"Corny must be carvin' the cantaloup," thinks I, and then forgets all about it until Sadie holds me up and wants to know if I'm goin'.

"Nix," says I. "Them art studio stunts is over my head."

"Oh, pshaw!" says Sadie. "How long since you have been afraid of Miss Belter? Didn't you and I help her to get her start? She'll feel real badly if you don't come."

"She'll get over that," says I.

"But Mrs. Pell and I will have to go all alone if you don't come with us," says she. "Mr. Pell is out of town, and Pinckney is too busy with those twins and that Western girl of his. You've got to come, Shorty."

"That settles it," says I. "Why didn't you say so first off?"

So that was what I was doin' at quarter of eight that night, in my open-face vest and dinky little tuxedo, hustlin' along Forty-second street, wonderin' if the folks took me for a head waiter late to his job. You see, after I gets all ragged out I finds I've left my patent leathers at the studio. Swifty has said he was goin' to take the night off, too, so I'm some' surprised to see the front office all lit up like there was a ball goin' on up there. I takes the steps three at a time, expectin' to find a couple of yeggs movin' out the safe; but when I throws the door open what should I see planted in front of the mirror but Swifty Joe.

Not that I was sure it was him till I'd had a second look. It was Swifty's face, and Swifty's hair, but the costume was a philopena. It would have tickled a song-and-dance artist to death. Anywhere off'n the variety stage, unless it was at a Fourth Ward chowder party, it would have drawn a crowd. Perhaps you can throw up a view of a pinhead check in brown and white, blocked off into four-inch squares with red and green lines; a double-breasted coat with scalloped cuffs on the sleeves, and silk faced lapels; a pink and white shirt striped like an awnin'; a spotted butterfly tie; yellow shoes in the latest oleomargarine tint; and a caffy-o-lay bean pot derby with a half-inch brim to finish off the picture. It was a sizzler, all right.

For a minute I stands there with my mouth open and my eyes bugged, takin' in the details. If I could I would have skipped without sayin' a word, for I see I'd butted in on something that was sacred and secret. But Swifty's heard me come in, and he's turned around

"SEE HIM!" SAYS I. "YOU DON'T NOTICE ANY BANDAGE OVER MY EYES, DO YOU?"

waitin' for me to give a verdict. Not wantin' to hurt his feelin's, I has to go careful.

"Swifty," says I, "is that you?"

He only grins kind of foolish, sticks his chin out, and saws his neck against his high collar, like a cow usin' a scratchin' post.

"Blamed if I didn't take you for Henry Dixey, -rst shot," says I, walkin' -round and gettin' a new angle. "Gee! but tnat's a swell outfit!"

"Think so?" says he. "Will it make 'em sit up?"

"Will it?" says I. "Why, you'll have 'em on their toes."

I didn't know how far I could go on that line without givin' him o grouch; but he seems to like it, so I tears off some more of the same.

"Swifty," says I, "you've got a bunch of tiger lilies lookin' like a faded tea rose. You've got a get-up there that would win out at a cakewalk, and if you'll take it over to Third avenue Sunday afternoon you'll be the best bet on the board."

"Honest?" says he, grinnin' way back to his ears. "I was after somethin' a little fancy, I'll own up."

"Well, you got it," says I. "Where'd you have it built?"

"Over the bridge," says he.

Say, it's a wonder some of them South Brooklyn cloth carpenters don't get the blind staggers, turnin' out clothes like that; ain't it?

"Must be some special occasion?" says I.

I WASN'T SURE IT WAS HIM UNTIL I'D HAD A SECOND LOOK.

"D'ye think I'd be blowin' myself like this if it wa'n't?" says he. "You bet, it's extra special."

"With a skirt in the background?" says I.

"Uh-huh," says he, springin' another grin.

"Naughty, naughty!" says I.

"Ahr, say," says he, trying to look peevish, "you oughter to know better'n that! You never heard of me chasin' the Lizzies yet, did you? This is a real lady—nice and classy, see?"

"Some one on Fifth avenue?" says I, unwindin' a little string. But he whirls round like I'd jabbed him with a pin.

"Who tipped you off to that?" says he.

"Guessed it by the clothes," says I.

That simmers him down, and I could see he wanted to be confidential the worst way. He wouldn't let go of her name; but I gathered it's some one he's known for quite a spell, and that she's sent him a special invite for this evenin'.

"Asks me to call around, see?" says he. "Now, I put it up to you, Shorty; don't that look like I got some standin' with her?"

"She must think pretty well of you, that's a fact," says I, "and I judge that you're willin' to be her honey boy. Ain't got the ring in your vest pocket, have you?"

"Maybe that ain't so much of a joke as you think," says he, settin' the beanpot lid a little more on one side.

"Z-z-z-pp!" says I. "That's goin' some! Well, well, but you are a cute one, Swifty. Why, I never auspicioned such a thing. Luck to you, my lad; luck to you!" and I pats him on the back. "I don't know what chances you had before, but in that rig you can't lose."

"I guess it helps," says he, twistin' his neck to get a back view.

He was puttin' on the last touches when I left. Course, I was some stunned, specially by the Fifth avenue part of it. But then, it's a long street, and it's gettin' so now that all kinds lives on it.

I was a little behind sched. when I gets to Sherry's, where I was to pick up Sadie and Mrs. Purdy Pell; but at that it was 10 or 15 minutes before they gets the tourin' car called up and we're all tucked away inside. It don't take us long to cover the distance, though, and at 20 to 9 we hauls up at Miss Belter's number. I was just goin' to pile out when I gets a glimpse of a pair of bright yellow shoes carryin' a human checker-board.

"S-s-sh!" says I to the ladies. "Wait up a second till we see where he goes."

"Why, who is it?" says Sadie.

"Swifty Joe," says I. "You might not think it from the rainbow uniform, but it's him. That's the way he dresses the part when he starts out to kneel to his lady-love."

"Really!" says Mrs. Pell. Is he going to do that?"

"Got it straight from him," says I. "There! he's worked his courage up. Now he takes the plunge."

"Why!" says Sadie, "that is Miss Belter's number he's going into."

"She don't live on all five floors, does she?" says I.

"No; but it's odd, just the same," says she.

I thought so myself; so I gives 'em the whole story of how I come to know about what he was up to. By that time we was climbin' the stairs, and as soon as we finds the right door I forgets all about Swifty in sizin' up Cornelia Ann.

Say, what a difference a little of the right kind of dry goods will make in a girl! won't it? The last I saw of Cornie she was wearin' a skirt that sagged in the back, a punky lid that might have come off the top of an ash-can, and shoes that had run over at the heel.

But prosperity had sure blown her way, and she'd bought a wardrobe to suit the times. Not that she'd gone and loaded herself down like she was a window display. It was just a cucumber green sort of cheese cloth that floated around her, and there wa'n't a frill on it except some silvery braid where the square hole had been chopped out to let her head and part of her shoulders through. But at that it didn't need any Paris tag.

And say, I'd always had an idea that Cornelia Ann was rated about third row back. Seein' the way she showed up there, though, with all that cinnamon colored hair of hers piled on top of her head, and her big eyes glistenin', I had to revise the frame up. It didn't take me long to find out that she'd shook the shrinkin' violet game, too. She steps up and gives us the glad hand and the gurgly jolly just as if she'd been doin' it all her life.

It wa'n't any cheap hangout that Cornie has tacked her name-plate on, either. There was expensive rugs on the floor, and brass lamps hangin' from the ceilin', and pieces of tin armor hung around on the walls, with nary a sign of an oil stove or a foldin' bed.

A lot of folks was already on the ground. They was swells, too, and they was floatin' around so thick that it was two or three minutes before I gets a view of what was sittin' under the big yellow lamp-shade in the corner. Say, who do you guess? Swifty Joe! Honest, for a minute I thought I must be havin' a nerve spasm and seein' things that wa'n't so. But it was him, all right; big as life, and lookin' as prominent as a soap ad. on the back cover of a magazine.

There was plenty of shady places in the room that he might have picked, but he has hunted out the bright spot. He's sittin' on one of these funny cross-legged Roman stools, with his toes turned in, and them gridiron pants pulled up to show about five inches of MacGregor plaid socks. And he has a satisfied look on his face that I couldn't account for no way.

Course, I thinks right off that he's broke into the wrong ranch, and is waitin' for some one to come and show him the way out. And then, all of a sudden, I begins to remember things. You know, it was Swifty that Cornelia Ann used to get to pose for her when she had the top floor back in our building. She made an embossed clay picture of him that Joe used to gaze at by the hour. And once he showed me her photo that she'd given him. Then there was the special invite he'd been tellin' me about. Not bein' used to gettin' such things, he'd mistook that card to her studio openin' as a sort of private billy ducks, and he'd built up a dream about him and her havin' a hand-holdin' session all to themselves.

"Great cats!" thinks I. "Can it be Cornelia Ann he's gone on?"

Well, all you had to do to get the answer was to watch Swifty follow her around with his eyes. You'd thought, findin' himself in a bunch of topnotchers like that, and rigged out the way he was, he'd been feelin' like a green strawb'ry in the bottom of the basket. But nothin' of that kind had leaked through his thick skull. Cornie was there, and he was there, dressed accordin' to his own designs, and he was as contented and happy as a turtle on a log, believin' the rest of us had only butted in.

I was feelin' all cut up over his break, and tryin' to guess how Cornie was standin' it, when she floats up to me and says:

"Wasn't it sweet of Mr. Gallagher to come? Have you seen him?"

"Seen him!" says I. "You don't notice any bandages over my eyes, do you? Notice the get-up. Why, he looks like a section of a billboard."

"Oh, I don't mind his clothes a bit," says she. "I think he's real picturesque. Besides, I haven't forgotten that he used to pose for me when hiring models meant going without meals. I wish you would see that he doesn't get lonesome before I have a chance to speak to him again."

"He don't look like he needed any chirkin' up," says I, "but I'll go give him the howdy."

So I trots over to the yellow shade and ranges myself up in front of him. "You might's well own up, Swifty," says I. Is Cornie the one?"

"Uh-huh," says he.

"Told her about it yet?" says I.

"Ahr, chee!" says he. "Give a guy a chance."

"Sure," says I. "But go slow, Joey, go slow."

I don't know how it happened, for all I told about it was Sadie and Mrs. Purdy Pell; but it wa'n't long before everyone in the joint was next to Swifty, and was pipin' him off. They all has to be introduced and make a try at gettin' him to talk. For a while he has the time of his life. Mostly he just grins.

The only one that don't fall to what's up is Cornelia Ann. She gets him to help her pass out the teacups and the cake, and tells everyone about how Swifty helped her out on the model business when she was livin' on pickled pigs' feet and crackers. Fin'lly folks begins to dig out their wraps and come up to tell her how they'd had a bully time. But Joe never makes a move.

Sadie and Mrs. Pell wa'n't in any hurry, either, and the first thing I knows there's only the five of us left. I see Sadie lookin' from Joe to Cornie, and then passin' Mrs. Pell the smile. Cornelia Ann sees it, too, and she has a synopsis of the precedin' chapters in a minute. But she don't get flushed a bit. She sails over to the coat-room gets Swifty's lid, and comes luggin' it out.

"I'm awfully glad you came, Mr. Gallagher," says she, handin' out the beanpot, "and I hope to see you again when I have another reception—next year."

"Eh?" says Swifty, like he was wakin' up from a dream. "Next year! Why, I thought that—"

"Yes, but you shouldn't," says she. "Good-night."

Then he sees the hat, and a light breaks. He grabs the lid and makes a dash for the door.

"Isn't he odd?" says Cornelia.

Well, say, I didn't know whether I'd get word that night that Swifty had jumped off the bridge, or had gone back to the fusil oil. He didn't do either one, though; but when he shows up at the studio next mornin' he was wearin' his old clothes, and his face looks like he was foreman of a lemon grove.

"Ah, brace up, Swifty," says I. "There's others."

He just shakes his head and sighs, and goes off into a corner as if he wanted to die slow and lingerin'.

Then Saturday afternoon, when it runs off so warm and we begins the noon shutdown, I thinks I'll take a little run down to Coney and hear the frankfurters bark. I was watchin' 'em load the boys and girls into a roller coaster, when along comes a car that has somethin' familiar in it. Here's Swifty, wearin' his brass-band suit, a cigar stickin' out of one corner of his mouth and an arm around a fluffy-haired Flossie girl that was chewin' gum and wearin' a fruit-basket hat. They was lookin' happy.

"Say, Swifty," I sings out, "don't forget about Cornie."

"Ahr, chee!" says he, and off they goes down the chute for another 10-cent ride.

But say, I'm glad all them South Brooklyn art clothes ain't goin' to be wasted.

What Newspaper Wits Say

Faith Shattered.

"I don't believe in that doctor."

"Why?"

"He didn't tell me everything I wanted to eat was bad for me!"

Too True.

Harper's Weekly.

"What is a synonym, dad?"

"A synonym, my son, is a word that you can use when you don't know how to spell the one you thought of first."

O Tempora!

Howard—Why did he marry her at all if he were going to get a divorce so speedily?

Coward—Because he didn't think it would be honorable to break their engagement.

An Early Impression.

Cleveland Plain Dealer.

"Maggie, wash the side windows this morning."

"Why this morning, ma'am?"

"I want the new neighbors to see our dining-room set."

Overburdened With Memory.

Washington Star.

"Your son tells me that he is going to take lessons to cultivate his memory."

"I hope not," answered Farmer Corntossel; "he can remember every fool tune that was ever whistled."

More.

Boston Globe.

First kid—"My papa's got so much money he don't know how to spend it."

Second kid—"That's nothing. My papa's got so much money that even mamma can't spend it."

Described.

"Pop!"

"Yes, my son."

"What is a harpsichord?"

"A harpsichord, my boy, is an instrument which when heard makes a man feel sorry that he ever said anything unkind about a piano."

And His Long Suit, Too.

Harper's Weekly.

Tramp—Lady, have you a pair of trousers which your husband has discarded?

Kind Lady—Yes. Here they are, but they will not last long—my husband discards from weakness.

Artistic Resentment.

Washington Evening Star.

"Don't you enjoy the singing of the wild birds?" said the rural enthusiast.

"Certainly not," answered the prima donna. "Any one who enjoys the musical reputation that some of these birds have gained should be getting at least a thousand dollars a performance. The method of these birds is positively unprofessional!"

Defined.

Puck.

As nearly as can be differentiated, a job is where a man does most of the work and somebody else gets most of the pay, and a position is were a man gets most of the pay and somebody else does most of the work.

And Perhaps More.

Punch.

Mr. Tell-it—My wife says her shopping at the bargain sale today reminded her of the last ballet she had seen.

Mr. Hear-it—How was that?

Mr. Tell-it—Well, because almost everything was 50 per cent off.

A Happy Thought.

Boston Transcript.

"The time will come," cried the Socialist orator, "when the laboring man will have the wealthy under his feet. And what will happen then?"

"He'll be walking on his uppers," came a voice from the crowd.

Variable Sentiment.

"Of course, you are a great advocate of industry," said the serious person.

"Well," answered Farmer Corntossel, "when it comes to an opinion 'bout industry I s'pose I'm purty much like anyone else; it depends on whether I'm doin' the work myself or hirin' it done."

Always a Debtor.

Chicago Journal.

As a pleasant-faced woman passed the corner Harris touched his hat to her and remarked to his companion:

"Ah, my boy, I owe a great deal to that woman."

"Your mother?" was the query.

"No; my landlady."

Horrors of Politics.

Chicago Tribune.

"Then you knew something of it already?" said the chairman of the notification committee, much chagrined.

"Yes," answered the nominee, "I saw an intimation of it in the newspapers. In fact, gentlemen," he added, with a broad smile on his sunny face, "I had a printer's inkling of it."

Diffusing the Annoyance.

Washington Star.

"You don't suppose we take boarders because we need the money," exclaimed Farmer Corntossel, loftily.

"I had some such idea," answered the man who had ventured to criticise.

"Not at all. We just get these people in from town to keep the mosquitoes from devotin' all their attention to our home circle."

Supplying Broken Parts.

London Sketch.

The Customer—When I bought a car from you a few weeks ago you said you would be willing to supply a new part if I broke anything.

The Motor Agent—Certainly, Sir. What can I have the pleasure of providing you with?

The Customer—I want a pair of new ankles, a floating rib, a left eye, three yards of cuticle, a box of assorted fingernails, four molars, two bicuspids and a funny-bone.

Venus Revenged.

Chicago News.

Long after the visitors' hour in the art gallery the statues engaged in conversation.

"Say, Vene," called Neptune's daughter, "tell us the truth. How did you lose your arms?"

"You won't breathe it to anyone?" asked Venus.

"You don't mean to say that a woman would tell a secret, do you?"

"Well, I'll tell you. I was trying to get my hands over my 'merry widow' hat to attach the hatpin and my arms snapped off."

And the statues laughed so hilariously that Mars awoke from his nap and grabbed his spear.

The Latest About Taft.

"Heard the latest about Taft?" inquired a campaign manager.

"No. What is it?" the reporters asked.

"It is copy for all of you, whether your papers are Republican, Democratic or Prohibitionist. A true and harmless story that will neither make nor unmake votes.

"Mr. Taft," said the campaign manager, after pausing to laugh, "was out taking a brisk constitutional one day, and in sharply negotiating a corner he ran square into a peddler, upsetting the man's tray of shoestrings and collar buttons.

"The peddler, as he stooped to pick up his wares, grumbled to himself:

"'And they want to say these here dirigible balloons is perfected!'"

Offered a Substitute.

The beauteous young woman enters the drugstore hastily.

"Is Mr. Chargem in?" she asks.

"You mean the proprietor?" inquires the affable clerk. "No, madam, I regret to say that he is not in."

"Oh, dear, I am sorry," she murmurs, into her beaming optics creeping the shadow of disappointment.

"Is there anything you wish?" the affable clerk asks.

"Well—you see—Mr. Chargem is my fiance, and I am unexpectedly going away on a trip, and I called to—to—to kiss him good-by. And now he isn't here, and the train goes in half a hour, and——"

"I am truly sorry, madam," the clerk says, "that your fiance is not here to kiss you good-bye, but"—his professional training asserting itself—"I can give you something just as good."

Journalistic Enterprise in Indiana.

Booth Tarkington says that in no state have the newspapers more "journalistic enterprise" than in his native Indiana. While stopping at a little Hoosier hotel in the course of a hunting trip Mr. Tarkington lost one of his dogs, says Everybody's Magazine.

"Have you a newspaper in town?" he asked of the landlord.

"Right across the way, there, back of the shoemaker's," the landlord told him. "The Daily News—best little paper of its size in the state."

The editor, the printer and the printer's devil were all busy doing justice to Mr. Tarkington with an "in-our-midst" paragraph when the novelist arrived.

"I've just lost a dog," Tarkington explained after he had introduced himself, "and I'd like to have you insert this ad. for me: 'Fifty dollars reward for the return of a pointer dog answering to the name of Rex. Disappeared from the yard of the Mansion House Monday night.'"

"Why, we were just going to press, sir," the editor said, "but we'll be only too glad to hold the edition for your ad."

Mr. Tarkington returned to the hotel. After a few minutes he decided, however, that it might be well to add "No questions asked" to his advertisement, and returned to the Daily News office.

The place was deserted, save for the skinny little freckle-faced devil, who sat perched on a high stool, gazing wistfully out of the window.

"Where is everybody?" Tarkington asked.

"Gawn to hunt th' dawg," replied the boy, without removing his gaze from the distant fields.

The Time Puzzle.

Nashville American.

The clock in the parlor is running too fast;
The clock in the kitchen is slow;
The clock in the hall is at best but a toy,
And half of the time it won't go.
John's watch needs repairing, and Bill's wasn't wound;
The clock in the attic won't chime;
We've no less than twenty timepieces about,
And no one can tell us the time.

From grandfather's turnip you would not expect
Exactness to minute and dot,
But Ethel Miranda has one that is new,
And hers should be right on the spot.
It isn't dependable, nevertheless,
No more than the new dollar tick
That Chester received as a prize with a suit
And thought he was turning a trick.

It's watches to right of us, watches to left,
And clocks scattered round here and there,
Besides a sundial that stands in the yard,
Though broken and needing repair.
In beautiful cases most all of them tick
In plentiful rhythm and rhyme,
But no one is certain that his is correct,
And no one can swear to the time.

To see that our meals are pulled off when they're due,
That no one may kick or complain,
We average up every timepiece in the house
And watch for the 8 o'clock train.
If it is on time, we can feel we are saved,
But when it is half an hour late
We turn to our watches, our clocks and the sun,
And average their heated debate.

Raising Foxes for Their Fur

"HAVING failed as a chicken breeder I am now making a thousand dollars a year on my fox farm."

The speaker was a New Hampshire woman who passed through New York the other day on her way to take two months' vacation in the Northwest.

"About ten years ago my mother inherited a small farm in New Hampshire and we went there to live," she continued. "I had had some four years' experience in the city as a stenographer and had managed to save up in the neighborhood of $500. Mother had let furnished rooms and had managed to scrape together more than double the amount of my savings.

"As we hadn't found city life all that it is cracked up to be and both being country bred we were anxious enough to get back to the country. My capital was invested in chickens and I worked faithfully to make my poultry pay. At the end of five years I hadn't one cent more in bank than when I started out.

"The trouble wasn't in raising the chickens and eggs, but in selling them. Our farm was several miles from the shipping station and the shipping station was many miles from a good chicken market. By the time shipping expenses were paid there wasn't much in the way of profit.

"So I decided to try something that would not be so expensive in getting to market. That Spring the hired man dug up seven young foxes. They were little beauties and it seemed a pity to destroy them for the misdeeds of their parents, who we all knew had lived on my poultry for more than a year.

"Finally we decided to keep them and try to raise them for their skins. They proved most interesting, and before the time came to sell their pelts I had done a lot of reading on the subject of raising fur-bearing animals for profit and decided to keep them and experiment.

"I made a run and three dens of fine wire netting, according to the directions given by a breeder of the red fox, feeding and caring for my seven experiments as he advised. The next February there was an increase of 20 to my flock, and two of them were silver foxes.

"Of course I felt at once that my fortune was made. It is the object of every fox-breeder to get silver kits. While a pair of pure red foxes will sell for only $15, a pair of good silvers will fetch $600. The silver fox is nothing but a freak in color of the common red fox, just as the black sheep is a freak of the common sheep.

"Though a pair of red foxes may have a black fox in their litter and the black fox may prove to be the parent only of red foxes, still there is a pretty good chance that two silver foxes will have some of their own kind in each litter, as such things usually run in families. The discovery that all my stock came from a family that produced silvers was like finding a small gold mine. It decided me to give up my poultry and eggs and devote my attention entirely to fox farming.

"As both my silvers were females I decided to put all the money that I could safely lay out in buying the very best silver male fox on the market. There were not many to be bought, and the best I could do was one that was not nearly so beautiful as my own at $300 cash and a promise of an even division of all the silver kits he fathered during the first two years.

"The first year there were no silver kits in his litter. The second year he accepted a second wife and between the two families there were three silver kits. While none of them was as beautiful as the mothers they were a decided improvement on their father.

"By dint of scraping and borrowing from my mother I managed to keep all three, and it has proved about the best investment I ever made.

"I have now a pair of black foxes who last February produced four perfect silvers. It was their first litter, but I feel reasonably sure that a red kit in their future families will prove to be an exception.

"My flock during the last three years has comprised 30 foxes, and my dens and runs cover less than an acre of ground. All my fences are 10 feet high, of 1½-inch mesh No. 16 galvanized wire. This netting goes three feet under the ground, and has an overdrop of 18 inches at the top. This overdrop is a piece of ordinary mesh wire supported on cross-pieces nailed to the posts.

"The holes for the foxes should be about three feet deep and must be roofed over in such a way as to turn the rain. It is absolutely imperative to have the nursery well drained and perfectly dry. Some fox-breeders line these holes, but my experience teaches that it is best to leave that to the mother, who oftener than not leaves the den unlined.

"Feeding is of course of the greatest importance. In the beginning I followed the advice of a successful breeder, whose rule was to feed his foxes the same as his dogs. By that he meant he gave them bread, table scraps and a little meat.

"To that diet I have added dog biscuits and a fox cake made of cornmeal, sour milk and enough soda to kill the sour taste in the milk. This is baked in thin pones and given to the foxes night and morning. Besides this bread I give each fox about a pint of skimmed milk a day and twice a week about a quarter of a pound of fresh meat. Too much meat is bad.

"What would be the result of feeding them fat hens and rabbits, such food as they live on in the wild state, is beyond the limits of my experience. Fortunately, I understood enough about animals to know that what they eat in the wild state is no guide to what should be given them when they are in captivity.

"It is a great mistake to have your breeding fox overfat. I never allow mine to go above 10 pounds, and rather prefer them to be two or three pounds lighter. It is best to keep the mother in a pen by herself until the kits are old enough to be independent.

"The quieter she is kept the better.

"There are usually from four to 10 in a litter. They are born blind and as a rule remain so until the eighth or ninth day. When they are a month old they begin to come out and are often as playful as a litter of young kittens.

"Now is the time to begin to give them solid food, as the mother will wean them in their third month, and it is best for them to be prepared to feed themselves. By midwinter they attain their growth, and if kept for breeders will give their first litter in the following February or March, when they are still less than a year old.

"While the fur is prime in November, I always leave the gathering of my pelts until late in December, as it continues to get fuller, and does not begin to bleach until a month later. Fur is always improved by cold weather and the food supply of the animal during the Autumn months. Oily food is especially desirable, fish heads being about the best that I have tried.

"There is always a good demand for fox pelts. Prime common red pelts bring from $1 to $5, prime cross from $5 to $15, prime silver from $75 to $300.

"At present the demand for good breeding stock is so keen that many fox farmers never sell their pelts. A fox whose pelt is worth $100 is worth at least three times that amount for breeding. My prices for breeders is about the average, and I sell all I can raise, reds at $15 a pair, cross at $75 a pair, and silvers from $300 to $600.

"How long these prices will hold is impossible for anyone to predict with anything like certainty. It is my opinion, however, that there will be ample time for many women of this generation to make a comfortable living and lay up a competence before the demand for the prices fall off to any considerable extent."

A Mistaken Situation.

Brooklyn Life.

A rather elderly gentleman stepped on a Fifth-avenue car in Pittsburg about 11 o'clock the other night, and after giving the conductor explicit directions to wake him when the car reached Federal street, seated himself in a corner and was soon sound asleep. When he had ridden about half a dozen blocks beyond Federal street a sudden lurch of the car wakened him.

Rubbing his eyes, he looked out of the window and, seeing where he was, angrily accosted the conductor thus: "Conductor, why didn't you wake me up as I told you? Here I am a half-mile past my house."

"I did try, sir," responded the conductor, "but all I could get you to say was, 'All right, Mary, get the children their breakfast and I'll be down in a minute.'"