

EYES.

"She hath two eyes so soft and brown,
For tender thought and glances true,
Commend me to the eyes of blue,
For heaven's wide of sweet surprise,
Blue eyes! blue eyes!

For roguish snap and sharp attack
Commend me to the eyes of black,
For fiercest love where madness lies,
Black eyes! black eyes!

For grit to stand by what they say,
Commend me to the eyes of gray,
Their steadfast beam all change defies,
Gray eyes! gray eyes!

For eyes that smile, and eyes that frown,
Commend me to the eyes of brown,
The best of each their goods comprise
Devotion true within them lies,
All rapture sweet beneath the skies,
Brown eyes! brown eyes!

—Elizabeth Chalmers Martin.

A NOVEL COURTSHIP

It was three days before Christmas. So much in love was Van Story that, as he walked up the avenue, this fact did not have the same emphasis that it might have had under different circumstances.

The cool, buoyant air—with a certain crispness about it that the ocean allows even to the metropolis on occasional winter afternoons—might have been hot and sultry and the fact would not have mattered to Van Story.

To a man in love, summer and winter, spring and autumn, lose their variety. Her last look—the radiant, responsive smile—the slight pressure of the hand—a hidden language of the voice—what are seasons, wars, politics, earthquakes, or any other paltry human interests, compared with these?

And yet there was a certain seasonableness in Van Story's thoughts as he walked deliberately along—deliberately, and not with the impatience that love manifests usually, because he knew that on this particular afternoon Miss Pinkton was not alone.

"Is she ever alone?" he had thought to himself gloomily, when he had started out. "I can't talk to her on a walk with people all around, staring at us, and this is about the only chance I have. Oh, for half a day of last summer! Thirty minutes in that pavilion would be all I ask for. But what shall I give her for Christmas? Flowers and books are tame, and yet anything more—"

While he was engaged in his reflections, he suddenly came across his old chum Castleton, who was, by the way, Miss Pinkton's cousin.

"Ah, old man, whither away? But I think I can guess—" said that dapper individual, looking him over half critically. "Well, Dorothy is at home, and surrounded by all sorts and conditions of men. I've just come from there. And, by the way, you're wanted."

"Wanted where?—at Miss Pinkton's?" said Van Story—as if he didn't know.

"Sure," said Castleton. "There's going to be a church trimming to-morrow night, and Dorothy has agreed to take charge of it. She wants you to help—she told me to tell you if I saw you."

"Who else is going to be there?" Castleton took his friend by the arm, and for a moment they both turned and looked over the solid iron palings down on the snow-garnished little grass plot in front of the brown stone dwelling house as if, for one instant, they had mutually agreed to turn their backs on the world.

"Old man," he said affectionately, "I've been thinking about you all the way from Dorothy's, and hoping I should meet you. I suppose if you really could see Dorothy alone for an hour or so, you'd like it, wouldn't you?"

Van Story looked at his friend solemnly.

"You know how I feel about that girl, of course," he said, "but this beastly town always stands in my way."

"I know it. I've been in the same boat myself—simply can't see her alone. People all around—at the theater, in restaurants, and at home brothers and parents and others are always dropping in. Oh, I've been there. But Dorothy's worth having. Dorothy's all right. I take a personal interest, you know, because I've known you both so long, and it just occurred to me that this church-trimming affair might give you an opening."

"I don't see how," replied Van Story. "There'll be a lot of church fellows there, will there not? The superintendent of the Sunday school, and the teacher of the young men's Bible class, and so on."

"Well, you can get her off in a corner, can't you—or get rid of the rest of them in some way? Tell them it's postponed—there's your chance, old

man. Christmas comes but once a year—make the most of it."

Van Story turned and grasped his friend's hand.

"There may be something in it, old chap," he said. "At any rate, I thank you. And now I must be off."

Van Story, when he arrived at the Pinkton mansion, was agreeably surprised to find that the crowd had diminished—there had been an afternoon tea, and this was the tail end of it.

"It was very good of you to come, even if you are late," she said. "You don't do this sort of thing very often, do you?"

"Not any oftener"—Van Story was going to add, "than I can help," but stopped himself for an instant. Then he thought it better to be strictly honest and so he added—"than I can help. I hate this sort of thing," he continued, looking her frankly in her blue eyes, "because, you know, it's so unsatisfactory."

"Sir!" she pouted back, "do you mean to say that my tea is unsatisfactory?"

He nodded.

"For me, I mean," he added. He lowered his voice, although this was hardly necessary, as three women on their right—the left-overs—were discussing the opera. "I shall never be able to see you alone," he said.

"What makes you think that?" "Well, haven't I been trying to for weeks?"

She smiled.

"If at first you don't succeed, try, try again. By the way, will you help us trim the church to-morrow night?"

"That's manual labor."

"I know it, and that's what I want you for. If you don't like teas, you surely will enjoy trimming a church. That will give you something to do. I know you are strong, because you used to play football, and besides, you look strong."

"Do I—really? So does a hired man."

She pouted again.

"Now, I intended that for a compliment, and it was horrid of you to turn it the other way. But you will come, will you not? You know the church—the large old-fashioned brick that sets off the avenue. The sexton will have the ladder, and the greens have all been ordered."

Van Story smiled at her enthusiasm.

"Who's going to be there?" he asked.

"Let me see. They've placed me in charge of the affair, you know, because I really felt I ought to do something this year, and there will be four others to help—the superintendent, Mr. Pump-ton; the infants' Bible class teacher, Mr. Huddle; the assistant organist, Mr. Wringer, and Vestryman Springer—that makes six in all, doesn't it—counting us in?"

Van Story arose.

"That's four too many," he said, as he held her hand. "Don't you think so?"

She flushed slightly.

"Yes," she said softly. "But—you'll be there, won't you? Surely?"

"I'll be there," he replied. "To-morrow night at eight."

As he walked back down the avenue Van Story almost shouted to himself in the exuberance of his new thought. Here at last was his opportunity, after so much waiting—after the long days spent in hoping against hope that the next time he might stand face to face with this beautiful girl and tell her how much he loved her—here, at last, was his chance. He hastily repeated over the names of the church-trimming party that he might not forget them. He would go to the sexton, find their addresses, and the rest was easy.

That individual was at his home, reading the afternoon paper, which he put down apologetically as Van Story entered.

"I am from Miss Pinkton, about

trimming the church to-morrow night. Have the greens been ordered?"

"Yes, sir; they will be delivered to-morrow."

"And the church will be open?"

"Yes, sir, I will open the side chancel door at seven-thirty."

"Good. And now will you be so kind as to give me the names and addresses of Mr. Pump-ton, Mr. Huddle, Mr. Wringer and Mr. Springer?"

The sexton called them out from his record book, and Van Story, armed with the precious paper, hurried off to the nearest hotel typewriter.

"I want this dictated on plain paper," he said to that imperturbable young lady, and he gave the following brief business note:

"Dear Sir—Owing to an unexpected and important engagement of the head of the Trimming Committee I am requested by Miss Pinkton to say that the trimming of the church, which was to have taken place to-morrow night, is postponed. You will, therefore, please not attend to-morrow night, but come on the night following. Yours truly, W. A. VAN STORY."

"I want that letter to be sent to each of these four addresses," he said, "at once," and as he hurried over to his jeweler he exclaimed gleefully to himself, "At last!"

The next evening they walked over to the church together.

"We must be early," she said, as she sat down on the steps leading up to the altar. The pulpit, tall and grim and stately, towered above her shapely head almost like a benediction. Far above them, the lights in the chandelier gleamed fitfully.

Surely, could there be a better place to love and be loved than in the sacred sanctuary, set within the beating heart of the sordid world and yet so far removed from it? And as she looked up at him, instinctively she felt that in such a place his words must ring true, and that she might trust him. He took her hand.

"Dorothy," he said, "I couldn't have told you how much I loved you before. I wanted your answer all to myself. Somehow the sea of city life seemed to shut out the sound of my voice. I longed for a quiet country lane, or the great silent ocean. But I could not wait. And here at last we are safe." He put his arm around her. "Do you love me?" he said.

Her head dropped silently down on his shoulder. And then followed that blissful moment, a moment that stands out in one's life forever after—the moment of life when love's dream is realized, and to these two it was as if the chorus of unseen saints was chanting their happiness. Suddenly she raised her head. There was a mischievous twinkle in her eyes.

"You have forgotten something," she said.

"No, I haven't," he replied triumphantly, misunderstanding her, "I have it here." He produced a tiny object that glittered in the dim light and sent out tiny shafts of lambent fire. "Your Christmas present," he said. "Two days ahead, none but less real. I didn't know what to give you, until I thought of this."

He slipped it on her finger.

"It is beautiful," she said at last, "beautiful."

There was a moment of silence, interrupted by a sound like the chirping of joyful birds. Then she spoke again. "When I said you had forgotten something," she said, the twinkle coming back to her eyes, "I wasn't thinking of this." She held up the ring admiringly. "I was thinking of the others—why, they may be here any minute."

Van Story caught her hand in his once more.

"No," he said smilingly. "You see, dear, it was my only chance. I just had to do it. I sent word to all the others—wrote them each a note, you know, that this thing was postponed until to-morrow night, on account of an important engagement. You didn't mind, did you? It was the truth, wasn't it? I wanted to be alone with you. It was our only chance. Don't you see it was?"

She dropped her hands by her side suddenly. The color left her face and then came back again.

"You did that?" she said. "How could you? How dreadful! Oh, why did you do it? What can I ever say to them? You wrote and told them not to come to-night—did you do that?"

He caught her hands again in his. Above, the stately old church bells in the spire chimed out the hour.

"Yes, dearest," he said. "I did it, and I'm glad of it. Nothing can ever make me sorry. I wrote the whole bunch of 'em not to come."

She raised her half-mournful, half-merry eyes to his.

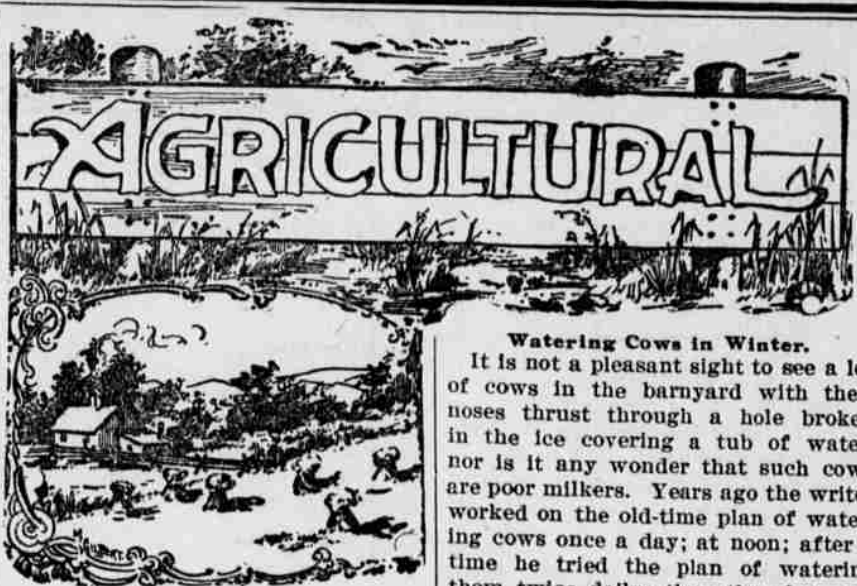
"So did I," she said.—Waverley.

Running Neck and Neck.

"Let me write the songs of a nation and I care not who makes the laws," said the musical young man.

"Oh, I don't know," replied the practical young woman, "I guess there are about as many ragtime laws as there are ragtime songs."—Comfort.

It is all right if the turkey crop dies out. Farmers are raising chickens these days that are as large as turkeys, anyway.



Smoking Meat.

Where one has but a little meat to smoke a barrel can often be used for this purpose. A correspondent sends us the following plan, which he vouches for as perfectly satisfactory, says Orange Judd Farmer: A sugar barrel or other barrel of large size is preferable. With a keyhole saw cut a door near the bottom through two or three staves. After sawing the door nail a strip across the staves to hold them together. The hinges are old pieces of leather tacked fast and may be hung from the top. Make a cross to hang over the barrel, and from the hooks suspend the meat. When the meat is in place throw a blanket over



BARREL SMOKEHOUSE.

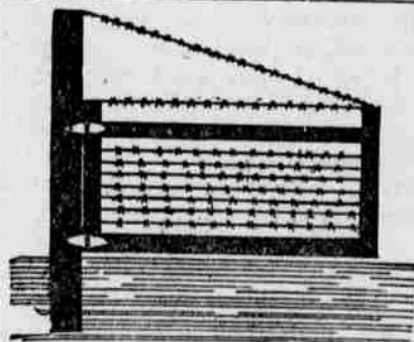
the cross to confine the smoke and light the fire, which should be placed in a pan. Great care must be taken with the fire so as not to burn up the meat or the barrel.

Dairying that Pays.

In a series of institutes in the northeastern counties of Pennsylvania I found that farmers are specializing to a much greater extent in that section than in many other sections of the State, says L. W. Lighty in National Stockman. Quite a number of dairymen are putting in plants of their own for buttermaking and are devoting all their thought and energies along that line. In a number of instances they sent their sons to the State college to take a short course and are putting on the market first class butter. In every instance of this kind I learned that the demand was greater than the supply of butter at a very good price. The universal verdict of those men was that, while dairying is hard and slavish work because of the minute and constant attention that the details of the business require, it pays a handsome profit.

Good Field Gate.

Here is a sketch of a good field gate. Why use all the timber on the farm to brace a gate, when you can make all the brace out of one barbed wire 9 feet long, and I will guarantee it never to sag. This gate is 8 feet by 5 feet, made by 1x4 lumber. It will open either way and the brace will al-



BRACED FIELD GATE.

ways follow the gate. If any of your Yankee farmers can beat this gate let it come.—J. M. Beauvals.

Farming as a Science.

The farm offers many opportunities for enterprise. There is plenty of room for advancement, and every experiment made, no matter how small, enables the farmer either to increase his yields or avoid mistakes. It is in the management of the details that the savings occur, and the keeping of accounts will enable the farmer to conduct his farm with a better knowledge of his operations.

Wheat Screenings.

The value of wheat screenings is best understood by taking some note of what experiment stations have done with it. In the Montana experiment station, where some comparative values were ascertained, it was shown that wheat screenings were the most valuable for feeding to lambs, while barley proved the most efficient for wethers. One experiment, however, does not give conclusive proof of the value of any ration. Where corn is produced it will be the universal grain ration in fattening sheep and lambs.

Watering Cows in Winter.

It is not a pleasant sight to see a lot of cows in the barnyard with their noses thrust through a hole broken in the ice covering a tub of water, nor is it any wonder that such cows are poor milkers. Years ago the writer worked on the old-time plan of watering cows once a day; at noon; after a time he tried the plan of watering them twice daily; then the plan was tried of furnishing water three times daily, during the winter, and a comparison of results showed that it paid well. The water given at morning and night is nearly warm, and the cows seem to enjoy it greatly during the cold days. That given at noon is colder, but the chill is removed, and the animals drink it freely. Of course, it is considerable work to water cows in this manner, but if one has a number of animals, some contrivance can be put in operation which will make the work comparatively easy. Try it for the next two or three months, watch the results in the milk pail, and you will agree that it pays.

Where Beef Cattle Grow.

There is a widespread notion that the Western and northwestern cattle ranch States grow the bulk of the beef cattle of the country, but it is a great mistake. Montana, Wyoming, Idaho, Washington, Utah, Nevada, Arizona and New Mexico, containing over 800,000 square miles and great cattle ranges, by the last census returns had only 4,860,509 head of cattle. While the single central agricultural State of Iowa alone had 5,367,630 head, to say nothing of the other Central States so rich in grain and cattle growing. These Central States can grow and maintain a steer to every two acres while these range States, for the most part have twenty acres to the steer, except on the rich alfalfa and irrigated lands. On such lands a single acre will support a steer, so rich are the alfalfa pastures.

Blinders for the Hog.

I would suggest a plan to prevent a hog from catching chickens. My plan works like a charm and is perfectly humane. Procure a piece of heavy leather large enough to come down over the face well below the eyes to within about two inches of the end of the nose and fasten the upper side to each ear with a couple of ordinary hog rings. A device of this kind may lose off occasionally, but it is easily replaced.—Henry Moon.

Home Mixing of Fertilizers.

The editor of this department is a firm believer in the home mixing of commercial fertilizers, but only when one knows what his soil needs. If potash and phosphoric acid only are needed, there is assuredly no sense in buying a lot of other ingredients, and the same argument holds good on any combination. On the other hand, if one has had experience with the high-grade complete fertilizers and has found them profitable to use it would be folly to take up with the home mixing of fertilizers, particularly in large quantities. There seems to be no need of argument in favor of either plan except as given, for it all depends upon a knowledge of soil and crop requirement, and action accordingly.

Agricultural Briefs.

Make 1904 a banner year in your farm efforts.

Clean up; make the old farm look new and start new methods, too.

Some farms carry a lot of worthless dogs. Why not get rid of them and keep a few sheep?

Hasty work is always at the cost of excellence. Take time enough to do everything well.

Gentleness with the cows pays. Cows that fear their owners are not as profitable as they might be.

Two hundred and forty-nine of the employees of the Department of Agriculture are graduates of agricultural colleges.

Time to begin making calculations about that good garden you've been promising your wife. Make selections and order seeds early.

In the "zones" where sugar-beets thrive and are produced with good saccharine percentage many farmers are making money on the crop.

Ple-crut resolutions are worse than none. When you make up your mind to improve in any direction be in earnest, and success will crown honest efforts.

A hive or two of bees should be on every farm. The bees help fertilize the fruit blooms and honey is good on buckwheat cakes and the bees delight to work among the buckwheat bloom—a good combination.