

THE DESERTED POSTOFFICE.



Now, I'm no reminiscencer an' folks ain't chargin' me With bein' versed in rhetoric, or gab, or repartee, But I've got my opinions an' I'm not afeerd to say I wish our old postoffice still kep' open here to-day. For when it kep', us fellers had a heap more fun, no doubt, Than since it's been abandoned for a new-style rural route. That's when it used to keep, you know, down to Joneses store, But them old times is gone, I guess, to not come back no more.

You rickollect, I reckon, how we'd set around th' stove An' gas, an' talk, an' tell our tales, an' ever'body strove To see which one could lie th' worst an' all of you'll agree That Annanias never had no great big edge on me. An' we'd chaw an' cuss an' conjure schemes to reg'larly regale Ourselves on Joneses apples while he passeed out th' mail. An' we'd sometimes git to hummin' on some old camp meetin' tune— Till Jones 'ud laugh an' tell us we'd be singin' purty soon.

An' when the evenin' shadders come a-stealin' cross th' land We'd spy th' schoolmarm trippin' in an' holdin' out her hand

To git her reg'lar letter—seemed she got one ever' day An' never was contented 'less she answered right away. So she'd borry pen an' paper an' we'd tease her till she'd sigh For she'd borry pen an' paper an' we'd tease her till she'd sigh An' say that 'fore she'd marry us she'd go lay down and die. Oh, we never was respecters of no persons, sex or kin An' when th' folks got mad—by gum!—we'd tease as worse ag'in.

But th' old days has departed an' th' store ain't quite the same,

Poor Jones declares he's bankrupt an' the Government's to blame, For when he kep' th' office there th' folks would never fail To do a little tradin' while they waited for th' mail. So I've thought th' whole thing over an' I've just about agreed That while th' rural route itself has filled a long-felt need, I believe that I'd be willin' to go git my mail once more Just to live, an' laugh, an' lie ag'in at 'Lijah Joneses store.

—W. M. Herschell, in Indianapolis News.

THE SQUIRE'S "HIRED GIRL."

TWO o'clock p. m. on a blazing July day in the country. A row of stalwart mowers, each keeping time with scythe and step across the ten-acre lot on the Howland farm. A line of piebald cattle, black and white, red and white, dun and gray, cream color and dun, coming slowly down the slope of the woodland pasture to drink from the brook beneath the spring. A great, old-fashioned, cream-colored farm house, with green blinds and a piazza, a side porch and a grapevine colonnade, standing on a level lawn, beneath tall maple trees that were only tiny saplings in the days when Great-grandfather Howland moved up into Vermont from Connecticut "to settle," some eighty years ago.

The doors and windows of this fine old mansion were standing wide open, and a brown retriever stationed at the front gate amiably watched the departure of two double-seated carryalls, each drawn by a pair of fine horses, and laden with a merry cargo of laughing girls. And from one of the upper windows another girl, apparently some twenty years of age, looked out, dressed in a blue striped calico, with a pinafore apron pinned to her sloping shoulders, and a cook book in her hand.

This was the aspect of the old Howland farm and homestead when John Parry, artist, first beheld them. During the three weeks of his stay in the mountain village of Bradley he had heard much of the Howland place, and the "Howland girls." Being a shy and retiring student, he inwardly congratulated himself this afternoon on the absence of "those girls," as he, too, looked after the cloud of dust that followed the retreating carryall wheels.

"I can get my picture done before they come laughing and gabbling home again," muttered Mr. Parry, as he fixed his camp stool and umbrella near the garden gate, and prepared to sketch in the groundwork of the finest view in Clayford County, as his host at the village tavern had called it, while directing him to it that day.

The ungallant artist painted as fast as he possibly could, in order to finish his work before the daughters of the house returned. But the sun poured down his most scorching beams upon his head, and not a leaf was stirred in any direction by a welcome breeze.

The haymakers halted now and then to allow of the passage of stout, comfortable looking brown jugs along the line, and the sight made Mr. Parry thirster, till at last, in his desperation, he unlatched the garden gate behind him and went up to the house.

The brown retriever did not oppose his advance, but lay on the clean marble-painted wooden floor of the hall, and lazily flapped his tail in welcome.

Mr. Parry knocked.

After some delay a light, graceful figure in blue calico appeared at the lower end of the hall.

Mr. Parry looked at the girl as she came nearer.

She had a frank, happy, childlike

face, with large, bewitching gray eyes, and a quantity of soft, short, curling hair of the true golden color, such as is seldom seen except upon the sunny head of a very young child.

"The hired girl, of course. How lively she is! I should like to paint her," thought Mr. Parry, as she dusted some flour from the prettiest hands and arms in the world, and apologized to him in a very sweet voice for keeping him waiting.

"I had just begun to make biscuits for tea, and I could not come till now," she said.

The artist, lost in admiration, gazed at her so persistently that a sudden warm blush ran over her pretty face.

"Do you wish to see Mr. Howland, sir?" she asked.

"No—no—I—you—if I might have a glass of water," stammered the unfortunate artist.

"Certainly, sir. Won't you step inside while I get it?"

Like one in a dream, he followed her into a cool and pleasant parlor, and stood waiting till she returned from the kitchen with a goblet of water on a tray.

"It is from the coolest corner of the well, for I drew it myself," she said, with a bewildering smile.

John Parry drank it, and thought it nectar. His mind was in a whirl, but out of the confusion a settled purpose very gradually developed itself. And when he set the glass down upon the tray on the table, he proceeded to carry out that purpose by taking the girl's hand and asking her point blank if she would marry him.

"Sir!" she exclaimed, drawing her hand away, and turning pale with fright, for she thought him a maniac.

"Don't be alarmed," he said, more calmly. "I am in earnest. And I am a gentleman. There is my card. I will give you any references as to my respectability you may desire."

"But, sir," she began. Then she glanced at his card, and was silent.

"Yes, I know it seems strange and perhaps rude to you," he said; "but on my honor I don't mean it so. All my life long I have had an ideal, and you realize it for the first time. I am rich, and I think I may say good-tempered. If you marry me, you will have but one person to please hereafter instead of many, as you have here. This menial position is not suited to you. Be my wife, and no young ladies will ever again drive away for pleasure and leave you to perform tasks like these."

"Like these!" repeated the girl, smiling.

"Why, yes. You said you were making biscuits for their supper, didn't you? Surely you cannot prefer the place of a servant to being the beloved wife of a rich man, who will study to make you happy in every way he knows?"

The hired girl looked down upon her brown and dimpled hands a moment.

"Would you really marry me, sir, a poor servant girl?" she asked, in an altered and softened tone.

"Indeed I would. To-morrow. Here in your own village, and among your own friends," cried the artist. "You are the sweetest, loveliest, dearest—"

"Hush!" she answered gravely. "I'll tell you, sir. In a week from now I'm

going among my friends, and if you like to follow me there—" She paused.

"I'll go to the end of the world! Where is it?" asked Mr. Parry.

"Only to Saratoga, sir."

"Very well. One week from to-day I will be there. You'll marry me, then?"

She laughed, showing her little gleaming white teeth, made him a rustic courtesy, and fairly ran away.

John Parry packed up his things, went to the inn, paid his bill, and started that very night for Saratoga.

He had nearly reached that place when he remembered, in utter consternation, that he did not even know his heroine's name.

"However, I'll soon find her. There is but one such face in the world," he thought.

And after a week had passed, he sought for the girl diligently, everywhere through Saratoga, but in vain.

One night he looked in disconsolately at the gayest ball of the season, and beheld her!

She sat the center of an obsequious group, magnificently dressed, and beautiful as a dream.

Poor John stared at her open-mouth. She saw him, smiled slightly, and she beckoned him to her with a wave of her jeweled fan.

"Give me your arm, my cousin," she said, negligently, as she rose from her chair.

And then John Parry saw it all. This was his heiress cousin, Kate, whom he had never seen before since their childhood. This was the bride his mother had begged him to seek, and from which very thought he had turned disgusted, lest he should be reckoned by the world an heiress hunter. And there, among the group of matrons on the sofa, was his mother's pleasant face smiling after them as they walked away together. He had met Kate at the house of one of her country friends, and, without knowing it, had given his mother the very desire of her heart.

Thus it was that the great heiress was wooed and married for herself alone, as every heiress truly desires to be.

But John Parry persists in saying that he married no one in the world but "Squire Howland's hired girl!"—New York Weekly.

Unexpected.

The story of a young man who found something better than the solitude of melancholy thoughts by the sad sea waves is given as a fact. While enjoying merry Margate he made the acquaintance of a young lady to whom he paid some attentions. Matters progressed with such seriousness and rapidity that the young man, when he came back to town, immediately made bold to present himself to the young lady's father to ask his consent and blessing on their marriage. It was then that he found himself face to face with his tailor, to whom he owed long arrears of unpaid bills.

Soldiers Kept Long Abroad.

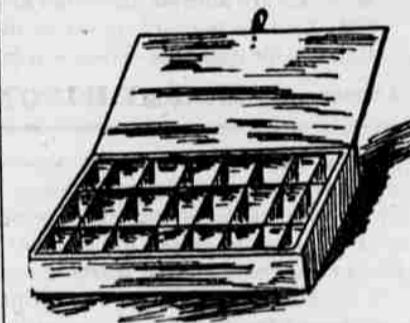
After twenty years' service abroad the First North Staffordshire regiment of England lately arrived at Southampton.



Box for Carrying Eggs.

Most poultrymen are familiar with the egg carriers used on the market and those who have a considerable quantity of eggs to handle use these carriers; the farmer, however, is in the habit of carrying eggs in a basket and often many of them become broken resulting in considerable loss. The illustration shows one of the boxes which may be made from cheap material and which will answer as well as the boxes sold for the purpose. Any grocer who handles quantities of shipped eggs will give a customer some of the cardboard filler such as are up in the crates; then buy some cracker boxes and fashion a neat box like the one shown, cutting the pasteboard fillers with a sharp knife so that they will fit the wooden box.

Boxes made to hold one dozen eggs and others to hold two dozen will be large enough. These boxes ought to have covers with a hasp coming down over a staple so that the box may be



CONVENIENT EGG BOX.

locked if need be. These boxes will cost but little if made at home as suggested, and if one has strictly fresh eggs of good size as well as uniform in size they can be marketed in these boxes at a higher price than if marketed in a basket; try it and see if it is not so. As an extra inducement to the consumer wrap each egg in white tissue paper and twist the ends of the paper as they are twisted around oranges and lemons. Have the eggs strictly fresh of good size and clean, and you'll find that the tissue paper conceit will sell them readily and at good prices.—Indianapolis News.

No Breed of Black Sheep.

A black sheep belongs to no particular breed, though at times he appears in the flocks of nearly all the pure breeds. In England he is more commonly seen in the Suffolk flocks, and it is a noteworthy fact that the suffolk breeders have all they can do to keep the blackish and gray-black tendency from asserting itself both in the skin and fleece. Black sheep frequently appear in pure-bred Leicester flocks, and to some extent in Lincoln and Devon Longwools, and the tendency is noted in the black spots on the skin; more frequently seen on the ears of even the best-bred sheep of these long-wool families, thus fortifying the belief expressed by Dr. Henry Stewart that the tendency to black in the Leicester owes its origin to the black ram known to have been used by Bakewell in the perfection of the breed 150 years ago. And it is not unreasonable to suppose that the black sheep which now and then appear in the Down and long-wool breeds, nearly all of which have been more or less improved through the use of Bakewell blood, are traceable to that great sheep breeder's handiwork.—Sheep Breeder.

Apple Trees 70 Years Old.

On the farm of John Carson, near Russellville, Howard county, Missouri, is an apple orchard which was planted seventy years ago. The land was pre-empted at that time, and the original "sheepskin" deed was signed by Andrew Jackson. The orchard bore a good crop this year. Many of its trees are three feet in diameter.

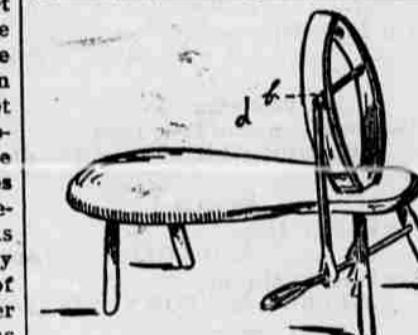
The Prolific Scale.

The total number of descendants from one individual of the San Jose scale during the time between the middle of June and the last of November has been calculated at 3,216,080,400. As all these millions obtain their food by sucking the sap from the plant they are on, it is not to be wondered at that a tree which in the spring was apparently in good condition may be nearly or entirely dead by fall.

Of the population of European Russia 86 per cent are farmers.

Repairing Harness.

Most premises have old leather traces about, and a number of parts of harness, such as breast, pole and holdback straps, can be made of these, by one handy at such work. Select a piece long enough for a breast strap, fasten a snap at one end; 18 or 20 inches from this snap cut away all but the best outside ply, rivet a buckle, punch a number of holes, and there you are. The pole and holdbacks may be made from old light traces. A belly-band for chain harness would



GOOD HARNESS HORSE.

have a large loop at one end instead of a buckle.

A back band for plow harness may be made from old leather or rubber belting. The leather belting, if pretty fair, will make good traces.

These hints are not* for repairing valuable new harness. One should be very careful about riveting on these. The illustration shows how I made a clamp for sewing harness from two kerosene barrel staves fitted in block so the bolts will draw at least 1/4 inch. This makes it clamp the work at top. Use two 3/4-inch bolts. This clamp, if properly made, will hold any part of the harness while being sewed.—W. A. Clearwaters, in Iowa Homestead.

To Move Wire Fences.

It often becomes necessary to move a fence from one part of the farm to another. It is a simple matter to move posts, but the wire presents a more difficult problem. The most common method is to slowly and laboriously roll it up on a barrel, haul it to the place where it is wanted and as slowly unroll it again. A much better and quicker way is to take a couple of old wheels, the larger the better, and fasten them together by nailing pieces of board to the spokes next the axle. The wheels when fastened together should be about two feet apart. Now take two planks and fasten firmly to



FOR MOVING WIRE FENCES.

the sides of the wagon box so they will extend backward about four feet. Mount the wheels on these planks so they will turn easily. Fasten one end of the wire to one of the boards that connect the wheels and drive astride of the wire. One man turns the wheel while the other drives, and the wire can be rolled up as fast as the team can walk. To unroll fasten wire to one of the corner posts, drive ahead and the wire will unroll itself.—C. V. Gregory, in St. Louis Republic.

Big Demand for Frozen Rabbits.

The rabbit pest of Australia is fast becoming an important source of income. Exports show considerable expansion. The figures are as follows: 2,830,112 pairs in 1900, 2,092,727 pairs in 1901, 3,274,210 pairs in 1902, 3,650,000 pairs in 1903. This industry has become an important one in Victoria. Over twenty million rabbits were utilized during the year for export purposes. Of these, 7,300,000 were exported frozen in the fur, and from ten million to twelve million skins were shipped and a large number of these animals canned and disposed of in Europe.

Pecan Crop Increasing.

The Southwest is the most prominent producer of pecans. Last season the output was possibly 1,300 cars. It is claimed by some that the yield this season will approach two thousand cars. The nuts are suitable for all purposes, and are relatively cheaper than almost any other sort on the market.

Profit in Medicinal Plants.

Many native plants, like bloodroot, podophyllum, solomon's-seal, veratrum, etc., are collected extensively for medicinal purposes. In these cases it is the root that is taken, necessarily destroying the plant. All of these plants are easily cultivated and could be grown on a commercial scale for the supply of the trade. In fact, similar plants are now grown in Europe for this demand.

The wool clip of Argentina is one-fourth of the world's supply.