Carrent Literature.

THE FIRST SNOW.

Gay bloom the flowers in Springtime set, And streaky apples linger yet ; Twas autumn but a week ago, Why, then, these flakes of snow? Summer's last rose they disarrayed, The while she dreamed in peace to fade, One swallow was inclined to stay ; The white flecks frightened him away.

Winter's cold shock who first endure Think him unkind and premature; Complain the Summer was too brief, And moralize o'er each dead leaf. Aut as he grips with firmer hold We grow more careless of the cold, Joy in the sparkle of his snow, And nestle by his fireside glow.

Dismayed, we note the first gray hair, Soon others come-we cease to care : Then gray outnumbering the brown, And soen white winter settles down, And when from youth we've passed to age We've learned our lesson page by page, To take what comes for weal or woe And never fret about the snow.

The Little Cask

Maitre Chicot, the innkeeper of Espreville, pulled up his tilbury before the gate of Mere Maglore's farm. He was a great hulking fellow about forty, red mained for a whole evening asking glasses together, he observed as he pre-faced and stout, who had a tolerably questions, unable to decide what to do. pared to go: faced and stout, who had a tolerably mean reputation.

and entered the yard. He possessed cider some real estate adjoining the old woman's land, which he had long coveted. answer, she made him first coax her for Twenty different times he had tried to not do it, but really tortured by the buy it from her; but Mere Maglorie fear that he might refuse to give the obstinately refused.

"I was born here, and I'm going to die here, too," was what she always said.

He found her peeling potatoes in front and refused. of her door. With her seventy-two years of age, she was dry, wrinkled, stooped; but indefatigable as a young her on a stool.

"Well, old mother, how is the health, always hearty, eh?"

"So-so, and you Maitre Chicot?"

"Eh! eh! just a little twinge once in awhile; otherwise I'm all right enough." "Allons! so much the better."

And she said nothing more. Chicot And she said nothing more. Chicot The whole day was spent in discus-watched her working. Her crooked sion. But as the old woman would not fingers, knobby and hard as the legs of yield an inch, the inn-keeper at last a crab, caught up the gray potatoes them round and round quickly, taking francs' worth of wine. off long bands of peelings under the edge of an old knife which she held in the other hand. And as soon as each potato was all yellow, she threw it into a bucket of water. Three impudent chickens would come one after the other to pick up the peelings even from the folds of her skirt, and then would run. to pick up the peelings even from the ruined. From time to time he paid the And Maitre Chicot found himself in folds of her skirt, and then would run old woman a visit, just as in July one possession of the farm. He declared: away as fast as their legs could carry goes to look at the fields to see if the them, with their booty in their beaks.

Chicot seemed to be worried, hesitated and anxious, with something that lighted with the fine trick she had playclung to the tip of his tongue and would ed him; and he would climb back into not venture to leave it. At last he made his tilbury muttering to himself: a decided effort.

"Say! Mere Magloire."

"What can I do for you?"

"Well, this farm of yours; you still ocious, cunning hatred-with the hadon't want to sell it?"

"If that's what you want-no! Never come for that here. What I say, I say no use talking about it any more."

You see, I've thought of an arrangement that would be just the thing for gain. "What's that?"

See here-you'll sell it to me, and then you'll keep it just as you do now. Don't you see what I mean? Listen, and I'll show you."

The old woman stopped peeling her potatoes, and fixed on the innkeeper's

He proceeded: "I want to explain the thing to you. Every month I'll give you 150 francs. You hear me!-every month I'll come here in my tilbury and pay you down to market in her old cart, driven by her thirty ecus or 100 sous. And still there groom Celestin, she quietly ordered her won't be any change in the world. You'll just stay in your house; you'll not have to bother about me; you'll not owe me the house and demanded the promised anything. All you'll have to do will be dinner. to take my money. Now, how does that suit you?

Then he looked into her face joyously with the most good-natured and selfsatisfied air imaginable.

The old woman gazed at him with suspicion-smelling a snare. She ask-

"That is all very well for me; but how about you? That won't give you the

He went on again to explain: Don't you bother your head about that. You'll stay here just as long as the good God allows you to live. You'll always remain here at home in your own house. Only you'll sign a little paper at the notary's, so that it'll come to me after you. You've got no children —nobody belonging to you except those nephews that you don't care snything nephews that you don't care snything about. Now, how does that please you?
You'll keep your property during your whole life, and I'll pay you down 150 isn't just famous!"

francs every month. It's all clear profit for you and no loss."

The old woman remained dumb, surprised, uneasy, but nevertheless visibly

tempted. Finally she said: "I'll not say no. Only I want to reason with myself about the affair. You come back and we'll talk it over again, some time next week. Then I'll tell you just what I think about it."

And Maitre Chicot went off as happy as a king who had just conquered an

She did not sleep the next night. For an arrangement, something to her dis- the stomach, never goes to the head; advantage, but the thought of thirty why, it just evaporates off the tongue. ecus a month, of that fine ready cash that would be poured into her apron, that would come to her like a windfall, without her making the least effort to get it, tortured her with desire.

Then she went to the notary, and told him all about the situation. He advised her to accept Chicot's proposition, but told her to ask fify ecus instead of thirty, as her farm was worth, at the least calculation, 60,000 francs. "At this rate even," said the notary,

"suppose you live fifteen years more, he would still only have paid you 45,-000 francs.

The old woman actually trembled with excitement at the prospect of fifty ecus every month; but she was still very suspicious, fearful of a thousand things unforeseen, of a thousand possible the very same he had promised; and schemes to defraud her; and she re-Finally she told the notary to prepare the deed, and returned home as excited He fastened his reins to a fence post, as if she had drunk four whole pots of

When Chicot came to ask for his a long time-declaring that she would price. Finally, as he persisted very eagerly in his demand, she announced her terms.

Chicot jumped with dissapeintment

Then in order to convince him, she egan to argue about the probable

duration of her life: "I've got only five or six years more girl. Chicot patted her on the back in a to live-that's sure. Here I am in my friendly way, and then sat down beside seventy-third year, and not stout at all for that. I thought something was tearing my very inside out, and they had to carry me to bed."

Chicot diden't allow himself to be "That'll do, you old humbug! you're solid as the church tower-you're going

to live to be at least 110 years old. I'm certain you'll live to bury me anyhow."

agreed to pay the fifty ecus a month. They signed the act next day. And from the big basket; and she turned Mere Maglorie further exacted fifty claim:

> grass is ready for the scythe. She always ing she'd have lived ten years longer received him with a malicious twinkle anyhow."-Guy de Maupassant. in her eye. It looked as if she was de-

"Not dend yet, ch, old careass?" He did not know what to do. Every time he looked at her he wanted to eyes hanging out?" strangle her. He hated her with a fer-

tred of the peasant who is robbed. So he began to scheme. So he came to her at last one day rubbing his hands together, just as he had done the first time he proposed the bar-

And, after a few minutes' chat, he

"Say, Mere Maglerie, why don't you ever come to dinner at my house when you pass through Espreville? Folks are cossiping about us; they say we are not friends, and that's worrying me. I don't want you to pay anything at my house, face two keen eyes, still very bright you know; I don't care about the cost of under their crumpled cyclids. a dinner. So just come as often as you and which must be attended to in rofeel like it—come and make yourself feel

at home. It'll be quite a favor to me. Mere Magloire did not wait to be asked twice, and two days after, on her way groom Celestin, she quietly ordered her forse to be unhitched and taken to

The innkeeper, radiant with delight, served here with chicken, pudding, chatterlings, mutton with caper sauce. But she ate scarcely anything—temperate as she had been from her childhood -accustomed to no richer fare than a crust of buttered bread and a little soup.

Chieot, much dissappointed, coaxed her in vain. Neither would she drink, she refused to take any coffee.

He asked: "Well, I'm sure you'll take a little

glass of fine liquor, anyhow?"

"Ah, that! yes. I'll not say no to that."

And he roared with all the force of his lungs through the inn:

"Rosalie, bring me the fine, the super-tine, the fil en dix." The servant appeared with a long necked bottle ornamented with a paper

And the good woman began to sip it very slowly, very fastidiously, making the pleasure endure as long as possible. When she got to the bottom, she turned the glass up to pour the very last drop down her throat, and said:

"That is fine!" She had no sooner said it than Chicot poured out another glassful for her. She wanted to refuse, but it was too late, and she sipped it all up, very slowly, as she had done the first time.

Then he tried to get her to swallow a Mere Magloire remained thoughtful. third, but she resisted. He persisted: "Why, that's milk, I tell you!-that's four whole days she was in a fever of cream. I take ten and twelve glasses hesitation. She felt sure there was without feeling any the worse. That something unlucky for herself in such goes down just like sugar; never hurts

> Nothing so tine for the health!" And as she liked it very much, she yielded; but she only swallowed half a

glassful. Then Chicot, in a burst of generosity,

cried out: "See here; I tell you what I'll do with you. Since you like it, I'm going to give you a little cask of it-make you a present of one-just to show folks that re are good "friends."

The old woman did not say no; and went home slightly tipsy.

Next day, early, the inn-keeper drove into Mere Magloire's yard, and took out of the bottom of the vehicle a little cask bound with iron hoops. Then he made her taste the contents, to show her it was

ting up bread for her soup.

He sat down beside her, bid her goodday bent his face down very close to hers while talking, for the purpose of smelling her breath. And he smelled a strong smell of alcohol. Then his face brightened.

"Say, mother, I'm sure you'll offer me a little glass, ch?"

And they took two or three drinks logether.

But very soon there was a rumor through the country that old Mere Maglorie was drinking, and getting hopelessly drunk, all by herself. Sometimes she was picked up from the floor of her kitchen, or she had to be carried in from the yard, or was found lying intoxicated in the middle of some country road, and had to be brought home, senseless as any corpse.

Chicot never went to see her any more; and whenever anybody would speak of the old woman he would ex-"Isn't it awful to see a person of her

age form such a habit? And, you see,

"If that old fool hadn't got to drink-

Frozen Pipes.

"Who is this man?"

"The one who is rushing along with his hat on the back of his head, and his "Yes."

"That is the man who warned the cryant girl the other night to shut off water so the pipes wouldn't freeze." "And the good girl obeyed?"

"Not exactly. She meant to, but her beau came up and she forgot all about t; consequently there was a freeze-up. Poor girl! She is very sorry! If tears would thaw the pipes she would shed 'em by the hundred.

"And why does the man rush?"

"He is on his way to the plumber for consolation.'

And what will the plumber do!" "He will show the man 14,678 calls which were booked before he came in, tation

Crossing Sheep.

English authorities give interesting results of cross breeding between the merino and the heavy English sheep Maitre Chicot's stables, and went into has long been a hobby with many New Zealand flock owners. For this purpose the Leicester and Lincoln seem to have been the earlier favorites, though the Cotswold is now held in the highest esteem. It is claimed that cross-bred animals leave little to be desired by the advecate of wool and mutton on the same animal, the first being long, fine and lustrous, the second well lined, juicy and abundant.

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1885. HARPER'S BAZAR. ILLUSTRATED.

glasses together, he observed as he prepared to go:

"And I want to tell you one thing, you know; when it's all gone, there's plenty more for you. Don't be backward in telling me. I don't care about the cost of it. The sooner it's finished the better plensed I'll be."

And he got into his tilbury.

Four days later he returned. The old woman was sitting at the door, busy cutting up bread for her soup.

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