

Prisoners and Captives

By H. S. MERRIMAN

CHAPTER I.

One afternoon, some years ago, the copper-bright rays of a cruel sun burned the surface of the tepid ocean. The stillness of the atmosphere was phenomenal, even in the latitudes where a great calm reigns from month to month. It is almost impossible to present to northern eyes this picture of a southern sea gleaming beneath a sun which had known no cloud for weeks; impossible to portray the brilliant monotony of it all with any degree of reality. The sun rises day by day, week in and week out, unclouded from the straight horizon, sails right overhead, and at last sinks westward undimmed by thinnest vapor. Month after month, year after year, age after age, century after century, this day's work is performed. The searching orb of light rises at the same monotonous hour and sets, just as he did when this world was one vast ocean, with but one ship sailing on it.

From the dark, mysterious depths of the ocean, wavering ripples mounting in radiation to the surface, broke at times the blue uniformity of its bosom. Occasionally a delicate nautilus floated along before some unappreciable breath, presently to fold its sails and disappear. Long trailers of seaweed floating idly almost seemed to be endowed with a sinuous life and movement.

No bird in the air, no fish in the sea! Nothing to break the awful silence! A wreck might float and drift here or there upon these aimless waters for years together and never be found.

But Chance, the fickle, ruled that two vessels should break the monotony of sea and sky on this particular afternoon. One, a mighty structure, with tall tapering masts, perfect in itself, an ideal merchantman. The other, small, of exquisite yacht-like form, and with every outward sign of a great speed obtainable.

There was obviously something amiss with the larger vessel. Instead of white sails aloft on every spar, bare poles and slack ropes stood nakedly against the blue ether.

In contrast, the other carried every foot of canvas. Carried it literally; for the white cloth hung mostly idle, only at times flapping softly to a breath of air that was not felt on deck. Since dawn the smaller vessel had been steadily, though very slowly, decreasing the distance between them, and now there were signs of activity on her deck, as though a boat were about to be lowered. Across the silent waters trilled the call of a boatswain's whistle. The vessel was plainly a man-of-war. As a matter of fact, she was one of the quick-sailing schooners built and designed by the British government for the suppression of the slave trade on the west coast of Africa.

Every knob of brass gleamed in the sun, every inch of deck was holy-stoned as white as milk. Aft no rope was frayed, no seizing afloat. It was easy to see that this trim vessel carried a large crew under strict discipline.

And now the melodious song of sailors hauling together floated through the glittering air to the great vessel of the dead. No answering cry was heard—no expectant faces peered over the black bulwarks. The signal flags, "Do you want help?" hung unnoticed. The scene was suggestive of that fable telling of a mouse proffering aid to a lion; the huge, still merchantman could have taken the slave catcher upon its broad decks.

Presently a boat left the smaller vessel and skimmed over the water, impelled by sharp, regular strokes. The sound of the oars alone broke the silence of Nature.

In the stern of the boat sat a square-shouldered little man, whose brown face and glistening chestnut beard, pleasantly suggestive of cleanly refinement, combined with readiness of resource. His pleasant eyes were scarcely hazel, and yet could not be described as gray, because the two colors were mixed. As the boat approached the great merchantman, this officer formed his two hands into a circle and raised his practiced voice:

"Aho—there!"

There was no reply; and a moment or two later the small boat swung in beneath the high bulwarks. There was a rope hanging almost to the water, and with a quick jerk the young fellow scrambled up the ship's side like a monkey. Three of the boat's crew prepared to follow him.

He sat for a moment balanced on the blistered rail, and then leaped lightly on to the deck. Between the planks the pitch had oozed up and glistened like jet, in some places the seasoned wood had warped. He stood for a moment alone amid the tangled ropes, and there were beads of perspiration on his brown forehead. It is no pleasant duty to board a derelict ship, for somewhere or other there will probably be an unpleasant sight, such as is remembered through the remainder of the beholder's life.

There was something crude and hard in the entire picture. In the merciless, almost shadowless light of a midday sun every detail stood out in hard outline. The perfect ship, with its forlorn, bedraggled deck; the clean spars towering up into the heavens, with their loose cordage, their clumsily furled sails; and upon the moss-grown deck this square-shouldered little officer—trim, seaman-like, prompt, amid the universal slackness—the sun gleaming on his white cap and gilt buttons.

While he stood for a moment hesitating, he heard a strange, unknown sound. It was more like the rattle in a choking man's throat than anything else that he could think of. He turned quickly, and stood gazing upon the saddest sight he had yet seen in all his life. Over the tangled ropes the gourd figure of a white dog was creeping toward him. This poor dumb brute was most pitious and heart-rending, for the very dumbness of its tongue endowed its bloodshot, staring eyes with a heaven-born eloquence.

As it approached there came from its throat a repetition of the sickening crackle. The young officer stooped over it with kindly word and care. Then, and then only, did he realize that the

black and shriveled object hanging from its open lips was naught else but the poor brute's tongue. This was more like a piece of dried-up leather than living flesh.

"Water!" said the officer quickly to the man climbing over the rail behind him. Some moments elapsed before the small beaker was handed up from the boat, and during these the officer moistened his finger at his own lips, touching the dog's tongue tenderly and skillfully.

"Look after the poor brute," he said to the man, who at length brought the water. "Don't give him too much at first."

With a lighter step he walked aft, and climbed the brass-bound companion ladder, while two of the boat's crew followed upon his heels.

Upon the upper deck he stopped suddenly, and the color left his lips. There, at the wheel, upon an ordinary kitchen chair, sat a man. His two hands clutched the brass-bound spokes; his head lay prone upon his arms. A large Panama hat completely hid his features, and the wide, graceful brim touched his bent shoulders.

As the stately vessel slowly rocked up on the glassy sweep of rolling wave the great wheel perked from side to side, swaying the man's body with it. From one muscular arm the shirt sleeve had fallen back, displaying sinews like cords beneath the skin. Here was Death steering a dead ship through lifeless waters.

And yet in the dramatic picture there was a strange sense of purpose. The man was lashed to the chair. If life had left him this lonely mariner had at least fought a good fight. Beneath the old Panama hat an unusual brain had at one time throbbled and planned and conceived a purpose. This was visible in the very simplicity of his environments, for he was at least comfortable. Some biscuits lay upon the grating beside him—there was bunting on the seat and back of the chair—while the rope loosely knotted around his person seemed to indicate that sleep, and perhaps death, had been provided for and foreseen.

CHAPTER II.

Gently and with exorable hesitation the naval officer raised the brim of the large hat and displayed the face of a living man. There could be no doubt about it. The strong face bore the signs of perfect health—the brown hair and closely cropped beard were glossy with life.

"He's asleep!" whispered one of the sailors—a young man who had not known discipline long.

"Halloo, my man! Wake up!" called out the young officer, clapping the sleeper on the back.

The effect was instantaneous. The sleeper opened his eyes and rose to his feet simultaneously, releasing himself from the rope which was hitched over the back of his chair. Despite ragged shirt and trousers, despite the old Panama hat with its limp brim, despite bare feet and tarry hands, there was something about this sailor which placed him on a par with the officer. These social distinctions are too subtle for most of us. We can feel them, but to explain is beyond us. We recognize a gentleman, and we can in nowise define one. This sailor's action was perfectly spontaneous and natural as he faced the officer. It was an unconscious assertion of social equality.

"An English officer!" he exclaimed, holding out his hand. "I am glad to see the uniform again."

The small man nodded his head without speaking, but he grasped the brown hand somewhat ceremoniously. The form of greeting was also extended to the two seamen by the ragged sailor.

"Are you in command of this vessel?" inquired Lieut. Grace, looking round critically.

"I am—at present. I shipped as second mate, but have now the honor of being captain, and bottle washer."

The men moved away, looking about them curiously. The younger made for the deck house, seeking the companion way below.

"Halloo!" exclaimed the solitary mariner, "where are you men going to? Hold hard, there, you fellows! Let me go down first."

The stoutly built little officer held up a warning hand to his men. Then he turned and looked keenly into his companion's face. The glance was returned with the calm speculation of a man who had not yet found his normal match.

"Yellow fever?" interrogated Grace.

"Yellow fever," answered the other, with a short nod. "I will go first."

Suiting the action to the word, he led the way, and the young officer followed closely. At the head of the companion ladder the sailor stopped.

"What is to-day?" he inquired, abruptly.

"Thursday."

"It was Tuesday when I lashed myself to that chair. I must have been sleeping forty-eight hours."

"And you have had no food since then?"

"I don't know. I really cannot tell you. I remember taking the wheel at midday on Tuesday; since then I don't exactly know what I have done."

He had descended the brass-bound steps, and as he spoke the last words he led the way into the saloon. A sail had been cast over the open skylight, so that the full glare of day failed to penetrate into the roomy cabin. Upon the oilcloth-covered table lay a rolled sheet of brown paper in the rough form of a torch, and beside it a box of matches.

"I burn brown paper," said the sailor, quietly, as he struck a light and ignited the paper—"it is the only disinfectant I have left."

"You need it!" exclaimed the officer. In the meantime the other had advanced further into the cabin. Upon the floor, beyond the table, with their heads resting upon the hatch of the lazarette, lay two men whose forms were distinguishable beneath the dusky sheets cast over them.

"Those are the last of nineteen," said the ragged man, waving aside the acrid smoke. "I have buried seventeen myself, and nursed nineteen. That is the steward, this the first mate. They quar-

reled when they were—alive. It seems to be made up now—oh? I did my best, but the more I got to know of yellow fever the greater was my respect for it. I nursed them to the best of my knowledge, and then I—played parson."

He pointed to an open Bible lying on the floor. The little officer was watching him with peculiar and continuous scrutiny. He barely glanced at the Bible or at the still forms beneath the unwashed sheet. All his attention was concentrated upon the survivor.

"And now," he said, deliberately, "if you will kindly go on board the Foam I shall take charge of this ship."

"Eh?"

They stood looking at each other. It is rather a difficult task for a small man to look up into a face that is considerably above him, with a continued dignity. "I'll take command of the ship," he said, soothingly; "you are only fit for the sick list."

Across the long and sunken face there gleamed again an unpleasant smile—a mere contraction of the features, for the eyes remained terribly solemn. Then he looked round the cabin in a dreamy way, and moved toward the base of the misnamed mast.

"I have navigated her almost single-handed for a fortnight," he said; "I am glad you came."

Then the officer led him away from the cabin.

CHAPTER III.

From the moment that the ragged steersman opened his mournful gray eyes and looked upon the sunburned face of Lieut. Grace he had felt himself insensibly drawn toward his rescuer. This feeling was not the mere sense of gratitude which was naturally awakened, but something stronger. It was almost a conviction that this chance meeting on the deck of a fever-stricken ship was something more than an incident. It was a beginning—the beginning of a new influence upon his life.

When Grace laid his sunburned hand upon the sleeper's shoulder he had felt pleasantly conscious of a contact which had further import than mere warm flannel and living muscle. It was distinctly sympathetic in its influence, for there is a meaning in touch. As the two men emerged on deck the officer turned toward his companion.

"In another hour," he said, "that small dog would have been dead."

"Ah! you've saved him?" exclaimed the other.

"Yes. He will recover. I know dogs." "He's had no water since Tuesday." "He looked rather like it. Come. We will go on board my ship and report to the old man, while you get a meal—some soup I should think will be the best. You will have to be careful."

He led the way aft, toward the rail where the men, having found a rope ladder, were lowering it over the side. Before reaching them he turned.

"By the way," he said, quietly, "what is your name?"

"Tyars—Claud Tyars," repeated the little officer, musingly, as if searching in his mind for some recollection. "There was a Tyars in the Cambridge boat two years ago—a Trinity man."

"Yes—there was."

Lieut. Grace looked up in his singular, searching way.

"You are the man?"

"I am the man."

With a little nod the young officer continued his way. They did not speak again until they were seated in the gig on the way toward the Foam.

"I had a cousin," the officer remarked then in a cheerful conversational manner, "at Cambridge. He would be a contemporary of yours. My name is Grace."

The rescued man acknowledged this neat introduction with a grave nod.

"I remember him well," he replied. "A great mathematician."

"I believe he was," answered Grace. He was looking toward his ship, which was near at hand. The crew were grouped amidships, peering over the rail, while a tall old man on the quarter deck, stopping in his meditative promenade occasionally, watched their approach with the aid of a pair of marine glasses.

"The skipper is on the lookout for us," continued the young officer in a low tone of voice requiring no reply.

"A slaver?" inquired Tyars, following the direction of his companion's eyes.

"Yes, a slaver, and the quickest ship upon the coast."

Propelled by strong and willing arms, the boat soon reached the yacht-like vessel, and in a few minutes Claud Tyars was repeating his story to her captain—a genial, white-haired, red-faced sailor.

(To be continued.)

Would Wish Him Luck.

"How would you feel if I should try to kiss you?" he asked.

"You know I have always been desirous of seeing you successful in all your undertakings," replied the girl demurely.—Louisville Courier-Journal.

An Expert.

Boss—My chief requirement in a stenographer is extraordinary speed.

Applicant—I can write letters almost as fast as they do on the stage.

Boss—Name your wages.—Cleveland Leader.

German Firing Regulations.

The new musketry regulations of the German army prescribe firing at human figure targets only, and these are to be colored gray. For kneeling and prone firing portable rests are used.

An Eulogium.

"Why does that member of Congress assume to be unfamiliar with the phrase 'stand pat'?"

"Because he's bluffing," answered the other.—Washington Star.

Degradation for Woman Spy.

A Russian woman named Zanaida Smolianoff, who had moved in the highest circles in the German capital, has been sentenced at Leipzig to nine months' imprisonment for espionage.

A Warning.

"Never marry an architect, my dear."

"Why not, mamma?"

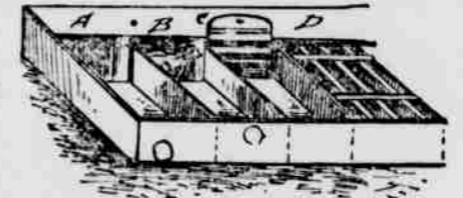
"Because he is sure to be a designing creature."—Baltimore American.

Mental power cannot be got from ill-fed brains.



Place for Sitting Hens.

We have always had a preference for having the nests of sitters low down, if possible, on the ground. In some cases we have scattered barrels, laid on their sides and slightly sunk into the ground, all over the orchard, which served as a run for our laying hens. The hens would select them for nests, and when they became broody, could be allowed to sit and hatch, and take care of their brood for at least a few weeks, right in the nest of their own selection. In the hatching room, too, we have regularly endeavored to have the nests near the ground, and if possible on the natural earth floor; or if in tiers, at least the lower one on the ground. Eggs usually hatch well on the natural earth floor. A reader of the Farmer, William Elwick, of Hankinson, N. Dak., gives herewith a plan of coop for sitting hens, that may prove decidedly serviceable in many cases. He makes these coops in rows, 16 feet long, 10 nests in a row, and 16 inches square. The nests are covered by a board 16 inches wide by 16 feet long, and inclosed by slide



CONVENIENT NEST COOP.

doors between nest and feed coop. Each feed coop (or run) is covered with a lath door. If hens sit well, he lets them off in the morning, and shuts them in at night. Thus they can be kept under full control all the time. At A is shown the empty nest; at B the hen sitting; at C the slide door fastened down, with sitting hen inside; at D the lath cover on top of run, confining the sitter to nest and run. The runs are 4 feet long.—Dakota Farmer.

Green Food for Small Chicks.

As soon as the little chick begins to grow feathers, that is, after the downy age is past, green food is quite necessary to its happiness. If there is no danger of the bird being chilled or getting wet, then let it have the grassy run to pick over; even if the weather is cool, it will do no harm to let the chicks on to the grass in the warm part of the day, but they must be watched, so that they do not stay too long and become chilled. One of the most successful poultrymen we know makes it a practice to grow a quantity of lettuce in hotbeds especially for feeding his young chicks for green food. This seems to be a good plan in his case, because his birds are hatched very early, before it is fit to turn them on to the grass. Don't attempt to raise young chicks wholly on grain.

Business Methods in Farming.

Thousands of farmers in the more opulent agricultural regions of the country still conduct their farms in a haphazard way, but everywhere the advantage and necessity of the business spirit are being recognized, says the Boston Globe.

The west has been warned, for example, that the fertilizer problem of the east and the south will have to be met before many decades unless the soils are put under better rotations and economy of laul is being preached.

It is now generally accepted as a truism that the better business man the agriculturist of today becomes, the more profitable will be found that occupation, which once was described by a keen, though not wholly wise farmer, in the statement that "farmin' ain't all keepin' books, by a long shot."

Planning Work Ahead.

Suppose just before the work of the spring opens, each field is planned out, the manure to be applied figured on, the quantity of seed required and its cost, together with the time the field should be prepared for planting and about the time required for the work. Then take each item of the work to be done each week and plan it out carefully the day before. So many hours for this task, so many for that, and so many for the other, and so on through the season. A half hour or even an hour spent each day in planning ahead, and then working in accordance with the plan, will save much time and labor. One of our troubles, as farmers, comes from our disinclination to systematize affairs, and we dart thither and hither and lose much valuable time daily.

Wounds on Fruit Trees.

An eastern fruit grower says: "Wounds of any considerable size should be given a coat of paint or some other durable substance. A suitable dressing must possess two distinct properties. It must check the weathering of the wound and prevent the growth of bacteria and fungi, and it must be of such a nature as not to injure the surrounding bark. The dressing is of no value in the healing of the wound, except as it prevents decay. For general purposes, a white lead paint is most satisfactory. It adheres closely to the wood. Wax, shellac, tallow, etc., are lacking in both respects. Bordeaux mixture would be an admirable material for this purpose if it were more durable."

Water for Horses in Summer.

If one will stop to think how hard it is to go through the work of the morning in a dry, dusty field on a hot day without a drink, one will then have an idea of how horses feel under the same conditions. An excellent plan of feeding and watering the horse during the warm weather is to give them water in the morning, then the hay and at night the water, the grain and some time afterward, usually two hours or more, all the hay the animal will eat up clean. It will be noticed that the water always precedes the meal of hay and grain. During the forenoon and during the afternoon the horses should have at least one cooling drink. It will do them no harm and they will do all the better work in consequence; then, at night, see that they are properly groomed and that they have a good, comfortable bed for their tired bodies. Treated in this manner, one will get a full day's work from every horse and he will not suffer from it, either.

Doubt as to Shredding Corn.

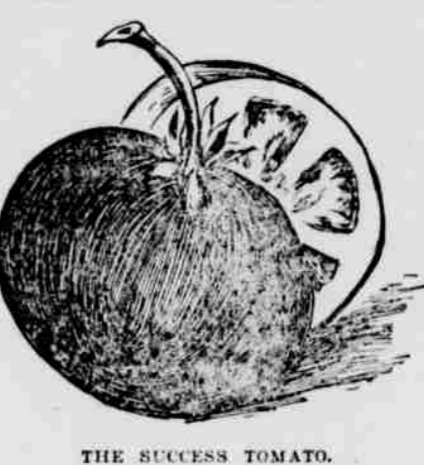
It is not universally admitted that shredding corn fodder pays. Many who have tried it seem to feel about like an Indiana farmer, who says: "I shired my corn fodder, but am not satisfied that it is a success. Labor is too high, and while cattle do very well on it, horses do not seem to do as well. In my opinion, corn, oats and timothy hay is the best combination of feed for horses; corn and clover hay with some bran for beef cattle, and clover hay, bran, oats and a little corn for sheep. I do not use concentrated feed. I do not grow any special variety of corn. The average yield to the acre one year with another is about forty bushels. I cut from five to twenty acres each year, using the corn harvester. I keep five horses, about twenty-five hogs, and from ten to fifteen cattle."

Waste of Feed.

Straw, corn fodder and rough hay are known as coarse foods, because much of such foods contain either an excess of woody fiber and little nutrition in proportion to the bulk, or are not as readily eaten by stock as is good hay or food of a better quality. For this reason there is a large waste of valuable feeding material in the United States that might be saved and used if proper attention is given to the preparation of foods and the combining of the different materials in a manner by which all can be utilized, and a corresponding gain in meat or milk thereby secured. Millions of stacks of straw and a still larger number of "shocks" or corn fodder rot in the fields, or are damaged in a manner to render the food valueless, though all of such could be made to perform service.

The Success Tomato.

One of the most promising of the several new varieties of tomatoes afforded to planters this spring is Success. It has its chief merits in its brilliant red color and its splendid shipping qualities. It ripens evenly and almost to the very stem, the skin is smooth and, as yet it has shown no tendency to crack. It is very firm and yet the flesh is not hard, but yielding and juicy. In habit of growth it is exceedingly promising.



THE SUCCESS TOMATO.

the vines being vigorous and compact and the fruit setting abundantly in clusters. Taken altogether it is a sort that will make a mark for itself unless it should develop, under field culture, some traits not now seen in the testing grounds.

It ought to be a variety of great value for shippers and those who grow tomatoes for distant markets are advised to watch the variety closely.—Indianapolis News.

Let the Calf Have Hay.

When the young calf or the young lamb is large enough to move around freely it ought to have some fine hay of good quality before it all the time so that it can begin to eat as soon as nature intends it should. Bear in mind that until its stomach is in condition to properly take care of the hay its instinct will keep the animal from eating much of it. The idea that any injury will result is wrong. If the young calf must be kept in the barn try and locate its stall where it will have plenty of light, especially sunlight, and all the fresh air it needs. Keep the stall clean with the nice hay always at hand for it to nibble and it will thrive. Of course this stall must be located for a time, at least, where the cow can see her baby at all times; then one will have a good cow and a good calf.

Paper Horseshoes.

The latest device for helping man, by helping those who help man, is in the shape of a paper horseshoe. This is said to be as durable, easier to fit, lighter and less trying on the horse than the present iron shoes. Car wheels, notably the wheels of Pullman cars, have long been made of compressed paper.

PROPHESIED CALAMITIES.

French Seeress Who Claims to Have Foretold Year's Disasters.

Perhaps the most-talked-of person in Paris is Mme. de Thebes, the mystic prophetess, who, it is claimed, has "made good." Mme. Thebes has been noted for years for her prophecies of dire events to come. It is said that she predicted the assassination of McKinley, and popular belief is that she foretold many great occurrences of late year.

Her prophecy of last December, couched in mysterious words, told of the terrors that the world would go through in the year 1906. The tenor of it all was that it would be a year of trouble. She said that there would be holocaust, famine, earthquake disturbances widespread, with wholesale casualties. The forces of nature, she declared, would rise up against man and millions would suffer death or anguish or loss. She predicted that there would



MME. DE THEBES.

be war. She said that the order of things would be upset, and incidentally that Belgium would play a curious part in it. America, she prophesied, would not escape the general misfortune, but would suffer some great disaster, the character of which she did not specify.

So widespread and shocking would be the calamities and suffering, she said, that man would wonder if all things were nearing an end. Humanity would turn its attention to the teachings of religion, and the most marked result of all the trouble of the year would be a great moral wave sweeping around the world. War would give way to peace, and a brotherhood of mankind without regard to race, color or sect would follow.

The believers in the powers of the seeress and the superstitious are now saying that all her prophecies, except war, came true in the first four months of the year. These include the famine in Japan, 1,000,000 suffering; mine explosion at Courrières, France, 1,200 killed. Two earthquakes in Formosa, 2,500 killed. Eruption of Vesuvius, 2,000 killed. Tahiti tidal wave. Thousands dead or homeless. And the earthquake at San Francisco.

OWN YOUR OWN WIRELESS.

Pocket Sender and Umbrella Requisite—Not Yet, but Soon, Maybe.

Every man his own wireless station with the aid of an umbrella is the promise made by an officer of the American De Forest Wireless Telegraph Company. He made this announcement while telling some details concerning the efforts to reach Ireland from America by wireless, says the New York Times.

By the pocket wireless apparatus, it is declared, any one can, with a knowledge of the Morse alphabet, telegraph from any point in New York City to Coney Island and possibly to distances farther away, even to ships at sea. This apparatus might be ready in a few weeks, it was asserted.

Dr. Lee De Forest, the inventor of the system that bears his name, is now in Ireland, the guest of Lord Armstrong, president of the British branch of the company, and already Dr. De Forest, the officers of the company say, has received 500 words sent from this side to apparatus placed temporarily on top of Lord Armstrong's castle in South Ireland. Messages, the De Forest people say, are going only one way just now, but before long, it is predicted, they will be going in both directions.

Abraham White, the president of the American De Forest Wireless Telegraph Company, gave out the statement about the pocket wireless machines and the possibility of utilizing umbrellas as antennas in the sending of messages from a person's pocket to stations and ships, miles away. In a few weeks, he explained, there will be an exhibition of the machines, so that any one can see how easy it is to tell your troubles to somebody twenty miles or more away.

Appropriate.

Patron—I see you have a new chef. What is his name?

Proprietor—Oh, we call him Poultrey Bleglow.

Patron—That's odd. Why should you give him such a distinguished name?

Proprietor—Oh, because he is such a good roaster.—Columbus Dispatch.

His Poetic Head.

"He's proud of being prematurely gray. He thinks that calcium effect over his ears makes him look poetic."

"Well, it does remind me of a poem."

"What poem?"

"When the Frost Is on the Pumpkin."—Cleveland Leader.

A country woman regards a compliment very much as the average woman does a husband's explanation.

If you want to keep out of the poor house, quit some of your fool ways.