A CHRISTMAS LEGEND.

A soldier in a scarlet coat,
One winter long ago,
Went out and met a pretty maid
In woodlands white with snow;
She stood beneath an ancient oak;
Her name was Mistletoe.

Her cheeks and lips were glowing red,
Like poppies in the wheat;
Her locks were twined with milky pearls,
Her eyes were blue and sweet;
He looked and loved, and, kneeling, laid
His saber at her feet.

From icy regions of the Pole
The norther blew all night,
And hung the branches of the pine
With tinkling fringes bright,
And made beneath the aged oak
A frozen mound of white.

But when the panes are thick with frost
And nights are bitter chill,
And silence, in a crystal coat,
Has eased the silver rill,
The pair of faithful lovers haunt
The wintry woodland still.

When with the burden of its years
The oak is bending low,
The soldier-holly, stiff and straight,
Stands bravely in the snow,
Its slender saber still unsheathed
To guard the mistletoe.
—Minna Irving in the Criterion.

The Runaway Christmas Tree

All the little fir trees in the forest were very much excited.

"To-morrow we shall be cut down," they cried, "and then we shall be carried to the big city."

Now, none of the little fir trees knew what the city was like, but they murmured and rustled and whispered of the wonderful things that they should see.

But there was one little tree that asked: "Do we all go?"

"Yes," said the other trees; "to-morrow we start on our travels."

Then the little tree sighed and said: "But I was promised to the children of the lumberman."

"The lumberman is poor," said a big oak, "and these are hard times. This year they must go without a tree."

The next morning, very early, the children came trudging through the snow and stood under the branches of the little fir.

"This is our tree," said one of them proudly. "On Christmas it will be lighted with candles, with an angel on the topmost bough."

"Such a dear little tree," said another; "how we shall love it."

And the little tree trembled as it heard them, but the children thought that it was the wind that shook it.

Then they went away, and later came men with axes and cut down all the young trees and laid them on a great sled to be carried away.

And in the evening, when the sun made a red path of light on the snow, the children came again, and when they saw that tree had been cut down they cried: "Where is our own little tree?" And the little tree that lay on the top of the sled answered loudly: "Here I am, here I am," but the children did not understand, they rubbed their eyes with their rough red hands and sobbed.

"What's the matter?" asked their father, as he came tramping through the wood.

"Oh, our little tree, our own little

"SUCH A DEAR LITTLE TREE."

tree," wailed the children. "It is cut down and piled with the other trees that are to be sent to the city."

"We are too poor to have a tree this year," said the tired man, sadly, and the children went away mourning.

And the sun went down and the moon came up, and showed the dark forest and all the little fir trees lying on the great sled, and presently the animals of the forest began to creep, creep among the new white stumps.

"So you are going to the city," said the white-tailed deer, nibbling the moss beneath the snow.

"Yes," whispered all the little trees, excitedly. But the little fir cried: "I don't want to go."

"Why not?" asked the white-tailed deer, and the little fir told of the children.

And the deer came closer, and for a long time the two whispered together, and presently a big gray rabbit joined them, and a white owl flew down and added wise counsel, and after a while the deer and the rabbit and the owl went away, and the little tree lay very, very still until midnight.

Then when all the other trees slept it rolled from the sled into the snow, and the wind, which blew through the forest asked, "What are you trying to do, little tree?" And the little tree said, "Help me to stand." So the wind blew under it until it was upright on its stem, and then the little tree went hopity-hop, hopity-hop, until came to a sheltered valley, and there it lay down and went to sleep.

It lay there sleeping and waking in the sunshine until the men came and carried off the sled full of young trees, but no one noticed that the little fir was gone.

And the night before Christmas the wind blew and blew again until the little fir tree stood upright on its stem, and the little fir went hopity-hop, hopity-hop until it came to the house where the children lived.

Then out from the forest came the white-tailed deer and the big rabbit, and the little white owl, and the deer pushed softly against the door of the cottage, and the owl pecked at the lock, and the rabbit hunched and hit warm his hind feet until the door was opened. And then the little fir tree bent its head and went in and stood in the corner of the room, and the three wild things of the forest went softly from room to room, and came back with things to hang on the tree. And last of all the little gray owl flew to the topmost branch and hung there the pink wax angel with golden wings.

"They are good children," said the little white owl, as he flew down again. "When the winter is cold, they hang scraps of meat for me on the trees."

"And they put carrots in the path," said the rabbit, "and cabbage, so that I may not go hungry."

"And behind the barn they drop armfuls of sweet, juicy hay," said the deer, "that I may come in the night and feed."

And the little fir tree said: "They are good children, and I would rather be here than in the big, big city. And then it whispered, "Good-night," and the wild things went away.

And in the morning when the children came, they cried, "Oh, father, father, look at the beautiful tree!" And the lumberman came in and cried in astonishment, "Who brought it here?" And the little fir tree whispered and sang:

"I ran away from the forest. I ran away."

But they could not understand, and so they stared and wondered, and at last the lumberman said, "It is too late to carry it now to the city, so it can stay." And at that the children cried, "A Merry Christmas to all!" And the fir tree whispered happily, "A Merry Christmas!" And out in the forest the owl and the rabbit and the white-tailed deer wished each other "A Merry Christmas!" as they hurried away through the snow.—Evening Wisconsin.

NEARING THIN ICE.

Peter Stuyvesant's New Year's.

The custom of celebrating New Year's Day in our own country is largely due to the Dutch. Old Peter Stuyvesant made much of the day, and cheery assemblages were held at the governor's home in New Amsterdam. The Dutch method of kissing the women for "a happy new year" was observed and toll taken of all who were young and handsome. In fact, during the reign of Peter Stuyvesant New Amsterdam was the most thoroughly beklssed country in all Christendom and formed a marked contrast to the staid Puritans, who thought the observance of this day savored strongly of reverence for the god Janus and who made no note of their first New Year's Day in the new world save to record, "We went to work betimes."—New York Evening Post.

Helping Santa.

Christmas the Year Through.

Christmas candles burn out, decorations must be thrown aside, exchange of gifts comes to an end. But these things play only a secondary part in Christmas. The love which is its essence, the overflowing good-will, the outspoken kindliness, the unselfishness and cheeriness, need not be limited to one day in the year. There is no reason why we should not have them every day. Why should love not rule through the circle of the year? A year full of Christ is a year which carries into every day the best of Christmas.

His Roar.

McGorry (carpingly)—Thim makers av almanacs hov got us be dhe t'roats, bedad!

Mrs. McGorry—How d'yez make thot out?

McGorry—Make ut out? Here, now. We hov cowld weather New Year's, phwin we don't nade ut; an' do dhey give us aven a brith av frost on dhe Fourt' av July, phwin our tongues are hangin' out wid dhe heat? Not so'a yez cud notice ut, bedad!—Judge.

A New Year's Wish.

God keep thee, dear, through all the years,
Through all the joys, the sorrows, tears
Of life—its commonplaces, too,
God keep thee sweet, and brave, and true
Amid the doubts and fears that rise
In every life—the mysteries,
Things that are hard to understand,
The movings of a mystic hand,
God keep thy reason sound and sure,
Thy mind alert, thy heart still pure,
God keep thee always—this I pray
For thee, upon this New Year's Day.
—B. McM. Bell.

In the Dark.

"Well, have you bought your wife's Christmas present yet?"

"I dunno. She has all our Christmas stuff locked up in one of the closets, where I can't get at it."

If Money Brought Happiness.

If money only brought happiness, there would be little Christmas cheer in a majority of homes.

FARM AND GARDEN

Are Farm Land Prices Too High?

How long will the price of farm lands continue to increase? Just so long as the price of farm products continue to increase, and these prices will remain firm so long as labor finds steady and profitable employment. In no other country in the world is labor so well rewarded as here. Where prices are low, wages are necessarily low. The man who receives liberal returns for his work can buy liberally, and can pay a fair price. There seems to be no probability that industrial conditions will be radically changed in this country soon. The people generally are too well satisfied with them. Good markets may, therefore, be expected to continue indefinitely.

Farm lands which may be relied on to product satisfactory crops of grain and grass are not selling too high. Land which, with proper management, will produce from 60 to 100 bushels of 50-cent corn per acre is well worth $150 an acre or more. There is a large amount of such land in Kansas and adjoining states.

The sure way to increase the value of land is to increase its productiveness. Under existing conditions prices will take care of themselves. The days of large surpluses are past. Demand crowds close upon the heels of supply. Mouths are multiplying faster than food for them.—Kansas Farmer.

Individual Hog Houses.

"Noticing articles from time to time on the construction of individual hog houses, I wish to submit the plan of houses that we use," writes a correspondent of the Breeder's Gazette. "I make them six feet square on the ground, both doors to be hinged so they will open and close readily. Twelve-foot boards make side and roof. I use good soft pine flooring, as it is lighter and much easier to move when necessary than heavier lumber. Four pieces 2 by 4 inches and six feet long

INDIVIDUAL HOG HOUSE.

are for sills. Two pieces 2 by 4 inches and 6 feet long are for ridge and plate.

"If this plan is used it will be found much more satisfactory than a plain A shaped house. The door in the roof can be opened when the sun shines. Sunshine is the best tonic known for little pigs, and the door is essential when the sow needs attention at pigging time as a means of entrance and, as is sometimes the case, a very hasty exit."

Value of the Home Market.

Farmers should encourage their home town, to build up a good home market for their dairy and poultry products, fruit, vegetables and many things that sell far more profitably at home than they could by shipping them away. Here is where the French farmers gain their prosperity; they have good home markets, where they market everything at high prices direct to their customers in their thrifty home towns and villages.

Towns can be revived by the farmers and merchants working together to get new industries, and the home market soon develops for all the farm products that make a prosperous community, and as the town grows the farms increase in value.—Inland Farmer.

Squashes and Pumpkins.

With care in storing, there is very little difficulty in keeping these, especially the former, in good condition until spring, and I have kept some varieties of the genuine pie pumpkins until well into March in just as nice condition as they went into storage. Select those that are well matured, and make sure that they are gathered before being touched in the least with frost. Store in a cool, dry place as late as safety from freezing will permit, then remove to a garret where they will keep cool and dry, but always safe from frost. Do not pile them, but set them on the floor and, better still, separate them so that they do not touch. In this way, well matured specimens can be kept almost t will.—Exchange.

Alfalfa Soils.

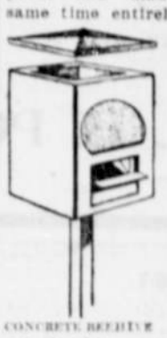
Alfalfa does best on well-drained soils, where the water level is several feet below the surface. It is a very deep-rooted plant, sending its roots down into subsoil which is largely unavailable to other farm crops. These roots will not thrive in a water-soaked soil, and in attempting to grow alfalfa on a wet soil, or a soil with the water level only a few feet from the surface, the alfalfa is placed in unnatural conditions and little can be expected of it. If possible, a field with a sufficient slope to effect thorough surface drainage and sufficiently open to porous to provide good under-drainage should be selected for alfalfa.—Maryland Experiment Station.

Why They Don't Lay.

Many who keep hens are asking themselves just about now why their pullets don't lay, when the fact is that a lot of their young stock was hatched too late, or was not given proper food and care during growth. The size and general appearance of a pullet does not always denote the time when she should commence producing eggs. I have seen flocks of pretty big nice pullets and they would lay hardly an egg all winter. The first essential for winter eggs is the right kind of stock to produce them. Food will not supply that want; it may help some and in some instances it's pretty difficult to help the matter very much by giving extra care. The strain has got to be of the right sort if they prove themselves reliable and profitable layers. After being in the poultry business so long and seeing so many people fuss and experiment and work in the effort to get eggs from stock that had no eggs to lay, no inclination to make eggs or ability to commence to get ready to lay, it is impressed all the stronger upon my mind that there is a whole lot to this hen business besides feed and care.—Inland Farmer.

Beehive of Concrete.

Among the occupations which offer profit and amusement, and at the same time entirely suited to women, is that of bee raising. Its advantages are that little space is required, there is no great expense and the work is light, requiring only a limited amount of time and care. Much of the apparatus required may be made at home and where the facilities for this are not present, the things may be purchased without any great outlay of money.



CONCRETE BEEHIVE

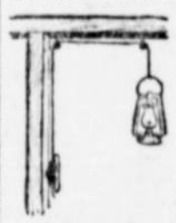
There have been many improvements lately in the manner of constructing the beehives, and probably the most interesting is one which is made of concrete. A patent has been recently issued covering the manufacture of concrete beehives, but any one with a little ingenuity may easily make them, and a set of molds once having been made satisfactorily, may be used indefinitely and any number of hives made from it. Anyone attempting to make a hive of this material should acquaint themselves with the character of the cement and should also be familiar with the habits of bees.

Warning to Dairymen.

We have repeatedly warned the dairymen that the oleomargarine law is likely to be amended next winter, and that the amendments proposed will destroy the value of the law, so far as concerns the protection of dairy products. Again, we ask you—have you written your congressman about it? Do you know his views? Does he know what you want him to do in the matter? Does he know what you are going to do to him in the campaign next year if he doesn't give you a square deal? This is no joke. It is a serious proposition, and no time is to be lost if the oleomargarine law is to be preserved in its present form.—Missouri Dairyman.

Convenient Light for the Barn.

Many fires may be avoided when the short winter days require the use of a lantern in the barn by having some such device as here shown to keep the lantern in place. This affair requires only two small pulleys and a rope. The rope is run through the pulleys, the lantern attached to one end and then pulled up to a convenient height, the loose end of the rope being fastened to a cleat on the wall. If this device is arranged in about the center of the barn much better light will be given than if the lantern were carried around from place to place.—Cor. of Farm and Home.



FOR SAFETY.

Prizes for Peasants.

The hilly territory of Trieste, it is stated, in a consular report on that district, is covered by pointed stones which prevent any cultivation, and some years ago the Society Agraria offered prizes for those who would remove them and thus change the waste ground to meadows. The work has now been going on for some years and every autumn a commission ascertains the area of the proposed redemption and the difficulties to be encountered and fixes the prize to be given. In spring it again visits the improved grounds and pays the prizes if deserved. This year in the different parishes sixty-six peasants improved forty-four acres and received $1,040.

Sunshine in the Dairy.

Sunshine is the dairyman's best friend. When the sun beats down hot in the summer we are apt to think it an enemy, but a week of clouds, even in July, casts a gloom over everything and makes both man and beast at cross purposes with the world. Sunshine is required to kill germs and microbes and keep both animal and human dispositions sweet. The Vermonter's cow barn that must be built so warm and tight lacks sunshine to keep the inmates in the best of health. All along our country's northern border, tuberculosis is on the increase in dairy herds.—Farmers' Mail and Breeze.